

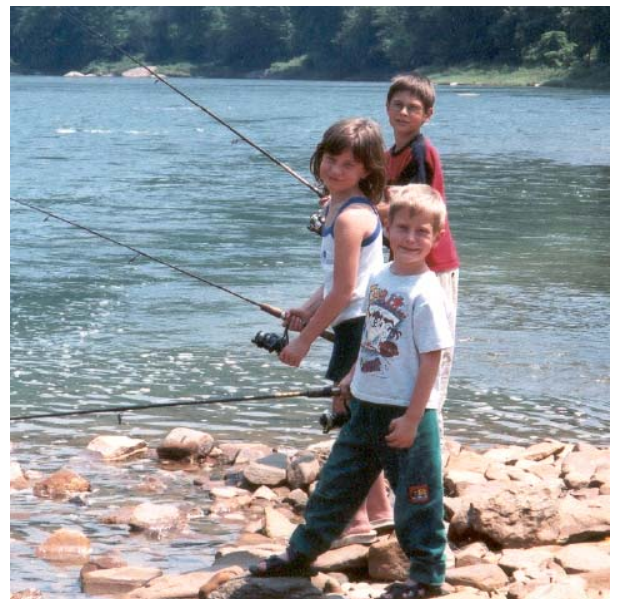
Clearfield County Waters

Remembering
our Past



Understanding
our Present

Hope for our
Future



Introduction

Writing this booklet has been a fun experience. There are many reasons we thought this project was necessary. First, we felt it was a great tool to inform the public about watersheds and what we do as humans to affect them. Second, we wanted to show through the stories and poetry of people who have lived here; how important our streams and rivers have been in the past and the importance of them today. Many stories name streams that at one time were not polluted, and are now. The opposite of this is also true. The West Branch of the Susquehanna at one time was so polluted nothing could live in it. That is not the case today. So probably the biggest reason for this booklet was to show the public that we not only need to protect what we have but also we can restore what is now polluted. It will take many county citizens to complete this task, but it can be done. So sit back and enjoy stories and poetry describing some of Clearfield County's past. We know we enjoyed compiling this information for you. **Remember we all live downstream!**

Clearfield County Senior Environment Corps (CCSEC)
Clearfield County Conservation District (CCCD)
Clearfield County Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)

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Department of Environmental Protection.

History of Clearfield County

As Clearfield County celebrates 200 years in existence we need to take a look back at our rich history. Indians were the first humans to make this area their home. The name Clearfield came from “large grassy fields where buffalo grazed.” As settlers moved into the area, survival was number one priority. Homes had to be built, land had to be cleared to produce crops, and fuel sources had to be found. The people also needed to make a living. This first came from logging. The county, along with many other areas on the West Branch of the Susquehanna, was well known for their great stands of white pines. Great tracts of land were cut for the timber that would be floated down the river to the bigger towns for market. Many settlers who purchased land sold the timber so their land would be clear of trees for more cropland (Taken from *Susquehanna River of Dreams* by Susan Q. Stranahan, The John Hopkins University Press, 1993).

Mining next became the big way to make a living. Clearfield County had both clay and coal in its layers beneath the soil. Mining in Clearfield began in 1758 when Samuel Boyd shipped coal from the area. He took over a tract of land the Indians had along the West Branch above Clearfield on November 1, 1758. William Boyd, Sam’s son, built an ark in 1803 and in the spring of 1804 loaded it with coal and it went 260 miles to Columbia. Most of this coal came from a bed one mile upstream of Clearfield. In 1813, P.A. Karthaus mined at the mouth of Little Moshannon Creek (Mosquito Creek) and in 1828 began sending the coal to Philadelphia. As more coal was discovered, more mining began to occur. Mining towns and companies were beginning to form. The World War years were a big boom for Clearfield County mining (Taken from *History of the Bituminous Coal Industry in Clearfield County and Vicinity*, by William A. Jaffe, Philipsburg, PA). During the wars the biggest concern was to extract this natural resource no matter what the cost. At first deep mines were used to extract the coal and clay. Very brave people would dig tunnels underground to mine these precious materials. Huge rooms were dug underground to take out the clay. Any material that was considered as waste was piled outside in huge mounds that in many cases still remain today. Strip mining then became a more efficient way to remove these minerals. Before the mining regulations of the 1970’s areas were stripped leaving very dangerous highwalls and pits. We are now paying for this with polluted water; unattractive and unproductive waste lands; and dangerous mine shafts and collapsing clay rooms that can cause injury or even death to an individual unaware of the danger in the area.



A pit located in the headwaters of Emigh Run.

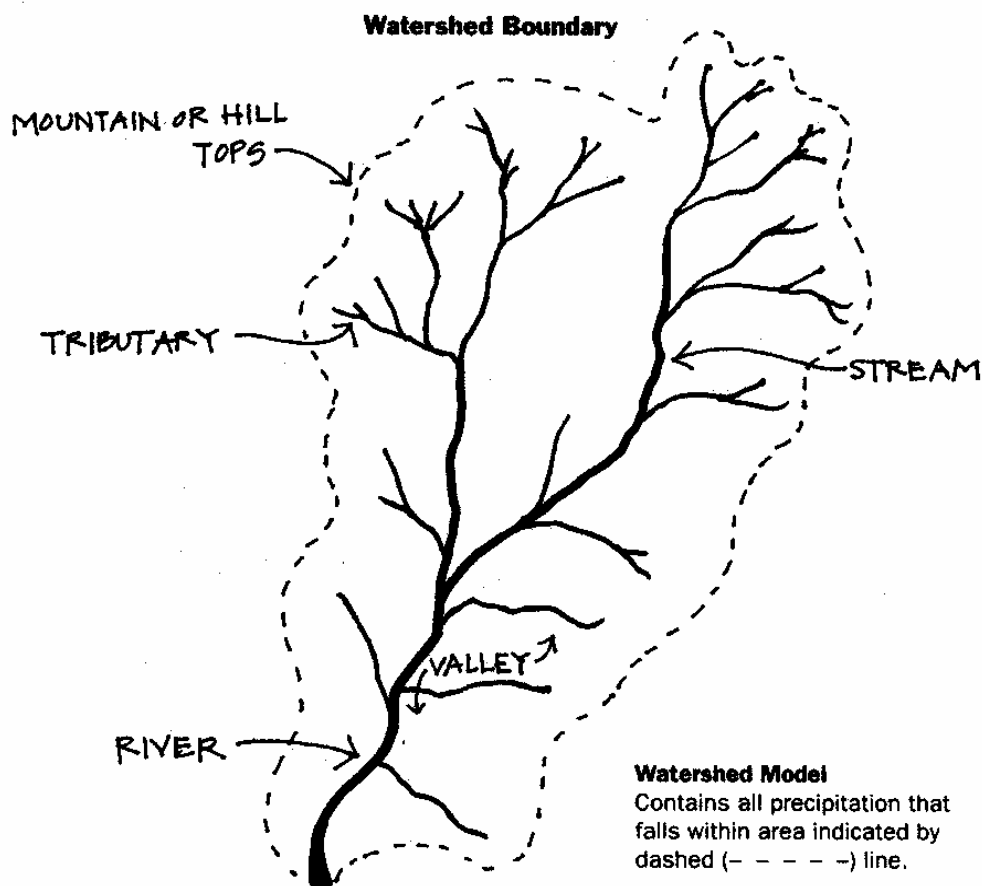


Opening of the General Refractory Mine located in Bradford Township. Only the top of the opening is visible due to iron precipitate.

What is a watershed?

A Watershed is all the land that drains to a common endpoint such as a pond, lake, river or another stream. A watershed can be as small as the land that the stream drains in your backyard to the Susquehanna River Watershed. Clearfield County actually drains into two major watershed areas. A small section of the northwestern part of the county is part of the Ohio River Watershed. Ultimately this area is also part of the Mississippi River Watershed since the Ohio River flows into this mighty River. The rest of the county is part of the Susquehanna River Watershed. This river flows into the Chesapeake Bay. Therefore the majority of the county is part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

The most important aspect of living in a watershed is that the land and water is all connected. The pollution that enters in our county ultimately affects everyone downstream. One of the biggest problems in both the Chesapeake Bay and the Mississippi River is excess sediment. We in Clearfield County contribute to that concern as much as any county downstream of us.



Pollution

Over the years the improper management of our natural resources has caused degradation to our land and water. According to the New World Dictionary the word “pollute” means to make unclean, impure, dirty and contaminate. It is divided into two types: point and non-point. Point pollution is any pollution that is coming out of one clear discharge point. For example a pipe carrying untreated waste water from a malfunctioning septic system and discharging into a stream is considered a point discharge. With today’s regulations problems from point discharges are not quite as large as in the past.

Non-point pollution is a different story. In this type of pollution, no specific point can be identified. There are many examples of this type and it is the largest contributor of our water problems in this county today.

Our biggest non-point contributor is Abandoned Mine Drainage (AMD). This is formed when water and oxygen react with the pyrite left from our coal and clay mining. The pyrite otherwise known as “Fool’s Gold” was left in the deep mines; was discarded in spoil piles outside the mines; or was exposed during strip mining with improper reclamation techniques. This can cause numerous problems in the water that comes in contact with this pollution. In most cases the pH is lowered and various metals such as iron, aluminum and manganese can be dissolved in the water. In certain conditions these metals can become a solid and fall to the stream bottom suffocating any aquatic life that may be present. Red precipitate is iron, white is aluminum and black is manganese. Aluminum has the biggest effect on fish. This metal will coat the gills of fish and suffocate them.



AMD seep located on Valley Fork, Roaring Run

Excess soil in the water is another type of non-point pollution. There are two words to define this: sedimentation and turbidity. Turbidity occurs when the stream is moving soil or sediment giving the water the cloudy appearance. This can affect fish by scouring their gills. This increases the chance for infection in the fish. Also fish, trout especially, use their vision to capture prey for food. An increase in turbidity decreases their vision and ability to capture food. Sedimentation or deposited sediment can destroy habitat for the aquatic macroinvertebrates (bugs) that live on stream bottoms. This removes a source of food for the fish living in the stream. Also many fish spawn or lay their eggs on the bottom of streams and rivers. Sediment destroys spawning beds and can bury eggs and does not allow fry to emerge.

There are many practices that cause excess soil or sediment in watersheds. Improper logging practices can cause this type of pollution. Trees are very important and are needed for many things such as paper and building material. They are also very important in nature. Their roots help bind the soil so it doesn’t run-off into streams. When it rains the trees help capture the precipitation. The rain that makes it to the ground slowly soaks in if not saturated. If all the trees are removed there is nothing to keep the soil in place. Also instead of slowly soaking into the

ground, the rain runs off more quickly. This can cause two problems. First it can increase the speed water reaches streams therefore increasing the magnitudes of floods. Next the water can remove the soil more easily and wash it into streams. This can cause sedimentation and turbidity in streams. Also improperly built logging roads can be a problem. To build access into sites, soil is disturbed and exposed to the elements. When it rains, water is going to follow the path of least resistance. Therefore it will run down a road into a receiving stream increasing the amount of sediment and turbidity. This was probably the first type of pollution that affected the West Branch of the Susquehanna. Timber was removed from very steep hillsides leaving nothing but exposed soil. The river began to experience increased sedimentation and floods.

Farming can also allow excess sediment to reach streams. This is caused by certain plowing techniques. If hills are plowed going with the contour, the water will soak more easily into the ground. If plowing goes opposite the contour, the rain can run more easily down the stream. Not only does this hurt watersheds but the farmer also loses precious soil needed for their crops.

Removal of riparian zones along streams and rivers can also cause problems in watersheds. Trees along a stream serve the same purpose as they do in the forest. Their roots help bind the soil. If these trees are removed erosion of banks will be increased. Also the removal of trees allows more sunlight to penetrate the water. This increases the temperature of the water changing the aquatic communities that live there. This type of pollution would also have been occurring during the big timbering days on the West Branch.



A Muddy Moose Creek entering West Branch of the Susquehanna.

Other changes probably occurred in the river during the big timber boom. Sediment is moved during higher flows. When the water slows down it drops out, building up in the stream or river bed. The sediment will fill in deep holes, decreasing the volume of water a stream can handle. When the water rises it starts eroding the banks and creating more sediment. The outcome is a wider but not as deep river or stream. If we could go back in time we would see many of our streams and the West Branch of the Susquehanna are wider and not as deep as when the first settlers came to this area.

It should be noted that 200 years ago the people probably had no idea what consequences would occur extracting these natural materials. Their main concerns were making a living and feeding their families. Now we can see what happens. Today pollution has destroyed our land and water. It is not only sediment and abandoned mine drainage problems. It is also sewage, excess nutrients and illegal dumping. Not only are recreation opportunities decreased but also sometimes trying to find clean water to drink is quite a challenge. We now know how to prevent many of these problems. Unfortunately even with today's laws and regulations they are still occurring. Hopefully with this booklet we can educate the public on what can be done to prevent the pollution and clean up the West Branch of the Susquehanna. Our streams in Clearfield County were once clean and full of fish. With the assistance of the people of the County we can restore many of our watersheds.

A Time to Go
By John Filsinger, Clearfield, PA
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While drifting down the widened tide
One Susquehanna spring,
We witnessed an exceptional
Display of venturing.

