

I. HISTORICAL SKETCH OF RURAL FIELD SPORTS IN LANCASTER COUNTY

By Herbert H. Beck

A consideration of the purposes and value of history requires that the historian be properly qualified as a witness before the bar of posterity. In cases such as the one at hand this qualification should reach the point of showing not only that the writer be in close and accurate touch with the past but that he have a technical knowledge of his subject.

Before such examination the writer modestly presumes to eligibility. He believes that while this sketch might have been written by men whose memories reach farther back than his own by thirty or forty years, it could have been done by none of this generation perhaps whose interest in the field sports of Lancaster County has been keener nor whose experience has been more widely ranged than his over the various phases of the subject. From a boyhood in which the writings of Frank Forrester had their quick appeal and the sportsmen of his village took on a heroism he has found his keenest recreation afield. Following an ancient instinct which, though it may have softened, has not turned with years he has entered enthusiastically at one time or another into all of the sportsmanly kinds of local hunting. He has splashed through the tussock swamps of many townships hunting snipe on the spring migration; he has been in parties of woodcock shooters in the days prior to 1904 when July cock-shooting was the accepted mid-summer sport; he has spent scores of August afternoons in the up-country farmlands in pursuit of the gamey upland plover; from early boyhood with a single-barreled muzzle-loader he has shot the September shore birds; he has hunted rail and reedbirds when few else did; he has bagged scores of quail about their farmland covers and a few ruffed grouse in Martic and Elizabeth townships; he has felt the pulsations of the "bushwhack" ride after the canvasbacks have darted to the decoys; and often, before the winter sunrise, he has been in the saddle to catch the happiness of the hounds as the pack burst rioting to freedom for the fox-hunt.

The rural sports of a region are seldom considered of historic interest until all of the unrecorded knowledge of them has been lost. The writer believes they should be given the attention of the historian while their facts are still fresh and before the gale of new pleasures has swept away all of the atmosphere in which they flourished. The insurance of this point involves certain events which are comparatively recent and includes certain persons still comparatively young. These measures—somewhat unconventional in the compilation of history—the writer feels justified in taking. Furthermore he is fully assured in the worthiness of his subject. The composite mind of Lancaster County is rooted quite as deeply in the recreations and sports as in the more serious pursuits of earlier generations of its people. In recording the facts of immigrant settlement and in recounting the history of religion, education, industry, society and politics this fact is too frequently lost sight of.

Then, too, the subject at hand is intimately connected with a lost or passing fauna. This alone gives it place in historical literature; for in the early economy of the region its native game animals and birds played a prominent part.

The broad scope of this historical sketch—and in its fragmentary character it can be nothing more than a sketch—is rural field sports in their accepted sense. It cannot therefore—except in a passing, introductory way

—include field games; even though in the light of their subsequent developments some of these are interesting and, to an outdoor people such as we have become, quite important. There for instance were the embryonic stages of America's national game as played among the youths of the Lititz Academy in the eighteen thirties, when in making his way around the bases—laid out essentially as now—it was the part of the runner to dodge the ball, a sturdy product of the village saddlery, instead of beating it to the corner. Nor can there be more than a passing glance at horse racing—though glimpses through the vistas of time reveal it as a prime diversion of the local mind. The straight-away quarter-mile dashes usually with some rough and ready Rutters, Skiles and Dillers up and with some local champion like Blue Bonnet, running past the cheering fences tell of something which quickened the pulse of Leacock Township in the eighteen sixties and seventies and which in those years was a relic of a much earlier sporting spirit. Local interest in the development of that distinctly American product, the light harness race-horse, centers about the trim figure of Lizzie Keller, the first great county-bred trotter, drawing a high wheeled sulky about 1880 in 2:31; and even more impressively about Paragon by Storm King of the Englewood Stockfarm, of Marietta. For Paragon enjoys the unique distinction of being the only world's champion Lancaster County has ever produced in any field of competitive sport. Driven by James Swain, of Lancaster, at Chicago in 1892, by putting together three heats below 2:14, he established a new record for four-year-old trotters.

And with these passing memories there comes the picture of the Whitmonday races at Rothville, a local institution typical of others of its period and earlier, which was destined to die with the statutory reclamation of society's swamplands; for the Rothville races, like bullrushes picturesque in their coarseness, could flourish only in wet places. This great Pfingst Montag gathering of the county folks with its dust and din, its beer and banter, its ferdomsei and fights, perhaps better than any annual event since Battalion Day of the eighteen forties, with its whiskey at three cents a glass, reflected the rougher fibre and the rural holiday color of the Palatine-Swizz mind in its local Americanization process.

