

the war his home had been his family driven back to the returned to a Newport whose , and renown had been shat- the age of 60 began business g out in the closing years of his e for his children. He held the irector of Customs for the Dis- ort from 1790 until his death. ing from active participation e spent a great deal of time half of public faith and effi- nent, thereby causing much attention. Yet, he soon relin- that slight interest in politics. ute theologian, yet advocated d. While he was a diligent Bible, a supporter of charity freedom, he belonged to no orshipped with the Congrega- believe," he said, "If party ntirely disused, there would be y among Christians."

horred, although in Congress ded that General Greene re- riate recognition for his gal- the Revolution and, later on, rry's victory. Yet he was not per for he believed that "mon- celebration for heroes, where nerely trying to outdo each dor, might better be given to of the dead or disabled." Re- ropolitan, in 1812, he writes: his dreadful scourge will be y waste and destroy, the Lord "

nd closing years of his life his beloved literary pursuits. and well-sustained habits, the discipline, begun late in his im in full vigor to the end of he died, in 1820, at the age e.

posed, retrospective, a man y young and old, strong in his n-minded, he was not content ality in either his most per- artial opinions and research always the splendid type of l and cultured gentleman nd an asset to any generation

FISH AND FISHERIES OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THIS day, when the waters in and around Rhode Island have to be stocked periodically to maintain their supply of fish for both professional and amateur fishermen, it should be of some interest, especially to such native Izaak Waltons as may be left, to look back to the Rhode Island of yesterday, when the idea of stocking ponds and streams with trout, salmon, or bass would have hailed as an absurdity. As a matter of fact, none of the early settlers in the State could have been expected to have foreseen a day when any such procedure would be necessary. The Rhode Island of the day of the Norsemen, of Verrazano, and of Roger Williams was a sportsman's paradise. The woods were full of all kinds of game; the ground was unusually fertile and supported a luxuriant vegetation; and the waters teemed with fish. But the men and women of that day did not look at all these natural advantages with the eyes of sportsmen. To them, the game, fish, and fertile soil symbolized a good living—food which could be easily secured.

Thus, for more than two centuries, the inhabitants of the Colony applied themselves to the extravagant consumption of their natural resources, assuming them to be inexhaustible. Only at the end of that time did they take serious notice of the results of their wastefulness. And then the natural stock of fish had been so far depleted that even the strictest conservation had little effect. Breeding more fish to restock the waters was the only solution.

The first law on fishing was passed in 1640 by the Aquidneck (later the Rhode Island) Colony and stated that inhabitants of Newport might fish to their hearts' content in Newport waters. Kingston and other towns along the Pettaquamscutt River formed similar laws for their inhabitants before the close of the century. Interference with those who made their living by fishing

was forbidden under the most severe penalties. However, a section of the King Charles Charter of 1663 best illustrates the general attitude toward the question of fishing and fishing rights. It reads as follows:

"We do . . . ordain and appoint that these presents shall not, in any measure, hinder any of our loving subjects, whatsoever, from using and exercising the trade of fishing upon the coast of New England, in America, but they may, and any or every-one of them, shall have full and free power and liberty to continue and use the trade of fishing upon the said coast, in any of the seas thereunto adjoining or any arms of the seas, or salt-water, rivers, and creeks where they have been accustomed to fish, and to build and set upon the waste land belonging to the said Colony and Plantations such wharves, stages and work-houses as shall be necessary for the salting, drying, and keeping of their fish to be taken or gotten upon the coast."

This was literally a royal invitation to make the most of the fishing at hand, and it was accepted thoroughly.

In 1719, a temporary special statute was passed by the General Assembly forbidding the further construction of dams and other obstructions across streams which prevented the free passage of fish. Under this law, individual Town Councils were made responsible for its infringements within their precincts. In 1735, seining and trapping were restricted to certain months of the year and entirely forbidden during Saturday, Sunday, and Monday of each week, while line-fishing was only forbidden on Sundays. Yet such legislation, with the many varying amendments through the years, was of no actual benefit to either seiners or line-fishermen, and a rivalry between the two classes for protective legislation sprang up.

In 1761, we find a new method of dealing with the problem of falls and dams across rivers. The people north of Pawtucket Falls petitioned the legislature for permission to run a lottery to raise money for the

construction of a tunnel through the Falls, or a channel around them, through which fish could pass from the lower into the upper waters. The petition was granted, and £1500 was raised to build what was called a "fish-way." The obstruction problem at John Arnold's dam, higher up on the river at Woonsocket, had been solved in a similar manner, through the building of a trench through which fish could pass. Later, in 1768, the Town of Providence appointed men to go to Pawtucket and lay out a piece of land to be used as a common, with a road into it, for the Town's free fishing.

A legislative committee attempted to make a survey of all the fisheries in 1766, but without success. In 1785, a serious quarrel arose between the Colonies of Rhode Island and Connecticut over the weirs which their respective towns on either side of the Pawcatuck River had constructed. In the fight for rights a group of Rhode Islanders drove a Connecticut captain and his men to Stonington and mobbed them. The matter was laid before the respective legislative bodies of the two Colonies for settlement and commissions to deal with it were appointed. However, before anything could be decided, the fish all died, causing the death of the issue as well. This was a direct result of the increase of manufacturing and the consequent building of dams. Ever since 1735, the colonists had become reconciled to such encroachments of their fishing privileges, due to the greater revenue from manufacturing, and now they suddenly realized that even the building of fish-ways around such obstructions had had little result. (This was because any fish-ways which interfered with private manufacturing interests were quietly legislated out of existence.) And, after 1857, the legislature abandoned the question of fish-ways entirely.