A Lilliputian chipmunk
Had launched into the stream
To try to swim that massive flood
As though to chase a dream—

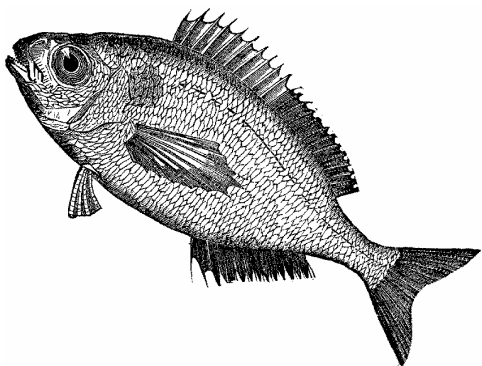
To know firsthand what might be there
Across that far expanse
That he had not experienced
In former circumstance.

He seemed so insignificant
In face of that great sea
But strove, unflinching, straight ahead
With strict persistency.

What prompted such capriciousness?
To leave familiar place,
And set his sights so far away
At such frenetic pace?

Our craft succumbed to downward wash,
With him still struggling,
And we shall never know for sure
If he survived that spring.

But we shall not forget that gleam
Quite settled in his eyes
That focused on that distant shore
With will to go and try.



A Symphonic Ode to the Susquehanna
By John Filsinger, Clearfield, PA
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When errands take us down to nearby Clearfield town,
We glance or fondly gaze from fronting streets or bridge
At your enduring, slowly-moving form, more calm
With deep reflections since our bicentennial's
Authentic reconstruction of a raftsmen's dam.
If leisure grants us time to pause and contemplate,
More aptly do we feel your quiet pulsing flow,
And sense the stilled vibrations of your long ago...

Reflections of your early history appear,
When Indians alone perceived your mysteries...
Conceived Chinklacamoose from passing dugout logs
When pioneers canoed upstream remarkably
To probe your upland arteries, and fashion farms
From trackless woods, and mills to grind sustaining grains.

Then came the hearty foresters who used your floods
In spring to move their timber rafts to Chesapeake,
Through labyrinthine rapids, hidden rocks, and mud;
You were the avenue for giant, virgin pines,
Floating to be the perfect masts of great tall ships,
To hold their sails unfurled in winds around the world.

Through changing times you rolled along two hundred miles
Of West Branch forest slopes, past smoke, and curse or
smiles
Of men, observing alteration of your clay
And sand and rocks to rust-iron glare from draining mines,
Then mix with human waste and slime of industry
To cripple and then kill your pure, wild legacy.

But happily in recent years a counterforce
Of wiser men has recognized the sanity
Of cleaning up the air we breathe – the earth where you
Can live and flow again with some impunity,
And we can fish, and swim, and ride your fresh clear tide
To feel a pride in Nature's pristine custody.

We love in wintertime to make cross-country tracks
With skis in new-laid snow across a treeless ridge,
And mark below your raven route past pillowed banks
Where rocky ranks held summer, sway; another day
More frigid winds blow free, insistently, to lace
And seal with frozen glaze your wrinkled, seasoned face.

Sometimes in early spring when we are seeking out
The cryptic, fleeting fragrance of Arbutus trailing blooms,
We hear your distant horns' or flutes' full-throated rush
From bellows of fast-melting snows on northward slopes,
Then hasten to a clear strategic resting place

To see the gushing power of your quickened pace.

When warming days have urged the ice to break and flow,
Your frozen parts fulfill their postponed destiny
To go downstream; at first they strive impatiently
To rush away, then gently down more distantly,
Diminishing to merge into your liquid whole...
We're waiting now for perfect time to launch canoes,
And share resurgence of the budding hills with you.

The winds of March have calmed; the bear has left his den;
The daffodils have flowered; the wren has come again;
And now we feel an urgency that we must choose a day
To take an April ride with you along your winding way,
Through northern woods, where banks give hint of rising grass,
Where thick-packed rhododendron growth and laurel mass
Will burst in June to myriad blooms of pink and white.

The mottled slopes that rise above show subtle shades
And tones, as hardwoods resurrect from winter freeze
To frame tall pines and hemlocks' fine viridity,
While early silver maples' erubescency
Preen's o'er the tilted hills and fills our springtime mood
With thrill of nature's saving liberality.

In fullest spring we feel your flow more pointedly:
The sun upon your rippled face is multiplied
Ten thousandfold—divided into quaking sparks
Of nearby clustered galaxies in speeding flight,
Caught for us briefly in your effervescency,
As though we ride through stellar realms in miniature,
Beyond imagination's wildest portraiture.

In summertime, we often walk for exercise,
Through shaded, fern-filled, log-strewn Appalachian woods,
To grassy knolls from which we note your dwindled shape
Crawl serpent-like among large rocks; reluctantly
You drain sustaining underground capacities,
And yield your fresh identity to saline sea.

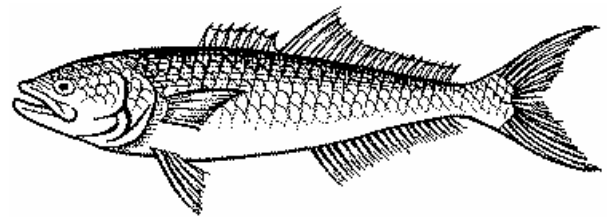
We'll come again in fall to see the treasured tinitis

Of Aspen, beech, and cherry boughs, or chestnut arch
Midst multi-cohered maple leaves, or scattered larch,
And you will be more difficult to navigate,
Meandering from side to side in shallow state,
But we'll be intimate with your most hidden traits,
As our canoe has autumn rendezvous with you.

Now gradually we hear your pounding waterfalls,
And we must pay attention to those urgent calls,
That we may prove our steering art's dexterity
To find a proper downward rush among the rocks....
Too soon it is upon us and your laughter's roar
Surrounds our palpitating hearts' rapidity,
As we plow through your writhing foam's complexity.

And then we take our rest with you on broad deep pools,
Your thunder slowly fading as we drift and cool
Our flaming foreheads with full handcups of your deep
Refreshing store; it's time for lunch—that boulder there
Protruding from the bank will serve as perfect scene
For roasting wieners and for spreading our cuisine....
Above, the gliding hawks keep watch, and so we face
Aloft to wonder at their heaven-soaring grace.

It is not long till excitation stirs again;
Our paddles like enormous hands soon fondle your
Resilient physicality with coaxing strokes;
Our hearts respond as to a lover's passion-breaths,
More ardently when you cry out in ecstasy
Of sound and thrust through narrow funneled
passageway,
Then shiver out at length to quivering expanse,
Where hundreds of your bottom rocks protrude
above
Your dazzling surface light, as bright as eyes in love.



Shad in the West Branch of the Susquehanna

The American shad or white shad is one of the six species of shad in the Chesapeake Bay. It is the largest and considered the best tasting of all the shads. The American shad is considered an anadromous fish. This means it leaves salt water and goes to freshwater to spawn. The adults may spend at least five years in the ocean. They then migrate to the Chesapeake Bay and up its tributaries to spawn. This usually occurs from the middle of February to early June between sunset and midnight. The female will lay up to 600,000 eggs and there will be several males around to fertilize them. The shad try to move upstream so the eggs have time to slowly drift downstream and hatch before reaching saltwater. The adults then either die or return back to the sea.

This migration can be stopped many ways. Dams can stop the progress of this fish. So can pollution. Abandoned Mine Drainage serves as a chemical blockage. The Shad will not come up the West Branch into Clearfield County due to this water quality issues and others. At one time this fish was an important food source for the settlers in Clearfield County. Many of the stories in the following pages recount the great amounts of Shad that were once caught from the river. Many of our efforts to clean up watersheds for trout and other fish will also help to restore the American Shad habitat.

A Time to Stay **By John Filsinger, Clearfield, PA** Copyright © 1993

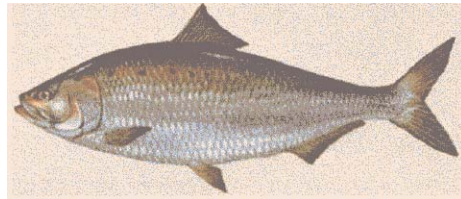
On that same trip we saw wild ducks —
The kind that yearly fly
Great distances in spring and fall
Their cycled life to ply.

We saw the male first skimming close
To water's rippling crest,
And then he landed near the bank —
Perchance a transient rest?

But soon we noticed there were two
Within that reedy place;
A female with a broken wing
Could not depart her base.

Would then the male abandon her
And rise into the sky?
He chose to settle there with her —
Can you imagine why?

We felt great satisfaction
While gliding on our way;
We'd learned substantial lessons
From sylvan friends that day.



American
Shad

Disturbed Stream by Norma Boykiw **Clearfield, PA**

There is a stream that flows through our property. I live on the Bailey Highway. As a child my son could lay down on the bank and drink directly from the stream. Then two bridges were built on the stream and it really seemed to change it. Now during rain events the stream becomes extremely muddy. We also have a pond on the property. At one time the pond was stocked with bass and bluegill. Then a silo was flushed and ran into the pond and killed the fish. It took about 10 years for the pond to recover.

Clearfield County
“Our Home”
By Joe Pedmo, Kylertown, PA

Sometimes I sit back and wonder what our county looked like 200 years ago. I vision Indians in their canoes going up and down the West Branch of the Susquehanna River. I also vision the wild salmon and other fishes that lived in this pristine water.

My grandparents came here in the 1920's from Europe and they came to what is now Clearfield County. My great-grandfather, once had a job in the coal mines, sent money to his sons to come to Pennsylvania because there was employment in the booming coal industry.

“King Coal” – In the late 40's and 50's many coal-mining companies were mining coal in our county. At this time in our state, there were very few mining regulations and the ones there were, were not enforced. King Coal ran wild in our county and our state. Some companies and individuals made a fortune on coal.

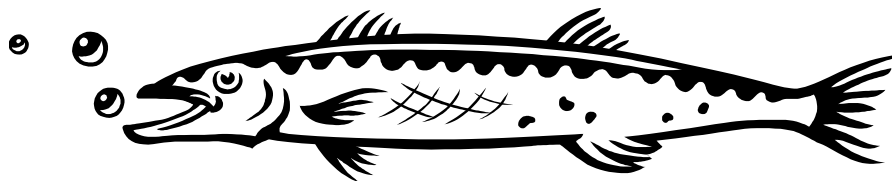
I am an avid sportsman. I enjoy hunting and fishing and my father enjoyed trout fishing in our many mountain streams. Not too many years ago, we used to fish the following “pristine” trout streams – Trout Run, Sandy Run, Alder Run – just to name a few local streams. Today, many streams hold no aquatic life or fish because of unregulated mining in our county.

In the future, wars will be waged for water because without good, clean water life is not possible.

We in Clearfield County are blessed to have so many mountain streams that never run dry.

We must be stewards of our precious water resources and educate our youth as to the importance of our water supplies.

As the song goes – “all day I have searched the barren plain without the taste of water. Clear, cool water”. It is our duty to protect our water for us and for those who will follow us. I congratulate Clearfield County Conservation District members in their efforts in conservation of our precious resources.



Montgomery Run (Creek) Hyde, PA by Bill Lawhead, Clearfield, PA

I remember as a kid being able to fish Montgomery Run and catching fish down to the camps. Now you can only catch fish just below the dam because a seep enters the stream below the Clearfield Reservoir. From this point on, other seeps and polluted streams enter Montgomery Run polluting it until its confluence with West Branch of the Susquehanna. Also in the late 60's and early 70's I was able to catch fallfish, chubs and catfish at the Hyde Bridge on the West Branch of the Susquehanna. This portion of the river was polluted for many years but then came back to support fish.

First fish caught in West Branch of the Susquehanna By, Jack Straley, Clearfield, PA

The West Branch of the Susquehanna was severely polluted while my dad was a kid. As a teenager—around August 1965—I was fishing the river and caught the first fish since it recovered. It was a catfish and I made the front page of the Progress. My dad organized the 1st Fishing Derby in the River some years after that. After realizing there was life in the Susquehanna when I was 15, Blair Reese and myself got a permit to collect macro-invertebrates or aquatic bugs out of Clearfield and Chest Creek. We would then put the in the West Branch of the Susquehanna.

I also remember a story about Montgomery Run that my father told me. He and Nathaniel “Rip” Yingling as kids would go fishing at Blue Hole which is near the camps in the 1920’s and early 1930’s. They could put their arms underneath their back and just flip fish out. They could park at Coal Hill and catch the limit.



SUSQUEHANNA CATFISH — Jack Straley, 10, of Clearfield displays two catfish he and his father caught out of the river at Clearfield Thursday night. The biggest is 9½ inches. In two hours of fishing Jack and his father missed three others. They were fishing just below Susquehanna Terrace. Catfish were first spotted earlier this week. (Progress Photo)

Anderson Creek Area by Lester Neepor, Curwensville, PA

I never could remember Anderson Creek when it wasn't polluted. In my grandfathers time in the 1800's and early 1900's he could fish for trout in this stream. Then Harbison Walker and North American Refractories begin to mine and the stream was polluted. My dad would tell me stories by my grandfather about the suckers running up Anderson Creek to spawn. In the late 1930's I was able to catch trout in Bilger Run. They used to stock it. I would fish from the confluence of Kratzer Run up. Some other streams I fished and are still good today are Bear Run and Irwin Run.

I have an interesting story about Roaring Run which is upstream from Tanner Run on Anderson Creek. In the 1940's I was given 9 milk cans full of fingerling trout. Back then this is what was stocked. I took some up to Bear and Coupler Run. The rest I put in Roaring Run without telling anyone. Well these kids were fishing up there and were so excited about all the trout they were catching in this very small stream! Unfortunately the word got out and it was fished heavily.

