

1st
Apr 5, 1953

The First Day

The true trout fisherman approaches the first day of fishing ~~with~~ with all the ^{palpitant} sense of wonder and awe that a child approaches Christmas.

There is the same ecstatic counting of the days; the same endless preparations; the same ^{in its tracks} ^{careful} making of lists, ^{which are succeeded in turn} followed by lists of lists! And then ~~it~~ and then -- when it ^{that the time has frozen} seems quite ^{will never} impossible it is actually ^{perhaps it's also} so, 'tis the night before Fishing! ^{time for poetry,} ^{a little} however bad...

'Twas the night before fishing
When all ^{through} the home
Lay dad's ^{scattered} fishing ^{gear,} ~~treasures~~
As though strewn by a souse...

one
for last minute checkup,

~~The unloathed fisherman, about to be released~~
~~from his long winter nap~~
But well of course have been up
a dozen times ^{sighing} ^{earing his nervous kidneys,} chirping the night, prowling the
peering at ^{wooly} skies,
midnight ^{halls,} ^{passing} through mounds
of ^{duffle and} gear, tapping ^{at} barometers, ^{perhaps even} occasionally
tapping his ^{medicinal} ^{or Canadian} bottle of Kentucky ^{boyish} chill-chaser...

It is this ^{boyish} quality of innocence and this irrepresible ^{all} sense of festive anticipation, that makes ^{all} children

For after all, ^{quite} ~~and~~ fishermen ^{merely} ~~are~~, grown up
children who have substituted Isaac Walton
for Santa Claus?

Just as no Christmas can ever quite
disappoint a youngster, however bleak and
stormy ^{the day}, so no opening day of fishing
can ever quite disappoint his grown-up
brother. The day ^{embodies its own} ~~carries its~~ special
magic ^{a magic} of its own that nothing can dull.

For ~~it~~ ^{it} is the symbol of the greatest of
Nature's ~~annual~~ ^{annual} miracles, the annual
unlocking of Spring, ~~the signal~~



For midwinter of prison doors, this

Since this fisherman dwells at
Latitude ^{should}, it will ^{come} as no great
~~particular~~ ^{to learn} shock ^{when I observe that} I have had
to draw rather heavily on this ^{supply of} ~~magic~~
of ~~magical~~ magic to help up my own
drooping spirits. Our big opening-day problem
is ~~threefold: to find (1) open water; (2)~~
~~find (3) that is not too high and (3) that~~
is twofold: to ^{know where to find} ~~find~~ open
water; ^{and} to be able to get ^{to it.} ~~there~~

Our opening day is the last Saturday
in April, a season of the year that usually
finds ~~all~~ ^{most} back ~~all~~ and side roads impassable
from either ^{or mud, or both,} the
snow (and ~~the~~ ^{some} ice pick a
more ^{practical} ~~useful~~ ^{with which} weapon to approach our
trout waters than a fly rod. Our rivers
and streams are ^{then} usually in their fullest

flood; the lakes and ponds are usually
ice-locked; and the best solution is
to ~~locate~~ ^{remember} an open or partially open
spring pond or beaver dam -- and then
~~stay if you can get there.~~ ^{spend the day trying to} Usually we take pre-season
winning opening days had to trek
have after a good into these

places on snowshoes, ~~the~~ ~~and~~ I ~~remember~~
~~remember~~ ^{remember} one spring when I stood on
foot-thick lid of a pond
~~the~~ ~~on~~ my snowshoes -- and took
light respectable trout on dry flies, ^{less than} thirty
feet away, ^{home to daddy} skidding them over the ice!

If you don't believe it, don't worry; I don't ^{quite} believe it myself.

Since 1936 I have kept a complete

record of every fishing trip I have taken.
It's amazing how you can torture yourself during the winter reading ^{it over}

Has a presumably practicing lawyer I would ~~not~~

have given the ^{total} number of ~~and~~ ^{of trips I took.} ~~in~~ ^{anyway,} in
the records I find this ^{rather depressing} box score for the

major opening day:

1936: Snow-shoes part way into
Flopper's Pond with Clarence Lath. Pond
partly open. No rise, no fish, no errors.

1937: Same way, same place, with
Mike DeFaut. Kept five fryers out of pride.

Snow-shoes trip to try to answer both questions

- 1938: Slugged into ^{beaver} Werna Creek dam with mudhooks. Same fellow plus brother Leo. Caught four 4 stinkers, and double pneumonia.
- 1939: ^{Waded into} Wilson Creek beaver dams with Bill Gray. ^{on snow-shoes} No rises, ^{no takes} Bill took 6 on bait. Spent ^{back across broken bridge} balance of day getting ^{out of mud} Buckshot.
- 1940: Louie Bonetti, ^{dam} Mee Racine and Leo and I to O'Neil's Creek. A beautiful day, ^{succesfully} and a beautiful hangover. No rises, no fish, several errors.
- 1941: Tom Cole and ^{and I drove out to the} Vic Snyder to "Old Ruined Dams". Roads open, ponds free of ice. Fair rise. (Beautiful day. Tom (6), Vic (7) and I (9).
- 1942: Same gang, ^{plus Leo, to} same place, ^{game conditions} I kept 5 fryers. Vic filled out on bait. Had fish fry in camp. Lost 2.5000 runs.
- 1943: ^{no fish and} no entry ^{just} (Must have been a glaucinopone.) ^{of when I went. Caught must have gone straight up!}
- 1944: South camp with gang. ^{usual opening} Bucked drifts ^{high water} lost 2 miles. Picked arbutus on ^{south} hillsides. No fish in crowd. Drowned our sorrows in mead and twisted garlands of
- 1945: To Ted Zuber's ^{herd} camp with Bill Gray and Carl Winkler. Raw, cold, N.E. wind. ^{Didn't win a line} Won \$17.00 at poker.
- 1946: To Frenchman's Pond with gang. Fly line froze. Got sick to stomach and spelled out QUIT DRINKIN at thirty ^{not} paces. Pinky paid it.
- 1947: Snow-shed 5 miles with Dick Tsch to Murnie's pond. Snow ^{still} 3 feet ^{deep} in woods. Caught in ^{cold} rain and snow. Spent following week in bed with a nurse.
- 1948: Chopped way into Stony Pond with ^{through winter's supply of windfalls} Dipp Warner and ^{Caught} Tom Bennett. Saw 2 bears and 17 deer. ^{Caught} 2 fair trout. Caught in hailstorm, which ended fishing. On to Ottawa Lodge and doghouse.

