

Lake Louise Beavers Are Pleasant Neighbors, C. F. Goeringer Thinks

Only Remaining Local Couple Have Resided On Estate Three Years, Once Flooded Road

The beautiful wooded shores of Conrad F. Goeringer's Lake Louise have become, quite by accident, so far as any one has been able to determine, a retreat for discriminating beavers . . . and while the couple which have made their home out there also made considerable inroads on his stand of timber, Mr. Goeringer considers them very pleasant neighbors indeed, and will allow no traps to be set for the industrious little trespassers.

They are something of a prize possession to him . . . for after all it's not every county gentleman who can have a pair of beavers in his front yard.

A few days ago a reporter from The Post went out to Lake Louise to investigate the beaver situation, since the Goeringer beavers are about the only family in this section of the county and hence are really very prominent residents of the Back Mountain region.

Mr. Goeringer himself wasn't home at the time, but the reporter followed up a couple of errand sheep and ran across one Joseph Gavek, who works about the Goeringer farm and knows all about beavers.

"Beavers," he explained, on the way down to the wooded shores of the lake . . . which incidentally, Mr. Goeringer created himself some nine years ago, because it seemed to be about the only pleasant geographical features his estate lacked . . . "are destructive little beasts. The ones we have here cause more damn trouble than they're worth."

It was easy to see what he meant when the little party reached the lake shores, for all along the eastern bank it looked as if a twister had wandered aimlessly through the woods, knocking down trees in all directions. Beavers, you understand, are intrepid woodsmen and are willing to tackle any tree up to a foot in diameter. Not just any kind of tree will do, though, said Gavek, for beavers are discriminating and won't sink their cutting teeth into any but soft-wood growths. The toll on poplars and birch is particularly heavy, and bass-

MUSKRATS AND WATER SNAKES SHARE LAKE WITH BEAVER FAMILY

Beavers, of course, are not the entire complement of wild life at Lake Louise. A thriving colony of muskrats has lived out there on Goeringer's estate for a number of years, too. There seems to be some affinity between muskrats and beavers, and wherever one animal is found, the other is near by. The Goeringer muskrats have their runs and homes adjacent to the beaver hutch and seem just as satisfied with the Lake Louise territory as the latter.

There are a good many snakes about the lake, too, and one day last month Joe Gavek, an employee of Mr. Goeringer, shot 15 at the outlet of the pond.

wood and soft maples are considered toothsome, too.

Are Good Lumbermen

The Lake Louise beavers don't seem to care where they cut, either, and every so often Gavek has to take his axe and cut away trees which have been felled across the pathways of the wooded private park. Perhaps the beavers prefer to work around the paths, because it's easier for them to get around.

Their methods are fairly simple. A well-trained beaver will stand on

Typical Beaver Haunt



It is in quiet forest pools such as this one that beavers prefer to make their homes, well protected from the inroads of humans, whom beavers regard with suspicion, and surrounded with soft-bark trees from which the busy little animals take their food.

his hind legs, which brings him a foot or so from the ground, and chew around the trunk until an adequate cut has been made. And then he stands back from his work and waits for the wind to blow up and topple the tree to the ground. All the wild tales about beavers knocking trees over by slapping them soundly with their tails is strictly nonsense says Joe, who has made something of a study of beavers and knows what he's talking about.

After a tree has been felled, the beavers strip off its bark with their teeth and then cut off all the twigs and branches within reach. And then just to make sure that no one else makes off with the assembled debris, they take it into the lake and anchor it to the bottom, where it's money in the bank until winter time.

Oh, yes, in case you've been wondering, beavers do all this in order to get three square meals a day. Being herbivorous little beasts, they like nothing so well as a good chew of bark or mouthful of sapling. And for some reason or another they're always putting a little aside for a rainy day. A night in the summer hasn't been well-spent unless a tree has been felled or a fallen tree stripped. Given a few more years . . . they've been there for three now . . . the Lake Louise beavers will have constructed a wicker-ware bottom for the entire pond, and perhaps then they'll retire from the timber business and sit back to enjoy life.

A year or so ago they constructed a dam, from force of habit, along the road which skirts the little lake, and succeeded in flooding a considerable portion of the eastern shore. In fact, so successful was their enterprise that the road was impassible for quite some time, completely awash in the dam back-water. For two small creatures they've created considerable stir and roam in the period of their residence.

Move To New Home

After a year or so on the eastern bank, however, they decided that perhaps their whereabouts would become known, so about a year ago they picked up their household effects and traipsed across the lake into new territory. Their new home is just across from the picnic clearing on the eastern shore, and fits snugly into a little cove before a well-nigh impenetrable section of the woods on the west bank.

