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TROUT FISHING from bank of Willamette River recently, Fay Earley, Sandy, (right) hooked a 20 lb. Chinook on a 6 lb. test leader, No. 10 hook and a small salmon egg cluster. Contrary to predictions by other anglers on the bank at Clackamet Park, Fay did land his fish and brought both his fishing partner, Ace Espersen, and the Chinook down to the Post to prove it. (Post photo)

FROM The RIVER'S EDGE

By
George MacAlevy

by George MacAlevy. A hard packed old clay road wound over the crest of a low ridge and slanted across the wild grass slope to the creek. Here the road hurried across an ancient stone, single arch bridge and disappeared in the forested slope on the other side. Once this road served a city, a city that rose, flourished briefly, and vanished in the scant span of a decade. The bubble, founded on oil, had swollen rapidly, and just as rapidly burst. The substance of bubbles leaves little mark on the land. Somewhere on the wild grass slope is a marker telling of the ling vanished city, and somewhere, also in the wild grass, are a few foundation blocks of a church, the last building of that long ago era to succumb to the ravages of time.

The stone bridge, too, is a remnant from that past era, but it still serves as a crossing, for now others live beyond that next ridge, and the next, . . . The creek has always been there, and long carried signs of the hidden wealth that lay below the slope. Indians scooped the oily scum from the creeks waters and used it as medicine and as fuel for their torches. When the white men came to the land they took their cue from the Indians and gathered and bottled the iridescent film from the top of the water. They sold it at tent shows and fairs, making many marvelous claims as to the benefits mankind could enjoy by taking the foul liquid internally. For many years this was the only commercial use of Petroleum.

The ancient creek was rich in fish. Brook trout, the only trout native to the region, abounded in it, and many grew large. Fallfish lived in the big pools and cavorted in the spray of falls and rapids. Their numerous progeny served as a constant food supply for the big trout that waxed fat on an easily obtained diet. But, then man found, a few miles away to the north, that great pools of this Petroleum substance lay underground from 600 to 900 feet down. Crude refining processes had already been developed to extract kerosene from the crude oil so far produced by skimming and dipping from surface pools. Kerosene was the most desired fuel for it was a good source of light as well as heat when its burning was controlled. So more and more were drilled. A great pool of the stuff was discovered along the banks of the creek. Hundreds of wells were put down overnight to get the black gold from the ground, and the big boom was on.

Hastily constructed tanks leaked and crude pipelines were always bursting or coming apart at the flanged and bolted

joints. And so the creek received more than its share of the oil. The city grew to 20,000 souls overnight. Flimsy wood shacks, tent cities, and streets of pole lean-tos made up a good share of it. The creek made a handy sewer for all the offal of the town. Saloons, gambling houses and all the other houses of vice moved in and the town ran wild. Some of the virtues came too, for the most solid structure in the town was a church, that church that long outlived all the rest of the town. But the main body of roistering roustabouts, adventurers and oil field roughnecks gave no thought to the welfare of the creek, or of fish and fishing and so the creek died as far as life in it was concerned.

In the late 1800's, the town was already just a memory marked by a forlorn weatherbeaten church, long unused. More people were fishing for sport. The stream looked promising but did not deliver. The timber along the middle section had all been cut down for oil derricks and to make room for wells during the boom. A few Brook trout wandered down from the headwaters but the now open creek warmed too much to suit them. They were creatures of shaded streams and cold water. The Fallfish flourished but they were fun to catch only. Nobody ate them—too bony. The big deep hole beneath the Stone Bridge ye Stone bridge yielded an occasional trout, but that was all.

This was also the era in which the Brown Trout of Europe and Scotland was introduced to the Americas. Being of fair size and carrying a goodly volume of water, this creek was soon stocked with fingerlings of this heat tolerant species. They thrived in the middle stretch of this stream. They populated the runs and glides below the wild grass slope where the decaying shambles of the dead city lay neglected and hidden in the weeds. Soon, there came to be known to all anglers, the Stonebridge Trout. He was reputed to be a big male Brown who early in life had moved into this hole, preying on Fallfish and Brook trout alike.

On a summers night, he could be heard to splash like a plank dropped into the water as he took a big night flying Dobson fly from the surface. Some superstitious natives of Irish extraction believed a Leprechaun lived under the bridge.

The Stonebridge Trout succumbed several times to lures and baits, but always succeeded in breaking away. Tall were the tales of this fishes prowess. One of the local boys who fished at night had taken big Browns from this hole, but in a few weeks there would be the Stonebridge Trout again. Today, that Stronbridge Trout is still there, a venerable finny giant of mythical past and great age. In truth, the Stonebridge Trout is a legend consisting of perhaps a hundred successive occupants of the hole under the bridge. I know of one year in which he was caught and killed three times, yet when these anglers would tell of their feat, they were scoffed, because as any fool could plainly see, had he the patience to quietly watch the pool awhile, "Old Stoney" was still there.

