

# Fin, Fur and Feather

By William J. Robbins Jr.



Stream pollution can take place in a few minutes or over a period of years. It can happen in either a small or large stream. No matter the size of stream or the time involved, man is the culprit for such transformation.

There is, as authorities of waters know, a certain amount of wash from roadways, meadows, etc.; but the chance of disease by such pollution is very rare.

In a case of small stream pollution, the Bowman Creek incident can be referred to as a sound example. Here was a stream as pure as any in the State that was contaminated in minutes. For this act the offenders were apprehended and fined for such negligence, and so the case was closed. It was estimated that the fine amounted to about 10c per fish, for those that were found dead. Hundreds were not found, however, for our scavenger birds found them first.

As for large stream pollution no better example can be found anywhere in the U. S. than our own Susquehanna river.

Not more than 100 years ago the water of this stream could be used for public consumption without filter and chlorine treatment. Today the story is very different with the chance of disease contraction excellent.

Many people are still living that have as memories, the boat rides on the paddle wheelers that plied between Butzbachs landing at Nanticoke and Pittston at the north end of the run. The cool air over the river was invigorating, and many of our early valley residents looked forward to a Sunday boat ride to put them in shape for the week ahead. This era is just sixty or so years ago, about the time coal companies started to dump mine waters and other waste materials into the river channel.

My memories of a much later date are of Finch's boat house that was anchored in the river on the east bank at Northampton street. Flat boats and canoes could be rented and an enjoyable time assured. Swimming at the Wilkes-Barre City—maintained beach in Nesbitt park is also fresh in mind, and standing on the old Market street bridge and watching fisherman land Susquehanna Salmon, (not carp,) and bass that would

deserve mention in any one's annals.

Why are all these things just memories? There are several reasons. Every industry and every Hamlet, Borough, Town, or City, on or in the vicinity of the Susquehanna water shed is using this stream as a sewage disposal plant. Sulphur water eroded the caulkings of the river steamers, making maintenance too high to continue as a profitable business, so the business folded up.

Finch was compelled to close his Boat House, for in reconditioning his boats each year he found a greater amount of solidified human waste that had to be scraped from the keels. The Board of Health closed the swimming beach because of epidemics. There were several typhoid cases, but luckily for the community, milder diseases predominated. No Susquehanna salmon or bass. They cannot survive in sulphur water, and if one happens to get out of its habitat and is caught, the flavor is gone, or to be more explicit, it tastes and smells like sewer gas.

Are filter and sewage disposal plants the remedial measure for this condition? The answer is, partly. If such a program were completed within the next three to five years, I'm doubtful if fishing in the river at Wilkes-Barre would reach the level of fifty or seventy-five years ago.

Many factors are involved. The spray programs on field and woodland such as the one that drove fish into migration down our river a few years ago would have to be carried out by well planned spot spray methods. Ichthyologists would like us to believe that this migration was caused by the lack of oxygen in the water, but they forget to mention that most fish that participated were in their adult stage, and reached this age in waters from whence they came. The change of temperature and mineral contents of water, caused by quick drainage from improperly tilled lands are two more factors to be reckoned with. Rural residents can reduce these conditions. Survey and restocking would also enter the picture, and if this work progressed with the same speed as the Harvey Lake survey, I'm doubtful.

(Continued on Page Seven)

## Poet's Corner

Transition

(In Memoriam to Ethel Still Ritts)  
How sweet can be transition  
From this, our earthly sphere  
Unto that fairer land, so free  
From pain and anguished tear.  
How sweet to stand in glory clothed  
Before our Father's throne  
And know the joyous welcome there,  
On reaching safely home.

How sweet can be the glad release  
As from a tired form,  
He lifts at last, the heavy cross,  
So long and bravely born.  
How sweet to feel His healing hand  
Upon a tired brow  
And know the great Physician  
Is taking over now.

How sweet then is transition  
From this, our earthly sphere  
To where is naught of sorrow,  
Nor pain, nor care, nor fear.  
How sweet can be transition,  
How good at close of day  
To find the Master waiting,  
At end of weary way.

by

Mrs. Fredric Anderson  
October 15, 1951.

## Toll Gate Lions Make Progress With Scrap

J. Lear Wagner, chairman of the Triple Scrap Drive, Old Toll Gate Lions Club, reports great progress and support for the project.

Scrap metal, tires, old batteries, etc. are being stored in Bert Smith's barn, in Trucksville.

Atty. Herman Cardoni, former assistant district attorney, and a student of the life of Christopher Columbus, will speak at the regular meeting Tuesday evening, 6:30 at Colonial Inn. Atty. Cardoni is an authority on the life of Christopher Columbus and his address promises to be exceptionally interesting.

Old Toll Gate Lions Club is also completing arrangements for the Turkey Party in Shavertown Hose House November 15. Robert Williams is chairman of the committee.