Man by original calling was either a farmer or a hunter. Field sports are simply an evolution of the primitive necessity of getting meat. The impulse to catch and kill, accumulated through hundreds of thousands of years, has lived strongly on and taken many remote recreational phases long after the immediate need of food getting has been eliminated by the devices of civilization. The rural field sports of Lancaster County, no exception to the general rule, fade imperceptibly into a period two centuries ago when game helped in the pioneer struggle for existence.

Rooted as it is in provender the subject of our sketch is properly opened with an extract from a letter of the great proprietor to the Society of Traders of London in 1683. Thus glowingly does Penn recount the game of his Sylvania: "Of living creatures, fish, fowl and the beast of the woods, here, are divers sorts, some for food and profit, and some for profit only; for food and profit, the elk, as big as a small ox; deer, bigger than ours; beaver, raccoon, rabbits, squirrels and some eat young bear and commend it; of fowl of the land there is the turkey, (forty and fifty pounds weight) which is very great; pheasants, heath-birds and partridges in abundance, etc."

It would be interesting to have had Penn's description of the bison had he but known more about the western part of his great tract. In any event the bison was never more than a straggler in the Lancaster County region. When the white man came here the animal was probably locally extinct.

The wapiti or elk at times probably must have provided a welcome addition to the larder of our first settlers; as possibly when severe winters drove it southward from its favorite eastern ranges on the Pocono plateau. The nearest evidences of the animal—part of a femur and several foot bones—

identified by Professor E. D. Cope, were found on an Indian village site in what is now York County. They were the remnants of a feast of comparatively recent times

The beaver was probably the chief attraction that brought Peter Bezalio to the region, though even when the first French traders came here beaver pelts were most probably becoming scarce locally; for this valuable fur had been a leading article of barter and trade with the Indians for many years earlier and as the animals were easily caught they were soon exterminated. Beaver Creek and Beaver Meadow (now the Big Swamp) in Clay Township are doubtless names reminiscent of a very early period, for it is unlikely that any of the animals existed in the county even as early as 1730.

The "heath-bird" of Penn's letter is the heath-hen or eastern variety of the prairie-chicken, which today is reduced to a remnant of a few hundred birds on Martha's Vineyard Island. Conjecturally this fowl lived on the serpentine barrens of Fulton, Little Britain and West Nottingham Townships, which were the only botanically open parts of the region in its primitive state. Heath-Hens—probably in the early Eighteenth Century not very wild and therefore a good investment for the valuable powder and shot which would scarcely have been risked on a bird awing—in all likelihood constituted important game for the early settlers.

In the Furnace Hills of Elizabeth and Clay Townships there persists a set of picturesque Pennsylvania German names worthy of historical record; for they come from a very early period and they are destined to pass away, perhaps within a generation. Even to-day they are used by only a few fox-hunters and woodsmen. There is the Awdlerkop (Eagle Head), the Kessel (or Kettle, a high-walled basin in the hills), the Geierthal (Vulture Valley), the Weisaichle Barrich (White Oak Hill) the Biwi Felsa (Pee Wee Rocks), the Felsa Barrich (Rock Mountain), the Deichly Barrich (Mountain with small ravines), and reminiscent of Stiegel and his signal gun on the mountain top above his old furnace—the Shtick Barrich (from the German Stück, a piece of artillery). Among these is valley germane to our subject for its beautiful name—the Hirsch Thal—recalls a day when this picturesque region was the natural range of the deer. Could the great boulders of the Furnace Hills but tell us something of the thrilling deer-hunts they have witnessed! A pair of antlers now weathering under the eaves of a Hammer Creek farmhouse—marked Christian Eby, 1754 and traditionally from a deer killed on the farm during that year suggests that the animal was then sufficiently rare to attract more than passing notice. Of earlier record there is none available though without doubt venison was one of the staple foods of those who broke the primeval forest here. As a straggler the deer has continued on. Doughty's Cabinet of Natural History (1831) notes that "A fine deer was run down recently in the Borough of Columbia, Lancaster County. It is supposed that it was driven in by some neighboring dogs and when taken was much exhausted." In the winter of 1885 a buck was killed on Mount Jackson Island at Benton by Stephen Whittaker, of Peach Bottom and John Hawk, of Fairfield; and since that year stragglers into the county from state game lands have at various times been run by the foxhounds packs of the county. Even in 1923 a deer is reliably reported in Conoy Township.

