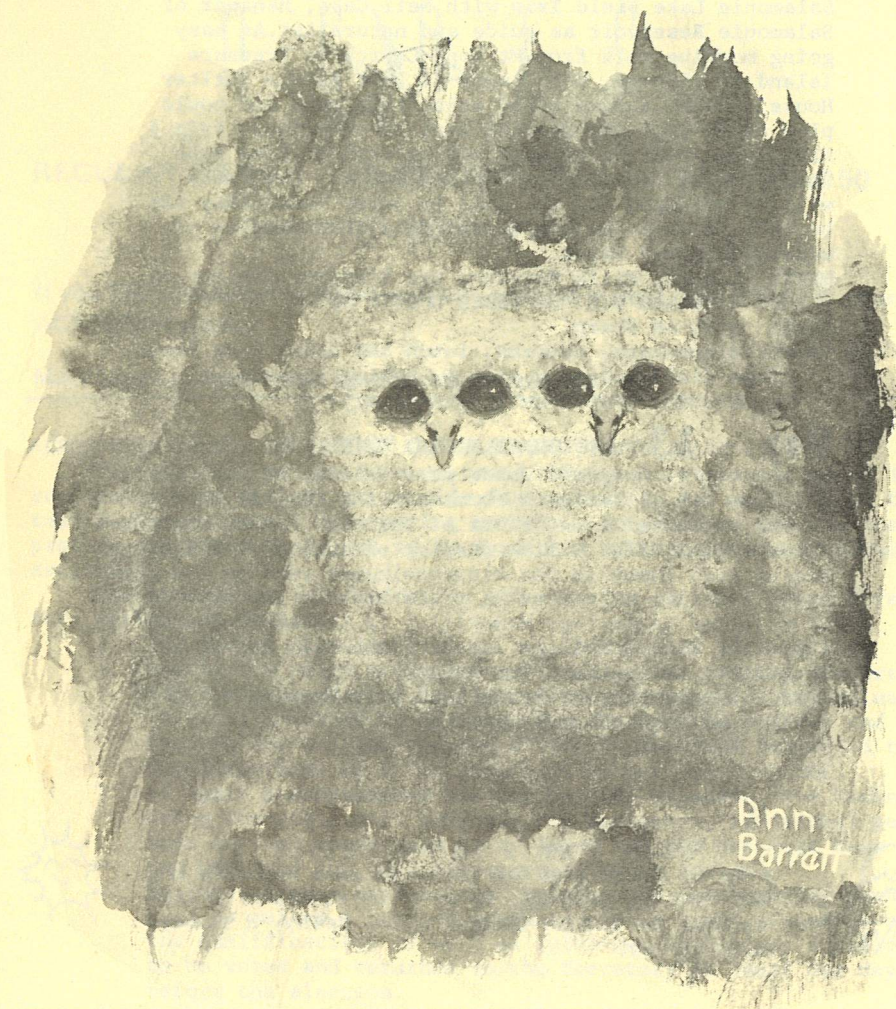


QUARTERLY

SPRING • 1972

Volume XI No. 2



spring

15

WORK DAY

April

spring

MEET: Peoples Trust Gold Dome Bank - Northcrest
TIME: 9:00 AM

(If you wish to call for an assignment and meet your work crew on location, call 637-6264.)

BRING: Work gloves, trash bags, loppers, rakes, wear old clothes. Bring your own lunch and drink.
(Each work crew will have extra drink and cookies provided.)

There's work to do at every ACRES reserve and a day of your labor is a fine gift to ACRES!

April 29 SATURDAY FIELD TRIP

Salamonie Lake Field Trip with Neil Case, Manager of Salamonie Reservoir as guide and naturalist. An easy going morning walk from Mt. Hope Church to Treasure Island is planned, with lunch at Lost Bridge Shelter House. (ACRES elders would enjoy this walk and could plan to do only the morning part of this field trip.) Afternoon will be rougher hiking from Mt. Etna Boat Ramp back to Lost Bridge Shelter House. Car spots will be arranged and no need to carry lunch, they can be left in cars. Mr. Case expects a good display of wildflowers and birds.