I remember as a kid the “Hobo ponds”. These were some ponds located by the North American brickyard in the 1930's. Hobos would sleep in the brickyard and come around the ponds to eat and visit. Us kids would fish there a lot catching sunfish.

I also fished on Montgomery Run (Creek). In the old dam there was a big rock out in the middle in the 1940's. We would sneak in and wade to the rock and build a fire and fish all night. This was illegal I am sure. Little Clearfield Creek which flows into Clearfield Creek was an excellent stream for trout. I used to fish it quite often.



As part of this project we went and interview people at different Senior Centers around Clearfield County. Here are their stories.

Burnside Senior Center

Barbara Fulton Mullins, Patchinville - I had an aunt in the 1930's and 1940's who used to fish Beaver Run and Patchin Run with a line, safety pin for a hook and worms. These streams still have very good water quality. My grandfather was Clyde "Pus" Fulton and he was the cook for the raft that floated down the river in 1938. Everybody picked on him because he couldn't swim. Fortunately he survived when the raft crashed into the bridge. He was extremely upset because he lost his pots and pans his "tools of the Trade". Before this he was bank president. Once the depression came he began farming and made other trips on the rafts. He died in 1947.

Nora Kitchen London, Westover – I remember when my father would go to Pine Run and Wilson Run to fish near Westover. He would only use a string and a hook and would come home with a bucket of brook trout. When I turned 5, I began fishing with my dad. Sometimes we would fish all day and he wouldn't stop to eat but I had to. When his hook would get caught it was up to me to swim out and get it loose. My other job was to clean the fish that was caught. Later on in life my father was beginning to go blind but he continued to fish. When he died I gave away all the fishing equipment. I just didn't have the heart to go without him.

Juanita Stockly, Cherry Tree – My husband used to fish in Sawmill and Beaver Run and Chest Creek. The West Branch of the Susquehanna flows behind my property in Cherry Tree. The sewers used to go into the West Branch causing pollution. Emigh Run is also badly polluted.

Verna Fry, Cherry Tree – After a lot of rain and high water I always have trash in my backyard. This has been going on for many years.

Jane and Dennis Patrick – Jane states that she used to fish with her husband until she would catch more than him. Dennis tells about his grandfather fishing. I can remember stories when all you had to do was hang worms on a tree and the brookies would jump up to get it. My grandfather used to eat the fish from the West Branch of the Susquehanna. The big food was pike and pickerel. I do not recall stories of shad coming up this far. In the 1950's the West Branch was really polluted. It used to be all different colors such as yellow and red. If you dropped a frog in the water it would die before it reached the shore. My grandfather wanted to see the river restored but he died in the 1960's and was never able to see it come back. Now you don't have to go far away to catch big fish. Bass, pickerel, muskies, catfish and fallfish are now in a much cleaner West Branch. I feel it was a miracle the river came back seeing how severe it was polluted. I also remember fishing Rock Run. Then in the mid 1980's gas wells were drilled and the native brook trout seemed to disappear. Other native streams I fished was Sawmill and Deer Run and Cush Creek.

DuBois Senior Center

Maurice Barrett, Treasure Lake – I used to live in Bloomington. I used to fish Little Clearfield Creek and caught brook trout over 35-40 years ago. I also used to fish Bell Run although I never caught too many.

Jessie Campbell, Luthersburg – When I was a little girl around seven years old my father died and I had to move in with my grandmother at Home Camp. There was a stream that ran by the property and my friend and I were told there were fish in it. We would take a line and a pin hook and tried to catch fish but we never did. Neither of us used worms because we didn't like to put them on our hooks.

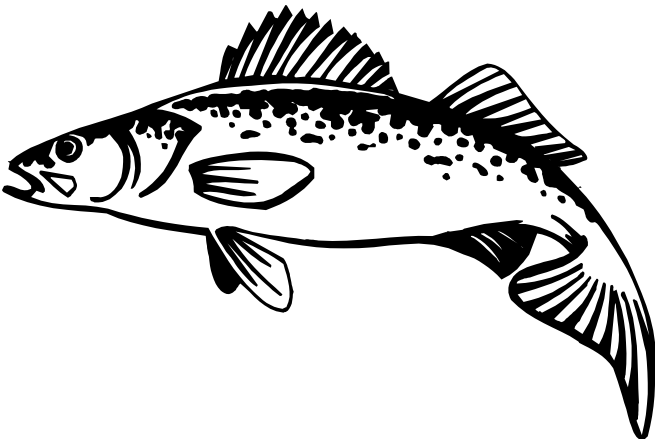
Sue Sullenberger, Treasure Lake – Recently when my grandson was four he was fishing on Treasure Lake. He caught a stripper close to 2 feet long. He was very proud of his fish.

Jane Mack, DuBois – I remember Clear Run in Sandy Township in the late 1950's early 1960's. The kids would catch tadpoles in the stream. Now I think it is polluted. It was mined up above and it has a reddish color.

John C. Smith, DuBois – I used to fish a lot at "Stanley Bottom" in the "suburb" of Helvetia. A creek ran down through the area and during the Great Depression I would catch tadpoles.

Francis "Chip" McClure , Penfield – I grew up in West Decatur. I used to fish Laurel Run mostly for suckers. We would look down in the water and shade our eyes so we wouldn't get a glare. Then with bread we would try to hook the suckers. I remember going to the Black Moshannon to camp after taking our 8th grade exams that would allow us to go on to High School. We had found some tar and melted it down to put on our homemade boat so it would be waterproof. We spent over a week fishing on the Black Moshannon. I also remember fishing Bennett's Branch, Medix Run and in Sabula. I used to catch a few brook trout. The pollution in Bennett's Branch does not enter until downstream of Penfield.

Jack Dodd, DuBois – I used to teach in Philipsburg. I wasn't a very good fisherman but I used to fish Cold Stream Dam in the 1960's. It was polluted some by acid mine drainage. Maybe that is why I didn't catch much. I did catch something there once in a while. This was before the ditch was made along Cold Stream to keep the polluted stream out of the dam. Now it isn't much of a dam.



Linda Bair, Treasure Lake – I was from Ohio but I started fishing when I was 5 or 6 years old. I hated putting worms on my hook. So my dad made some type of bait called dough ball with cornmeal, vanilla and some other stuff. The first time we went out I used it and caught more fish than him!

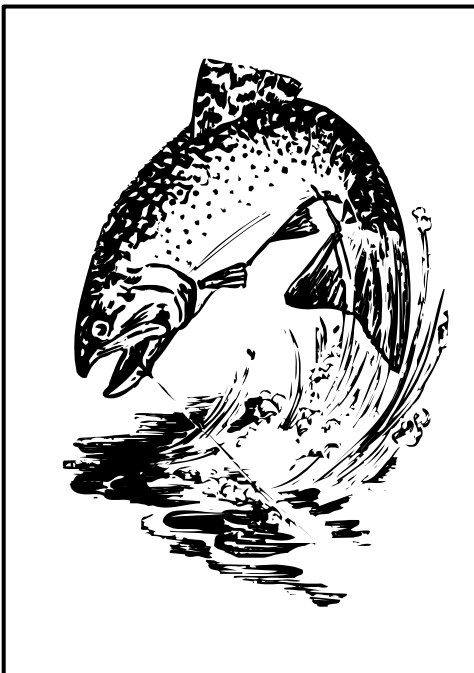
Karthus Senior Center

Esther Schnarrs, Karthus – I remember swimming in 4 different holes in Mosquito Creek. I also used to swim at Miller's Landing in the West Branch of the Susquehanna. This was occurring in the 1920's to 1930's. We used to be able to skate in the winter. The river would freeze completely. Some people used to have ice houses. After the river froze they would cut big chunks of ice. Since they put the Shawville Plant in, the river has never froze. My husband and friends would go fishing in the Quehanna area and Three Runs and fish for native brook trout. At this time there was no highway like today. The only way to get there was on dirt roads. Then right by the stream they would fry the small fish in a pan.

Dorothy Hugney, Karthus – When I was growing up I would swim in Sandy Creek. One day I felt something biting me in the toe. When I lifted up my foot there was a crab (crayfish) biting me! This stream used to be a source of drinking water but they had to now dig wells.

Dorothy Seisler, Karthus – My dad's name was Paul Shaddock. In the 1940's he used to fish in the Quehanna Area such as Gifford and Three Runs. He was sort of fussy what he would bring home. He liked native trout over stocked. I remember my parents would get into arguments. My dad wanted to fish on Sundays but my mom didn't like him too.

Kylertown Senior Center



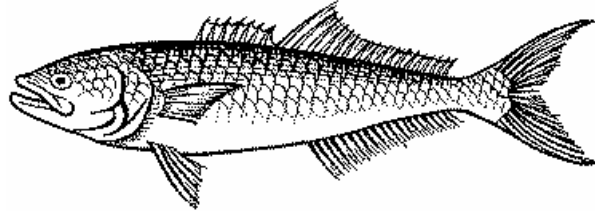
Bob Carlson, Kylertown — I used to fish many streams in the area. I caught brook trout out of Alder Run and tributaries Mons Run and Hubler Run. I used to fish tributaries of Moravian Run such as "Sally's Bottom" and Beveridge Run. The entire length of Deer Creek was also a great stream for brook trout. Then I went to service for World War II and they begin to strip mine the area. When I came back I was disappointed because most of these streams were ruined. The stream at "Sally's Bottom" still has fish, though. Most of the strip mining in the area started in the 1940's. I also used to fish Mosquito Creek, Six Mile Run and Black Moshannon until I felt it wasn't safe for me to be on the streams.

Violet Gummo, Muncy — I am not from around here but I remember a story when my husband first took me fishing. He always wanted me to go so we went fishing on a stream in Huntington County. I went to this big hole off the beaten path where a log fell in. I caught fish and began screaming and my husband came running. I caught some more that day but after that my husband never asked me again!

Zella Harter, Kylertown — I grew up in Goshen. My dad used to go down on the rafts before I was born in 1907. The last trip he went on he helped take logs down to Renova. My dad was a very strong man. He was also in charge of distributing pay. He caught some guy trying to get paid for

the second time and a fight began. My father won out but he never went down with the logs again. Soon though the Railroad came through so taking logs in the river became a thing of the past. My father was a lumber man. I met my husband when he was helping cut timber on our land which was near Medix Run in Goshen Township. My dad's sawmill was in the Blackwell Dam area.

Mickey Cantoline, Kylertown — My father was a coal miner with 10 kids to feed. He didn't have much time to take us fishing or money for a car to take us anywhere to fish. I used to go fishing at the ponds that were made when they were strip mining. We would catch catfish, bluegills and other sunfish there. This occurred around 1944-45.



Houtzdale Senior Center

Carolyn McAlkich and Leonard Thompson — We used to swim in Beaver Run. The railroad went down by the run and the kids put up tire swings that they would jump off. We never worried about cars. The kids built a little dam to make a good swimming hole. This was some 70 years ago. Then in the winter the water would freeze and we could skate all the way from Sterling to Brisbin. We would build bonfires to keep warm

Ada Hawkins — I used to fish for trout down through Paradise. The women caught more fish than the men and it made the men mad!

Raymond Love — Beaver Run was once good fishing. Then it became polluted after the Flood of 36. The WPA widened and stoned the sides. It's pretty well cleaned up now and the fish are coming back.

Mona Martin — I fished Mill Dam in Brisbin in the summer and ice-skated there in the winter. They called it Mill Dam because of the old sawmill that was there. It burned down.

Arthur Geresh — I remember that I had a bad experience when I was seven years old. I fell out of the boat and into the water.

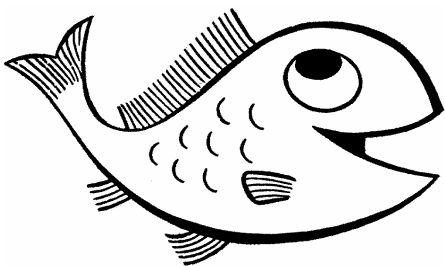
Ruth Love — I worked for the water company for 26 years. In the mid-eighties, Mountain Branch of Moshannon Creek developed Giardia and you had to boil your water until a new filtration plant was built.

Hubler Run
By Robert L. Carr
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I remember Hubler Run,
From Levi's Farm, flow,
Water under the sun,
Flow to the Low,
Friend tried to hook a fish,
The water streamed by,
I have a wish,
The fish and frog should not die,
By (W.B.) Sportsman Club to Alder,
That day was wet,
From the sky fell water,
Fishing pole and net,
Crayfish are common,
Once saw a turtle swim,
In the Hubler Run,
New life needs to begin.

Kettle Springs Run
By Robert L. Carr
Copyright©2003

Kettle Springs Run start,
West of spring road,
From Roy Evans farm's heart,
By the barn, a hay load,
Runs to the east,
Before the thirties,
Have a fish feast,
Fishing under the trees,
There was a drought,
The fish were all done,
There was no more trout,
In this little run,
The Nelson Road, under,
The waters going down,
To the Run of Alder,
The rushing water sound.



Wilhelm Run
By Robert L. Carr
Copyright©2003

Wilhelm Run starts in the trees,
West of the Spring Road,
In the dead leaves,
Would be a toad,
Like the stream to the north,
There were fish and frog,
Before my birth,
Flow thru swamp, maybe some fog,
Flow under the nelson,
The waters stream,
Some hunt with a gun,
I have a dream,
By Ernest's farm, water run,
From high to low,
The hike is fun,
More we need to know.