Caught in our hair.

1949: ^{partly} Snow-shoed into Scudde's Pond with Joe Parker. ^{dumpling} Pond open over springs. ^{Fish passing} Stood on ice and kept 8 on dry flie! Joe took only 1 on spinning gear, the wrong medicine.

1950: To Alger county with Marquette gang. Snow, ice and ~~high water~~ high water. Didn't wit a line. Excursion became a pub crawl. Lost count after the 17th.

1951: Shugged ^{won three dick snow} into Scudde's Pond led by ^{prone Expedition} Commander Frank Russell ^{and his men} Al Paul caught 2 ^{in outlet}. Pond ice locked tight ^{great}. Flound 2 fifths and retired in ^{disorder}. Attracted by unfriendly matrix. Got half shot.

1952: Mud. ~~last~~ hooked way into Frenchman's Pond with Hans Scarffe and 2 boats. ^{intermittent} Mice rise. Hans and I fished out ^{carefully} ^{over} selecting trout. ^{Most} dramatic first-day rise ^{can} ^{in a hell of a} good fisherman when the trout commit suicide.

I regret that it

^{you see,} As a matter of fact the first day of fishing ^{in my backwash} at least, is something of a gamble, largely an annual spring get-together of congenial souls. An opportunity to try out and find the bugs in one's equipment, and a chance to stretch one's legs and expand one's ^{opports} ^{also frequently} ^{can} ^{entrench oneself firmly in the doghouse.} ^{early and} ^{firmly} ^{in the doghouse.} ^{was the morning after the first day} ^{when all through the house} ^{not a child person was straining} ^{the moaning and the} ^{groaning} ^{of} ^{your} ^{daddy} -- the louse!

THE FIRST DAY

The true ~~fish~~ fisherman approaches the first day of fishing with all the sense of wonder and awe of a child approaching Christmas. There is the same ecstatic counting of the days; the same ^{lager and} palpitant preparations; the same loving drafting of lists which are succeeded in turn by lists of lists! And ~~then, and~~ then--when it seems Time has frozen in its tracks and the magic hour will never arrive--lo, 'tis the night before fishing! ^{Tomorrow is the big day!} Perhaps it ^{is} also the time for a little poetry, however bad...

Single Space { T'was the night before fishing
When all through the house
Lay dad's scattered fishing gear,
As though strewn by a souse...

Dad will of course have been up a dozen times during the night, prowling ^{darkened, creaking} the ~~midnight~~ ^{the midnight} halls, peering out at ~~nightless~~ ^{creeping down stairs and} skies, pawing through mounds of ^{bright} duffle and gear for the umpteenth last-minute checkup, ^{crouching over} listening to ^{the} all-night disc jockeys, tapping at ^{and} barometer--perhaps even tapping his medicinal bottle of Kentucky or Canadian chill-chaser... It is this ^{juvenile eagerness, this} boyish quality of innocence, this irrepressible sense of anticipation, that makes all children and fishermen one. For after all, aren't fishermen merely over-sized ^{juveniles} children who have ^{sub}traded ~~stituted~~ ⁱⁿ Isaac Walton for Santa Claus ^{for Isaac Walton?}

Just as no Christmas can ever quite disappoint a youngster, however bleak and stormy the day, so no opening day of fishing can ever quite disappoint his grown-up brother. ^{For} The day is invested with its own special magic, a magic that nothing can seem to dull. ^{For it} is the signal of the end of the long winter hibernation, the widening of prison doors, the symbol of ^{one} the ~~greatest~~ of Nature's ^{greatest} miracles, the annual unlocking of Spring.

* * *

Since this fisherman dwells at Latitude ^{45 N,} it should come as no great shock to learn that most opening days I have had to draw rather heavily on this supply of magic to keep up my own drooping spirits. Our big opening-day problem is twofold: to know where to find open water; and ^{then} to be able to get to it.

Our opening day is the last Saturday in April, a season of the year that usually finds most back ~~and side~~ roads impassable from either snow or mud, or both, and the ice ^{chisel -> often} pick a more practical weapon with which to ^{assault} approach our trout waters than a fly rod. Our rivers and streams ~~are then~~ usually in their fullest flood; ~~the lakes and ponds are usually ice-locked;~~ and the best solution is to ^{try to} remember an open or partially open spring pond or beaver dam-- and then spend the day trying to get there. Usually we take pre-season snow-shoe trips ^{a good part of} to ^{reconnaissance (?)} ~~try to answer both questions~~ ^{on snowshoes} ~~contingent by the conditions.~~ ^{hence, my pals and I usually}

Even on opening days I have often had to trek into these places on snow-shoes. I remember one recent spring when I stood on foot-thick ice of a ^{small} pond on my snowshoes--and took eight respectable trout on dry flies ^{from an open spring-hole} less than thirty feet away, skidding them home to daddy over the ice! If you don't believe it, don't ^{worry;} I'm not quite sure ^{that} I believe it myself.

