

Fin, Fur and Feather



By William J. Robbins Jr.

One of the most educational experiences of my life was the rearing of two pens of quail, five years ago.

It all started the day Mrs. Robbins and I left our home at Trucksville and drove to the Eastern State Game Farm a few miles south of Reading, near the small town of Swenksville.

We assumed full responsibility for obtaining and rearing to 12 weeks of age, sixty day-old quail. Harveys Lake Camp No. 274 United Sportsmen of Pennsylvania was the sponsoring group, and at that time was a young organization. We felt a loss by rail shipment could not be afforded on our first project so the trip was made by car.

The vast facilities for quail rearing at this farm practically defies description and our visit which was much too short for a complete survey is the reason our observation and notes were limited. Miles of wire, hundreds of brooder coops, incubation buildings and scores of other buildings necessary for the operation of this gigantic project, meets the eye upon arrival.

The farm manager, Mr. Warfel, upon whose shoulders rests the full responsibility for the success of this work, has had many years experience at artificial breeding and rearing of game birds. Being one of the oldest employees of the Commission and I believe one of the first protectors to rear pheasant with broody hens, it might be said of him that he started this work on the ground floor, an invaluable asset to a person in his position.

We were indeed fortunate, for on this particular day we had the opportunity to observe a quail hatch in the incubator house. A sight that I shall never forget. The best description I can give of the hatching of these birds, that are about the size of bumble bees, would be a corn popper full of corn that popped out from under the lid. This event took place when an incubator drawer was pulled out in order to give us our allotted birds.

At our departure we were advised that the mortality of day old quail would be high with an average loss of 40 to 50% not

unusual. That statement from the farm superintendent was the only dampener of our enthusiasm. Through-out the return trip our conversation hovered around the mortality of artificially reared birds. The factors involved were temperature, food, and cannibalism. We vowed before arrival at home that we would pay strict attention to these. My thoughts did, however, revert to the farm and I wondered how these three factors could be checked constantly on a project where birds were hatched by the thousands.

After placing the birds in the brooder I started with pad and pencil to figure out the approximate cost of quail. Even if we lost only 10% the price of each bird was staggering. If we lost 40% it would be proportionately higher. Fortunately we lost but five out of sixty, though we had a power interruption that caused the temperature to drop to the danger point.

My thoughts at this date began to change and since our experience in the work was first hand and practical, I feel that I am justified in my present conclusions.

Few hunters are shooting quail and it might not be a bad suggestion for the Commission to place quail on the song or protected bird list for a few years. This would afford them an opportunity to reproduce naturally as our grouse have done.

It should not be assumed that I favor closing the Eastern Game Farm, but I do feel that dollars can be spent to better advantage if quail rearing were reduced to ten percent and the facilities converted to turkey rearing. Thirty percent would be a good starting percentage. This would permit at least sixty per cent to be diverted to food and cover work, a very important program that should be expanded.

In areas where turkeys have been released there has been some natural reproduction but not on a scale that would permit the discontinuance of artificial methods. The food problem, not predators, seems to be the "thorn in the flesh".

Plain facts and undisputable figures cannot be denied, and I'm

SAFETY VALVE

Sends Some Verses

Ambler, Pa.
September 18, 1951

Dear Editor,

Are you in cahoots with the mailman up your way?

I wrote to you September 12, you replied September 13, and I received your reply September 14. Never have we seen anything like that around here before. Must be the rooster crowing on the Dallas Post envelope.

Jack and I both liked your letter. Jack lived with his folks on a farm at Huntville near the Dorranes during World War I. His brother, Howard and his father planted some pines which are really tall, now.

As you asked me about poetry, I'll admit that I do write a wee bit of it, the sing-song variety. How did you know?

For instance, this summer I taught at a Vacation Bible School and wrote this poem of thanks:

We thank you, God, our Father,
For the birds and trees and flowers,

For all the friends we love so well

Who share our happy hours.

