

from-

Pillar To Post....

by hix

They swamped the counters at the Dallas Post, small gourds, big gourds, middle-sized gourds, gourds with crooked necks, gourds with warts, gourds with stripes, gourds big enough to make a nest for a wren, gourds small enough to wear as a thimble when hollowed out.

The door opened again, and more gourds appeared, stacked high on a large tray.

Rain sluiced down outside, and another tray of gourds edged its cautious way through the door.

"We've got some more gourds in the car, but these are a good sample," announced Lois London and her mother, Mrs. Heitsman, in chorus.

"What makes them so shiny?" somebody inquired.

Lois explained. The crop had been phenomenal, 450 bushels of gourds, harvested and delivered to the house in baskets, in addition to gourds of lesser quality left in the fields.

To preserve the gourds, a coating of shellac or varnish is essential, to seal the pores. There must be at least a million sealed pores resisting moisture around the house in Center Moreland.

Those ornamental gourds bear no resemblance whatever to the nondescript specimens offered for sale in the town stores.

They're the most fascinating little objects you ever saw, each one different from every other gourd, each one shining like a new-minted coin.

The staff gathered round and selected gourds. It was impossible to decide upon six or seven, or even a dozen. Each time the contents of the trays was stirred up, another superior specimen of gourds appeared, and the process of elimination started all over again.

Goodness knows what you do with a gourd. You can't eat it. Maybe a bird would have the ultimate answer, combining food with housing, pecking its way into the interior and gorging itself as it excavated.

A gourd dipper, they say, gives a pioneer atmosphere to a water bucket.

But other than that, why is a gourd?

A wooden bowl filled with gourds would make a pretty colorful centerpiece for a holiday table. Maybe they should be combined with polished apples, accented with bitter-sweet and milkweed pods. The possibilities are unlimited.

Mrs. Wilbur Davis sorted out two dozen gourds. Leighton bought a dozen, and started to decorate the mantelpiece. Hix, in a daze, bought a dozen.

"Sandy, how about you? Want to buy some gourds?"

Sandy shook her head.

"Uh-uh," Sandy, said, "last year we had some gourds and we threw them out after awhile, and all the seeds sprouted. We've got gourds to burn."

That's the classic way of insuring a crop of hubbard squash, they tell me. Just heave out the seeds and let them freeze on the ground all winter. In the spring, presto, the seeds sprout, and come September you are pressing Hubbard squash upon your neighbors.

The demand for Hubbard squash is not what it used to be. But take it from one who knows, it makes a pumpkin pie that is completely unequalled.

How on earth did we get away from the gourds?

Here they are, in a box on the chair alongside my desk, green and yellow, one almost black, one crookneck the color of a white ironstone pitcher, one squat little job striped like a miniature watermelon, one modelling cream colored splashes on a forest-green ground, one green as far up as the waterline and a blazing yellow on the superstructure, with a tiny green cap to top it off.

The Londons and the Heitsmans are in shellac up to their elbows, readying the crop for market, 450 bushels of it, minus the gourds which found purchasers at the Dallas Post.

Better Leighton Never

by Leighton Scott

Leaf-Watchers

This may be the last good weekend for leaf-watchers. I will recommend some routes upon which the watching will be the best.

Over the Poconos by Routes 115 or 611 should be good, if you happen to be going south.

Route 118 to Williamsport is always a favorite, and there is a terrific view from the mountain about three miles east of Hughesville.

The Williamsport route is the favorite of Howard Risley, a famous Back Mountain leaf-watcher. But he drives faster'n I do. I like a slow, windy route.

To insure ourselves against missing any of the best colors in the flaming foliage, me 'n a friend picked out a circuit close to home last weekend, grabbed some binoculars, and toured it by motorcycle.

Bundled against the cold we chugged off toward Centerville from Orange, pursued by every cycle-hating collie in Franklin Township. After we hit Route 292 to Vernon, we slowed down so we could see. The rambling hills along both sides of the highway were aflame with red and yellow. Most of the trees had turned, and now and again there was one striking scarlet picture which would bring us to a halt.