Big Run
By Robert L. Carr
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Big Run starts on a farm,
Where Martha and Lester,
Had a house and barn,
Down goes flowing water,
You can still find fish,
Hike along the stream,
Catch one for a dish,
Under the sun beam,
Some say fishing in the rain,
Will have more success,
Experience life's chain,
Except nothing less,
Flow thru the park,
Headed for the bay,
In light or dark,
By the stream, stay,
Fishing with a fly,
Under the road, to the river,
There is a camp close by,
More flowing water.

River Rats **By Martha A. McCloskey, Clearfield, PA**

“Come quick, The ice is starting to go out,” was a yearly cry at the McCloskey home on River Street, Clearfield, across from the dam. The old Susquehanna was up to its old tricks again! This was the same ice that Bill, Mack, Bob, and sometimes Fake played on all winter from the time it was frozen deep enough to carry their weight. When the spring thaw and rains came, the ice broke up and floated down stream. It would jam up at the dam and the apprehension of folks living near it was justified as the river sometimes overflowed its banks.

In summer, a different form of play occurred. The boys would try to walk the whole way across the river under the falls on a timber that was so slippery that sometimes their balance was lost and then it was difficult to conquer the undertow. They called themselves “River Rats” and sometimes would dive off the falls too.

Then came March 1936, and the rains were unceasing. The river became swollen, exceeding its banks, and filled many basements. Ole Tex, the McCloskey dog, paced up and down the cellar steps until there was no more room to pace. Someone came to his rescue and carried him to the second floor where he stayed in safety. Meanwhile, waters were rising on the first floor. Mother Dora McCloskey was rescued by Third Ward firemen whose boat was able to take her out a kitchen window, over the clothesline to higher ground.

At last, the waters stopped rising but not before the depth reached above the piano keys. That piano was salvaged and its oak wood was made into a beautiful sewing machine cabinet for me by my husband, Mack, who at one time had played in that very river. That was the only positive thing to come out of the '36 flood that I'm aware of.

And now the McCloskey house, which long ago had been the second Clearfield Hospital, was ready for cleanup.

Old Erie Pike **By Colleen Irwin, West Decatur**

Old Erie Pike was the stagecoach route between Erie and Philadelphia. Along the way were boarding houses for the horses to rest and lodging for the drivers and passengers. The original spring is still being used and provided enough water to supply two households.

Where the spring comes out of the ground, a log with a pipe pounded through it is still in place. Running through the property is a small stream named Albert Run. It still has pure water and if you are lucky enough to see them, some native trout.

The Straight Waters **By John Askey**

Roy Askey related to me, his son, now 82, how on “The Straight Waters”, located between Millers Landing and Karthaus, men built V-shaped “fish walls”. At the down-river narrow end of the wall

would be placed a “Fish Basket” in which the fish would be trapped. Yes, prior to 1900, our Susquehanna was home to various species of fish!

I recall that after W.W.II people fished above Moshannon Creek; in most instances there were fish in the Eddys below the mouth of the small pure feeder streams. Large Moshannon Creek has been a major source of polluted water for many decades. Rupley Run has become acidic also.

“Ring Rocks”, used by the early rafters to tie up their rafts, are still intact at Millers Landing, near the Kunes camp, and just above the Karthaus Bridge, on the Clearfield County side of the River. Rooms and meals were available for the rafters at those locations.

In 1936, before the building of the Curwensville Dam, torrential rains resulted in a devastating flood of the Susquehanna Valley. The Karthaus Bridge was destroyed. I was then 14, and recall John Miller and my brother, Millard Askey, coming from Millers Landing in a rowboat, built by John. Persons watching from the rivers edge were horrified as the two men dodged brush, railroad ties, and bridge remains, managing to “land” near the old freight station. Lloyd Hoover operated a ferry until the present bridge could be built.

“Moshannon Falls”, below the west end of the Karthaus Tunnel, continues to be a challenge and thrill for most canoers.

Robert Louis Stevenson, in 1879, wrote about the Susquehanna in the Harrisburg area (in his “Across the Plains”) –

“And when I asked the name of the river from the brakeman, and heard that it was called the Susquehanna, the beauty of the name seemed to be part and parcel of the beauty of the land. As when Adam with divine fitness named the creatures, so this word Susquehanna was at once accepted by the fancy. That was the name, as no other could be, for the shinning river and desirable valley”.

Don’t you agree?!!

Susquehanna River As told to Edith Hebel, Karthaus, PA

Harold Ditty, know better as “Bob” is a 92 year old man who was raised along the West Branch of the Susquehanna River at Cataract, about five miles below Karthaus, and has lived near it all his life.

“Bob” reports that he didn’t fish much; the River was already polluted from deep mining before he was born. There were some fish where the little feeder streams come into the River. His mother, however, told of how they used to stretch a string or wire across with short lines on it. Each morning before breakfast, they would go out with a boat or canoe to gather up the fish.

The community of Cataract was first named Buttermilk Falls. Then the New York Central Railroad came through from Keating to Irvona. The telegraph operators didn’t like that long name; they changed it to Cataract.

“Bob tells the story of his younger brother “Butch” taking off one day on the frozen river, on Bob’s

hockey skates. It was an easy but lengthy “sail” the 17½ miles to Keating, but without the wherewithal to eat and spend the night in the hotel there, he walked an even lengthier night back on the railroad, in his stocking feet.

“Bob” has identified a couple of sites which he feels indicate the long-ago presence of Indians — one a smoothly hollowed out place in a large rock a short distance up stream, probably used for grinding meal.

Today, he sees many canoeists making their way down the River — as many as 17 at one time. Some of the picturesque locations and streams they encounter on the way are Tinker, Belford, Buttermilk Falls, Cataract, Stone Quarry Hill, Upper Three Runs, Lower Runs, Lop Run, Spruce, and Birch.

The Susquehanna
By Betty Renoe McGovern, Keewaydin, PA
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She runs through our deep valleys and winds along her way,
Covering many, many miles from Carrolltown to the Bay.
You'd travel many places to see a more perfect view,
The big tall trees surround her, above the sky so blue.
Sometimes she's slow and lazy, other times she'll flood the land,
But she stays between the mountains carved out by God's own hand.
The Indians named her way back when the land was fairly new,
White men used her for logging, rafting and fishing too.
The trees all whisper to her as she flows along her way,
The moon turns her to gold at night; the sun warms her by day.
In winter when the snow falls and covers up the ground,
She skips along so quietly you never hear a sound.
Then comes spring thaw and run-off that pushes her along,
She rushed over rocks and sand and whispers her own song.
The weather's getting warm now, you'll hear her calling you;
There's no place more inviting for a man and his canoe.
There are many places to stop and camp, relax and be at ease,
Tonight the grass will be your bed, your roof the tall oak trees.
A serenade of crickets and frogs, maybe coyotes too,
When you awake you'll be refreshed and kissed by mountain dew.
On her banks you'll see animals, a buck or doe and fawn,
Maybe even a big black bear, you just keep paddling on.
Some places she has rapids capped with foam of white,
Then there's beautiful Buttermilk Falls, a riverman's delight.
She passes by many small towns as she travels on her way,
The most beautiful stretch around Karthaus, or so canoeists say.
I really love living here; I'll stay close by her side,
For she's the beautiful Susquehanna in whom we all take pride.

Red Moshannon Creek By Lyle Fowler, Philipsburg, PA

In the 1870's and beyond my Grandfather, Robert Fowler of Chester Hill fished for trout in the Red Moshannon Creek. My Father, Lyle Fowler, told this to me.

In the last 1800's Stiner Family had a logging place along the creek. The homes around this area is now known as Stiner Terrace. Many of the streets in Chester Hill Borough are named after the Stiner's youngsters and other family members.

There also was a Brickyard beside the Creek it was called Wigton. The Post Office was named Wigton. We have some Wigton bricks at home.



Moshannon Creek Down stream from the Route 53 Bridge.

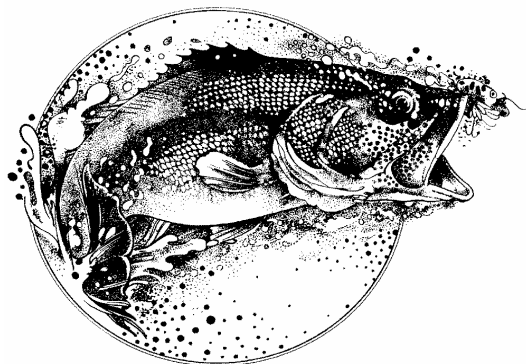
In the 40's we skinny-dipped, boys and girls together and there was no hanky panky. There were quite a few things flowing down the creek we called them Brown Trout, our family couldn't afford swimsuits. We also skated up to Houtzdale and down to Munson on our shoes.

The Railroad track passed over the Moshannon Creek just across Route 53 in Hudson. We would get in the manhole on the Bridge and the train would pass over us. One evening we went in the manhole and when the train went over us the fireman left out the hot coals, ambers, and ashes all over us. We helped each other to get them out. Nobody was hurt but we never got in there again.

Our Hudson song went like this:

"We are the Boys from Hudson and we aren't so very neat, we seldom wash and comb our hair and never wash our feet"

We had loads of fun around this creek. It would be nice to have recreation and fishing come back to this wonderful waterway.



**Story By William M Ammerman, J. Carl Ogden,
Charles A. Wuster and Gloria Ogden Warster
Clearfield, PA**

One significant influence on the history of Clearfield's Ogden family was the condition of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River and Moose Creek. The patriarch of the family was Daniel Ogden, a Revolutionary War Veteran. Daniel was the first white settler at the Indian village of Chincleclamoose. He came to their region with three of his sons by the way of the river.

According to the "History of Clearfield County Pennsylvania" (1887) as edited by Lewis Cass Aldrich: "In the year 1797 Mr. Ogden, with three of his sons, came to this place, ascending the West Branch in canoes. In this work they met with great difficulty. The channel in places was narrow and filled with rocks, rifts and water-soaked trees, and they were obliged frequently to unload and drag their empty canoes over these places, which hindered their progress considerably. They passed above the old Indian town, and made a landing on the site now occupied by Matthew S. Ogden, about half a mile south of Clearfield Court-House."

Daniel came to Clearfield seeking a new home after encountering hostility from Indians in Cherry Valley, New York. The condition of the Susquehanna River, with its obstacles and difficulty in navigation in 1797 influenced his decision to land at what would become Clearfield. While the river was rocky, the land was hospitable. Several references in the family's sources of history mention the area's "Cleared Fields". The condition of the river-combined with the inviting landscape—made the area a fine location for Daniel to establish his family and descendants.

In addition to the river as a source for transportation, Daniel and his son Matthew used local streams for their survival. The exact location along the river at which Daniel landed was a small stream south of the town of Clearfield. According to S.B. Row in Clearfield County: or, Reminiscences of the Past, Daniel and his sons after struggling with the river "...reached a small stream, about half a mile above the mouth of Chinklacamoose, on the opposite site of the river. Here Ogden made his improvements and home. He selected this location, believing it possessed advantage for the erection of a mill which he then contemplated, but he found afterwards that the stream was too small for the purpose." The stream which came to be known as Ogden's Run, today is located underground and empties into the river at the intersection of Everett Street and South Second Street. Abandoning building a mill at the area where Ogden Avenue is now, Daniel and Matthew located mills elsewhere, including one on Clearfield Creek. Numerous sources cite how Daniel and Matthew established a gristmill on Chinklacamoose Creek (now called Moose Creek). The millstones were later used in a mill located on Trout Run (See Clearfield County: Present and Past by Thomas Lincoln Wall, 1925).

Daniel and his descendants populated much of Clearfield County. To this day, many with the name Ogden or those descended from the same trace their lineage back to a man influenced by the tributaries of this region. Since the days of 1797, the Susquehanna River and its streams served as powerful avenues of transportation and commerce. Nevertheless, their condition over 200 years ago had a profound impact on both the Ogden family and the settlement that was to become the community of Clearfield.

By James Billotte, Frenchville, PA

This is a story of my father Desera Billotte born 1875. As a young man he worked on logging timber and worked on the rafts taking the logs to Lock Haven and Williamsport where the larger sawmills were at the time. Many times he told of tying up at the rock known as Ring Rock located at Karthaus.

By James Billotte, Frenchville, PA

My name is James Billotte, son of Desera Billotte and Lillie Roussey who were some of the early settlers of Frenchville which is located about 2 miles of the Susquehanna River. I remember my grandfather talking about taking horse and wagon to the river to catch and bring home a number of tubs and other containers of Shad (fish) to be cleaned and salted to be used for food. The way they caught the fish was by a basket attached to a pole that was attached to a post on the bank of the river and they would dip the fish out of the river and swing the basket of fish to the banks to be put in the tubs that were in the wagon. This was done for food and not as sport. Perhaps some day the Shad will come back and people can catch them for sport and food.

By Ed Lynch, West Deactur

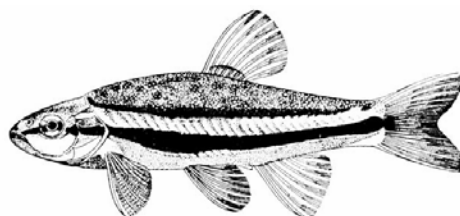
This story starts at a place on Montgomery Creek, called "Blue Hole" Time 10am, the first day of fishing season.