There had been laws restricting the taking of fish out of the State by non-residents. However, most of the laws up to this time applied only to fresh water fish. Smelts were the first salt-water fish to receive protection, and this was not until 1857. A commission, appointed the previous year to look into the causes of the diminishing fish supply, reported that fish were as plentiful as ever, but its investigation was not very complete. Certain kinds of fish were still abundant and that seemed to be enough. That other kinds

were fast disappearing was only to evident, yet there was no official talk of re-stocking. Scup was then plentiful off West Island and Seakonnet Point, as were also bluefish and tautog.

In 1870, the Commission of Inland Fisheries was established, but its duties were only to look after fresh water stock. Meanwhile the constant arguments went on between trappers and seiners and line-fishermen. It was inevitable that the former should win out, because people were demanding more and more fish as food and only large scale methods of catching fish were practical. A concession was made to the line-fishermen's demands by instituting a weekly closed period for trapping and seining, but the results were negligible. In 1879, the Commission of Inland Fisheries was also give full jurisdiction over all the bay fisheries.

Official attention toward re-stocking the waters first appeared in 1868, when salmon were raised and put in the rivers. This fish did not breed well, however, and soon disappeared. Black bass were then introduced from out of the State and thrived in Rhode Island waters. The idea of re-stocking, though not given legislative support until so late, had originated privately in 1825 with the Society for the Encouragement of Domestic Industries. This society did the best it could, giving premiums for the breeding and fattening of fish, but its small efforts passed without official recognition, until necessity forced the State to adopt the plan itself. Probably the single and constant labor of Newton Dexter, a member of the Inland Fisheries Commission and a lover of fishing as a sport, did more to establish the present methods of regularly re-stocking rivers and streams than anything else. Fish for re-stocking were obtained from the United States Fish Commission and consisted mainly of shad, trout, and black bass. And this method of keeping up the supply has continued to the present, being the only way after all.

In all this survey, one thing is dominant, that nothing was done officially for the protection of one of Rhode Island's greatest natural industries until forced by necessity. Lobsters were not protected until 1881, and then they were fast disappearing. It has been the same with other natural sources of

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supply throughout the country. The buffalo, beaver, wood pigeon, and timber all existed in vast quantities for the benefit of the early settlers and western pioneers. And they have been used prodigally and wasted, until within a comparatively short time ago.

If there is any moral, it is the one which should inspire a foresightedness in the conservation of all sources of natural supply, something which, had it been applied some centuries earlier, might have been bearing rich fruits today.

HANNAH ROBINSON

ONE of the most romantic figures in all Rhode Island history was Hannah Robinson, whose name has been immortalized because of her association with the so-called "Hannah's Rock," a shrine which has been visited by many who have heard the touching story of her undying love for a faithless husband. In 1746, Mr. Roland Robinson, Hannah's father, built a beautiful homestead, which is still standing and occupied, just off the Boston Neck Road about five miles north of Narragansett Pier, not far from the "Old South Ferry."

It was in this year, also, that Hannah was born. Soon after her birth a colored child was born to one of the family slaves and she was called "Hannah" after her young mistress, for as soon as she was old enough she was made the young lady's special maid. Later another daughter came into the family and she was called Mary. William, the brother, followed about thirteen years after the birth of his sister Hannah.

In her happy, prosperous home, Hannah Robinson grew into young ladyhood, and her father, anxious to give his children the best possible education, sent her to a famous school in Newport, a school for young ladies, kept by a Madam Osborne.

Hannah Robinson was so good and so beautiful and so full of grace of mind and personality that she seems more like a myth than a real person. Mrs. Turrell, a descendant, says of her, that she "was rather above medium height, with a clear complexion delicately tinted with rose; dark hazel eyes, Grecian features of the finest mould throughout; a faultless head of auburn hair, swan-like neck and shoulders, a lovely expression, and of an incomparable grace in speech, manner and carriage." Certainly

all traditions are that she was the most beautiful girl in the American Colonies, and it does not seem strange that her father should have had great ambitions for her future.

Hannah, then, in all the first bloom of her beauty, entered this select school in Newport, and there it was that she met M. Pierre Simond, who taught dancing and French. He was the son of an old Huguenot family of some note, and Mrs. Turrell writes of him that "He was of pleasing person and seductive manners."

It is probably true that from the first moment of their meeting Hannah Robinson and the young Frenchman fell deeply in love, and that they exchanged pledges of affection. The young people managed to meet occasionally outside of classes, and so the time went on until Hannah was to return to her father's house.

Hannah knew well, and Simond realized, that Mr. Robinson, with all his pride and his ambition for his daughter, would never sanction their marriage, and when the time drew near for them to part they were very sad. But Hannah had an uncle, William Gardiner. It is said that, as a son of a second marriage of Hannah's grandfather, he was scarcely older than his lovely niece, and certain it was that he had a warm, romantic heart and aided the lovers. He employed Simond in his home to teach his young sons, and thus made it possible for the young couple to meet without her father's knowledge.

It is said that Mrs. Robinson divined Hannah's infatuation for her lover, and did all that she could to dissuade her from it, but finding that all persuasion useless and that her daughter's very health was menaced by any thought of separation, she reluctantly condoned their meeting. The old house is full of cup-boards, the most famous being