Later, Rainbows were also introduced to this stream. They also grew well here, and occasionally, "Old Stoney" reverts to being a Rainbow for a while. So, now arguments wax as to which he is, Rainbow or Brown. Both species grow large in this middle open section of the stream where Oilodom had its fling. The open grassy banks and softly flowing riffles furnish a bountiful larder of insects, where Fallfish thrive on an insect diet as well as trout; and where big trout in deep dark pools lie in wait for a meal of unwary Fallfish.

It was on a stremier fly tied to imitate a Fallfish that I saw



the Stonebridge Trout taken. But he wasn't fooled by the fly, so he turned up kyp at it. The angler was old and wise to the ways and moods of a Brown. He persisted. He cast again and again untiringly, each time retrieving jerks past the spot he felt sure "Old Stoney" was using for a lie. Finally, after, I am sure, a good hour and a half had passed of steady cast and retrieve; the fish either lost all patience or became hypnotized by the insistent silver flash of the fly. Whichever it was, he slashed at it savagely and got himself well hooked. His first topwater rolls and jumps were tremendous and quickly took all the speed out of him. He was still well hooked, so he reverted to boring down to the depths, he tried to rub the fly out on the gravelled bottom and the angler feared for his leader. He circled and dove into the shadows of the bridge keeping his broad flanks directly against the pull. He jerked his head and tried to bore away again and again, but to no avail. His great strength at last was all gone, and, more dead than alive he was slid up on the gravelled beach. He had fought his last fight and lost.

This eight pound Brown was duly mounted, and today it hangs on the den wall of this angler's son. It is proudly labelled "The Stonebridge Trout", and is the son's most treasured momento of his departed father. How many other den walls do you suppose carry a Stonebridge Trout? He has been caught and mounted many times down through the years.

J. Brown Sells Agency

J. Ross Brown has announced the sale of his 43-year-old real estate and insurance business at 55 E. Powell Blvd. to C.E. Weisenhaus.

Weisenhaus has been associated with Brown for 24 years. Brown will continue his association with the new owner handling real estate sales.

Two new persons have joined the sales force.

They are W.C. (Buck) Davis and his wife L. A. (Lee) Davis. For the past two years they have been selling acreage in Sandy for Snyder Bros. They will concentrate on home sales in Gresham.

Before going to Sandy, Davis worked for McRoberts Ford in Gresham for more than eight years.

The couple has three children, two in Sam Barlow High and the other in Powell Valley Grade.

Eagle Auxiliary Elects Officers

Fraternal Order of Eagles Gresham Auxiliary 2151 held installation of officers recently.

Mrs. Arthur Seeger, installing president, and Mrs. Virgil Mieleo, installing conductor were in charge of the installation.

New officers include: Mrs. Ben Hensley, Jr. past president, Mrs. Peter Henke, pres., Mrs. Don Schmidt, vice pres., Margie Komlofske chaplain, Goldie Garner, sec., and Mrs. Carl Sharnke, treasurer.

Mrs. Jesse Payne, inside guard, Mrs. Ivan Swift, outside guard, Mrs. George Bell, conductor, Mrs. Charles Welty, Willie Splawn and Edith Walker, trustees, Edith Walker, lodge mother and Edna Schmidt, musician.

President Henke appointed the following committees: Mrs. Sharnke, refreshments, Mrs. Payne and Mrs. Komlofske, membership, Mrs. Bell, Mrs. Hensley, Mrs. Welty and Mrs. Seeger, auditing, Mrs. Hensley and Katherine Jundett, ritual and Mrs. Welty, historian.

Mrs. Garner, civil and social service, Mrs. Schmidt and Mrs. Seeger, finance, ways and means, Mrs. Hensley and Mrs. Walker, visiting.

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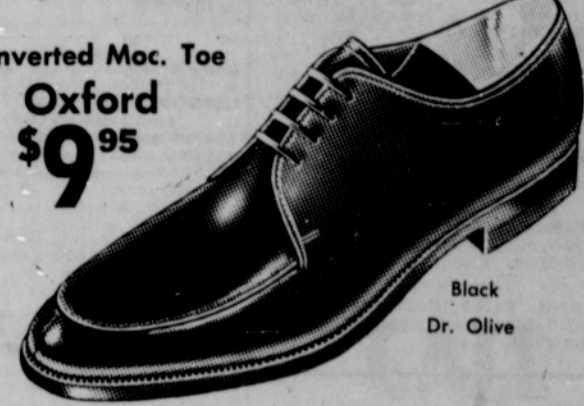
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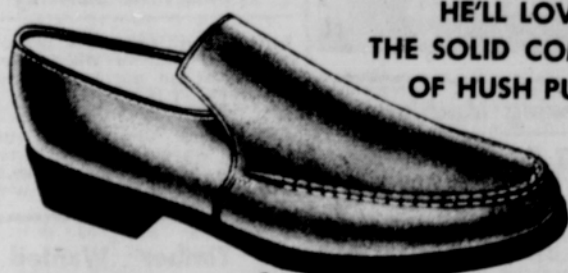
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