Since 1936 I have kept a complete record of every fishing trip I have taken. It's amazing how ~~you~~ ^I can torture ~~yourself~~ ^{myself} during the winter reading it over. As a presumably practicing lawyer I wouldn't dare ^{tell} give the total number of trips I ^{have taken.} ~~took.~~ Anyway, in going over ^{my fishing log} the records I find this rather depressing box score for the magic opening day:

- 1936: Snow-shoed into Flopper's Pond with Clarence Lott. Pond partly open. No rises, no fish, no errors.
- 1937: Same way ^{to} same place, with Mike DeFant. ^{Reluctantly} kept five fryers out of ^{low} pride.
- 1938: Slugged into Werner Creek beaver dam with mudhooks ^{on Onchidea?}. Same fellows plus brother Leo. Caught 4 stinkers and double pneumonia.

X
Hanna
omit
underline ->

1939: Hiked into Wilson Creek beaver dam ⁵ on snow-shoes with Bill Gray. No rises, no takers. Bill took 6 ^{fryers} on bait. Spent balance of day ^{cooking} getting Buckshot back across broken bridge.

1940: Louie Bonetti, Nes Racine and Leo and I to O'Neil's Creek dam. A beautiful day succeeded by [^] beautiful hangover. No rises, no fish, several errors.

1941: Tom Cole and Vic ^Snyder and I drove out to the "Old Ruined Dams." Roads open, ponds free of ice. Fair rise. Beautiful day. Tom (6), Vic (7) and I (9), ^{all fryers. Geese honking over like crazy.}

1942: Same gang plus Leo, to same place, same conditions. I kept 5 fryers. Vic filled out on bait. Had fish fry in camp. Lost \$2.50 at rum. ^{and turned} Tossed all night. ^{Buckshot and I}

1943: No fish and no entry of just where I went. ^{Must have gone straight up!}

1944: South camp with usual opening gang. Bucked drifts last 2 miles. High water. Picked arbutus on south hillsides. No fish in crowd. Drowned our sorrows in mead ^{wine} and twisted garlands of arbutus in our hair.

1945: To Ted Fulsher's camp with Bill Gray and Carl Winkler. Raw, cold. N.E. wind. Didn't wet a line. Won \$17.00 at poker. ^{Slept like a log.}

1946: To Frenchman's Pond with gang. Fly line froze. Got sick to stomach ^{violently} and spelled ^{and spelled out} QUIT DRINKIN' at thirty-six paces. ^{in block letters} The new chains. ^{Pinky paced it off.} ^{and flew up.}

1947: Snow-shoed 5 miles with Dick Tisch to Nurmi's pond. Snow still 3 feet deep in woods. ^{Got} caught in cold ^{bitter} rain and snow. Spent following week in bed with a nurse. ^{Must repeat next year.}

1948: Chopped way through winter's supply of windfalls into ^{the} ^{bountiful} ^{O'Leary's} ^{Stony} Pond with Gipp Warner and Tom Bennett. Saw ² bears and 17 deer. Caught 2 ^{nice} fair trout ^{Paul Benjamin's roadside} right off bat. Then caught in hailstorm, which ended ^{sudden} fishing. On to Ottawa Lodge, ^{and} ^{of those tourist-traps} and doghouse. ^{saloon made of logs} ^{out of logs} ^{all} ^{Thence on to doghouse.} ^{too.}

^{swash with} ^{stuffed owls and} ^{of pressing} ^{Drinks} ^{also} ^{must have been} ^{too.}
^{the cutest iddy bitty bar made out of} ^{logs.}
^{Next morning, snug in my doghouse,} ^I ^{suspected} ^{their whisky was, too.}

1949: Snow-shoed into Scudder's Pond with Joe Parker. Pond partly open over bubbling springs. Fish dimpling. Stood on ice and ^{Cook} kept 8 on dry flies! ^{twins} Joe took only 1 on spinning gear, the wrong medicine. ^{It was a miracle.}

1950: To Alger county with Marquette gang. Snow, ice and high water. Didn't wet a line. Excursion ^{degenerated into} became a pub crawl. Lost count after the 17th.

1951: Slugged way thru deep snow into Scudder's Pond led by ~~proud~~ proud ~~expedition~~ Expedition Commander Frank Russell and his new jeep. Pond ice ^{There is a new breed form of insanity, the victims of which are} locked tight as bull's horns. Al Paul caught 2 in outlet. ^{and} Floored 2 fifths and retired in great disorder. ^{party of} Attacked by unfriendly natives ^{and} got half shot.

1952: Mud, hooked way into Frenchman's Pond with Hank Scarffe and 2 boats. Nice intermittent "business" rise. Hank and I filled out, carefully selecting our trout. ^{One of the} Most dramatic first-day rise I ^s remember. Funny thing, ^{I become a} hell of a good fisherman when the trout ^{decide to} commit suicide.

As you see, the first day of fishing in my bailiwick at least, is something of a gamble, largely ^{a traditional} an annual spring get-together of congenial souls, an opportunity to try out and find the bugs in one's equipment, and a chance to stretch one's legs and expand one's soul. I regret that it also frequently affords an excellent opportunity to entrench oneself early and firmly in the doghouse. ^{All of which brings on the final seizure of poetry.}

Simple Epiphany
T'was the morning after the first day
When all through the house
Echoed the moaning and groaning
Of poor daddy--the louse!

out of seven men I was the shortest at six feet!
The inventor of the julep bet is a poet.
cope between a brambles and a pine. May he roost in hell.