Fishing this creek is a great adventure because of the different fish encountered (2 kinds—Brook and Brown) and their response to the bait used, and the choice of residence. I always preferred to fish going up the creek to the water dam.

This particular day was unusual as I was able to catch a nice variety of both species. I have caught about half my limit when I reached a deep hole about a quarter mile below the barricade gate to the dam. After casting out my line into the center of the deep hole my bait was suddenly taken and the spool spun line out at least 25 to 30 feet across the pool upstream. I knew I had something big! After about (I thought it was at least an hour) of releasing and reeling in I did the "KID" thing and jerked it onto shore I sure was lucky I didn't lose it. There it was an 18" brook trout the biggest fish I ever caught even to this day.

During my lifetime of fishing this creek I probably caught at least 100 legal fish and some others, but none as thrilling as this one.

Incidentally the "Water Dam" fishing was very good but a bit illegal, but at 14 to 17 years old I never gave it much thought and did it anyway. Many Times.



Keepers

By: Ken Undercoffer

I started fishing the local streams as a kid of about 12 in the late 1940s. My sister, Lynda, and I fished the little tributary to the River that runs down past the Country Club in Hyde. This was not high-class fishing, as you might guess, but we enjoyed it, nevertheless. We caught lots of chubs and occasionally a sucker. Parker Dam was another favorite place. In those early days, anything that would attach itself to my line was fair game. It didn't matter how big, or what kind ... catfish, chubs, sunfish, whatever, as long as not too much time elapsed between fish. But it didn't take long before I began to seek other more worthy adversaries, namely trout. Kids from Clearfield grew up listening to their elders' tales of trout fishing. I wanted to catch a trout in the worst kind of way.

My classmate, Bob Clark, was an occasional fishing buddy in those days. His mother, Naomi, an occasional trout angler herself, told me that a few days before, she had been fishing in Moose Creek, just above 'Six-Mile-Bridge.' Every time she dropped a worm into the four-foot deep water of the pool above the bridge, several brookies would dart out from under the washed-out roots of a stump to take the bait. Over and over again they snatched worms from her hook without ever managing to get themselves hooked. Well, I was the one who got hooked.

A few days later my parents dropped me off at the 'Six-Mile-Bridge' on their way out to camp. They promised to come back in a couple of hours and wished me luck. I snuggled down next to the fabled stump, impaled a worm on the hook and dropped it into the water, inches from the sunken roots, watching intently as it slowly sunk toward the bottom. Sure enough, about half way down, several brookies darted out and before I knew what had happened, stripped the worm from the hook. I put on another and got the same result, then nothing. Either the fish had tired of the game or, more likely, they had spotted me lurking above and decided to lay low for awhile.

I finally gave up and tried a couple of holes downstream without any luck. But the vision of those fish flashing out from under the roots to snatch worms from my hook persisted. After a half hour or so, I returned to the hole above the bridge and crept carefully up to the stump under which these elusive trout were surely hiding, just waiting for another free meal. Well, not this time! I threaded a small piece of worm onto the barb of the hook so that not even the tiniest piece dangled from the point. This was not the proper way of course - everyone knows that one must leave a little bit of the tail dangle loose so that it can wiggle and entice the trout to strike. But I was determined that if any of these fish grabbed any part of that worm, he would also be forced to grab the business end of the hook as well. Once again, I dropped the bait down between the submerged roots and watched it slowly sink. Sure enough, just as the worm reached the bottom, a brookie shot out from its hiding place under the roots and promptly impaled itself on the hook. I unceremoniously jerked the wiggling fish onto the bank and pounced on it with no less ferocity than a cat on a hapless mouse. He just reached the six-inch mark on my rod. He was a keeper! I quickly broke his neck and, after admiring the beautiful red speckles surrounded by blue halos on his sides and the brilliant red belly and lower fins, carefully placed him under a stone in the water upstream from the stump and went back to catch another. Every so often I would sneak upstream, raise the stone and pull out the tiny gem hidden there, just to make sure that he really was big enough to keep. I continued to fish there by the stump, but didn't see another fish, probably because I had managed to terrify every other trout in the hole with the commotion.

After a while, two other fishermen came sneaking upstream toward me. One crouched carefully just below my hole and with intermittent false casts deftly dropped a small dry fly several times up into the pool. The last cast landed in the water three feet from where I crouched. None produced even a hint of interest from any of the denizens lurking below the stump. I can't begin to describe how smug I felt. With all their obvious skills, they couldn't catch a fish from this place. One even had the audacity to ask me how they were biting. "Not so well," I said . . . not about to tell this 'dandy' that underneath the roots of the very stump where I crouched was a cornucopia of trout - him with his high-faluten dry flies and fancy bamboo rod. These fish wanted worms, as any self-respecting fisherman, especially one who had just caught his first keeper, well knew. I couldn't imagine, in my wildest dreams, ever fishing the way they were and catching fish with something as silly as that tiny hook wrapped in feathers. How little I knew!

At first I was pretty much limited to streams reachable by bicycle: Moose Creek, Montgomery Creek and, after a few years, Lick Run near the SR 879 bridge. These streams were all stocked, but also held their share of native brook trout, which quickly became my favorites. Brookies were usually willing to hit a worm, sawyer or just about anything else edible attached to a hook and cast into the water. This made them great fare for a young boy's short attention span. When a buddy would catch a trout the other would holler: "is it a keeper!" If it was, it went into the creel to bring home for bragging rights. And when the brookies weren't biting, catching frogs, crayfish, and turning over rocks to see what sort of creatures were living there occupied the hours. Trout fishing, even then, was about a lot more than just catching fish.

Growing Up as a Trout Fisherman **by: Ken Undercoffer**

I discovered fly fishing in my teens. Uncle Kip Gourley was my mentor. He was one of the best fly anglers in the County and taught me the basics of fly fishing and fly tying.

By the time I was in my mid teens I was pretty much hooked. After school left out in early June, Gawaine Adam and I would camp out on the upper end of Trout Run for a week. We slept in a tent pitched in the grass beside Ireland's Skid Camp. The Irelands had graciously allowed us to do this each year. We would start out in the morning at sunrise. A whippoorwill in the big oak beside our tent served as an alarm clock, never failing to wake us at the crack of dawn. They still give me goose bumps when I hear them call. Every day, we would fish up Trout Run and then way up Cold Stream. Late in the afternoon we hiked back downstream to camp, totally exhausted, and fell into bed as the whippoorwill called again. The brookies were small but plentiful. Each day we would catch a few 'keepers' which we brought back and put in a cooler submerged in the camp's spring. We didn't often bother to cook and eat them. Catching was a lot more fun than cooking. Sometimes, when my father came out to check up on us, they got cooked and eaten. However, he didn't join us as he just wouldn't eat fish, fresh caught or otherwise.

Late one afternoon, we were sitting on the swinging bridge below Ireland's Skid Camp taking a much needed rest. I noticed a trout rising on the far side of the stream above the bridge, where the current curled around a flat rock sticking out from the shore. I knew by then that rising trout could seldom be caught on bait, so I put on a #14 Adams and managed to get a good drift right over the spot where he last rose. He took the fly immediately and after a brief struggle I had my first wild brown trout taken on a fly. He was 9 inches long and absolutely gorgeous, not at all like



the pallid stocked browns that we occasionally caught ... yellow tinged with crimson, large red spots on the sides and a solid red adipose fin.

I continued to fish with bait after that but increasingly turned to flies. Any method that could catch fish like that wild Trout Run brownie was worth pursuing.

We caught brown trout from time to time in the freestone streams around Clearfield, but they were not very common and usually freshly stocked. I don't remember ever catching a fingerling sized brown trout in any of the local freestone streams in those days, so natural reproduction of browns must have been very scant.

Native brookies were the common fare. Although plentiful, they were small, seldom reaching even 7 inches. The biggest I ever caught in those days was one of 9 inches in the upper end of Mosquito Creek. When the minimum size limit was six inches, brook trout seemed to stop growing at 5 7/8 inches. After it was raised to 7 inches, they seemed to stop growing at 6 7/8 inches. This phenomenon led to the realization that fishing pressure might be the factor limiting their ultimate size.

At some point I began to realize that it was silly to keep killing these beautiful fish and taking them home where they usually languished in the freezer for a few months until mother threw their freezer-burned remains into the trash. So I started releasing most everything I caught.

When I became old enough to drive, my trout fishing experiences expanded to include the wonderful limestone streams in the State College and Bellefonte area, which were mostly inhabited by brown trout. But I never lost the memory or the love of native brookies. As a matter of fact, over the years my fondness for them has grown.

I left Clearfield in 1962 to take employment in Virginia and pretty much gave up trout fishing for the next 17 years. Bass fishing filled the gap. I returned to live in Greensburg, Pennsylvania in 1979 and my interest in trout fishing was quickly rekindled. At first, I fished mostly in the stocked project waters. But eventually I tired of catching the pale, factory-raised versions of trout, and my efforts turned more and more toward the pursuit of wild trout bred and born in the stream and especially native brookies.

A few years after moving back to PA, I started fishing the streams around Clearfield again. Lick Run, Trout Run, Moose Creek and Mosquito Creek were taken off the stocking list in the early 1980s because of the effects of acid rain. Hatchery trout just could not take the shock of being transplanted into these low pH waters and quickly died. Moose Creek was recently added back to the stocking program, somewhat to my dismay.

Brown trout are especially sensitive to the effects of acid rain and are gone from the local streams, as far as I can tell. Eliminating competition from hatchery trout and the extreme angling pressure it attracts helps brook trout a lot. Wild brook trout fishing now is even better than it was when I was young. If one is willing to walk a ways from the road, brookies from 8 to 9 inches are not unusual. Individuals to 10 and even 11 inches turn up from time to time. It takes 6 or more years for brookies to grow to this size in these infertile waters, so even light harvesting severely limits their ultimate size.

But acid precipitation has taken a terrible toll. The headwaters of many of my old haunts are pretty much devoid of even the acid-resistant brookies. Brookies no longer swim in Alex Branch much above its confluence with Trout Run. The headwaters of Mosquito Creek hold few brookies and the headwaters of Lick Run are probably similarly affected. But brookies are still hanging on in all these streams farther downstream where the water is less acidic.

The Allegheny Mountain Chapter of Trout Unlimited recently received a Coldwater Heritage Grant to assess the upper end of Lick Run, above Stone Run, to determine the effects of acid rain there. Brook trout still live at least as far up as Doctors Fork, but recent shocking data indicate that the population declines drastically upstream in the Doctors Fork area. Hopefully, advancing acid precipitation remediation techniques can be used to restore our local streams to their once great status as native brook trout waters.

Brook trout are the only salmonid native to the streams of Pennsylvania and our state fish. They are said to be one of the prettiest freshwater fish in the world. Although they are still living and reproducing in many of our mountain streams, as an indicator species, their decline tells us that all is not well in the mountains of Pennsylvania. We have not lost them as a species, but we have

Fishing Memories

My name is "Cal" Weisgarber and am now 81 years old.

I started fishing when I was about 6 years old in the streams around Irishtown, Walltown, Curwensville, Olanta, and New Millport, PA. Practically every stream had trout in them and some also bass and pickerel.

I can still remember when Anderson Creek was full of trout. About 1936 on the 1st day of trout season my father Harry Weisgarber and I started at the bridge near North American Refractory and fished up stream. Even through it was cold and there was ice along the edges of the creek we caught brook trout all morning.

I spent all my summers largely at my grandfather and grandmother Weisgarber's farm at Irishtown. There were many streams in the area and I fished them all. Daily Run, Irish Run, Heilbern Run, Poplar Run, Curry Run, and several branches of Bell Run of which I don't know their names. Every stream no matter how small held brook trout right up to the springs where they originated.

My grandmother loved trout for breakfast and it was a rare morning that I did not have eight or ten of them ready and soaking in salt water for her to fry. How beautiful they were with the colorful spots and pink meat.

As a boy I was used to hooking a trout and just throwing them back over my shoulder as most were not over 6 or 8" long. Dad had a beautiful 3 pc. Bamboo rod that he prized and I wasn't to use it, one day I sneaked it out and went down to Bell Run to the Paint Springs area. I hooked one and tried to throw it over my shoulder as I was used to doing, but this one must have been about 18" long and it broke the rod tip. I hid the rod for a while but eventually had to confess to my guilt.

The following stories are from John C. "Cal" Weisgarber, Sr.:

Some Saturdays when dad was off work, he, my two Schultz cousins, and myself would go down to the Beaver Dams at the headwaters of Curry Run. We always took two large lard cans of about 5 gallon size each, and would fill one with trout and the other with the larger of the horny chubs that we caught. Many of them would be 10" to 12" long and granddad loved them.

I remember hooking into a large eel one day and when I pulled it in I thought it was a snake and was so scared I fell down over the breast of the dam. This was the only eel I ever caught in the U.S.A.

As a very young boy I lived next door to a Mr. John Myers on Center Street in Curwensville, PA and he was a teamster for hire and kept horses. He used to tell me how in the latter part of the 1800's they used to net Shad out of the Susquehanna River near where Irwin Park is now located. He said they would take barrels and would salt them down. He said it was nothing to net several barrels of Shad in a few hours.

I can still remember when the limit of trout per day was 35.

Three of my uncles from Portage, PA would often come in on a weekend to my Grandfather and Grandmother Derrick's home at Grampian, and they would often have a large washtub of trout to clean in the evening.

