

Hayes-Genoter History and Genealogy Library

**THURSDAY**  
December 23, 2010

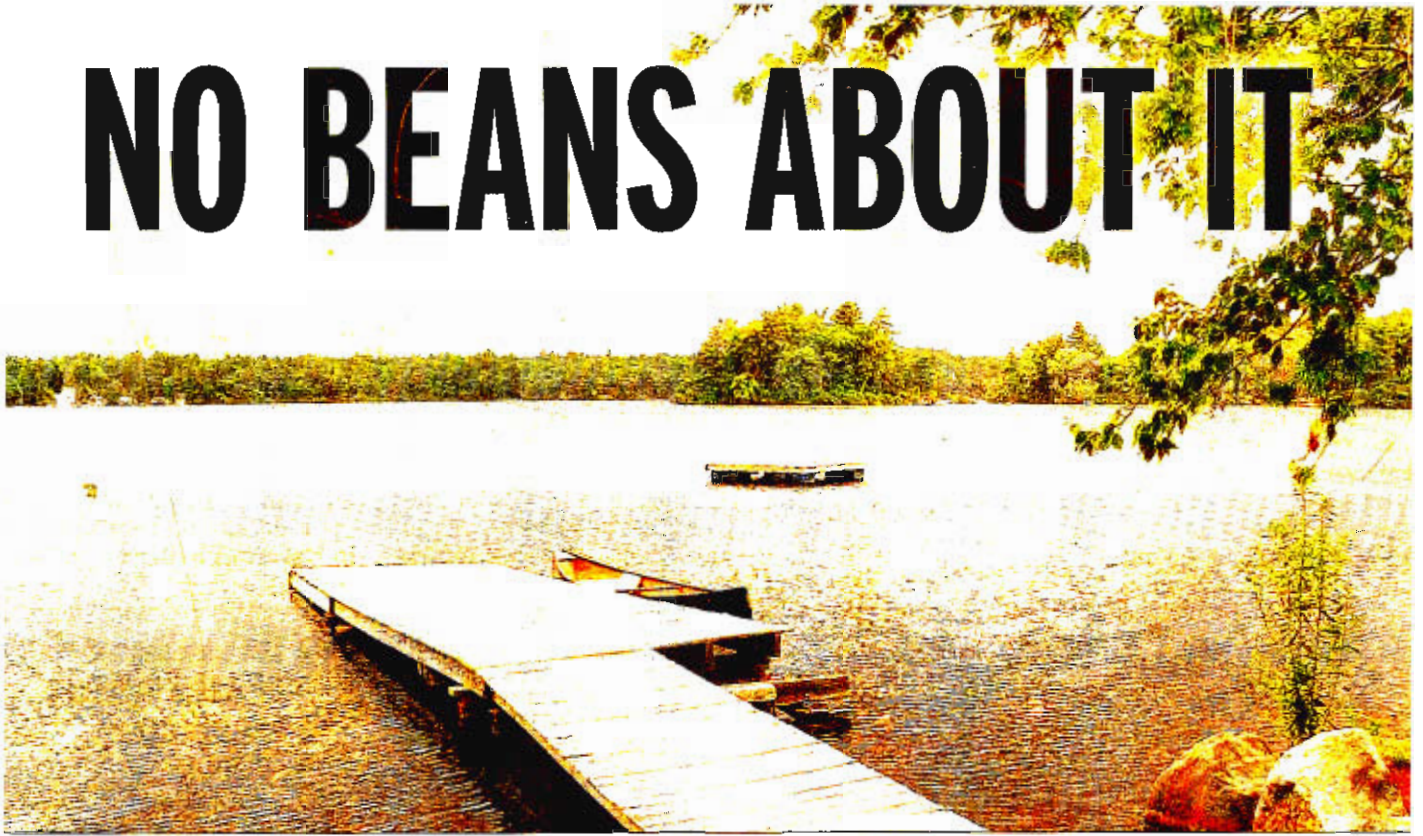
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Pelham Historical Society

William T. Hayes   Karen Genoter

# NO BEANS ABOUT IT



File photo

Small lots on Little Island Pond in Pelham were given away in 1929 as part of a promotion by a Ganem's Market in Lawrence.

## Pelham buys lots given away in 1929 coffee promotion

By JOHN TOOLE  
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PELHAM — Town officials are going shopping for “coffee lots.”

No, they’re not looking to corner the cappuccino market.

They’re trying to pick up some forest land near Little

Island Pond for conservation purposes.

Had you been around in 1929, you could have scooped up the land for the equivalent of a few cups of joe.

Ganem’s Market of Lawrence had the deal for you: Buy three pounds of Monarch Coffee at the regular price of 55 cents

a pound and they would have given you real estate around Little Island Pond for free.

“Lots of land given away!” proclaimed a display ad in The Evening Tribune. “At Little Island Pond!”

Ganem’s wanted to reassure its valued customers this wasn’t some deal tied to buying the

Brooklyn Bridge or acquiring swamp land in Florida. “This is Not a Lottery,” the ad said. “No Lucky Numbers.”

Instead, what buyers were promised was, “The Chance of a Lifetime. A Fine Camp or House Lot on the Shores of a

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This ad was part of a 1929 coffee promotion that offered free land in Pelham. Now the town of Pelham is looking to acquire some of those lots for conservation purposes.

# LAND: Town has already acquired most of Ganem's coffee lots

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Beautiful Pond.”

Working at the mill or the factory, it must have made you want to wake up and smell the coffee. “All the Joys of New Hampshire Camp Life at Your Own Door,” the ad said. “Beautiful and High Shady Camp Sites.”

There was so much more.

“Every Lot Guaranteed 1600 Square Feet or Over,” the ad said. “You Will Enjoy the BOATING Here,” it said. “Nature Created This Spot for You. Take Advantage of It.”

What nature couldn't provide, American ingenuity would. “Electric Lights Available on the Premises,” the ad said.

If all this was too much to believe, then ponder this: “No Taxes to Pay! We've Done That For You!”

Ganem's, preparing as only a market could for the inevitable onslaught of customers, cautioned: “Note — Not Over 2 Lots of Land to a Customer.”

Ganem's was sure the coffee drinkers of Lawrence couldn't pass this one up. As the ad said, “you couldn't buy a finer coffee than MONARCH?”

And, really, that's what Ganem's said it was all about. “Ganem's Market Has Come Forward at Considerable Expense to Give Lawrence People an Opportunity to Obtain Lots Free by Purchasing Three Pounds of Monarch Coffee.”

This promotional campaign for

Ganem's and Monarch — you might call it the king of coffee — brings us to those “coffee lots,” which derive their name from the marketing strategy.

Pelham Conservation Commission Chairman Paul Gagnon said a hearing was held recently concerning plans to buy one of the lots, about .7 acres, for \$3,200, about half its assessed value. The town is negotiating to buy two smaller parcels, too.

None of these deals amounts to much, in the big scheme of conservation. At least nothing the Nature Conservancy will run out and announce. But, for the town, there would be some forestland management benefits, which makes the small deals desirable.

“Had this ever developed, the closest

analogy would be a campground,” Gagnon said.

It never did develop, though, never matched the ad's sketches of something that resembles, say, Hampton Beach.

“The streets were never put in,” said Spike Hayes, founder of the Hayes-Genoter History and Genealogy Library in Pelham. “Over time, the town picked up most of (the lots) for taxes.”

Now, you might say the town is looking to pick up the land for a little more than the price of a cup of coffee.

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