Centreville Stores Crowded As Christmas Buying Gets Under Way

Old Time Hunter Recounts Changes In Past Half Century

A Talbot county old-timer gives a picture of hunting in that county fifty years ago which may evoke memories in the minds of some of Queen Anne's veteran nimrods. The article is taken from the Easton Star-Democrat.

I sometimes go in the Clerk's Office where the gunning licenses are issued, and the office is crowded all day long—all bent on being ready for the first day of the hunting season, for no one is permitted under the law to kill any kind of game in Maryland out of season or without a license granted by the State.

The law is not uniform throughout the State, and this reminds me that the farmers in this county are very much worked up over the change of the law here by the last legislature. Heretofore, it was lawful to kill rabbits in September, and now they can only be killed in November.

The farmers are overrun with them and complain that they have done great damage to the corn crop.

But to proceed. When I see all this formality required in order to enjoy a day's hunting, it takes me back more than a half a century ago, when every county man had a gun and generally when hunting season came, all the preparation required was to sling the shot and powder pouch and game bag over your shoulder, put a box of G. D. caps and a bunch of soft paper for wadding in your pocket, and then call a dog.

The hunting ground was the entire county, and it was rare that anyone objected to hunting on their property. The only objection I ever heard of in my neighborhood was to some who hunted for the market. In those days the breech-loading gun was not in use. The first one I ever saw was after the Centennial Exposition in 1876 at Philadelphia.

The guns were all muzzle-loaded. Doubtless the majority of your readers never saw one, and it may interest them to know something about them. These guns were loaded at the muzzle, each gun had an iron rammer, which was called a ramrod; the gunner would pour a charge of powder from his pouch into each barrel, then stuff some soft paper in the muzzle and ram it down. He would then go through the same operation with the shot; the last preparation was to put the caps on the nipples, then when your gun was cocked you were ready for game—and don't you think with their old-time gun they couldn't shoot, for they could.

The game then consisted of partridges, pheasants, woodcocks, rabbits and squirrels, and all were very plentiful and pot pie made of them was a common dish. It was not unusual to see hunters return at night actually loaded down with game. It required the very best shot to bring down a pheasant—they fly so fast. I had an experience with one, as a boy, that makes me vouch for their speed.

I went hunting with my brother, who claimed to be an expert shot. I was anything else, but was anxious to learn. He put me on one side of the ravine and he took the other side and set the dog in the middle of it. He cautioned me to shoot quick of I saw one. I had never seen a live one, and we started. Just about 100 yards straight ahead of me was an old tree that had been the victim of a storm. It lay prostrate with the limbs still on it, dead and dry. When about 2 yards distant from it I heard the greatest chatter in those dead leaves. It was so sudden that it frightened me and I dropped my gun, but I saw a pheasant for a fraction of a second. The chatter was so great that my brother heard it, called to know if it was a pheasant and he wanted to know why I didn't shoot, and I didn't know what to answer.

He then asked me which way he went. I showed him, so in a few minutes we heard another whir in the leaves and my brother shot, but for some reason the pheasant didn't stop, and I asked him why. He explained to me that they would often go a half mile or so before they dropped. So he took me along to help find it. I know we saw no signs of it. Since thinking it over for the past five decades I have reached the conclusion that that particular pheasant exceeded the speed limit, and we didn't follow him far enough—and by the way, that was my last hunt for big game. Afterwards I confined my shooting to wood-peckers and flickers; they stayed put till you shot them and never flew after they were killed.

After the breech-loader came into use I saw hunters come to the country from the city all dolled up in corduroy suits with cartridge belts around them and carrying the last word in breech-loading hammerless guns and accompanied by the finest bred dogs with silver collars. They were such flashy sports that they actually hurt the eyes to look at them.

I have seen these same sports go back to the city without any game worth speaking of unless they were able to buy some from the natives. In those days woodcock were quite plentiful and these beautiful birds were delicious. When very plentiful the country stores bought them, or rather traded ammunition for them, and took them to the city market.

As a boy I never knew a trap caught rabbit to sell for more than 15 cents. Last fall I priced nasty shot rabbits in the market at 90 cents. They looked as though they had been carried over from the past year. Of course, conditions are very different today—the good roads and the automobiles have opened up every section of the county; there once was, and consequently it is very scarce as compared with old days, the one exception being squirrels, and they never were more plentiful.