About 1985 I discovered that the streams that run through Houtzdale to Osceola were full of trout of all kinds. All that time there were so many that I thought it looked like a hatchery. I caught brook trout, brown trout, and Palomino and rainbow. One fall day during the limited season on large night crawlers I caught a 20" Rainbow, a 17" Rainbow and a 17 1/2" Native Brook Trout, and I have proof of this as I stopped at the Curwensville American Legion Post and had them measure the brook trout so no one could call me a liar.

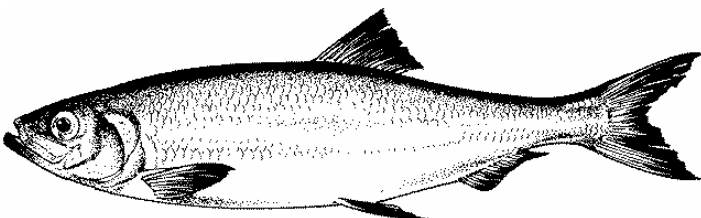
I used to live along the West Branch of the Susquehanna just above the Bridge near the Curwensville football field right on the river's edge.

One day I returned home after work and my boy Bob or "Beetle" as we used to call him said, "Dad look in the bucket down in the garage." I looked and in it he had 6 nice trout. I asked him where he caught them and he said out back of the house just above the bridge. I then told him as soon as I eat supper I am going to Carfley's Bait Shop and got a pack of night crawlers, and if you can catch 6 I can catch the limit of 8 before dark, and I did. I had Brooks, Browns, and Rainbows but I caught the 8 of them. I also later caught an 18" brown Trout in the same area.

The West Branch of the Susquehanna is one of the best streams in Pennsylvania for trout as well as bass, pickerel, muskies and many other species.

A smallmouth bass within a 3/4 inch of the state record was caught under the bridge at Irwin Park, and I caught many pickerel up to 17 inches long just upstream from that spot.

I have been monitoring streams in my area for about a year, and I have found every feeder



stream from Anderson Creek up to and including Haslett Run having a pH capable of holding trout, even Bigler run. Kratzer Run that parallels the road from Grampian to Curwensville is full of trout, and I have caught Brook and Rainbow trout up to 12" long in it.

Bell Run above Walltown even in the red water has brook and Brown Trout in it as I have caught them recently.

Shortly after World War II I used to fish Little Clearfield Creek from Olanta to O'shanter for small mouth bass and almost every large hole would yield a very nice fish, especially when I used soft shelled crabs for bait. I don't think today there are any Bass left in Clearfield Creek. It also used to have very many quite large Chain Pickerel in it as I caught quite a few around Kerrmore Area.

During 1940 to 1943 before I went into the service I worked at Franklin Tannery Company and had a job where I was done by 7:00am so I went fishing almost everyday, mostly to Poplar Run near Irishtown. I would bet anyone that I could catch the limit of 10 on any given day, but I got no takers, as they knew I could do it.

Most of the streams I have spoken about now have fish in them but not in the numbers or varieties I have spoken about, but they are coming back.

I never thought I would see the West Branch of the Susquehanna in the pristine shape it is in now. When I was a boy the water was so bad it burned your eyes when swimming in it.

"Cal" Weisgarber — I remember in the very early 1940's fishing with Dick Traister on Watts Branch at Kerrmore. We would drop one of us off near the Watt's farm and then the other one of us would go down to the lower end and fish towards one another. Then the one that got to the car would pick the other one of us up.

At that time Watt's Branch was full of Brook Trout and an occasional Brown Trout up to 18" long.

Little Clearfield Creek was excellent too. I remember one afternoon at a hole between Kerrmore and New Millport of a hatch of mayflies coming off. There was not a fish to be seen until the hatch came off and then the waters practically boiled with trout for about an hour. I have experienced the same thing on Spring Creek on the Penitentiary grounds.

"Cal" Weisgarber — Dick Traister and several of us from the tannery would drive down to the Grassflat Area to a place called the Coke Oven on Black Moshannon Creek. This was in the days before spinning rods and spinners were common.

We would use fly rods and Devon Minnow Spinners from England. They had too many gang hooks to be legal so we had to cut a set off. Many are the trout we caught this way. Also we used these many times on Mosquito Creek.

I remember one afternoon in the 40's we had a sudden thundershower and "Kip" Gourley who had a Cabinet Shop on the corner of Thompson and State street said "Cal, let's go to Mosquito Creek." I had never fished wet flies before but he rigged me up with two wet flies, and in almost every hole and long ripple we would catch a trout, and sometimes two in the area called Blackwell Dam.

"Cal" Weisgarber — I remember on 1st day of fishing season very many years ago I went to Parker Dam. There were so many people there and no one was catching anything that I decided to go up

the left hand branch called Mud Run.

I couldn't catch anything on worms so I decided to catch some stick worms and in doing so I found quite a few large yellow larvae with quill tails of which I still don't know what they were, but this is what the fish wanted. I caught quite a few trout on them in Mud Run, and then went back to the dam, and was the only one catching fish.

I sure had quite a crowd around me asking what I was using for bait.

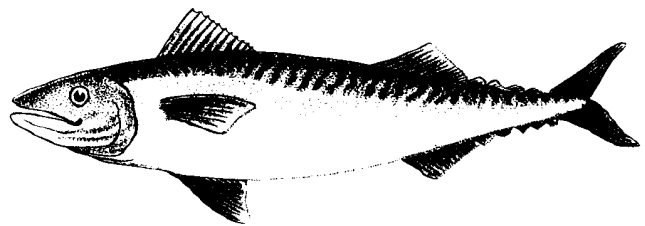
"Cal" Weisgarber — One evening about in 1985 I got a brand new ultra lite spinning outfit and I put on a brand new gold Thomas spinner. I went upstream from my house on the West Branch of Susquehanna River to just opposite where Anderson Creek empties in. There was a large deep hole under the far bank and I crawled over into it and became stuck. The lure would not come back. Being too deep to wade into retrieve it I put the rod tip down and proceeded to break off the lure, when all of the sudden a muskie about three feet long broke the water about a yard high. I had my hand full for about ½ an hour, and had pulled him into shallow water to net him when some kid who had been fishing near by said "I'll net him!! I'll net him!!" And proceeded to knock the lure out of his mouth. I'll never forget that big stripped Tiger Muskie. That same night across from Franklin Tannery near the old swing bridge I hooked into another one that I couldn't stop. He stripped everything lure and all off.

There are some record-breaking fish in that river.

While fishing for Chain Pickerel where the spillway water from Curwensville Dam empties into the old riverbed I was fishing with a jointed Rapalla Plug big as a banana when the largest Brown Trout I ever seen followed it in, and I believe he would have taken it if it hadn't caught in some weeds grounding up out of the water. When that fish turned it splashed water on my son "Beetle" from its tail as he was standing on the bank near by.

Miles Appleton was fishing close by and I asked Miles if he has seen what happened and Miles said that he has previously had that fish on but could not handle him. I fished there many times afterwards but never saw the fish again.

"Cal" Weisgarber — Many years ago probably about 1960 Charlie Brocail and I sent away to Harters Company to get Blanks to build spinning rods. We got them made and wrapped and they were probably the best spinning rods I ever had.



One hot day we were down on the Kinzua about where the dam is today and I was using soft shell crabs for Walleye for bait when I got a strike like a freight train. I had 200 yards of spinning line on with crocket thread for backing. That fish ran out the line and did not stop until I could see that crocket thread backing. I couldn't get him to move so we started throwing stones to move him. After about two hours I finally got him in and it was a 36" carp. I remember a schoolteacher and some of her pupils watching me.

As soon as I got the fish off I found I was out of crabs. I spotted a big red dead crab along the edge and used it. As soon as it hit the water the same thing happened and I was almost two more hours landing another 30" carp this time.

The wear on my rod tip eye was almost halfway thru the guide from the pressure on that line for almost 4 hours.

Right after I got home from World War II dad and I would often on Sunday fish Fenton Run that empties into Bilger Run. Dad usually fished up and I would go down towards Bilger. We almost always got our limit of beautiful Brook Trout. There was a very large hole near the end where I fished, with a large rock in it. I would sneak up on my hands and knees and was certain I could catch 2 and sometimes 3 trout out of this hole. I mostly used grasshoppers. Today there are no Trout in Fenton Run to my knowledge.

“Cal” Weisgarber — Many people never knew there were brook trout in Roaring Run that crosses the road just before North American Refractory. This was a pristine creek with many nice holes with sand stone in them from the quarry that runs up though that valley. I remember catching a 12” native Brook Trout just below the road just before it empties in Anderson Creek.

Shortly after our dam was finished I remember fishing for small mouth bass near the breast of the dam just where a small creek empties in from an area called #19 mine.

I used green and black floating flat fish lures and I caught bass up to 18”long until my arms were tired. Some of there plugs were chewed almost half way thru.

Later on, carp moved into their area so thick you could almost walk on them and spoiled my good luck.

“Cal” Weisgarber — When I was about 14 or 15 years old on Saturdays a bunch of us kids would walk up to Clearfield Creek at Olanta, and take our lunch along. We always just used forked sticks and set our rods on them and waited for the bobber to go down. We caught quite a few fish this way and we would spend all day. I remember one day I got a hit on my old steel telescope rod and black silk line, and started hauling the fish in. I pulled it up over the bank and it was so big it scared me and the kid I was with. I hollered to him to get it but he was afraid of it and it got away. As I remember it was probably a bass and about two feet long. This was in the hole just above the Olanta Bridge.

Probably about the same year I was fishing by myself in the lower end of Watts Branch at Kerrmore, when I saw a very large fish jump and take a dragon fly, so I went over and hooked into the largest chain pickerel I had ever seen.

He was so big I couldn’t get him out. Later that fish just lay in there glaring at me but wouldn’t bite again. That fish was well over two feet long.

In the very early 1940’s I was friends with “Tiger” Domico and we both worked at the tannery at that time.

Tiger loved to fish, and probably was the best fly fisherman I have ever known. Tiger didn’t drive but as I had a car I would take him on Saturday and Sundays to the fisherman’s Paradise at Bellefonte. Tiger loved to fish long streamers and malibaes and could handle up to 60 feet of line and lay it down perfectly wherever he wanted it, and he caught very many very large fish.

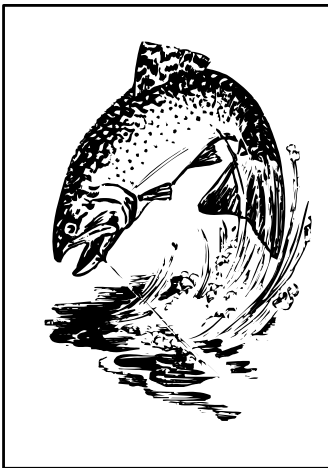
One day the fish were rising but wouldn't hit anything. I tried probably 20 different flies but nothing worked, I went to their tackle shop and bought a #20 Black Dust with two red quill tails on it. We had to fish with barbless hooks and I remember catching about an 18" trout on that fly shortly afterwards.

"Cal" Weisgarber — One summer I had to have my hemorrhoids removed and Dr. Elmo Erhard told me not to do any heavy work for about three months. I asked him if I could fish and he said that was ok. I used to go out 12-mile road near the state tree nursery where there was a stone camp. I didn't know what the name of the stream was that crosses the road at that point, but in the 1950's it was a very fine brook trout stream with several beaver dams on it.

I remember one day when the stream seemed dead and you couldn't see a fish shortly after a freak thunderstorm came up and it even snowed a few flakes, this in June or July, and immediately I could catch a fish almost anywhere I dropped my bait.

One day I saw a nice trout jumping in one of the Beaver Dams but I couldn't get him to bite. That evening I went back with dry flies and caught two very nice trout, one at least a foot long. I remember the one fish jumped when I hooked him and he tangled the leader over a stick sticking out of the water, and I walked out on the breast of the dam and untangled the leader and landed the trout. I never thought he would stay on.

Enough of this reminiscing. I could go on forever, but it would get to be boring.



By: Ronald Hoover, Natrona Heights, PA

I was a teenager and spent a lot of time on Merlin Hess's dairy farm. He told the story of when he was a teenager. His father owned a farm near the Stoneville Cemetery and he would walk up Big Clearfield Creek to where Morgan Run emptied in and would go fishing. He told one time they went at night using lanterns for light and fished for fresh water eels and on this night they filled a bushel basket full of eels. On another occasion he told of fishing for native brookies in Morgan Run. Near where the old grist mill was he would catch 12 to 14 inch natives. He would tell stories also of when the Shad would run on Clearfield

Creek and how people would camp along where Morgan Run emptied into Clearfield Creek to catch Shad as they would swim up River. He said whole families would camp and fish for the Shad. This occurred some where around 1920 to 1925.

My grandfather Ken Knepp lived in Krebs by the old brickyard when my mom (Wanda Hoover) was a young girl. He would fish for Native Brook Trout in Long Run, for food for his family. My mother tells the story of one day he took all of his kids with him, which was 9. He did not catch a fish, he told the kids they made too much noise and scared away all the fish. This occurred sometime between 1935 and 1940.