MEET: Liberty Mills Marathon Gas Station (junction of I-69 and U.S. 24 West) Double up!

TIME: 9:00 AM Sharp!

BRING: Binoculars, cameras, lunch and drink. Wear boots.
(Some field trippers will be taking an evening cook-out. Join them if you wish.)

May 13 SATURDAY FIELD TRIP

On our way to Cooper's Woods near Geneva, we will visit The Deam Oak, a landmark commemorating Charles Deam's famous botanical work "Flora of Indiana". The Cooper's Woods should offer a fine display of spring wild flowers and we will lunch in the oldschoolhouse yard on the property. (If time allows we'll visit briefly the Gene Stratton Porter Limberlost Memorial.) In the afternoon we'll visit the Marion College Botany Glenn near Gas City. Naturalist in charge: Pat Bolman

MEET: Rogers Market. State Road 1 in Waynedale (go to west side of parking lot).

TIME: 9:00 AM

BRING: Lunch and drink (again, we'll be near our cars). Plan to be gone all day on this field trip.

RAIN . OR . SHINE POLICY

A lot of ACRES time and personnel goes into field trip and work day planning, so we go as scheduled no matter what the weather decides to do. Really, it rarely rains all day!



QUARTERLY COVER ARTIST is Ann Barrett, Senior at Carroll High School and charter ACRES Student member. Ann goes Saturdays to the Fort Wayne Art Institute and plans to enter college in Ohio in the Fall.



Spring! Membership Renewal Time



REGULAR \$2.00

SUSTAINING \$10

PATRON \$50

----- STUDENT: \$.50 -----

If you find a membership return envelope enclosed in your QUARTERLY, your ACRES dues are due.

Make sure we have your correct address and zip.

ACRES WILL CHANGE NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF ITS BOARD -

The ACRES Directors have approved changes in the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws to provide for nomination and election of fifteen Directors by all dues-paying members. In addition the changes provide for three Directors to be appointed by certain other organizations.

The procedures for nomination and election of the fifteen Directors will be as follows:

1. The annual election will be set in November or December.
2. During the third month before the election, voting members may nominate persons for election. A nomination may be made in writing signed by at least ten dues-paying members and containing the written consent of the nominee and delivered to the Secretary.
3. At least a month and a half before the election, the Nominating Committee will nominate, if necessary, additional persons so that there will be at least one and not more than two nominees for each Directorship to be filled.
4. At least twenty days before the election, each voting member will be mailed a list of nominees with a brief statement of the qualifications of each as furnished by him and a ballot to be voted and returned to the Secretary at least one day before the election.
5. Members may vote either by mail or in person at the meeting. Details of the procedure will be set forth in the Fall Quarterly.

These procedures have been adopted to carry out the promise of the Board at the last member's meeting in the hope of broadening membership representation on the Board of Directors and encouraging more members to give their time and talents to the needs of ACRES.

THE YEAR OF THE OWL

Many people consider bird watching an armchair sport easily managed with a pair of high powered binoculars and musclebound index finger. With modern photo equipment, bird watching has become more sophisticated. Being a student of ornithology myself, I've had many opportunities to study our feathered friends in field and lab, but nothing can compare with a pair of great horned owls I worked with - I call it THE YEAR OF THE OWL.

My sophisticated modern equipment for this bird watching task included binoculars, camera and sheer fortitude.

It all started late in February with the blessings of Marion College where I was a student. I took on the owl pair, studying them in their nesting habits, taking pictures and writing a term paper about them.

It all sounded so simple until I met my subjects!

First, they had the advantage of a nesting site 45 feet above ground level. Then being superb fliers, they usually flew away from me, at first, sometimes disappearing for days at a time.

Picture if you can a green college student in the middle of a woods shimmying up a small tree (mainly because I am not a good climber and the smaller looked easier) loaded with binoculars and camera in one hand and a death grip on the tree with the other. Add to this a 15 mph wind across an open field and temperature at 30 degrees. Now you have the exact setting for an attack from the rear by three pounds of mad, male great horned owl feathers.