And this spring a friend sent me a church bulletin from Trucksville for March 4th with a reprint of a poem which I wrote when we lived on Mt. Greenwood Road.

The White Church On The Hill.
I love our little church

That rests upon the hill,
For all the pleasant memories

Which linger in it still.

And when I hear the preacher
Tell how to find true peace,
It's there before he mentions it
In swift and sure release.

With all the falling footsteps
That echo in the hall,
We feel Christ's living presence
And answer to His call.

"Come, follow Me", and you will see

That freedom waits within.

No more will earthly cares beset
The one who casts out sin.

When we lived up at "Tamarack Lodge", I made a hall curtain into a quilt, getting the idea from "Gone With The Wind", where

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certain beyond all doubt that the Commission members, aware of the cost of quail rearing, will make some change at this particular Game Farm.

THE DALLAS POST

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A non-partisan liberal progressive newspaper published every Friday morning at the Dallas Post plant Lehman Avenue, Dallas Pennsylvania.

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ONLY YESTERDAY

From The Post of ten and twenty years ago this week.

From The Issue Of

September 26, 1941

Evans drugstore is moving on Sunday to its new location on the new highway, one of the first concerns to take this step.

Contractors on the new road to Harveys Lake are using 17 carloads of material a day. One lane, from Castle Inn to Dallas, is completed.

Mrs. Nuell H. Kester was elected first president of Trucksville Fire Company Auxiliary on Wednesday. There are 56 members.

Claude Cook has a 1912 Ford, inherited from an aunt in Blairstown, N. J. He brought it home last week, in tow, because of lack of license plates. He had dozens of offers for it en route. It's in perfect condition, acetylene lamps and all. You start it with a crank.

Mrs. George Sawyer has had returned to her two Christmas cards sent to occupied areas of Versailles and Orleans nine months ago. Postal service has been suspended.

A community center for Dallas is being talked about. Other communities of small population have designed and erected such centers.

Ruby K. Grabsky, Luzerne, will become the bride of Conrad Hislop tomorrow.

Elizabeth Piskorik, Fernbrook, and John Pitcavage, Swoyerville, were married in August.

Burn, Buy and Boost anthracite. Anthracite week is September 29 to October 4.

Esther Rae Warden, Shavertown, married Donald E. Hardenburgh, Soranton, on Saturday.

Girl Scout Council To Meet October 1

Dallas District Girl Scout Council will meet at Carverton Methodist Church Monday night at 8. Guest of honor will be Mrs. George Metz, former leader of Trucksville Brownies and active in Girl Scout work for twenty years. Mrs. Donald Coughlin, Commissioner, will attend.

Helen Sellers, Executive Director, will speak.

Mrs. Charles Nuss, Lehman, will report on her summer visit to Camp Edith Macy, where she represented Wyoming Valley Council at the International workshop. Dolores Morris, headquarters, will teach new songs and games in collaboration with Mrs. Charles Hensley, chairman of training.

Refreshments will be served by Carverton Troop Committee.

YOU KNOW ME

BY

Al, Himself

GREEN WRAPPED TOMATOES

Farmers in the Back Mountain district would be better off financially if tomatoes would not ripen in the north. Mrs. Kistler purchased a basket of full ripe tomatoes for canning and on the same day we dropped into the packing plant at Devens' Mill where green tomatoes were being washed, waxed, segregated into four different sizes for shipment to southern states below North Carolina. Trucks were lined up along the Main highway, with thousands of baskets of the unripened fruit, waiting their turn to unload.

We asked a farmer how much he got for his load and he answered \$1.80 a basket, adding that the top price that day was \$2.50. That's a peach basket, folks, not a bushel. We asked why all farmers here did not pick their tomatoes green instead of letting them ripen, and he answered, "We can't control the summer sun."