Fishing in Anderson Creek
By George Kirk
Pioneer History of Brady Township

Our first fishing trip down Anderson Creek was in the month of June 1853 and continued yearly up to and including the year 1861. During these years, with the exception of small improvements, the one at the Moore Mills and the other at the Hollopeter and Johnson Woolen Mills, about a half mile further up the creek, Anderson Creek wound its way through an unbroken forest of Pine, Hemlock and other kinds of timber, from its source then in Huston, now in Pine Township, to the village of Bridgeport, about two miles west of Curwensville.

When fishing either up or down the creek, there was seldom any chance to walk along on the bank of the stream on account of the density of the rhododendron, which covered the valley and hillsides of this creek, as well as of its tributaries for their entire length, as well as on account of the rattlesnakes, which were very numerous in places and could be heard frequently on either side along the shore.

The creek had to be waded, as in many places the rhododendron was so dense that it was impossible to get through it on the shore, and in many places you were compelled to lie down in the water, which was very cold from the melting snow and ice, that could be found in abundance under the heavy growth of timber and in the laurel beds in June and July and creep under the laurel, with you head out of water, as it was almost impossible to get through any other way and be safe from the rattlers.

We used a rod about three feet long and a line on which a fish nook was made fast, of about the same length as the rod. This line, when fishing down stream, you would let float in the water ahead of you, and when a trout took hold of the bait, it would always start up the stream toward you, and then you could take it loose from the hook.

Quite often, if they were a foot or more in length they would get away from you as you did not have much chance to secure them, with only your head out of the water, and the line sometimes tangled in the laurel that often hung over the water in a tangled mass.

Sometimes you would get a nice eel, but you might consider yourself fortunate if it did not get away from you, as they were not so readily handled in the water as a trout. Besides, if they got a good hold on your finger, they would pinch it pretty hard, hard enough to bring the blood. As a rule you would get the largest trout in this way, and quite a few of them would be from ten to fourteen inches in length.

We would start to fish down the creek at the Moore Mills, and when we would get down to the mouth of Little Anderson Creek, we would from thence set outlines for eels at any convenient place along the creek.

For these fishing lines, other would use the very best of the flax to spin into linen threads to make these outlines, as well as fishing lines and fishing nets. This thread would be cut into lengths, so that if four of them were braided together the line would be about three feet long, and so strong that the largest eel or fish in the creek could not break them. These lines on which an eel hook was made fast, were tied to a stick about six feet long, sharpened at one end to stick into the ground or a heavy stone laid thereon.

The best hole for eels on the creek, between Moore's Mills and Bloom's Run, was where a large flat rock sloped down into the water at an angle of about sixty degrees, the creek, at this point making a sharp turn to the right, causing the water to thus react, forming a deep pool, or hole about ten feet deep, in which the eels could gather, and frequently we would get five or six eels at this place, the next morning.

This rock and pool are still there, and can be seen from the B.R. and P. train. In fishing for trout we always used the same sized hook that we did for eels, for by so doing a small fish seldom got fast on the hook. I still have in my possession a few of the hooks I used in those days long since gone.

Our camping ground was at the mouth of Bloom's Run, where we would stay all night, sleeping on a bed of Hemlock boughs under the spreading branches of a large hemlock tree, with a good fire in front of us, build against a rock for a back wall.

Mother would always see to having our knapsacks well packed with bread and plenty of butter, for she well knew that we loved broiled trout and eels with plenty of butter thereon.

The first thing to do after getting to our camping place was to build a good fire of hardwood, so we could have a large bed of hot coals, over which we would broil trout for supper.

For our breakfast we had the same bill of fare, varied sometimes with a broiled eel. We always made it a point before retiring for the night, to clean and salt the fish and eels we had caught during the day, and hang them up on a very small sapling, so that if Mr. Coon, who was always fond of fresh fish, came around he could not get them.

Even now, although more than seventy eventful years have come and gone, memory will carry me back to those happy carefree days of long ago which often come to my mind that were spent not only fishing on Anderson Creek, but other streams as well. The next day would find us fishing back up the creek, lifting out outlines as we went. By the time we would arrive at the mouth of the Little Creek, we would have a nice lot of eels, that would average about two feet in length.

By Carl Undercofler, Woodland, PA

I was born and raised in Bradford Township, Clearfield County. My idol was Mark Twain and my heroes were Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn.

Just relax and let your imagination take control. What a fascinating experience to spend warm relaxing days on the Mississippi, floating and catching large fighting fish. Maybe a large pike, a luscious walleye or even a sturgeon.

Back to reality, we have no Mississippi, we have the Susquehanna River and it is dead. Although my father, who was born in 1894, recalled of Shad runs in this beautiful river, it has been dead for many years because of the coal mines in Cambria and Clearfield Counties. These coal mines were a major source of income to these counties.

We still had a couple of good Trout Streams in Bradford Township, and following Huckleberry Finn's example I laid a plan to "Go Fishing". Millstone Run was one of these streams and a classmate lived

near Millstone.

At 11 years old I had never played hooky but as I said Huck was my Inspiration. My classmate was “Wig” Wallace and loved the outdoors, so everything fell in place. Instead of riding my bike to the Woodland School one morning, I rode the 4 or 5 miles to Shiloh and Millstone Run.

“Wig” taught me things about the outdoors that were fascinating. He even showed me a partial carcass of a brook trout lying on a stone. It had been caught by a “coon” and made a tasty lunch for him. After 50 years this is still painted in my mind.

Wig and I had a wonderful day catching native brook trout and enjoying the great outdoors. All the trout were returned to the water unharmed. Like wise, I returned to school the next day unharmed but the fear of getting caught prevented any more hooky.

Forcey Run entered Roaring Run between Woodland and Bigler. This stream had a good supply of horny chubs and minnows. In the summer I frequently traveled the 2 miles on foot with net and bucket in hand to catch minnows. I sold these minnows to a local fisherman who caught trout with them.

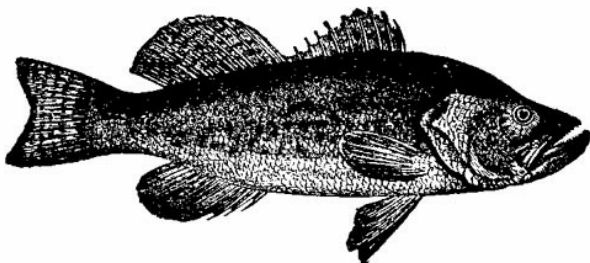
Roaring Run had limited aquatic life at this time because of clay mines in the area. Small quantities of fish were sometimes seen both above and below the Forcey Run confluence. This entire watershed – Roaring Run, Valley Fork and Forcey Run are now dead. This appears to be the most polluted watershed in Clearfield County.

At the time of this writing I can find only three streams in Bradford Township with water quality good enough to support fish.

Trout Run was a 5-mile bicycle ride in the late 1940’s but was managed frequently on Saturdays and some Sundays. The fishing fun was always worth the long ride. After arriving at Trout run it was not unusual to fish two or three mile of stream. Made for a long day but was almost always productive. If a trout could not be hooked, suckers were abundant and fun to catch.

Little Trout Run was just up the road another mile from Trout Run. This was a very remote stream with lots of native brook trout. Stream banks were thick with laurel and very difficult to get through. Sometime it was necessary to crawl through the laurel on hands and knees to catch an unsuspected brookie. However a face-to-face encounter with a rattlesnake changed my whole perspective on Little Trout Run. This 30’ foot rattler that I remember was actually only about 3’ feet long.

Both Trout Run and Little Trout Run are now affected by Acid Rain and have limited populations of native Brook Trout.



James Run in Boggs Township, a Tributary to Morgan Run was another favorite for Native Brook Trout but a few years of drought and a victim of Acid rain have most likely killed any fish in this 1st order stream. It does not suffer from acid mine drainage in the headwaters and has some macroinvertebrate life.

Emigh Run headwaters are near the village of Wallace. This small coldwater stream produced Chubs & Minnows downstream until an impoundment formed the Morrisdale Dam. Morrisdale had an abundant supply of panfish. This was too far away to walk or bicycle but I still made occasional summer trips catching mostly sunfish.

Emigh Run exited the Morrisdale Dam and flowed through the village of Hawk Run and joined Moshannon Creek. Moshannon Creek serves as the border between Clearfield & Centre County.

Emigh Run is now the victim of the Coal Industry but present remaining operations in the headwaters will hopefully improve water quality. Also West Branch School students are presently monitoring this stream & gaining awareness of our environment. Several grants have been awarded for assessment and clean up of this stream. This in turn will lessen the pollution entering Moshannon Creek.

My recollections here paint a rather dark picture. However, one must remember my remarks about the Susquehanna. This once dead river produces fish from above the Curwensville dam to at least Gallows Harbor. Water quality from Curwensville to Clearfield is very good. A concentrated effort to clean up Clearfield Creek would mean a great deal to the Susquehanna and the results would be felt as far down river as the Chesapeake Bay.

Around 1929 there was a devastating fire in Woodland. It virtually destroyed Main Street including several Motels. Harbison & Walker then built the Woodland Pond for fire protection. It was not used for water at brickyard. This body of water was for me a place of year round recreation swimming all summer long, Ice skating when ice was present and most of all fishing whenever I could get a line in the water. Large Bluegills were very abundant as well as Yellow Perch and Brown Bullheads. All three varieties are very tasty and supplied many a good meal.

After an accidental drowning and liability concerns the "pond" was drained in the mid 1980's. It remained drained and became very unsightly until 1997 when an effort was made to clean up the area and refill the "pond". It was refilled in the spring of 1998 and has been stocked with various species including large and smallmouth bass and trout. A kids fishing derby is held each June with a good turn out of kids and parents. After Derby Day the "Pond" is open to the public.

Clearfield Creek, by Dorothy Bloom, Clearfield

My husband's parents lived along Clearfield Creek near Belsena. They would catch fish in Clearfield Creek to feed people that worked for their lumber company. They would take a string with hooks on it and stretch it across Clearfield Creek. They would catch the fish and have them for breakfast. My husband and I lived in Faunce. I remember Clearfield Creek becoming polluted due to mining in the area. One time in the 1960's I remember my husband killing a snake and finding a fish in its mouth. He could not figure out where the snake could have found a fish in the area. We discovered later that something happened at Glendale pond and fish were released. Somehow they found their way to the unpolluted streams in the area. Also in the 1960's there was a mill pond along Morgan Run. Morgan Run was polluted at the time but not the pond. My husband would put fish in it. I remember Cherry Run always being free of pollution.

“Triple S Cocktail” excerpt from “Journey Into Spring”, by Bill Gilbert – Article from The Progress printed Friday, May 26, 1978

The author of this article recalls a canoe trip down the West Branch of the Susquehanna. He refers to the area where Clearfield Creek enters as the “Triple S Cocktail”. This is because at this area of the West Branch at this time would be 3 different colors. First was the clear water on the north bank. Then came the whitish, opaque sewage in the middle due to the outflow from the Clearfield Sewage Treatment Plant. On the south side of the bank of the West Branch, thanks to Clearfield Creek’s input is the odd yellow color like liquid topaz due to the pollution of mining along this watershed. Eventually the three mix and fish, amphibians and birds along the river disappear. The last thing the author remembers seeing is a sucker that was washed down into the mess and was swimming on its side trying to move back up stream.

Streams in Clearfield County, by Bill Lanager, Clearfield

The following streams are ones I know used to have trout in. I am not sure they do now but I believe most do.

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| Little Laurel Run | Trout Run |
| Woods Run | Roberts Run |
| Alex Branch | Crooked Run |
| Crawford Run | Mosquito Creek |
| Twelve Mile | Gifford Run |
| Moose Creek | Fork Run |
| Graham Run | Little Morgan |
| Hog Back Run | |
| Laurel Run (above and below Parker Dam) | |
| Lick Run (I would walk to fish here, I caught my first legal trout here) | |
| Montgomery Run and branches above dam (I would walk to fish there) | |
| Deer Creek (We used to stock the lower end) | |
| Twooey Run (also known as Laurel Run in West Decatur) | |
| Cold Stream (Flows into Trout Run) | |

Mineral Springs, PA — contributed by Pansy Duke’s daughter, Peggy Schenk

Years ago, there was a spring of good mineral spring water. Everyone in the area came to the spring for drinking they named the little settlement Mineral Springs.

Near the spring there was a park & ball field, where the sewage treatment plant is now. The young & old alike enjoyed the ball games & spending time at the park.

By, Terry O'Connor, Clearfield, PA

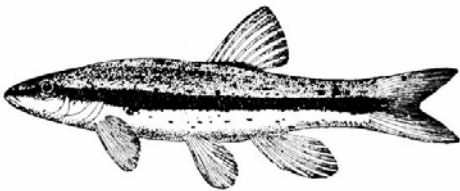
Over one hundred years ago, our Clearfield County Waters were home to some marvelous creatures and important seasonal food items that unfortunately are no longer here.

After darkness and at nights in late September and October, with lantern and torch in hand, many folks were seen gathering around water holes on small streams and tributaries, recognizing a delicious protein bounty was at hand this night. Tubs and baskets would be filled by eels attracted to the lights in a frenzy of slip and slide, capture and escape. The fall collection event would be remembered by many as a family adventure, full of squeaks, giggles and riotous fun. And, of course, it did add a fine delicate fish food to the family menu.

My Grandmother, born Grace Owens, lived less than a mile from Potts Run, on present Twp. Road running from Turkey Hill to Boardman. The valley community at the eel hole bridge was known as "Sleepy Hollow". She often told of going eeling at the run with her older brothers as a young girl and of the excitement the memory brought her. She would go on to teach school at the Turkey Hill School and live within several hundred yards of the eel hole the rest of her life.