Of the early bear-hunts of the county there is scant record. Doubtless many a well-tamed locality of the present has hidden in its past a bear story that would be worth presenting; but even the traditions of these hunts, as they must have been retold about the old grist mills and taverns, are no longer available. An entry in the diary of the Lititz Moravian Congregation dated October 14, 1766, is the only one immediately at hand. "Last night, it being moonlight" Pastor Bernhard Grube writes "A large bear came into the Brethren House yard; but the brethren became aware of his presence too late. They followed him through Lititz but could not get him." That

bears were not uncommon during this period, even in those parts of the county that were then quite extensively under cultivation, is shown by this record and by one from the same source a few years earlier that tells of the failure of the children to come to the Congregation School from the farms nearby because of rumors of bears in the woods adjoining the village. As a local species, however, the black bear probably became extinct before or very shortly after 1800.

The wild turkey passed out, after serving as a game-bird par excellence, about seventy years ago. The River Hills and Islands were famous turkey grounds. William Coleman of Peach Bottom, born in 1838, well remembers turkeys in fair numbers, particularly about Big Island, off Haines Station. In the bird's last range, the Furnace Hills, a ravine—the Welsh Hahne Deich—is named for him. It is passed on from the hunters of the last generation that several flocks were regularly to be found in this part of Elizabeth Township. The Turkey Hills of Manor and Caernarvon Townships also tell their stories. Stragglers, after the general disappearance, have been even rarer than deer. During the winter of 1894 three wild turkeys were discovered in the Black Swamp, a tract of rough land which runs southwest from Elizabethtown to the river, opposite York Haven. These birds, which are supposed to have crossed the Susquehanna during cold weather, were decoyed and trapped. One of them, a magnificent gobbler approaching Penn's ideal proportions, was mounted and is now in the collection of the late Dr. A. C. Treichler at Elizabethtown. The other two escaped and were shot in the same region about 1895.

the local story of the wild or passenger pigeon is as interesting as it is tragic, for it records to a date more recent than any elsewhere reported the progressive extermination of the most picturesque figure of American bird life.

In the Eighteenth Century pigeons came through the county in flocks so vast that flying closely they would easily have blanketed the whole region, from Conoy to Caernarvon, from West Cocalico to Fulton. To the early settlers they were the manna from God. One charge of shot would furnish a repast for a big family, trapping was not difficult, and conjecturally there was a squab time—for most probably the enormous breeding colonies, which in the early Nineteenth Century covered many square miles of the northern tier counties, in earlier years reached into this region.

An entry in the Archives of the Lititz Moravian Congregation hands down the first local picture of this noble bird. "March 26, 1780. At the Sunrise Service of Easter" writer Grube, "the brightness of the lovely morning was suddenly eclipsed by the passing overhead of countless multitudes of wild pigeons flying with their wonted swiftness from south to north."

The last great flight of pigeons over the county has been accurately reported by two capable observers. The one, the late Dr. M. W. Raub, was a boy of ten at the time and lived in Strasburg Township. The other, Abraham R. Beck, then twelve, saw the same flight at Lititz. He tells of the event in the following account, written in 1907.

"In the spring—March or April—of 1846 a vast migration of wild pigeons, reminding one of those described by Audubon as common in his day and the only instance of that magnitude that I have ever known, passed over Lititz, flying from south to north. It was on a Saturday afternoon. I had taken up my box of water colors for pastime, when one of my companions—Dick Tschudy, chum of my heart—rushed into the room breathlessly announcing the wonderful flight; and then we ran as fast as legs could carry to the road fronting my father's school playground (in the vicinity of the S. W. corner of Cedar and E. Orange Streets) which has the best locality affording open observation. The dense mass of pigeons extended from overhead seemingly—beheld in the prospective—to the eastern horizon, and as far north and south as the eye could reach; and was continuous from about

12:30 to 4:30 P. M. The day as I remember it was blustery and clouded; had it not been for the latter condition the birds must have cast a distinct shadow upon the landscape, so closely were they massed. Of those who went gunning for them I recollect only James H. Mitsch, who took his stand on the Lancaster road (where is now our house) and bagged some ten or twelve. Their crops, upon dissection, were found to contain undigested rice. One mighty detachment of the main flock settled upon the orchard of the farm which, later, we knew as Johnson Miller's, breaking off, with their piled up weight, thick limbs of the apple trees; and another great division whirled down upon Pine Hill, where, roosting in the woods that night, many of the birds were captured. Perhaps the main flock flew to roost as far north as the Furnace Hills, occupying most of the woodland between that locality and Pine Hill."