Farmers take their loads to the West Pittston auction and sell them to buyers from the South. They receive a number that informs them which refrigerated trailer to follow to the Dallas segregating station. Here the tomatoes are put through a machine that washes, dries, waxes and sizes the fruit. After they are dried someone picks out the pinks. Any tomato with even one spot of red will rot before it reaches the southern market. The greens roll up an incline tumbling over and over before the keen eyes of eight women, four on each side of the rolling fruit. They pick out and drop the rejects into a center channel. These are basketed and either sold back to farmers or reach the local market. The first bin along the incline has the smallest holes and so on up through three more bins so that tomatoes are speared out of the machine in four different sizes faster than it takes to write about it. While this process is going on the refrigerator trailer is backed up to the building where its empty boxes are unloaded. Each box will hold the contents of two and a half baskets. All the time the trailer is being loaded, a motor runs continually to keep the trailer ice-box cool. When the truck is fully loaded it starts immediately for the southern market where the fruit eventually reaches the southern housewife as fancy tomatoes.

In the winter the whole procedure is reversed, the southern crop comes north.

Sheffield Abood is a southern buyer. He rents the Devens' building and owns the tomato separating machinery. One of his workmen told us that he married a Wilkes-Barre girl, but we didn't press into his personal affairs. He charges other buyers fifty cents a box to have their load go through the separating machine. The buyer then pays \$1.50 a box to ship his load south.

Let's add this cost up. Say a farmer gets \$2.00 a basket. That makes \$5.00 a box, considering it

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Barnyard Notes



(Barnyard Notes welcomes a guest columnist this week—the late William Penn Ryman, Esq.)

THE FORMATION OF DALLAS BOROUGH

As the village of McLellonsville (early name for Dallas village) grew and the wealth of its inhabitants increased, new ideas began to creep in, and some of the parents began to grow dissatisfied with the idea that their children should live and grow up without some of the advantages of modern civilization. "Tis wonderful" says, Emerson, "how soon a piano gets into a log hut on the frontier. You would think they found it under a pine stump. With it comes a Latin grammar." A piano and one or two organs, a Latin grammar and one or two of the "ologies" had found their way out to Dallas early in the sixties, about the winter of 1862-'63, but there was no one then in the township who could teach such branches, and only by sending the children away to Kingston and elsewhere, and paying their tuition in addition to regular school tax, could such instruction be had. A few were able to do this and did do it, while the common schools of the township did not get much above the curriculum of the famous "three R's."

Great efforts were made, mostly by a few who lived in and near McLellonsville, to improve this state of things and established a graded school, but a jealousy of the village folks grew up among those who lived in the remoter portions of the township, and with it a combined effort to oppose all such schemes. Schools which had been good enough for their fathers and grandfathers were good enough for them. This was an unanswerable argument to many of them, and swept away every opposition in the outside districts. Those village folks thought they must not be indulged in any such extravagant and visionary notions. A reformer who ventured to offer himself as a candidate for school director was looked upon as a common enemy by this class, who honestly believed that debt and financial ruin were the natural and certain consequences of his election, so that such candidates were almost invariably defeated, or, if by chance elected, were left in such a minority as to be powerless for good.

The typical school director was often a man who could neither read nor write. Teachers were often chosen because of the meagerness of the salary which they could be induced or forced to accept than for any other merit or qualification. A lady school teacher was one time discharged from one of the schools there. The real and well known reason was because she had the temerity to flog a son of one of the school directors. Not wishing to give the real cause for dismissing her, this school director put it on a broader ground of alleged unfitness. He defended his action as follows: "I don't profess to know much about school teaching myself," he said, "but I can sometimes spell a simple word like b-o-k book, which is a—more than she can do, if I do say it myself. Haint that so, Jim?"

Bad seemed to grow worse until this state of things became unbearable to the villagers in and about McLellonsville. All other efforts having failed, separation began to be thought of and discussed. At first it was thought that a separate school district might be cut off from the township. That plan did not seem to be best just at that time, because of the long fight and delay that might ensue if the matter were contested, as it most likely would be. They wanted immediate relief in the matter of better school accommodations and were determined to have it.