An eel is a fish, (Not a reptile). The eels that came and made their home in the Susquehanna are called Anguilla Eel. The Sargasso Sea in Atlantic Ocean is their birthing place. Our eels undergo a wonderful metamorphosis from a seawater entity to a freshwater creature. This transformation is called catadromous. Its opposite the shad and the salmon also native to our Clearfield County waters and were a vital food source here over the last ten thousand years or so. Born in fresh water here, transforming into a salt water fish, bulking up in the Atlantic Ocean, and returning home years later as an abundant protein food that played a very significant part in the lives of native Americans and colonists through nineteen hundred.

Such fish is said to be anadromous. For the most part, the loss of these wonderful creatures was due to the dams that blocked the Susquehanna at the turn of the twentieth century. Fortunately, things are now happening on the Susquehanna and West Branch that gives promise of Shad and Eel return to Clearfield County in the future.



By Terry O'Connor, Clearfield, PA

Jim Barger, 86 year old, Clearfield Resident, tells of living along Montgomery Run in Hyde City as a boy and attending Saint Francis. Industriosly, he deployed a trap-line along the creek and river to be tended by ice skating to and from school. Many of a school boy took advantage of this "then" popular way to earn a hard won buck. Our waters are home to fur-bearing-wonders we often today forget about, but are a critical part of our environment. Anyway, Jim's adventures and misadventures reflect many a story occurring on, in and around our Clearfield County water paths. On his way to a good pelt, Jim found dastardly Rustlers ready to pounce on his line at any open chance, he had to put up with naive teachers and school officials whose tardiness rules were misplaced. It is said that occasionally he had to put these school bureaucrats on notice when he didn't show at all due to a particular good catch or had more important things to be taken care of.

“TO BE A RAFTER”

By Robert L. Carr

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On the logs ride
River extra wide
Moving rather fast
Like times in the past
Push the oar right
The current fight
Abutments and 4 bridges
River between the ridges
Pass no trouble
Wear rubber soul
80 bridges high
As thirty pass by
Mix of young and old
Rafting for the bold
Roll over a rock
Bit of a shock
Raft covered with water
Being a rafter
Push left the oar
Will turn some more
By the rock slide
A little rough ride
Some water white
Each turn, new sight
Hillsides of trees
Not many green leaves
The river in between
Few ducks were seen
Is a great ride
Beautiful hillside
Buzzards flew around
As river goes down
Riding on a log
Sometimes river fog
Chance at the oar
A rafter's chore
3 boats smaller
2 canoes, 1 flater
The people on the shore
Wave more and more
From the bridge wave
Memories to save
Many pictures taken
Memories of kin
Memory of a rafter
Logs on the river
Waters roll away
Water to the bay.

“THE RAFT”

By Robert L. Carr

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Worked on bicentennial raft,
Special logger craft,
We hope to float,
On this flat boat,
Been 200 years,
Blood, sweat and tears,
And many times laughter,
Riding on the water,
The river, rolling down,
Trees falling down,
Cut trees with ax and saw,
Waiting for spring thaw,
Logs slide into splash dam,
Maybe a road for a tram,
The dam is broken,
Way back when,
River fills with logs,
Before the spring frogs,
Logs, some would ride,
Granddad walked the river wide,
On the logs, go across,
Sometimes canthook toss,
Ride the river again,
Maybe ride in the cabin,
On the raft's woody deck,
Quite the woody trek.



Clearfield County's 2004 Bicentennial Raft.

By Carl Undercofler, Woodland, PA

A large economic boom occurred in Bradford Township beginning in the late 1800's. Large brick manufacturing factories opened in Woodland, Mineral Springs, Barrett and Bigler.

Clay for the manufacture of brick and coal to fire the kilns was mined locally. Clay was mined from the hill above the Barrett Works and transported to the factory by bucket line, much like today's ski lifts. Pine Top had a mine and a "dust mill". The clay from the mine was ground into a fine powder creating very dusty conditions and coining the name "dust mill".

This mine, and several mines in Woodland, Mutton Hollow and Mineral Springs, caused a rapid and severe decline in water quality in Roaring Run. Coal mines polluted Valley Fork above its merger with Roaring Run.

However, not all mining severely affected water quality. A clay mine located near the present drive-in theater produced clay as late as the early 1950's. The water flowing from this mine drained into an unnamed tributary to Valley Fork. This water was of sufficient quality to support aquatic life including crayfish and some small minnows and chubs. Many times this stream was used for drinking water by farm hands on hot summer days. Also, a family who worked at a nearby sawmill used it for their water supply.

When the land was "stripped" along I-80 at Dale, this water rapidly degraded and Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) flowed from the open drift of the mine. Since that time, a huge iron mat has formed completely closing the portal of the mine. The water now has a very low pH and high metal content and supports no aquatic life.

By Terry O'Connor, Clearfield, PA

You know its all about the dance of water! Clearfield County lies on the Appalachian plateau, with the spine of the eastern Continental divide running through it. Over hundreds of million of years the terrain has been shaped and molded by gigantic and catastrophic forces or continental convection and plate tectonics. The final design and lay of the land falls to our water sculpture's, the bubbling brooks, creeks, streams and river that carve the beautiful landscapes we call our home. All life as we know it is dependent on this magic liquid and its integrity we now find only we humans can be the caretakers of this precious, ultimate gift of nature.



Ice Skating—a favorite past time during the depression.

Did you know that throughout the first half of the twentieth century our streams and ponds and river became major outdoor arenas for a very popular winter activity throughout Clearfield County? Ice-skating became a major part of community get-togethers, fun, exercise, challenge and the natural prozac for the winter blues. The inexpensive sport peaked at the right time as the depression came on. There appeared to be little that could not be done on our frozen water than occurred elsewhere, dances, weddings, all types of games, overnights stays, celebrations and of course, political speeches.

As we entered the 1930's the newspapers was filled with ice-skating feats of all types and durations. My father Leroy (Pat) O'Connor was attending high school in Clearfield. The students of Knox Township rode the train each day through Faunce and Dimeling to Clearfield and school. He and another boy decided to skate to school, using the ice of Potts Run to Clearfield Creek and on to the West Branch to the High School. This is a trip by water of some twenty five miles. They evidently completed the journey, but humbly choose to ride home on the train. Even with a 4 a.m. start by moonlight they found themselves late for class. Such mighty incomprehensible disengagement from reality was par for the course around the county, with the ice-skating craze.

By: John Schenk, Woodland, PA

I remember fishing for "chubbies" - in Forcey Run around 1936—I would have been 6—8 years old. I remember it was when they were constructing Route 322 as we know it today. Chubbies as we called them were 2 or 3 inches long which seemed large for a young boy. We started in the creek just across 322 by Walker Lumber near Bigler. I was very young but I was with my older brother and other older boys. The hour after we got to the creek a thunderstorm came up. One of the older boys said he knew a short cut, which ended up being a long way. We came out of the woods near where the Bigler stop light is now. I remember my dad picking us up somewhere close to where the Wesleyen Church is, so it had to be after 5PM when he got home from work. I was very very happy to see him. I do not remember us catching any fish and I never went back again. To my knowledge the creek has no fish or life today.



Woodland Pond, around the 1940's.

By John Schenk, Woodland, PA

I grew up on Lake Street, Woodland just across the tracks from Woodland Lake—the lake was built by Harbison Walker for fire protection. It is supplied from an underground clay mine. When the clay mine closed my uncles who had worked there dammed up the water which in turn supplied water to the EUB church, Parsonage & two other homes in the area. They also boxed in one area where people could get drinking water. I can remember one year our well went dry. My brothers & I hauled wash water and drinking water in a copper tub

& buckets on our sleds during winter, not a nice job. We spent so many hours swimming on hot summer days. There was no life guard. We all looked after each other. I remember my brother helped a little boy who couldn't swim. Two times he got in over his head and my brother rescued him. There were little catfish always. One year somebody put sunfish in and we had a lot of fun catching them with grasshoppers. Our fishing equipment was a willow branch and store string. Before plastic bags, meat was wrapped in paper at the store and tied around with string. Our hook was probably a bent pin. No kids rods, etc. back then. There were times we were not allowed to go swimming because high water washed household sewage into the lake, no sewage system then. Most everybody had their own but some none. The lake was also active in winter for ice skating. A Sunday afternoon could find 50 or more skaters. The lake was drained in the 80's. But with the help of Carl Undercofler & township officials it is now refilled & is a fair fishing spot. No swimming is allowed.

Conclusion

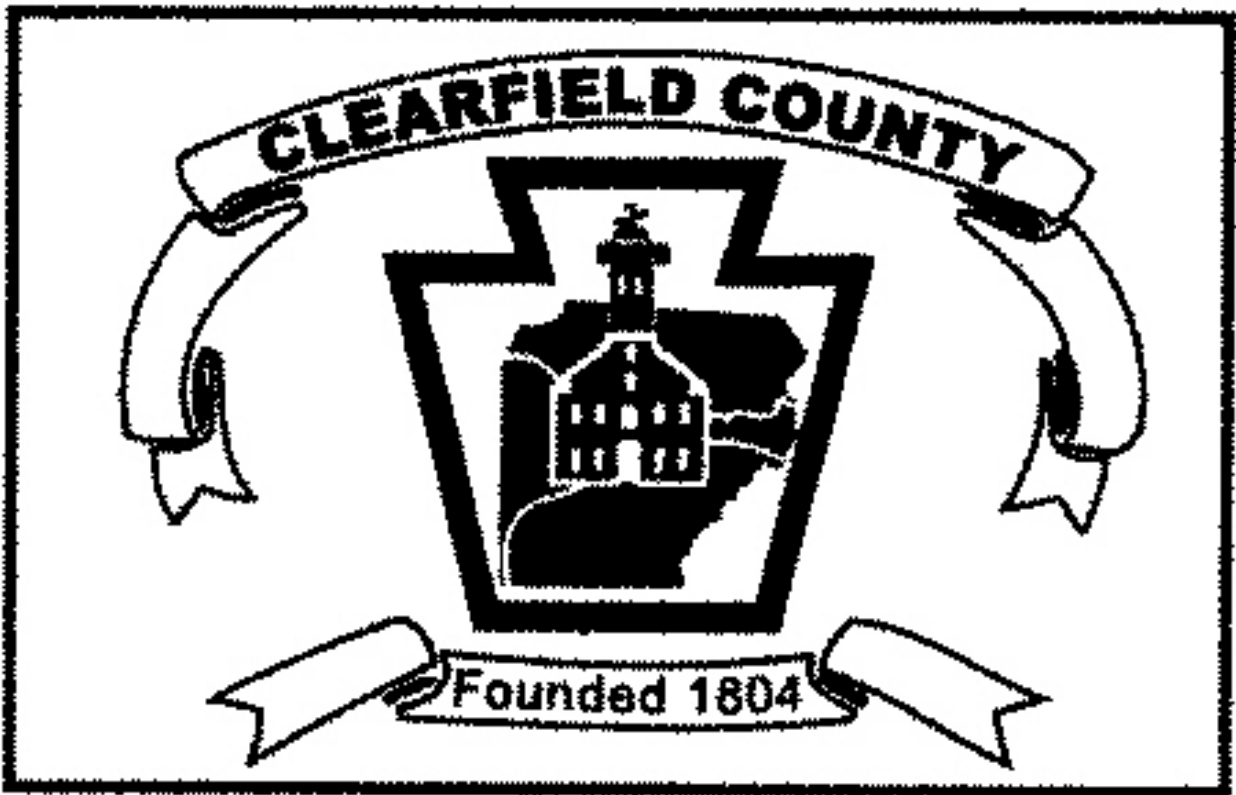
The purpose of gathering these stories served many purposes. One was just to get the history of our area for the Bicentennial. The main reason though was to show the conditions of streams and rivers today compared to years ago. Many streams contained native brook trout and the West Branch of the Susquehanna had pickerel and muskies. Shad migrated and provided food for the people who lived in the area. Then in pursuit of harvesting our natural resources we began polluting our streams. Many of them were destroyed by Abandoned Mine Drainage. Other problems included sediment and at one time sewage was a problem. Yes, many of these streams remain this way today, but they don't have to be. As told in a few stories the West Branch of the Susquehanna was terribly polluted at one time. What was once a source of food the river served as a dumping area to remove wastes. Then people began to do something about it. Now fish thrive in many places that were once void of life.

We should not have the mindset that there is nothing we can do about our watersheds. Our streams were not always polluted. They don't need to be today. Through education of the public and people coming together for a common goal many of our watersheds can be restored. We would encourage you to become involved with local watershed associations and other conservation groups. We can make a difference!

Please consider joining and becoming involved with the watershed and other conservation associations listed below in Clearfield and surrounding counties. **We can make a difference if we all work together.**

Alleghany Mountain Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Anderson Creek Watershed Association
Bennett Branch Watershed Association
Central Counties Concerned Sportsmen
Clearfield Creek Watershed Association
Chest Creek Watershed Alliance
Montgomery Run Watershed Association
Morgan Run Watershed Group
Mosquito Creek Sportsmen's Club
Moshannon Creek Watershed Coalition
Sandy Lick Conservation Initiative
Upper Mahoning Watershed Association
Emigh Run/Lakeside Watershed Association
Hubler Run Watershed Association/West Branch Sportsmen's Club
Little Clearfield Creek Watershed Association

If interested please call 765-8130 for meeting times and places.



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