THE FIRST DAY

The true trout fisherman approaches the first day of fishing with all the ~~palpitant~~ sense of wonder and awe ^{of} that a child ^{approaching} approaches Christmas. There is the same ecstatic counting of the days; the same ^{palpitant} ~~endless~~ preparations; the same ^{loving drafting} ~~careful making~~ of lists which are succeeded in turn by lists of lists! And then, and then--when it seems Time has frozen in its tracks and the magic hour will never arrive--lo, 'tis the night before fishing! Perhaps it's also ^{the} time for a little poetry, however bad...

T'was the night before fishing
When all through the house
Lay dad's scattered fishing gear,
As though strewn by a souse...

*listening to all-night
disc jockeys;*

Dad ~~will~~ of course have been up a dozen times during the night, ~~easing his nervous kidneys~~, prowling the midnight halls, peering ^{out} at sightless skies, pawing through mounds of duffle and gear for ^{the umpteenth} ~~one~~ last-minute checkup, tapping at barometers--perhaps even tapping his medicinal bottle of Kentucky or Canadian chill-chaser... It is this boyish quality of innocence, this irrepressible sense of anticipation, that makes all children and fishermen one. For after all, aren't fishermen merely ^{over-sized} ~~grown-up~~ children who have substituted Isaac Walton for Santa Claus?

Just as no Christmas can ever quite disappoint a youngster, however bleak and stormy the day, so no opening day of fishing can ever quite disappoint his grown-up brother. The day ^{is invested with} ~~carries~~ its own special magic, a magic that nothing can ^{seem to} ~~dull~~. For it is the signal of the end of the long ^{winter} hibernation, the widening of prison doors, the symbol of the greatest of Nature's miracles, the annual unlocking of Spring.

* * *

~~Past ^{were} opening days ^{more} ~~apt~~ to lean to the tragic
than ^{the} magic, as the following
depressing account from my
fisher's log may reveal:~~

A

NO 9 From these records one thing
emerges rather clearly: past
opening days were more apt to
lean to the tragic than the
magic. Here is the actual
depressing account, omitting only
the technical data on barometric
pressures, wind direction, and the like.

caught in sudden hailstorm, which ended all fishing. On to Birchbark Lodge, one of those quaint Paul Bynyanish roadside tourist-traps cluttered to the eaves with stuffed owls and yawning dead bass ^{affixed} attached to varnished boards-- and possessing the cutest iddy bitty bar made out of real Vlogs. Next morning, snug in my doghouse, I suspected the whisy was, too.

1949: Snow-shoed into Scudder's Pond with Joe Parker. Pond partly open ever bubbling springs. Fish dimpling. Stood on ice and took 8 on tiny dry flies! ^{It was a miracle.} Skidded them over the ice. Skidding at Scudder's! ^{by George Bellows.} ~~It was a miracle.~~ Joe took only 1 on spinning gear, the wrong medicine.

1950: To Alger county with Marquette gang. ^{Began to fidget} Felt like a midget. Out of seven men I was the shortest, at six feet. A tall tale! Snow, ice and high water. Didn't wet a line. Excursion degenerated into a pub crawl. Lost count after the 17th. Heard 8 million polkas and hill-billy laments--all sung through the left nostril. Love, your spell is everywhere... The inventor of the juke box is a cross between a banshee and a fiend. May he roast ^{the firehole of} in Hell.

1951: Slugged way thru deep snow into Scudder's Pond led by proud Expedition Commander Frank Russell and his new jeep. The man searched for snow-drifts to charge! There is a new form of lunacy abroad in the land, the victims of which are called x Jeepomaniacs... Pond ice locked tight as a bull's horns. Al Paul caught 2 in outlet. Surprise-attacked by party of friendly natives, ~~lurking nearby.~~ Entire expedition got half shot and retired in vast disorder.

1952: Mudhooked way into Frenchman's Pond with Hank Scarffe and 2 boats. Nice intermittent "business" rise. Hank and I filled out, carefully ~~selecting~~ our trout. ^{Fish fat and sassy.} One of the most dramatic first-day rises I remember. Had but 2 bottles of beer--a fine, contrite broth of a boy. Funny thing, I become a hell of a good fisherman when the trout decide to commit suicide.

* * *

As you may now suspect, the first day of fishing in my bailiwick is something of a gamble. Usually it is considerably more devoted to drinking than fishing, a state of affairs against which I maintain a stern taboo when ~~the~~ really fishing in earnest. Then any drinking--usually a nightcap or two--comes only after the fishing is over and done. To me fly fishing is ordinarily quite difficult and stimulating enough without racing the old motor... But the first day is mostly a traditional spring get-together of congenial souls, an incidental opportunity to try out and find the bugs in one's equipment, and a chance to stretch one's legs and expand one's soul. I regret that it also frequently affords ~~me~~ an excellent opportunity to entrench oneself early and firmly in the doghouse. ~~Now~~ ^{at this} is the time for all middle-aged fishermen to sow their rolled oats. All of which brings on a final seizure of dubious poetry.

T'was the morning after the first day
When all through the house
Echoed the moaning and groaning
Of poor daddy--the louse!