The male is defender of the female and the nest and will stop at nothing to protect them.

The female all this time was sitting on a clutch of two eggs, watching the antics going on below her. Without raising up so as not to disturb the eggs she would rest her head on the edge of the nest to watch me.

It took me two months to get acquainted with the owls so that I could come into the woods, climb my oversized toothpick and watch or take picture without interruptions.

Up to this time the male had delivered me five attacks from the rear while I was in my tree and on several occasions caused me to drop out of the tree with the bounce of a ripe persimmon.

Winter finally left us and my owl family increased to four.

With more mouths to feed the owls began harrassing a nearby barnyard - father picking on unconfined barnyard chickens and mother plagueing the farm geese. That spelled trouble!

It was a routine day in late spring when I went to see my owl family. All had gone - no owls, no nest, nothing to tell me the real story - but I feared a very sad ending to my winter of pleasure.



Pat Bolman



MOTHER NATURE IS DYING

The other night I was home reading a book when I received a telephone call that Mother Nature was dying. I dressed hurriedly and rushed over to the hospital. A lot of people had gotten there before me and they were all sitting in the waiting room crying and wringing their hands. I searched out the doctors who were in another room having a heated argument as to how to save her. Each doctor seemed to have a different remedy.

One doctor said, "We have to get her some fresh air. She can't breathe. We'll have to turn off the power plant because of the smoke."

"Are you out of your mind?" another doctor said. "We turn off the power, and she'll freeze to death."

"Perhaps we could keep all cars away from the hospital," a third doctor suggested. "That would relieve her breathing."

"Out of the question," a fourth doctor barked. "How would we get back and forth to work if we prohibited cars near the hospital?"

"Gentlemen," another doctor said, "I don't believe it's the air that's hurting her as much as the water. We have to find some water that's drinkable. Strong measures must be taken immediately against polluting the hospital water."

The director said, "Where would we get the money to support the hospital if we closed down the factories because they're polluting the streams?"

"We'd also have to give up detergents," a doctor added, "and we can't have a clean hospital if you give up detergents."

"Isn't anybody going to do anything?" I shouted.

They saw me for the first time and one of the doctors said angrily, "We're sorry, this is a medical conference for professionals only. Would you kindly leave?"

I walked out, and down the hall. Suddenly I saw a closed room, which had the name "Mother Nature" hand-printed on the door. Underneath it, in large red letters, was another sign: "No Visitors."

No one was in the hall, so I opened the door. There was Mother Nature propped up on the pillows. She looked old and tired and haggard. I couldn't believe anyone could have changed so much in 10 short years. But she seemed glad to see someone and smiled weakly.

"Hi, Ma," I said. "You're looking swell."

"You wouldn't kid a very sick lady, would you?" she said, gasping.

"No, I'm not kidding. You look wonderful. I've just been talking to the doctors and they say they'll have you on your feet in no time."

"Those quaks don't know anything," she said. "All they do is come in every few hours and take my temperature and give me something to relieve the pain. I think I've had it this time."

"Don't talk that way, Ma. You're going to pull through. You've survived worse things than this before."

"It's never been this bad," She said and then started having a coughing fit. "This time the grim reaper's coming to get me."

"But if you go, we'll all have to go, Ma." I cried. "You have to hold on. Please, Ma."

"I kept complaining of pain," she whispered, "but no one would pay attention to me. I said, 'If you keep on doing what you're doing I'm going to die.' But everyone said, 'Ma, you'll never die' Why didn't they listen to me?"

"We're listening now, Ma. We're listening. We have the best doctors in the world. They're out there now, and they have a plan."

"I guess the real thing that hurts," she said, "is that my will won't be worth anything now. I left every person in the world clear water, pure air, green fields, brilliant sunsets and blue skies. It wasn't much, but it was everything I had."

Just then the door opened and a nurse came in. She went over to the bed waving a thermometer.

"Come on, Mother. It's time to take your temperature."



"Tree-huggers" by Nan Goldenberg, Huntington, Indiana.