## Guest Speaker

Rev. William Williams, rector Prince of Peace Church, will be the speaker Monday night before St. David's Society at Wilkes-Barre. Y. M. C. A. Donald Evans, vice president, will preside.

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## ONLY YESTERDAY

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

From The Issue of October 17, 1941

Chief Warden Charles Stookey is pleased with success of the black-out Friday night, 99.99% successful. Only six violations were noted for the entire Back Mountain. Signals went through rapidly and were obeyed.

B. Frank Bulford, only surviving signer of Dallas Borough charter, will celebrate his 86th birthday on Monday with an open house.

Jackie Yapple, four-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. John Yapple, Goss Manor, has infantile paralysis, but is getting along well. This is the first case for two years, since the son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Weidner was stricken.

Dr. G. K. Swartz is leaving his Dallas practice to enter public health service in Washington, D. C. Herbert Lundy, defeated in the Republican primaries, will run on the democratic ticket against Wilson Ryman for tax collector of Dallas Township.

Round steak, 29 c per lb; lettuce, two heads 15c; skinless Franks, 25c per lb; tub butter, 2 lbs 75c; combination storm and screen door with bronze screen, \$6.98; eight pound capacity washing machine, \$49.95.

Nancy Hagney, Kansas, and Charles Mattingly, Dallas, were married Thursday evening in Wichita.

Florence Miller, Dallas, will wed John Gaughan, Jr., Wilkes-Barre, today at noon. Charlotte Cease, Trucksville, became the bride of Dr. Hamilton Young, Plymouth, Tuesday evening. Amanda J. Johnson, 84, died at Beaumont Sunday morning. It was her parents who cleared the land where the Sterling Farm is now situated. She was born in a log cabin near Harveys Lake before the Civil War.

Fifteen boys won the Green-Hand degree at Dallas Township school Friday evening.

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## YOU KNOW ME

BY Al, Himself

This baby never cries. Her mother, as a baby, never cried either. We had five kids, we still have, but they are not kids now. Well, one time when we had a long week-end we took a trip to Atlantic City when the mother of this baby that never cries was only six months old. We called in a friend to take care of the elder four kids, and with our wife started off with the mother of the baby that never cries.

On reaching our hotel room we pulled out a bureau drawer and our wife made a comfortable crib with some pillows and stuff and placed our youngest child in it. We asked the woman in charge of the floor to watch her while we took a stroll on the boardwalk.

We paid her a dollar, a large tip in those days. She didn't want to pass this up, but she was very much alarmed.

"What will I do," she exclaimed, "If the baby cries?" "Don't worry," we assured her, "She never cries. She'll just lie there counting her fingers. All you have to do is get her out of here in case of fire."

So we took our stroll and came back in an hour and there she was, wide awake as we had left her, cooing away and counting her fingers.

She grew up, married and had a baby. It is this baby that never cries. When it was three months old and never cried, her parents were worried that she could not see, then as the baby grew older they were alarmed that she could not hear.

"Why all this worrying?" we asked.

"Well, she never cries," answered her mother.

We assured her that everything was alright. Her only fault was that she took after her mother in never crying. We were right. The baby is five months old now and she can see and she can hear but she never cries.

That is, hardly ever. Last week we were invited to her christening. We hadn't seen her in eight weeks, but there she was, awake, cooing and counting her fingers. This was going to be the grandest baby ever christened.

She awoke as usual Sunday morning, talking to herself, waiting for her mother to prepare the bath. She was bathed, fed and dressed, laughing away with not a care. We were going to be proud of this grandchild!

She was brought through the ante room door and smiled at the whole congregation. Our wife had to place a restraining hand on our arm to stop us from getting up right there and announcing to all, "This is our grandchild!"

The first hymn was started. This baby lifted up her head, took one alarmed look around and let out a yell that told all that this was not the sort of thing she expected. She never stopped. They took her out to the ante room and all during the service we could hear that baby. She was christened somehow, but never stopped protesting. The minister tried to console us by stating that she would undoubtedly be an excellent help to the choir when she grows up.

That isn't all. We saw a beautiful leg of lamb go into the oven in the morning and on reaching the table fall apart, so the mother of this baby that never cries, cried.

Then it started to rain. Did we say rain? It just poured. We were drenched packing our grips in the car for an early start from New (Continued on Page Seven)

## Barnyard Notes

I am about to start this column with Hank Peterson's tale about the "Yankee Clipper" when the dreadnaught enters with tears in her eyes.

The shades of night is falling fast and I am four days late with the Notes. But it makes no difference that my conscience is puckered up like a month's old lemon!

"What?" says she, "are you sitting there for at the typewriter when Blaze and Rogue have run away all day. Maybe they're killed on the highway. I wish I could be so phlegmatic!" Which is her way of saying, "Why don't you do something?"

And then we are off to the races, Notes or no Notes, like a couple of bloodhounds on a new scent; but a good bloodhound stays on the scent and don't trail off after no bitches.