P. S. I finished writing this deathless lament on April tenth. Opening day is just fifteen days away. A sudden lashing blizzard is howling out of the east. "Whee-e-e-e..." There is already ten inches of soggy new snow and the barometer ^{has dropped} ~~is~~ in a well. Quick, Watson--get me the needle!

to remain spellbound while mired ^{up} to the hubcaps in mud. Our big opening-day problem is twofold: to know where to find open water; and then be able to get to it. *In the process we are sometimes driven to drink.*

Our opening day is the last Saturday in April, a disenchanting season of the year that usually finds most back roads ^{badly} clogged if not impassable ~~then~~ ^a either snow or mud and ~~the~~ ^a three-pound ice chisel often a more promising weapon with which to assault our trout waters than ^{the} ~~a~~ three-ounce fly rod. Our lakes and ponds are usually still ice-locked; our rivers and streams are usually in their fullest flood; and the best solution is to try to remember an open or partially open spring pond or beaver dam--and then spend a good part of the ~~big~~ day trying to get there. Hence it is that my fishing pals and I usually take several pre-season reconnaissance trips on snowshoes. But ^{regardless of the day, we} always ~~we~~ go, come fire, flood or famine-- ^{or the fulminations of relatives by marriage.} ^{forth,}

Even ^{on many} opening days I have ~~often~~ had to trek into ^{the chosen spot} ~~these~~ places on snowshoes. I remember one recent spring when I stood on the foot-thick ice of a pond on my snowshoes--and took eight respectable trout on dry flies from a small open spring-hole less than thirty feet away, skidding them home to daddy over the ice! *(Here add portion ^{you} omitted from last draft.)*

Since 1936 I have kept a complete record of every fishing trip I have taken. ^{It is} ~~It is~~ amazing how I can torment and torture myself during the winter, ^{recreating once again} ~~reading it over,~~ ^{the those magic scenes, hearing once again} ~~As a presumably practicing lawyer I wouldn't dare tell the~~ ~~total number of trips I have taken,~~ ^{but} ~~in going over my fishing log I find~~ ~~this rather depressing account of past opening days. Frequently they were more~~ ~~tragic than magic.~~

1936: Snow-shoed into Flopper's Pond with Clarence Lott. Pond partly open. No rises, no fish, no errors. Two flats ^{tyris} on way out. *"Oh what fun it is to run..."*
1937: Same way to same place with Mike DeFant. Reluctantly kept five ^{wisened} fryers out of low peasant pride.

1938: Slugged into Werner Creek beaver dam with mudhooks on Model A. Same fellows plus brother Leo. Caught 4 stinkers and a dash of double pneumonia.

The slow rhythmic whirr of the fly line... (New-A)

reading this over

Fix

to remain spellbound while mired ~~///~~ to the hubcaps in mud. Our big opening-day problem is twofold: to know where to find open water; and then be able to get to it. In the process we are sometimes driven to drink.

Our opening day is the last Saturday in April, a disenchanting season of the year that usually finds most back roads badly clogged if not impassable and a ~~three-~~^{four-}pound ice chisel often a more promising weapon with which to assault our trout waters than the ~~three-~~^{four-}ounce fly rod. Our lakes and ponds are usually still ice-locked; our rivers and streams are usually in their fullest flood; and the best solution is to try to remember an open or partially open spring ~~pond~~^{-fed} or beaver dam--and then spend a good part of the day trying to get there. Hence it is that my fishing pals and I usually take several pre-season reconnaissance trips on snowshoes. But regardless of the day, we always go forth, come fire, flood or famine--or the ~~fulmerations~~^{fulminations} of relatives by marriage.

On many opening days I have had to trek into the chosen spot on snowshoes. I remember one recent spring when I stood on the foot-thick ice of a pond on my snowshoes--and took eight respectable trout on dry flies from a small open spring-hole less than thirty feet away, skidding them home to daddy over the ice! If you don't believe it, don't fret; I'm not quite sure that I believe it myself.

Since 1936 I have kept a complete record of every fishing trip I have taken. It is amazing how I can ~~torment and~~ torture myself during the winter reading this ~~stuff,~~^{stuff,} ever, recreating once again those magic scenes, ~~hearing once again the slow rhythmic~~^{seeing again the glittering promise of trout} ~~whish~~^{over} of the fly lines... From these records one thing emerges rather clearly: past opening days ~~were~~^{mildly} more apt to lean to the ~~tragic~~ than the magic. Here is the actual depressing account, omitting only the technical ~~data~~^{water-temperatures} on barometric pressures, wind direction, and the like.

1936: Snow-shoed into Flopper's Pond with Clarence Lott. Pond partly open. No rises, no fish, no errors. Two flat tires on way out. "Oh what fun it is to run..."

1937: Same way to same place with Mike DeFant. Reluctantly kept five wizened fryers out of low peasant pride.

1938: Slugged into Werner Creek beaver dam with mudhooks on Model A. Same fellows plus brother Leo. Caught 4 ^{youngsters} ~~stinkers~~ and a dash of double pneumonia.

caught in sudden hailstorm, which ended all fishing. On to Birchbark Lodge, one of those quaint Paul Bunyanish roadside tourist-traps ^{cluttered to the laves} wash with stuffed owls and ^{assorted} autographed portraits of politicians and miscellaneous weight-lifters and possessing the cutest iddy bitty bar made out of ^{real} logs. Next morning, snug in my doghouse, I suspected ^{the} their whisky was, too.

1949: Snow-shoed into Scudder's Pond with Joe Parker. Pond partly open over bubbling springs. Fish dimpling. Stood on ice and took 8 on tiny dry flies! T'was a miracle. ^{Shedded them over the ice -> skidding at Scudder's!} Joe took only 1 on spinning gear, the wrong medicine.