How the Midwest Was Won

by K. C. Tessendorf

From the Gulf to the Great Lakes a vast, somber, and silent forest once stood, piney in the south and far north but predominantly deciduous elsewhere. Cruising along the interstate highways today, penetrating through hundreds of miles of open farmland, one may idly speculate upon what transformed that primeval forest into an agricultural plain. By the sweat of whose brow were those giant trees felled?

Two stereotypes emerge: the lone woodsman, dwarfed by the forest, chipping away persistently over decades; or the lumberman's juggernaut, slashing and raging with rapacious efficiency, feeding timber into the hungry maw of an expanding nation. Each is true in particular areas, but as a general overview one is tempted to believe that this American forest largely went up in unharnessed smoke.

A source for finding out how the forested Midwest was won are the journals of contemporary observers, among whom was William Brown, an Englishman who resided for a time among the frontiersmen. Returning to Britain, he published America: A Four Years Residence in 1849. Brown wrote the book on America and American practices for prospective emigrants. His description of the felling of the great forest can hardly be improved upon.

March and April is the time for the farmer who intends to clear any new land in order to secure a crop of wheat for the succeeding year. If therefore he or his family are not strong enough for the undertaking themselves, they hire out the job to persons who are accustomed to it, and are always ready at hand and easy to find. The common price of clearing land, fencing, burning up, and making ready for the seed, is ten dollars per acre, one half cash and one half store pay or produce.

After the ten acres are marked out, the men begin the process of felling the timber, two men at one tree. They have the knack of throwing the falling tree to any point they wish, and accordingly they make it dodge against another tree in the di-

rection they are clearing, the weight of which leaning against the next makes it easier to fell. The trees if large will average about two hundred per acre; but, if smaller, perhaps three hundred per acre; but all the trees are of one height, unless some pine trees are growing among them; these trees tower over every other tree of the forest, and never put out a single branch till they are high above the loftiest oak, beech, or maple; and some of the stems of these pines measure, before you come to a single branch, upwards of 200 feet.

Onward go the men, not heeding what sort of wood they are cutting down; they strike right and left, and at the end of a single week they will have felled the whole ten acres. Let it be understood that the felling of trees in America is not like felling them in England, where the timber is worth two shillings per square foot, and where the woodsman cuts as near the root as possible. In America they leave a stump of each tree standing about three feet high, or just the most convenient height a man can more easily use his axe with the most effect.

When the whole of the ten acres are felled, the next operation of the men is to cut off the limbs of the trees and pick out what logs will be suitable for splitting up for fencing rails and for building purposes; and if a saw mill is within a come-at-able distance, they will save some of the soft wood for that operation; or if near a city, they will save the beech, maple, and hickory which make the best firewood (and sometimes oak) for that purpose. But we will suppose that none of these advantages are within reach of this clearing; then the men only draw as much out with oxen as will serve to fence the clearing and build a shanty for either man or beast; after which they go round among the neighbours for five or six miles, and invite them to a Logging Bee.

They provide a substantial repast of beef, pork, and whiskey against

the day. The females are also invited to come in the after part of the day, to take a cup of tea and join in the dance at night, and great numbers are sure to be collected together. Each man appears on the appointed day early in the morning with his yoke of oxen ready to commence business; and very soon a large heap of logs are piled up and fired; they then commence raising another pile and firing that, and so they go on till the whole five hundred years' growth of the ten acres is blazing away like—in short, like blazes!

The owner during this time is handing round refreshments to the workmen; but there is no stopping till the whole is on fire. They then turn their oxen among the grass in a neighbouring field or wood still coupled together, and betake themselves to the house where their dinner awaits them to which we may suppose they do ample justice. After they have sat awhile after dinner, and the whiskey begins to circulate freely, some will volunteer a song. At last Old Snowball, a dusky son of Africa, is called forth, and his fiddle being in readiness, each man chooses his partner and "off she goes" is the order of the day; sometimes within doors and sometimes without and sometimes both, the Negro fiddling away on the door threshold.