I visited a farmer up near the Queen Anne's line not long ago, and he told me that they were a pest. He said one corn field alongside of a piece of timber had to be replanted four times. The squirrels would dig it up each time, and that they had torn the corn all to pieces.

In the spring, when the robins come, I think of the time when they were lawful prey for the thousands. Of course, it is unlawful now to shoot them at any time. It was an excellent law, and now everyone is glad to see them around except the cherry growers for they sure do love cherries and they act as though they have earned, because they surely do work overtime in ridding vegetables of insects that destroy crcops and vegetation generally.

I have never had a State's number pasted on my back when I was young and refuse to be labled now at my time of life. Whenever I see it I am reminded of the number pasted on a mule's back when he comes from auction, or a convict, who has a number instead of a name.

Entire Family Given Health Uplift By Seals

Penny Christmas Seals When Put Together Do Useful Work

Just what good the little penny Christmas Seals may do for the less fortunate, suffering from tuberculosis may be glimpsed from a single case selected by Dr. R. H. Riley, director of the State Department of Health. Penny by penny these seals collect a fund which is directed to useful purposes, just such as the medical attention and sanatorium care given to an entire family from one of Maryland's counties.

The family consists of father, mother and six children ranging in age from 19 years to 19 months. The father has been in ill health and unable to work for the greater part of the year; the nineteen year old, who has a job in another part of the county, has been the main source of support. The family was brought to the attention of the County Health Department through the request of the family physician for aid from the Christmas Seal Fund in securing an X-ray examination for one of the children.

When the family was visited it was learned that the mother was examined fifteen years ago when the second child was born, was found to have tuberculosis and was advised to go to a sanatorium. The advice was not followed. This occurred before there was full-time health service in the county in which the family lived and there was no agency to follow-up reported cases of tuberculosis. In the meanwhile the family had moved several times and they were comparative new comers in the community in which they had settled.

Under the circumstances it was decided to have the entire family examined. The father was found to have tuberculosis in an advanced stage. The mother has the disease in the chronic form. The five younger children are all infected with the active type of the disease. The nineteen year old is to be examined later.

After much careful planning the father, mother and five younger children were all sent to a State Sanatorium. In all of these arrangements, the friendly aid of members of local clubs in supplying the necessary clothing, in storing the family belongings and in helping to keep up the family morale was of great assistance.

The experiences were described in a recent report of the full-time county healthy officer of the county in which the family was found. The record could be duplicated, Dr. Riley said, wherever the Christmas Seals help to furnish the funds for tuberculosis work, and it shows only one of the many ways in which the funds derived from the sale of the Tuberculosis Seals are used to relieve suffering, and if possible, to restore health.

The seals will be on sale until the end of December. They are only a penny apiece, and every penny spent for them, counts in the fight against tuberculosis.

County Had 23 Births, 20 Deaths In October

Queen Anne's county had twenty-three cases of notifiable diseases during October, according to the report of the Maryland State Department of Health. These included scarlet fever, 6 cases; chickenpox, 1; whooping cough, 1; tuberculosis, 2; syphilis, 12; gonnorrhea, 1.

Twenty-three births were reported for the county during October, twenty being white and three colored. Deaths were three less, totalling twenty, of which nine were white and eleven colored. The total population of Queen Anne's county as estimated by the State Board of Health for July 1st of this year is 14,571.

STRANGE SEA CREATURES

Reproduction of a beautiful painting in full colors graphically showing undersea creatures. One of many features in the December 20th issue of the American Weekly, the big magazine which comes regularly with the BALTIMORE SUNDAY AMERICAN. On sale at all newstands.

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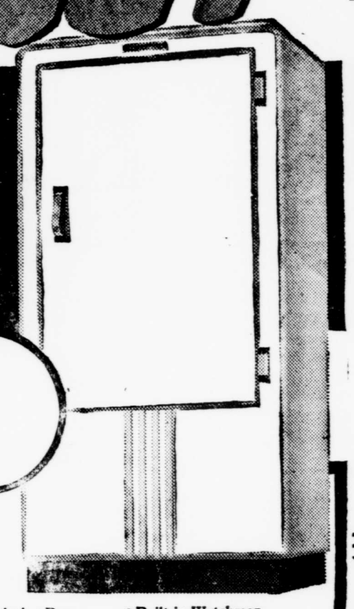

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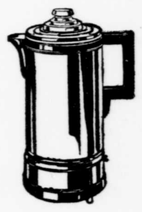

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