1950: To Alger county with Marquette gang. Felt like a midget. Out of seven men I was the shortest, at six feet. A tall tale! Snow, ice and high water. Didn't wet a line. Excursion degenerated into a pub crawl. Lost count after the 17th. Heard 8 million polkas ^{and hill-billy laments--} all sung through the left nostril. ^{Love, your spell is everywhere...} The inventor of the juke box is a cross between a banshee and a fiend. May he ^{and his polkas} roast in Hell.

1951: Slugged way thru deep snow into Scudder's Pond led by proud Expedition Commander Frank Russell and his new jeep. The man ^{searched} for snow-drifts. ^{to charge!} There is a new form of ^{lunacy} insanity abroad in the land, the victims of which are called Jeepomaniacs... Pond ice locked tight as a bull's horns. Al Paul caught 2 in outlet. Surprise-attacked by party of friendly natives, ^{lurking} camping nearby. ^{Entire expedition} got half shot and retired in vast disorder.

1952: Mudhooked way into Frenchman's Pond with Hank Scarffe and 2 boats. Nice intermittant "business" rise. Hank and I filled out, carefully selecting our trout. ^{Had but 2 bottles of beer -- a fine, contrite broth of} One of the most dramatic first-day rises I remember. ^{2 days} Funny thing, I become a hell of a good fisherman when the trout decide to commit suicide.

As you ^{may now suspect,} can see the first day of fishing in my bailiwick is something of a gamble. Usually ^{it} there is ^{considerably more devoted to a state of apathy} more drinking than fishing, against which I maintain a stern taboo when really fishing in earnest. Then any drinking--usually a ^{on two--} nightcap--comes only ^{is prep work done. So me} after the fishing. ^{and stimulating} Fly fishing is difficult enough without racing ^{threshold} one's motor... ^{But the first day is} Mostly the first day is a traditional spring get-together of congenial souls, an incidental opportunity to try out and find the ^{and deliciously}

Now ~~it is~~ ^{the} time ^{for all} middle-aged fishermen ^{to show} ~~passing~~ their ^{ropes} ^{into} ^{the} ^{water}.

bugs in one's equipment, and a chance to stretch one's legs and expand one's soul. I regret that it also frequently affords an excellent opportunity to entrench oneself early and firmly in the doghouse. All of which brings on a final seizure of dubious poetry.

T'was the morning after the first day
When all through the house
Echoed the moaning and groaning
Of poor daddy--the louse!

P.S. I finished writing this ^{scathless} lament on April tenth. Opening day is ^{just} fifteen days away. A ^{sudden lashing} blizzard is howling out of the east.

"Whell-l-l-l..."
There is already ten inches of ^{soggy} new snow.

Quick, Watson, ^{me} ^{the} ^{get} ^{my} ^{the} ^{needle!} ~~the gas my spine pipe.~~

the barometer is in a well.

THE FIRST DAY

Ritual

The true fisherman approaches the first day of fishing with all the sense of wonder and awe of a child approaching Christmas. ^{Each year he} There is the same ecstatic counting of the days; the same eager and palpitant preparations; the same loving drafting of lists which are succeeded in turn by lists of lists! And then--when Time seems frozen in its tracks and one is sure the magic hour will never arrive--lo, 'tis the night before fishing! Tomorrow is the big day! Perhaps it is also the time for a little poetry, however bad...

T'was the night before fishing
When all through the house
Lay Dad's scattered fishing gear,
As though strewn by a souse...

Dad will of course have been up a dozen times during the night, prowling the ^{midnight} ~~creaking~~ halls, peering out at the ^{glowering} ~~midnight~~ skies, creeping downstairs and pawing through mounds of ^{duffel} ~~duffle~~ for the umpteenth last-minute checkup, crouching over the radio listening to the bright chatter of the all-night disc jockeys, ^{ritualistically} tapping ~~at~~ the barometer--and perhaps even ^{surreptitiously} ~~surreptitiously~~ tapping his medicinal bottle of Kentucky or Canadian chill-chaser... It is this boyish quality of innocence, this irrepressible sense of anticipation, that makes all children and fishermen one. For after all, aren't fishermen merely permanently spellbound juveniles who have traded in Santa Claus for ^{Isaac} ~~some~~ Walton?

Just as no Christmas can ever quite disappoint a youngster, however bleak and stormy the day, so no opening day of fishing can ever quite disappoint his grown-up brother. The day is invested with its own special magic, a magic that nothing can dispel. For it is the signal of the end of the long winter hibernation, the widening of prison doors, the symbol of one of Nature's greatest miracles, the annual unlocking of Spring.

Since this fisherman dwells at Latitude 45th, it should come as no great shock to learn that ^{on} most opening days I ^{am obliged} ~~have had~~ to draw rather heavily on this supply of magic to keep up my own drooping spirits. ^{for example} ~~It~~ is ^{SOMETIMES} ~~something~~ difficult

~~not for nothing~~
to remain spellbound while mired to the hubcaps in mud. Our big opening-day problem is twofold: to know where to find open water; and then be able to get ^{there} ~~to it~~. ^{During the ordeal} In the process we are sometimes driven to drink.

Our opening day is the last Saturday in April, ^{ordinarily} a disenchanting season of the year that ~~usually~~ finds most back roads badly clogged if not impassable and a four-pound ice chisel ~~often~~ ^{with which to probe} a more promising weapon with which to assault our trout waters than the four-ounce fly rod. Our lakes and ponds are usually still ice-locked; our rivers and streams are usually in their fullest flood; and the ~~best~~ ^{most sensible} solution is to try to remember an open or partially open spring-fed pond or beaver dam--and then spend a good part of the day trying to get there. Hence it is that my fishing pals and I usually take several pre-season reconnaissance trips on snowshoes. But regardless of the day, ^{we bravely} ~~we~~ always go forth, come fire, flood or famine--or the fulminations of relatives by marriage.