This amusement is carried on till daylight next morning without intermission. As soon as one party is tired they retire to chat or liquor and make room for another party. The Negro never tires; he is in his proper element and rasps away at his cracked stradivarius [sic] as if he would saw it in two, making at the same time such contortions in face and limb as would set a whole audience in a roar of laughter. When daylight appears, then every man catches his oxen and wends his weary way towards his own clearing, and is ready and willing the next day to join another Logging Bee, or to call his neighbours to his own assistance.

The building of a farmer's first house is accomplished in the same manner: all is done in one day, and they never leave the house till the

new farmer and his wife are put to bed in their new dwelling. This is called a Raising Bee and is universally followed in all the backwoods.

It answers also for making the stranger acquainted with his neighbours, and oftentimes acquaintances are formed and love matches made which continue to the end of life.

When the timber lately growing on the land is thoroughly burnt up, which generally takes a week to accomplish, if the weather be ever so favourable, the ashes are either collected and sent to the ash factory, or if that is so far distant that they will cost more carrying there than the price will amount to, which is at the rate of five cents per bushel, it is spread abroad among the stumps, levelled as well as the rake can do it, and the land is then ready for sowing. There is no ploughing or harrowing necessary; there are no weeds or grass whatever in the earth; it is quite bare of vegetation. The seed is then thrown on, there is no fear of birds stealing any of the seeds; there are none worth speaking of at all, except woodpeckers, and they live on the insects bred in decayed trees, and will not taste grain of any sort.

The men are now occupied in splitting up the logs, saved for that purpose, into rails for the fence; they use no posts, but a fence of light rails piled one upon another in zigzag line crossing over one another's ends at the obtuse angles; and a rider on the top of all. This is called a legal fence; it is about six feet high when completed, and

though it looks strange and ugly to an Englishman accustomed to see a nice trimmed hedgerow, wall, or picket fence, yet it answers well for all intents and purposes of the farmer, and is surely both soon put up, and repaired afterward with very little trouble.

The stumps still stand in the ground, which cannot in general again be sown with wheat or grain till the expiration of twelve or fourteen years, when the roots become so decomposed that a yoke of oxen will draw the plough, going round the stumps and stopping instantaneously when the plough meets with any obstruction. At that time the land is found very favourable for the growth of Indian corn, among which they sow melons, squashes, pumpkins, or cucumbers. Grass seeds are sown, after the first cropping. Timothy grass and clover yield good crops without manure, except that a peck of gypsum (plaster of Paris) finely ground into powder is sprinkled upon each acre. This substance has a surprising effect upon these grasses, and you may see to a foot where it has been laid; it is a very cheap article and sells for about 1 dollar to 1¼ dollars per barrel.

I have many times, in looking over a farm, said to the owner, "Why don't you grub up the stumps, at all events from this field in front of your house?" The answer invariably was, "There are from 200 to 300 stumps per acre, and to stub them up would cost at least on the average sixty dollars per acre; and if I wanted to sell my land, the price which I could obtain for it,

building included, would be at the utmost fifteen dollars per acre; so there is no encouragement for grubbing up stumps. There is also another consideration: if the stumps were grubbed up, a hole would be made in the earth where the stump and roots came out; this hole would want filling up and levelling, which would cost a great deal in labor; but if the stump is allowed to rot upon the place where it grew it will fill up its own hole, so the trouble and expense is saved by allowing them to decay where they are."

I should then ask, "How many years will it take before your land which is already in cultivation will be clear of stumps, allowing them to decay gradually?" His answer would be, "The oak, ash, and hickory will be sufficiently decayed in twenty years; the birch, elm, and whitewood in about sixteen years; but the pine and chestnut will remain sound in the earth for fifty years, and then," he would archly observe, "they turn to stone." This is as much to say that no man alive will ever see the stumps of these trees eradicated from the land (by operation of time alone) which had been cleared in his days, even if done when he was ever so young.

The locale described by Brown is almost certainly within the environs of present-day Cleveland, Ohio. Within a century and a half this ground has passed from forest, to stump-filled clearing, to farmland, to concrete and crabgrass. Such are the cumulative works of man, that the mind boggles at deciphering what changes in land use another century will bring. ■

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