In the eighteen seventies wild pigeons, though reduced in numbers, were still so plentiful that an observer in Penn Square, watching a strung-out flock aligned above King Street, could not see the end of the passing pigeons in either direction. During this decade they still entered largely in the sporting program of late August, September and October and they were still locally trapped with stool pigeon and spring-net.

About 1880 the species seems to have taken a sharp decline. The only passenger pigeons the writer ever saw were in late August, 1888, when as a thirteen-year-old boy he saw a flock of about one hundred and fifty on the farm of the late Chauncey F. Black, near York. This year marked a general reappearance of the greatly shrunken flocks. A few were killed near Lititz and elsewhere.

Probably the last wild pigeon shot in Lancaster county fell to the gun of William Ream, shooting doves along Mill Creek, in September, 1891. The bird, in juvenal plumage, is in the M. W. Raub collection.

In September, 1910, there seems to have been a reappearance in Lancaster County of the last poor remnant. It is the latest record, so far as the writer has been able to ascertain, in North America and as such is of outstanding interest to the Ornithologists of the country. As to the reliability of the observation no doubt remains in the writer's mind. The fact of it is thrown into clear focus by converging evidence from four independent witnesses, each of whom was perfectly familiar with wild pigeons; and in each case reported the birds were seen about localities that were famous roosts and ranges during former years. Jacob Frey saw a small company at Turkey Hill; W. Frank Gorrecht, fishing in the Susquehanna Broad off Washington Boro, saw seven flying within fifty yards of his boat; a similar flock was seen in a grove near Wenger's Mill, at Brownstown; and Jacob Fry of Frysville, saw five about their former favorite feeding grounds along the Muddy Creek.

The Susquehanna in Lancaster County, for about one hundred and seventy-five years after the first white man entered the region, was perhaps the most famous ducking ground of Penn's domain. Before the culm came down from the coal mines to cover and exterminate the wild celery and other aquatic plants on which wild fowl live, such waters as the broads off Marietta, Washington Boro and Peach Bottom were often literally covered with ducks during spring and fall flights. Well into the eighteen seventies duck-shooting about these favorite feeding grounds was as good as it now is on the flats off Havre-de-Grace; and in primitive days there must have been an even greater abundance for the flintlock fowling pieces. John Smith's log records the extraordinary numbers and varieties of fowl on the upper waters of the Chesapeake. To a far greater degree in earlier years than now the Susquehanna, as a feeding ground, was part of the Chesapeake system. In the seventies, off Marietta, as reported by the older duckers of the town, there were still plenty of canvasbacks, redheads, blackheads, mallards, blackducks, pintails, shovelers, baldpates, green and blue-winged

teal, golden-eyes, ruddy-ducks, buffle-heads and ringnecks with a sprinkling of gadwalls. Now the greater part of what is left of these vast migration companies do not stop in the county at all and several kinds, notably the baldpate, the pintail, the redhead, the shoveler, the ringneck and the gadwall are very rarely seen.

The Canada goose, always a spectacular figure of the vernal and autumnal skies as he wedges his trackless way to and from the north, in earlier days probably stopped to nip the winter wheat more frequently than he now does and he was then doubtless often a worthy addition to the Sunday board. The picturesque Pennsylvania "Dutch" name which this fine fowl bears locally—Awicher Yaeger (eternal huntsman)—is reminiscent of a superstition which is still current in parts of Bavaria. To the early Palatine settler the clanging note of the goose in the black March gale—fully suggestive in the mass and in the night of a pack in full cry—was the lost soul of some riotous huntsman doomed to follow the hounds through eternity.

The whistling swan, as an abundant species of the Chesapeake-Susquehanna system in the Eighteenth Century, was perhaps the most prized game of the early rivermen. This species, after having been reduced to the point of extermination, is now again becoming plentiful under the federal protection that was accorded it about fifteen years ago. The vast mating concourse of swans which assembles regularly in March on the Flats off Havre-de-Grace and usually disperses there to pass northward in pairs and triangles, in 1921 moved en masse up the river to Marietta, where they studded the Broad with several thousand of their snowy forms, and circling in small companies over the town disturbed the night with the din of their excited whinnings.

