



Small Worlds Around Us
By Lynn M. Watkins

This Peculiar Bird Flies Under Water!
There is a large bird, who inhabits cypress swamps, rice marshes and bayous, that can fly under water, spear fish at the same time and confound scientists because of its many peculiar habits; the water bird known technically as Anhinga. The more common names for this uncommon creature are water-turkey or snake-bird. And the only method ever discovered about the feeding habits of this odd-ball is underwater "spear-fishing."

The water-turkey's appearance is just as peculiar as its habits. It can hardly be said even to be shaped like a bird. The body is streamlined, glossy black in color with silver markings. The neck is very long, very thin and terminates in a head no larger around than the neck to which it is attached. On the other end of this misfit is a tail shaped exactly like a fan's open fan. When at rest, on a water-side stump, the bird constantly flexes the long neck, which probably gave some early observer the idea of the name "snake-bird." Perhaps the glossy-black feathers as well as the bird's size suggested to some one else the common name "water turkey."

Within its range the bird is common, but because of its natural timidity and its reluctance to appear near human habitations, it is seldom seen. The birds are found in many of the states bordering the Gulf of Mexico and in the backwaters of South American rivers. They often are found in company with the various herons, sometimes even in heron rookeries, often building their crude nest of sticks in the same tree. Nothing this strange bird does seems to be ordinary. It never dives into the water like its relative, the cormorant, the sea gull or the terns. The water-turkey insists on being different; it perches on a tree limb over some likely section of water and watches below for a fish. When the unlucky fish appears, the bird plops into the water, feet first in a regular belly-flop, with head and neck erect. Once in the water, the bird submerges and pursues the fish, propelling itself with powerful short strokes of its wings, its webbed feet violently churning the water. While swimming, the head is carried back, by sharply crooking the neck. This is a "cocking position" giving the head a forceful thrust when approaching the victim.

The strike is a flashing strike, driving the sharp bill into the body of the luckless fish. Then the bird comes to the surface, tosses the fish in the air and swallows it headfirst, all the time keeping its body just below the water's surface. There is little doubt but the Anhinga started out to be different; different in name, appearance and aloofness, as well as in behavior, until it actually overdid it. In most respects this odd-ball in feathers is practically ridiculous. (Released by The Register and Tribune Syndicate, 1960)



CAT SURVIVES BURIAL—A cat named "Kitty," shown at left, crawled out of the hole pointed out at right by young Davy Johnson, after the feline accidentally had been buried alive for 15 days. Buried when bulldozers dumped earth at the foundation of this home at Bismarck, N. D., "Kitty" crawled her way to daylight 15 days later, scrawny and hungry. (UPI Telephoto)

Minimum of 100,000 Books Desirable in Local System

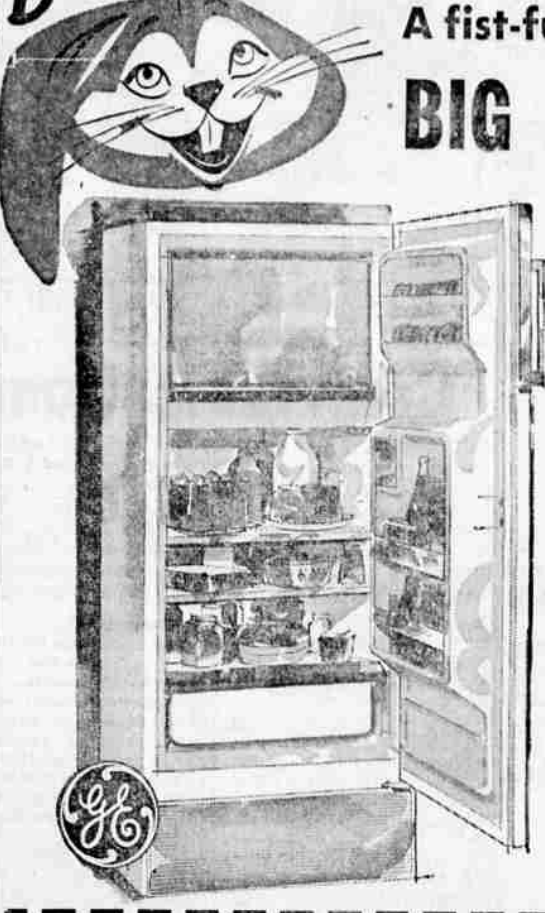
The 46,500 books in the Public Libraries of Medford and Jackson County are not enough when compared to the recommended standards of the American Library Association. Omar Bacon, head librarian, said the ALA recommends that libraries serving a "sizeable" population, should have a minimum of 100,000 books. The 58,375 persons served by the city-county system can be considered a sizeable population, he said. A minimum of 100,000 books are needed in a system of this size, he said, because of the great diversity of reading needs in the community. The Ashland library serves a population of 12,325 persons, yet has a total collection of 39,146 books. Average-wise the Ashland library is far ahead of the Medford system in books per capita population, Bacon pointed out. **Strive For Goal** Bacon said the library will strive for a 100,000-book collection but it will be some years yet before this goal is reached. He anticipates that the collection will reach 56,206 volumes by the end of the 1959-1960 fiscal year. The library board is asking in its 1960-1961 budget that the money allotted for the purchase of books be increased from \$8,500 to \$10,000. The increase in funds would come from a \$1,800 budget item which has previously been used to rent books, it has been pointed out. The library will no longer rent books. The increase would enable the library to purchase 3,600 new books, not counting other articles and pamphlets, during the year. Besides direct purchase the library also obtains books from state grants and gifts. State money for books is granted with the condition that the books be used to boost rural library collections. The state gave some 700 new books to rural libraries in the city-county system last year, including five new sets of encyclopedias. For the 1960-1961 fiscal year, the state has already committed itself to grant \$20,000 to the library for the purchase of books. Approximately 7,500 books can be purchased with this sum, Bacon pointed out. He said that an average of from 2,500 to 3,000 books are received each year by the library as gifts from various persons. Many persons give books he said, ranging in number from one to several hundred. **Total Number of Gifts** Bacon said the total number of gifts this year may well exceed the average of previous years, since some 500 books had been received as gifts in just one week recently. Bacon pointed out that books which are gifted to specific branch libraries are normally kept there permanently with the understanding that any library in the system may borrow them. When the library accepts gift books, they do it with the understanding that each one possible will be used in the system. However, some books which are needed are given to community groups, other libraries or are turned back into the community by sale.

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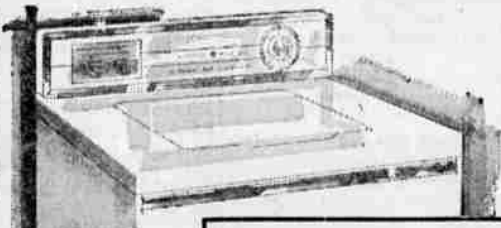
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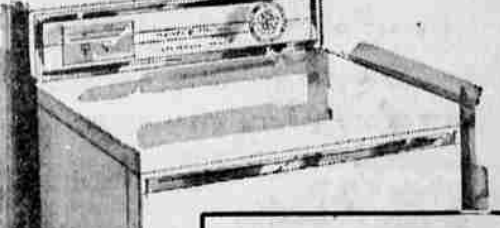
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