Across from Eggleston's cider mill, we stopped and tried out the binoculars on the valleys around us. I took off my glasses, and the colors looked brighter, but with no definition, like an impressionist's painting. The apple trees were still green by the mill.

Bowman's Creek was swollen from several days of steady rain, and lines of leaves sailed end to end down the quiet flood under the bridge on 292.

The next section of the trip was following Bowman's upstream to Noxen, where I knew the stream would be jumping. It really looked like October up there, with the painted boughs hanging over some fine stretches of choppy Alpine water. The water was in a real hurry to get to the river too, because all that rain had left quite a supply back up in the mountain.

The sun came up for about five minutes and set the leaves aflame behind the white water. When it went down, it got plenty cold, and we moved on toward Harveys Lake by way of the regular road. An alternate route would be up over Sorber Mountain; recommended.

The next good scene in our circular jaunt was the Kunkle-Demunds Road, especially where the branches arch over it by Lake Catalpa. Beautiful as they are now, they'll be a real threat when iced up during the winter.

We were cold and tired when we finished, but we had done as fine a leaf-watching trip as can be picked out of the Back Mountain.

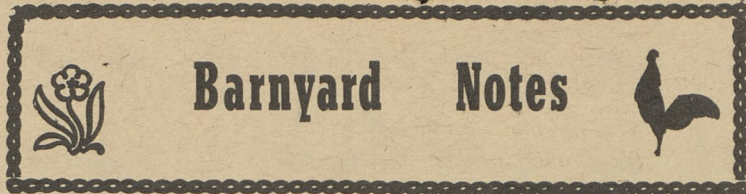
And those colors don't last forever, so get with it.

"Those who do not remember the past deserve no future", says an inscription on Cape Cod. Families whose ancestors attended this school and neighbors should honor themselves in restoring this house, now an advertisement of our neglect and carelessness.

I attended such a school four months a year in the South, carrying lunch in a tin pail, walking a mile-and-half, using make-shift books; and learning the facts and events of life in discomfort. Two excellent teachers opened new worlds to me: I owe them gratitude and love; and I am proud to have gone to a one-room country school with fine neighbors.

Also a thought on naming country roads: travellers in the country are presumed by country people to know where they are and where they want to go. But signs help guide. Why not name our Back Mountain roads distinctly, picturesquely maybe, but definitely. Our road might be called "Mountain Grange Boulevard". "School House Lane" would designate the road on which our old school stands. I like "42nd Street". There are other terms besides lovers' lane.

— Ralph Weatherly



Barnyard Notes



Tender hearted persons who cringe when they toss a live lobster in a pot of boiling water will be interested in a bit of information which Winifred Baird of Harveys Lake R. D. 1 requests me to publish in this column.

Kind to Lobsters

"The human is the most compassionate animal on earth with the possible exception of some tame, lovable pet . . . The rest of the earth's creatures kill or maim, eat each other without a qualm . . .

"As New Englanders, we love to dine on lobsters, crabs and clams. Our common habit is to bring a pot to a rolling boil and toss them in . . . We excuse ourselves by the thought that they are among the lower forms of life—but, they do feel pain, obviously.

"This pain is crustaceans . . . is all needless, according to authorities!

"They point out that the large crustaceans, who inhabit our cooler sea waters, die quietly, peacefully and automatically if the temperature of the water should rise slowly to about 100 degrees—a temperature that is only warm to human hands . . .

"So, the recommended method is to put these creatures into cool, fresh water and let them stay there for a while. This, itself has an anesthetic effort, since the fresh water dissolves the native salt from their bodies. Then turn the heat on and bring the water to a slow boil and then cook to the recommended time.

"According to authorities, there won't be a quivering sound come from the pot. As an added touch, they recommend that a metal mesh be put at the bottom of the pot, so that the feet of the lobsters or crabs cannot touch the sudden, quick heat on the bottom of the pot . . .

"Here's to more, humanely home-cooked crustaceans.

—Arlington [Mass.] Advocate."