Among the old-time hunters whom the writer knew when he was a boy none was more typical of a certain sporting spirit than Joshua Snively of Lititz (1825-1901). In high degree he showed that glowing love of the game, intruded upon little else, which characterized the triggers of the Mid-Nineteenth Century. How happily and dramatically he would re-live the hunting scenes of his youth! Rising from his rocking chair to maneuver for a favorable position or make the shot—his eyes, hands and shoulders telling most of his story—he would carry himself and the boy back into the happy hunting grounds of the early eighteen forties. From these thrilling accounts of Sunday hunting trips the writer learned of the last of the ruffed grouse and black squirrel in the Millport Hills along the Lititz Creek. The former noble game, after holding a central position in local sports for nearly two centuries, is now a rare bird in the rougher regions only—as in the Furnace Hills and lower River Hills. The black squirrel, a phase of the mountain gray squirrel, locally known as stump ear (*sciurus carolinensis leucotis*), is only curiosity. Even the great "stump ear" which furnished much good meat for the early settlers and sportsmen up to the eighteen seventies or eighties is nearly gone, being replaced almost entirely in its former ranges by the carolina gray or long ear. Gunners of the eighteen thirties and forties in Northern Lancaster County seem not to have known the long ear; according to tradition the stump ear being the only gray squirrel existing there at that time. The fox squirrel was generally extinct in the county probably long before the black squirrel, even though a few, evidently re-introduced, have been shot in the northern tier townships within the past few years.

Upland shooting over dogs was probably introduced soon after 1825. Dr. Levi Hull of Lititz had setters and pointers in the early eighteen forties. It is a tradition in the writer's family that George Steinman of Lancaster, the father of the Historical Society's late president, sent a setter by the interrupted canal and railroad route of the eighteen forties to Pittsburgh; only to have the dog immortalize himself by returning the two hundred and eighty miles, through forest and across rivers, to his home in Lancaster.

With the advent of the setter and pointer there followed a half century or more of high-class quail, woodcock and snipe shooting with a large company of followers. The late Richard R. Tschudy of Lititz, and Philip Deichler of Lancaster, were typical sportsmen of the height of this period. Few regions in Pennsylvania were better stocked with game in the eighteen sixties, seventies and eighties. The bountiful farmlands afforded plenty of feed and there was still ample cover in all townships for quail. A dozen or fifteen coveys could easily be found in a day's hunt, there was no bag limit, and returns were only dependent upon the activity of limb and the marksmanship of the sportsmen. Bob White as a local species is now poised between sport and sentiment. Encroaching civilization, an increased population, and the recurrent menace of winter have pressed him hard; but rural opinion during the past decade has cared for him so well that despite several blighting blizzards and the county's 18,000 licensed guns many farms—after a period of the reverse—now have their coveys and Bob's brave whistle has again become quite prominently a part of our pastoral symphony.

With the warm rains of March the snipe, on their northward flight, come into our meadows and swamps often in large numbers, for the county seems to be in a channel of migration. Prior to the passage of a federal law, doubtless of wise economy, stopping all spring shooting, the Wilson's or as they were called jack snipe afforded famous local sport. Many stream courses, notably those of the upper Cocalico, the Hammer, the Chiques above Manheim and the Copper Mine Creeks were easily capable of yielding a score and sometimes two score of snipe to a pair of good guns in late March to mid-April. There was a fascination about the greening springheads and the treacherous tussocks; there was a keen test of all the better qualities of sportsmanship in the fast, twisting game; there was a thrill and a glow about spring snipe shooting which made it, at least in the writer's experience, superior to any forms of hunting in Lancaster County.

Woodcock shooting in the Churchtown Swamp, on the low-lying islands of the Susquehanna and especially in the Big Swamp of Clay Township, was a famous local sport diminishingly up to 1900. In the seventies and eighties parties from Lebanon, Berks and Lancaster Counties, as related by the older sportsmen, would sometimes foregather in the twilight of the Big Swamp at the end of the opening day in July, to compare bags totaling several hundred birds. This great expanse of headwater country, perhaps the largest tract of continuous swampland in southeastern Pennsylvania west of the Delaware marshes, before it was cleared, partly drained and invaded by electric car and honking automobile was a sportsman's paradise superior to any in the county. The extreme picturesqueness of the place, even as the writer knew it in its passing glory, and its abundance of July and October woodcock combine to make it the region of all others locally about which there is encircled in his mind a halo of memories and traditions of sport in Lancaster County.