Woods, however, mean nothing to The Post reporter, and he plunged into the dense underbrush behind the sturdy back of Gavek to get a better look at the beaver haunt. As he and the woodland youth approached the new beaver hutch, he could see a number of smoothly worn trails heading towards the lake . . . Beaver slides they're called . . . along which the couple navigate in their travels. Incidentally, the beavers had the good judgment to build just beyond a stone fence, which was calculated to keep outsiders from prying into their private lives. That fence, by the way, must be a hundred or more years old and was a feature of a farm that used to cover the one-time meadows now flooded over by the lake waters.

The top of the beaver hut looks like . . . and is . . . a huge pile of cut twigs and branches, with moss and clods of earth pushed into the interstices to make it watertight. The real living quarters, though, says Joe, are under water. Probably the beavers have tunneled under the lake bottom for quite a space, to make sure that they would be free from interference. There is one opening above water, but the main entrance is located somewhere beneath the surface.

Gervak has seen the beavers occasionally. They're nice, plump, little animals, he says, with luxuriant, glossy fur of brownish-black. They

weigh somewhere around thirty pounds, and their pelts or blankets, as they are sometimes called, would bring fifteen or twenty dollars on the open market. But perhaps the beavers understand how nice they would look around a pretty girl's neck, and so whenever they see some one coming they make themselves scarce. Now there, says Joe, is where their tails come in handy; when a beaver hits his stride, he uses his tail for leverage. You can hear a good, husky beaver thump his tail a mile away, when the wind is right.

How long the beavers will stay around the lake is purely a matter

Agriculture Had Heyday In 1915

Farm-Crop Value Was Higher, Problems Less

Records of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture show interesting conditions existing in farming in this state 25 years ago when agriculture was enjoying a heyday as compared with the multifarious problems of 1941, Secretary of Agriculture John H. Light asserted today.

In 1915 there were approximately 219,000 farms in Pennsylvania compared with about 169,000 at present, acreages devoted to the various grains were greater, yields were as high and in some instances higher and yet prices received by the farmer were above those of today. Livestock, poultry and milk prices, however, were lower and the same was true of wages, but more people were employed because farms had not reached the present high state of mechanization.

In 1915 the estimated wheat harvest was 24,928,000 bushels from 1,312,000 acres which had a total value of \$26,174,000 compared with the 1940 production of 18,789,000 bushels from about 900,000 acres which had a value of \$15,219,000. The total estimated production of

of conjecture. They are more or less nomadic, and whenever the best has been taken from the forests, they are very apt to set out for other Elysian fields. That's probably how they happened to move to Lake Louise to begin with, although there has been loose talk to the effect that the State Game Commission planted them in the neighborhood.

Whether or not the Lake Louise beavers have been raising children on the side is not known. At least no one has seen any young beavers about. It might be a good thing for the beaver population if they have, however, for the breed is rapidly falling off in these parts. A colony that used to make its home on North Mountain has fallen on hard years, and the beaver situation has been so critical in Wyoming, Sullivan and Columbia Counties of late that no trapping is allowed in these regions at all.

corn was 54,792,000 bushels which had a value of \$41,641,920 compared with a production of 53,640,000 bushels valued at \$38,621,000 last year. Hay shows little change, the production 25 years ago having been 3,558,000 tons compared with 3,238,000 tons, but the value of the crop a quarter century ago was placed at \$56,752,200 compared with \$31,850,000 last year.

The average price received by the farmer for his milk was \$1.76 per hundred pounds, 33 cents for a pound of butter, live chickens 12 cents a pound, 80 cents a bushel for potatoes and 38 cents per dozen for eggs. Milk retailed at an average of seven cents a quart.

The average farm wage with board by the year was \$235 or \$1.20 a day with board and \$1.60 a day without board. The last general report showed the average wage rate per month with board was \$29.50 and the daily wage \$1.80 with board and \$2.35 without board, but considerable advances will be

Warning

A warning has been issued by the Department of Agriculture to all unlicensed livestock dealers to procure their licenses at once to avoid prosecution. Several prosecutions have already been made for failure to procure 1941 licenses and in each case fines have been imposed in addition to the costs of prosecution.

Tobacco

There is a total of 113,841,000 pounds of Pennsylvania seedleaf tobacco in storage in the warehouses of the country. This compares with 112,788,000 pounds stored a year previous and 79,260,000 pounds held January 1 this year.

shown from those figures when the present survey is completed as a result of the defense industry wage appeal to farm labor.

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