The result was the organization forthwith of the Dallas High School Association, incorporated February 16, 1878. Within a few weeks of its inception this association was fully organized and incorporated. The purchase of grounds and the commencement of the building, adjoining the site of the first log school in Dallas, where was still standing the old "red school-house", successor to the log school-house, soon followed, and the result was the handsome and commodious school building now standing on the hill south of the village (Editor's note: this is the present old frame grade school building in Dallas Borough). This building was completed in the fall of 1878, and in October of that year the first school was opened with John Fuller, Esq., late of Wilkes-Barre, now deceased, as principal. Few men could have satisfied the needs of the place at that time so well as did that genial and ever kind hearted John Fuller. Fresh from college, where he had graduated with distinction, filled with the ambition and zeal of youth, he accepted this position as a stepping-stone to the many higher things which he had a just right to believe were before him. The excellent school which he established, and the many recollections of his genial companionship and splendid manhood will long live as a silent tribute to his esteemed memory.

The following are the names of the original stockholders and incorporators of the Dallas High School Association: Leonard Machell, James Garrahan, Ira D. Shaver, William J. Honeywell, Theodore F. Ryman, John J. Ryman, Chester White, Joseph Atherholt, William Snyder, Joseph Shaver, Jacob Rice, James G. Laing, C. A. Spencer, A. Raub, George W. Kirkendall, William P. Kirkendall.

From the first opening day this school was very successful. With two or three exceptions all the children of school age in the district attended the new school, and the taxpayers asked that the taxes belonging to that district be used to support the new school. This was flatly refused, and for a long time the public money was practically thrown away in keeping open the public school within five rods of the new school, where more than ninety per cent of the pupils of (the entire township) were paying tuition in addition to the regular school tax, for the sake of getting the advantages of the best school. This wasteful spite work on the part of the township school directors could not long be tolerated, and steps were soon taken to revive the old question of a separate organization, either of a school district or of a borough. The latter plan was finally adopted. The petition map and other necessary papers were quietly prepared on the fourth day of January, 1879. They were laid before the grand inquest of the county. The application was vigorously fought on the dog in the manger principle by the outside residents of the township, especially by the school directors and supervisors, but the opposition was too late. The movement had gone too far, and had too much strength and had too good a cause to suffer defeat then. The application was approved, and the incorporation of the borough was completed April 21, 1879.

The ill feeling aroused by this struggle and final separation of the borough was carried to extreme lengths, and by some will be carried to their graves. With them it took the form of "boycotting." Some of the people who were left out in the township vowed never again to patronize a store or business within the limits of the borough. Cooperation stores were established in the township, in which a company would form, build a storehouse and stack it with the fund raised by contributions from each member. Each contributor then had the right to buy his goods at cost from the stock. Others vowed never to enter or pass through the borough limits again, and would go miles around and suffer great inconveniences for the sake of keeping good the pledge. Such was the bitterness of the animosity that grew from so simple a course. As the years roll by, and we get far enough away to see correctly and with an accurate focus, the conviction must generally come to all that it is best as it is. There will be more high schools in a few years. "Let those who have the laurels now take heed." Those boys can not be held back much longer.

FROM THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF DALLAS TOWNSHIP BY WILLIAM PENN RYMAN PUBLISHED 1901 BY—

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PAGES 101 to 105

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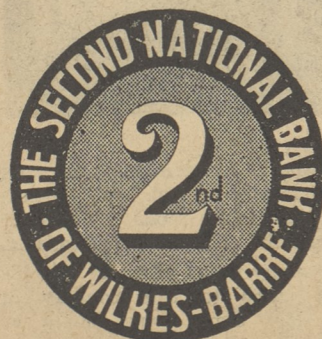
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