And the Big or Beaver Swamp is coupled brightly in the writer's mind with a notable act of canine intelligence above instinct. As an incident, typical though unsurpassed, in the vast dog-lore which was proudly and affectionately retold by many masters of this half century of high-class upland shooting, it is worthy of record. The writer's field diary, July 2, 1900, tells the story: "Hunting in the thick alder brake of the Big Swamp with Tom Keller (one of the best-known sportsmen of the north-end in the seventies, eighties and nineties) we lost the pointers for ten or fifteen minutes. Suddenly I saw Colonel, the younger dog, racing through the thicket. On seeing me he wheeled and instantly began drawing. I called Tom and we followed the crawling Colonel. He led us about a hundred yards and then stopped dead, backing by a few yards his partner, the staunch old Duke, who had been standing a woodcock during the prolonged period of the incident.

Colonel, quite evidently growing impatient, had broken his point to fetch his master."

The clearing of the farmlands opened local ranges for the upland plover, a bird that probably was scarcely known to the early settlers. In the late Nineteenth Century, especially about the large fields of the central and northern central townships, this fine game-bird was extremely abundant. As a boy the writer often saw two or three hundred plover in a single favored field in Warwick Township. A few years later, with the coming of the close shooting repeater, in company with Frank Thurlow (of worthy prominence among the qualified sportsmen of his generation) he has often shot fifteen or twenty birds of a late summer afternoon.

The golden and black-bellied plovers, scarcely more than memories today, often furnished abundant sport in October for past generations of gunners. The open fields where the stockyards now are, at the end of North Lime Street, Lancaster, were curiously favored as feeding grounds by these transient species, and as late as the eighteen seventies Thomas Thurlow, John Kahl and others often made large bags there.

The lowly cottontail, useful from early days as food, and with the passing away of better game increasingly of sporting value, is perhaps of more interest in projecting the future than in recording the past, for he seems to be the best and perhaps the only hope of the hunters of local generations to come. To the old-time sportsman of the 1870 period the cottontail was little more than a nuisance; a trying temptation for the green setter afield and an unwelcome weight abag.

Fox-hunting flourished as the rural sport supreme in Lancaster County for a hundred years and more. It began probably with the iron masters of the Northern End in the Eighteenth Century. Fox-hunting was a family tradition of the early Grubbs. The infectious spirit of the game, doubtless from these English sources, spread to the Pennsylvania Germans of Elizabethtown and Clay Townships. Soon after 1800 the "view halloo"—in Pennsylvania Dutch "Dot geht er"—was heard in the Furnace Hills; and the traditional hunters of that early period, the Mooks and the Brendles, were followed by a continuous line, punctuated by such names as Eberly, Keener and Nesinger, in which the sturdy joys of the chase found expression almost entirely in the South German dialect.

In the handed down traditions of fox-hunting in Northern Lancaster County—and they reach with fair certainty to the early years of the last century—there is no record of a time when the red fox was not the chief object of pursuit, though the animal was not a native in the region. Custis writing in a sporting magazine of about 1830, says in his memories of that most noted of American fox-hunters, George Washington, "the foxes hunted fifty years ago were gray foxes." John Bartram, the Philadelphia naturalist of the Revolutionary period, says that the Indians of the region never knew the red fox before the white man came. English sportsmen of the late eighteenth century, disgusted with the low sporting ethics of the gray fox, imported the English red fox—prince of hound run game—into Long Island and Virginia, whence it spread over its present southern range. It is likely, too, that the iron masters of our region planted the first red foxes here. This has often been done during the past century when they became locally scarce. The present red fox is probably a cross between the English fox and the Canadian red fox. The black phase of this species has appeared in the Furnace Hills twice; once making famous runs for the hounds of old Jacob Eberly about 1880, and again furnishing much sport, without being caught, in the winter of 1900.

The hound stock of the region is coupled in part with the name of Daniel Boone. In a letter to Mordecai Lincoln, who lived near what is now Exeter, Berks county, the famous frontiersman announces that he is bringing Lincoln from Kentucky a well-broke saddle horse and a pack of hounds.

Family records of the late Dr. J. B. Lincoln, who owned the Boone letter, indicate that the horse and hounds made the long trail successfully and proved very satisfactory.

In Southern Lancaster County fox-hunting was the inevitable by-product of English settlement. Here it had more followers and a somewhat different setting and atmosphere from the sport in the continuously wooded and racially different Furnace Hills; but the spirit and aim of fox-hunting was the same in all townships. To hear the music of the hounds, to catch an occasional glimpse of the elusive quarry, to run the fox to earth and possibly to dig or trap (*) him out for another chase—this everywhere was the rule of the game. He who shot a red fox was a tribal outlaw, unworthy of neighborly feeling and with little hope in eternity.