I am convinced that Rogue will come home in due course; but the thoroughbred Blaze, an Irish Setter at that, may take some finding and I say as much.

Off and on for fifty years I have lived with dogs, long before the dreadnaught and I tied up in the same harbor. I have slept with dogs, doctored them, petted them, loved them, and shared my food with them; lost, found, buried them; but of all I ever see, there is no doubt, the smartest is a mongrel. I have owned two of them, Tyke, now departed, and Rogue, who I don't own but who adopted me. I am sure Houdini will come home—but Blaze is another story.

We are off to the kitchen for a Bologna sandwich before starting the search when Hallowe'en vandals throw apples on the porch and one shatters the glass in the yard lamp. I am out to the barn in a hurry for the car and the spotlight to find them, and it is whilst I am cruising slowly, spotting the bushes and brushes on Norton Avenue where they ran, that I hear a great yapping very much like Blaze.

I return to the house and there find the dreadnaught torn between canine affection and an injured property owner's lust for vengeance. But we take up the first scent again and start out looking for dogs. Not, however, before I take up the message vine and inquire of Charlie Heminway, Fred Dodson, Clint Ide and Fred Broken-shire if they have seen a beautiful Irish Setter and a plain black and white dog with a black patch on his eye, which is Rogue. They are no help.

On the way to the car there is young Davy Estus waiting on the sidewalk. He always turns up at such times to report nature's doings, a grey squirrel killed, a flock of wild geese, a robin out of its nest or a gartersnake in the strawberry barrel. He is ready for action and hops in the back seat.

We cruise hither and yon, listening yon and hither for the plaintive yelp of a bitch Irish Setter, an insistent yelp which grates on your nerves and the neighbor's when she is confined to her yard but which is very helpful on this moonlit evening when she is lost.

On Machell avenue we can hear it coming from the direction of the high school. But on Franklin street, with the motor off and the lights out, we can't hear because of traffic on the lower road, and when the traffic ceases, someone is talking; so my patience is worn thin as the seat of my gaberdesines. But the dreadnaught is cool and collected and gets in some nice punches in the infighting.

Then above the over rated quiet of a Dallas evening, we hear more yelping from the hillside back of Carrie Capron's house, and jumping to a quick conclusion, Davy says, "That's Bill Jeter's dog."

I am now sure it is Blaze trapped behind the Newberry Estate's guarding fence and says as much, but I am overruled in the Council of War that follows and although I have now driven to the main entrance on Pioneer Avenue am forced by youthful enthusiasm and women's intuition to turn around and drive up to Bill Jeter's place, where the short-haired pointers are having their meeting.

We can see by the empty pen, that it is not Bill Jeter's dog that is breaking the evening calm and that is one barrier swept away from my conviction that it is Rogue and the bitch setter that is somewhere on the Newberry property.

Davy knows the countryside well, even after dark, he and young Murray Scureman having played cowboys and Indians all over that end of Dallas. So leaving the dreadnaught to save her nylons in the car, we take off into the underbrush and are soon up against southwestern end of the Newberry fence. And we are no sooner at the fence than Davy jumps back four feet as a cub bear tears out of darkness, so he thinks. But it is no cub bear. It is Blaze on the other side of the eight-foot fence and with barbed wire at the top there is no way to get her over. Rogue is not with her. She has no collar, is very nervous and no doubt thirsty, and it is two miles around to reach the entrance. So the dreadnaught comes down from the car to stand by Blaze and hold her attention, whilst Davy and I drive back to Pioneer Avenue and into the Newberry Preserve.

There is nobody home at Bill Higgins and nobody in the big house though the lights is on and we are trespassers. But we are sure neither is hankering for the company of a lost Irish setter and a black and white dog with a black spot over his eye. Which is very sensible. So Davy and I take off in the Dodge and follow the blazed trail around the inside of the fence, through ferns and rhododendrons, over brush, bushes and rocks. It is very large this Newberry Estate and the rabbits sound like mountain lions in the dry oak leaves even in bright moonlight. Then we find a place where the road that skirts the inside of the fence is only for antelope and Davy and I leave the Dodge marooned on top of a rock and walk through the forbidding woods in the direction of Parrish Heights and Bill Jeter's back yard. And there we find Blaze on our side of the fence and the dreadnaught on the other standing ankle deep in the stuff that makes roses grow redder. We are mauled with affection by Blaze. The dreadnaught said there is no need for us to drive around and pick her up; she will take a shortcut home. So the three of us, Davy, Blaze and I start back along the fence for the car.

And there would be no more to this story, but when we get home and are taking Blaze to her kennel, who should greet us but Granny. "I have fed Rogue, he has gone to bed for the night; and here's some food you can give to Blaze." "Hell," says I, "a thoroughbred that can't get over a nine foot fence and find her way home is too darn dumb to eat!"—and you know, I think I saw Rogue wink that eye that's hidden by the black spot.

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