On many opening days I have had to trek into the chosen spot on snowshoes. I remember one recent spring when I stood on the foot-thick ice of a pond on my snowshoes--and took eight respectable trout on dry flies from a small open spring-hole less than thirty feet away, skidding them home to daddy over the ice! If you don't believe it, don't fret; I'm not ~~quite~~ ^{quite} sure that I believe it myself.

Since 1936 I have kept a complete record of every fishing trip I have taken. It is amazing how I can torture myself during the winter reading over this stuff, recreating once again those magic scenes, seeing again the ^{soft velvet glitter of soft} ~~glittering promise~~ of trout waters, hearing once again the slow rhythmic whish of the fly lines... From these records one thing emerges rather clearly: past opening days were more apt to lean to the mildly tragic than the magic. Here is the actual depressing account, omitting only the technical data on barometric pressures, water temperatures, wind direction, and the like.

1936: Snow-shoed into Flopper's Pond with Clarence Lott. Pond partly open. No rises, no fish, no errors. Two flat tires on way out. "Oh what fun it is to run..."

1937: Same way to same place with Mike DeFant. Reluctantly kept five wizened fryers out of low peasant pride.

1938: Slugged into Werner Creek beaver dam with mudhooks on Model A. Same fellows plus brother Leo. Caught 4 youngsters and a dash of double pneumonia.

A

1946: To Frenchman's Pond with
gang. Our fly lines froze ^{in the guides}. Thawed ^{lines and} sleeve to
South Camp where Leo broke out a
bottle of rare ~~of~~ old brandy. Evidently
it was too old; or ~~too new~~ after
the third round I ^{suddenly rose and} ~~clapped~~
my hand to my mouth -- and ran
myself ~~and went~~ outside and
frew up. ^{guess} I had better stick to the
~~old~~ ^{(medium rare ~~at~~ one-year-old} reliable brands of ^{cookin'}
whisky, the kind designed for peasants
of distinction....

1939: Hiked into Wilson Creek beaver dams on snow-shoes with Bill Gray. No rises, no takers. Bill took 6 fryers on bait. Spent balance of day coaxing the old fish car back across broken bridge. Finally did it with oats soaked in rum.

1940: Louie Bonetti, Nes Racine and Leo and I to O'Neil's Creek dam. A beautiful day succeeded by a beautiful hangover. No rises, no fish, several errors.

1941: Tom Cole and Vic Snyder and I drove out to the "Old Ruined Dams." Roads open, ponds free of ice. Fair rise. Beautiful day. Tom (6), Vic (7) and I (9), all fryers. ^{weirdly} ~~Geese honking over like crazy, ~~some like a~~~~ ^{sounding as if ~~demented~~ as} ~~Geese honking over like crazy, ~~some like a~~~~ ^{a distant pack of coyotes.}

1942: Same gang plus Leo, to same place, same conditions. I kept 5 fryers. Vic filled out on bait. Had fish fry that night in camp. Lost \$2.50 at rum. ~~Slept on mattress of mice nests.~~ Tossed and turned all night.

1943: (No fish and no entry of just where I went. ^{my, my.} ~~Fish car and I must~~ have gone straight up! Maybe no gas coupons.)

1944: South camp with usual opening gang. Bucked drifts last 2 miles. High water. Picked arbutus on south hillsides. No fish in crowd. Drowned our sorrows in mead and wore twisted garlands of arbutus in our hair.

1945: To Ted Fulsher's camp with Bill Gray and Carl Winkler. ^{round} Raw, cold. Northeast wind. Didn't wet a line. Won \$17.00 at poker. ^{third drink} Slept like a log. ~~produced a fatal~~

1946: To Frenchman's Pond with gang. Fly line froze. ^{it was} Leo gave me a drink of rare old ^{brandy.} whisky. ^{evidently too old.} After the ^{sick} it was got violently sick to stomach and frew up.

Spelled QUIT DRINKIN in block letters at thirty six paces. Pinky paced it off. ^{held up my hips hand} The new champ. ^{and announced me the new champ.}

1947: Snow-shoed 5 miles with Dick Tisch in to Nurmi's pond. Snow still 3 feet deep in woods. Got caught in bitter cold mixed rain and snow. ^{chills and} ~~She rubbed my chest, ~~as my delirium I tried to rub hers.~~~~ ^{at} following three days in bed with a nurse. ^{to} Enervating but fun. ^{to} Must try again next year.

1948: Chopped way through the winter's bountiful supply of windfalls into O'Leary's Pond with Gipp Warner and Tom Bennett. Saw 2 wobbly bears and 17 deer. Caught 2 nice trout right off bat. ^{Chuckled and} ^{twirled my waxed moustaches.} Then

See A for 1946 entry

Back in camp Leo broke out a bottle

caught in sudden hailstorm, which ended all fishing. On to Birchbark Lodge, one of those quaint Paul Bunyanish roadside tourist-traps cluttered to the eaves with stuffed owls and yawning dead bass ^{impaled on} affixed to varnished boards--and possessing the cutest iddy bitty bar made ^{we were solemnly assured,} out of real logs. Next morning, snug in my doghouse, I suspected the whisky was, too.