The master fox-hunter of the period of the sport's greatest activity, the Nineteenth Century, and indeed one of the outstanding figures in the rural sports of Lancaster County generally, was Brisbin Skiles. From his early years—he was born in 1817—almost to his death—in 1905—Brisbin's was the banner name of fox-hunting in Lancaster County and it will always hold a central position in the colorful lore of the sport. A self-contained, resourceful and magnetic man was Skiles, with a quiet enthusiasm and a rare skill in fox-hunting which usually kept him near the hounds, despite the fact that his mount was rarely asked to make a jump, and always kept him foremost in the admirations of the "byes" as he called his associates. As "Daddy of them all" Brisbin's tavern at Mt. Vernon, on the Philadelphia pike, was the congregating place of the fox-hunters of the region and it was here in the eighteen seventies and eighties that the spirit of an earlier year came to a sporting glory so heightened that it was caught and reflected in many a hostelry and farm of the region. Brisbin was the central figure of a large company of whom, among many others, were Jake Bair of Vintage, Jake Rutter of New Holland, Joe, Milt and Abe Roop of Andrew's Bridge, Dr. Raub of Quarryville, Ben Myers of White Oak, and Hen Harnish of Pequea Valley. Brisbin's drop hunt, the type of many others, was an interesting phase of a departed local sport. It was an annual affair, usually in January. Many mounted and many more who cared less for the sturdy comforts of the saddle than they did for the stirring conviviality of the event, would

*The rock trap, one of the several devices of taking a holed fox uninjured, is possibly an invention of the Furnace Hills; for some of the early hunters there were expert stone masons, the red standstones and conglomerates of the region are well adapted for the construction, and the trap itself does not seem to be known elsewhere. A number of the traditional "earths," useful to many generations of foxes and hunters in the Furnace Hills, lend themselves to the purpose of this ingenious trap. All but one of the exits to the rock den having been carefully closed the stone trap is built against the only opening through which the imprisoned fox can come out to feed. It is made of heavy, flat-sided rocks; rectangular, with interior dimensions about 30 inches long by 20 high by 8 wide. Delicately poised on its smooth floor, which inclines sharply toward the hole, there is a "rollstone" usually one of the ancient water-worn rock balls which abound in the region. When the fox, working at a crevice of light purposely left in the heavy masonry in front, kicks this rollstone it slips into the rock-mouthed hole and effectually closes the trap.

The fox is taken out of the trap—or removed from the end of an earth burrow after the hunters have dug down to him—with a "twitch." This consists of a stout, forked stick with a dangling cord connecting the ends of the prongs. The snarling fox is made to snap at the "twitch." With a little patience and skill the noose is lodged and twisted about the upper jaw, back of the canine teeth, and the fox is drawn out, grabbed by the loose skin back of the ears, and muzzled or bagged.

come to Mt. Vernon on that great afternoon. There was the excitement of penning up the various packs as they would come trailing in; there was the surcharged atmosphere of the howling barroom; there was the bountiful roast turkey spread in the dining room; and then when the light was failing there was the drop in a nearby pasture with the light-footed fox sped to his freedom by the shouts of the crowd; and finally the "riding on" of the hounds and the field going away "devil take the hindmost" with a "bye" here and there clinging to the mane and frantically kicking for a saddle grip of his plunging mount.

The drop hunt as a distinctive local sport reached its climax, shortly before the game waned, in the great meet at the Killashandra Farm on February 14, 1906. The hosts of the day, the late B. J. McGrann and his son, Richard, had spared nothing to make the affair the memorable event it turned out to be. All of the hunters of the county and many from beyond, even to the Rose Tree region, were invited. Each club or hunting group was marked distinctively, by pre-arrangement, and each excelled the last in picturesqueness as they would come in with their colors, in satin bows, tied to the caps, the bridles and the collars of the hounds. There was a famous breakfast with oyster-pie and ale and a touch of warmth against the deep, wet snow which covered the ground. No picture of its kind perhaps in the annals of fox-hunting in America could quite equal that which followed the dropping of the fox. With its colors and tones and breadth it will ever remain the masterpiece of the picturesque and spectacular in the sporting department of the writer's mental gallery. For when the great doors of the barn swung open there poured out a roaring Niagara of hounds—256 strong. Nor could the sequel of the chase have been more in contrast elsewhere. For of several hundred riders, some of them in pink and superbly mounted, by some joke among the gods of sport it fell to yellow-bearded Davie Kempfer, of the Blue Ribbon Hunt of Lititz, with a lath for a crop and on a time-honored stallion with a chain-reined bridle, to bring home the fox and claim the silver cup.