Frank X. Tolbert, columnist of the Dallas Morning News of Dallas, Texas, recently had this to say of a "visit to Yankees' Version of Dallas" in his column Tolbert's Texas:

WHILE IN PENNSYLVANIA last week, I visited in Dallas. This would be a borough (also a township), mostly residential, inhabited by about 2,600 Dallasites on a cool hill top in northeastern Pennsylvania and 9 or 10 miles from Wilkes-Barre. The Yankee version of Dallas was named in honor of the U. S. Secretary of the Treasury in 1814-16, Alexander James Dallas, a tight-fisted type who took over when the treasury was rather empty and left a \$20,000,000 surplus. Alexander James Dallas was the papa of George Mifflin Dallas, who was elected Vice-President in 1844 and may or may not be the fellow for whom Dallas, Texas, was christened. (John Neely Bryan, the founder of the Dallas between Forney and Grand Prairie, left a haunting mystery here by commenting only: "I named this town for my friend, Dallas.")

THOMAS MORGAN, THE MAYOR of Dallas, Pa., was off on vacation in Boston when I wheeled through Little D. However, I spoke with the borough engineer, John Jeter, who said that the Pennsylvania Dallasites were under the impression that Dallas, Texas, was titled for Alexander James Dallas. "My daughter, Deborah, is an American Airlines stewardess and sometimes stops off in your Dallas," mentioned Mr. Jeter.

The clipping was sent to Barnyard Notes by Mrs. George F. Swartwood of Overbrook Avenue. Her daughter, Priscilla, now Mrs. Dalton Drake, was born in Wilkes-Barre, graduated from Meyers High School and Wilkes College, and now lives with her husband and daughter, Susan Louise, in Baytown, Texas.

Recently they toured Arizona, New Mexico and Texas and made their first overnight stop in the Lone Star State's Dallas.

"Imagine our surprise," she wrote her mother, "when we opened the paper at breakfast and found this article. I am sure you will enjoy it as much as we did."

— Pris, Dal and Susie

Safety Valve...

USE OF CHARCOAL

Dear Editor:

Only yesterday I read the following article, which may be worth putting in your paper, since reading in today's Post about Drake's fire.

— Ruth, Dungey

Warning on use and storage of charcoal, the writer says (from Modern Maturity magazine)

I must warn you that using charcoal to draw moisture and reduce mustiness and mold renders the charcoal itself dangerous in that it becomes subject to spontaneous combustion when damp. This has been confirmed by my county fire marshal and firemen, by Consumer's Guide, by the University of Washington, and by warning bulletins published in various localities. Charcoal should be kept in a fireproof container or in a dry, cool, well ventilated place. This fact about charcoal may seem strange, but it's true, and I feel it important that people know it.

WHY NOT SAVE OLD SCHOOL HOUSE?

Dear Editor:

On an unmarked road running from Memorial Shrine northeast towards the Sutton Creek road stands forlornly in dejected loneliness a school house that is historic, ancient in years and probably rich in memories.

If it were painted and renovated and its surrounding ground beautified Franklin Township would have a sort of shrine. But Franklin is a poor township, and we are more concerned with building roads than in sentimental remembrance.

Here is an opportunity for those really interested in local history to do something constructive. It is easy to go to Williamsburg and see the reconstruction of dubious colonial society houses there; it would indicate better evaluation if we cared for our own relics of brave pioneerw, remembering their efforts to establish civilization here and there hardships endured with courage and vision.



Autumn

Now when the time of fruit and grain has come,
When apples hang above the orchard wall,
And from a tangle by the roadside stream
A scent of wild grapes fills the racy air,
Comes Autumn with her sunburst caravan,
Like a long gypsy train with trappings gay
And tattered colors of the Orient,
Moving slow-footed through the dreamy hills,
The woods of Wilton, and her coming, wear
Tints of Bokahra and of Samarkand:
The maples glow with their Pompeian red,
The hickories with burnt Etruscan gold;
And while the crickets fife along her march,
Behind her banners burns the crimson sun.