The treasured memories of fox-hunting in Lancaster County, however, must finally dwell on its best phase; the picking up of the night trail at windless winter sunrise and the pack going away in melodious discord across the Furnace Hills or over the swales of Salisbury. This kind of hunting with the many situations and occurrences of the local field, together with the leading fox-hunters of the early Twentieth Century about notable places within their respective ranges, several favorite mounts, a number of dogs famous in their day and way, and two foxes—old White Tail of the Furnace Hills and Wild Bill of the southeastern townships—swift and elusive fox characters for several seasons each; these features of local hunting and perchance a bit of its breeze, with claim only for accuracy and compact comprehensiveness of detail, the writer has marshalled under the sheltering caption of

A FOXY DOGGEREL

About Lancaster County

It's a mellow winter morning
With the upland moist and soft,
While the smoke from woodstove chimneys
Rises lazily aloft.
It's a morning out of fifty
And it's pretty safe to say
That from Coleraine to Speedwell
Every hound will run to-day.

Forge Hill was scarcely dawnlit
When the Nesingers went out,
And soon old Punch and Rattler
Were whimpering about;
And now they've struck a night trail
In behind the Walnut Spring;
And hark! He's off! The pack cuts loose
To make the Hirschthal ring.

There's click of hoof in the Kettle path,
It's Holtzhouse on his black,
And Eckert riding through the brush
To watch their working pack.
For Nettie's got one started
With Dash, Seed Keener's hound,
And Rowdy, Fly, Rose, Range and Nell
Make White Oak Hill resound.

A sprightly redbird flashes up
To balance on a birch;
A gray squirrel scurries nervously
And flattens on his perch.
There's a patter in the withered leaves—
The fox! It's old White Tail!
He stops to listen, flirts his brush,
And streaks it up the vale.

Down about Mt. Vernon wood
There is a merry dash
With Henry Skiles, and wiry son
On white-faced Sandy Flash.*
Their fox has little time to fool
Before that speedy drive.
He'll have to hunt his hole to-day
To finish up alive.

In Sadsbury, by the Chester line,
The run was short and quick;
And the music of the chase is changed
To sound of shovel's click;
For Seldomridge is working hard—
His licking dogs about
And steaming horse tied by the fence—
To dig the redskin out.

What makes the winter crows dart down
There, above the old Bone Mill?
Yes! Look again! You see his brush?
It surely is Wild Bill.
And here they come, full forty strong
Like a pack in Leicestershire,
With Johnny Raub and Norman Neff
A-gallop in the rear.

*The champion running horse of Lancaster County, owned by Mr. Brubaker (1908-12). Sandy Flash was stabled at Mt. Vernon, and at the end of his breezy career he was buried in the Lancaster Fair grounds.

And over by the Nickel Mine
There's music in the air,
For Johnny Kurtz has got one going
With the gray-haired veteran Bair.
Their horses pounding up the road,
All mud from nose to hocks,
Bring the loafers from the Georgetown store
To try to see the fox.

Down East Earl way there's been a loss
Although the going was fine,
And hounds are nosing everywhere
To straighten out the line.
The "byes" are guessing what went wrong;
Doc think he went to earth.
While Charley Eaby takes a chew
And tightens up his girth.

On sunny slope of old Pinch Hill
Two saddle horses stand,
With thirty long-ears lying 'round—
None finer in the land.
They're building in a trap up there
To try to get this fox.
Mann Keener does the setting up
While Zeamer fetches rocks.

And Slotey's pack is working
Somewhere down near Martindale;
And Garrett's got one running
In the Conewago vale.
Old Andy Hershey heaves a sigh
This perfect hunting day,
And cups a hand against his ear
To catch a distant bay.

It's a mellow winter morning
And the upland's moist and soft
While the smoke from woodstove chimneys
Rises lazily aloft.
The Garden Spot's all music.
From Wakefield up to Clay,
From Donegal to Churchtown
Every foxhound's out today.

Author: Beck, Herbert Huebener, 1875-1960.

Title: Historical sketch of rural field sports in Lancaster County
/ by Herbert H. Beck.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s): Hunting--Pennsylvania--Lancaster County--History.

Publisher: Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society, 1923

Description: 149-160 p. ; 23 cm.

Series: Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 27,
no. 9

Call Number: 974.9 L245 v.27

Location: LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

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