1949: Snow-shoed into Scudder's Pond with Joe Parker. Pond partly open over bubbling springs. Fish dimpling. Stood on ice and took 8 on tiny dry flies! T'was a miracle. Skidded them over the ice. Skidding at Scudder's! by George Bellows. Joe took only 1 on spinning gear, the wrong medicine.

1950: To Alger county with Marquette gang. ~~Began to fidget~~ ^{Felt} like a midget. Out of seven men I was the shortest, at six feet. A tall tale! Snow, ice and high water ^{everywhere.} Didn't wet a line. ^{Wet whistle instead.} Excursion degenerated into a pub crawl. Lost count after the 17th. Heard 8 million polkas and hill-billy laments--all sung through the left nostril. Love, your spell ^{was} ~~is~~ everywhere... The inventor of the juke box is a cross between a banshee and a fiend. May he roast in the bottom-most pits of Hell. ^{and his accomplices}

1951: Slugged way thru deep snow into Scudder's Pond led by proud Expedition Commander Frank Russell and his new jeep. The man searched for snow-drifts to charge! There is a new form of lunacy abroad in the land, the victims of which are called Jeepomaniacs. ^{They're afraid of nothing...} Pond ice-locked tight as a bull's horns, ^{the saying doesn't go.} Al Paul caught 2 in outlet. ^{Trout, not bull's horns.} Surprise-attacked by party of friendly natives.

Entire expedition got half shot and retired in vast disorder. ^{Using real traps hatch of doghouse.}

1952: Mudhooked way into Frenchman's Pond with Hank Scarffe and 2 boats. Nice intermittent "business" rise. Hank and I filled out, carefully selecting our trout. Fish fat and sassy. One of the most dramatic first-day rises I ^{ever recall.} ~~remember.~~ Had but 2 bottles of beer ^{all day long, such a} fine, contrite broth of a boy. Funny thing, I become a hell of a good fisherman when the trout decide to commit suicide. ^{truly} This is a fascinating pond.

As you may now suspect, the first day of fishing in my bailiwick is something of a gamble. Usually it is considerably more devoted to drinking than fishing, a state of affairs against which I maintain a stern taboo when really

the fishing *really gets under way.* ~~in earnest.~~ Then any drinking--usually a nightcap or two--comes only after the fishing is over and done. To me fly fishing is ordinarily quite difficult and stimulating enough without *souping up* ~~rearing~~ the old motor... But the first day is *different; it is* mostly a traditional spring get-together of congenial souls, an incidental opportunity to try out and find the bugs in one's equipment, and a chance to stretch one's legs and expand one's soul. I regret that *the ritual* ~~it~~ also frequently affords an excellent opportunity to entrench oneself early and firmly in the doghouse. *Then comes* ~~Now is~~ the time for all middle-aged fishermen to sow their rolled oats. All of which brings on a final seizure of dubious poetry.

T'was the morning after the first day
When all through the house
Echoed the moaning and groaning
Of poor daddy--the louse!

P. S. I finished writing this deathless lament on April tenth. Opening day is just fifteen days away. A sudden lashing blizzard is howling out of the east. "Whee-e-e-e..." There is already ten inches of soggy new snow and the barometer has dropped in a well. Quick, Watson--get me the needle!

Apr. 26,
1953

the earth fragrant with the ~~earth~~ yeast ^{of spring} fragrant in the air,

1953: ~~There ~~had been~~ were~~ ^{spring} ~~After~~ 4 hauntingly lovely ^{and} ~~the sky~~ cut by the ~~flash of~~ ^{flash} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~soft~~ ^{soft} ~~red~~ ^{red} ~~days,~~ ^{days,} with ~~endless~~ ^{endless} ~~wedges~~ ^{wedges} of honking

geese, ~~honking over,~~ Last night the wind swung abruptly to the east, ^{and} the

thermometer and barometer joined hands in a suicidal ~~sky~~ ^{weather} nose dive.

Hank Scarffe, Al Paul and I set out in 34 of the ^{navy} ~~slit~~ ^{slit} freezing to the windshield upon landing. All plans

away, we foolishly tried to reach the Moose Creek beaver dams, but got stuck in the first ^{long} ~~drift~~ ^{drift}. We then ^{headed west and} ~~pushed~~ ^{pushed} and

slugged our way through acres of rotten snow into Frenchman's Pond, where Hank

and I huddled like wet robins watching

Al and his new ^{telescope} ~~goggles~~ ^{goggles} (test the pond with worms. Then ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{the} snow, ~~comes~~ ^{comes}, and

there were whitetails on the pond! We looked at each other and struggled and silently

No one prepared even a drink...
sneaked away. Once home I drained
the fish car radiator, took a giant
slug of whiskey, and ^{slumped miserably} ~~dropped~~ into bed,
and put the covers over my head...
There I remained until nightfall, drumming
incessantly that ^{I was a boy again} it was Christmas, and I had

found coal in my stockings. I awoke
to hear the blizzard screaming outside, "Whew-u-u-u-u"
I ~~and~~ crept down stairs in my bathrobe
drew every shade in the place,
and lit a roaring fire in the Franklin
stove, put on a mile-long ^{plain} concerto
by Delius, ^{foot-high} built a highball, and

settled down with a book ^{about hunting}
in Africa by a guy named, ^{of all things,} ~~about~~
~~rough~~, ~~Jack~~ Hunter, was charmed
to learn that the ~~Isanti~~ pygmies of the

^{Isanti forest}
Stuen [^] cure certain eye infections by wringing
the infected eye.
in [^] each other's eyes. I ~~hope~~ ^{wish} the red-
eyed weather man ^{would just throw a drop in...}
~~and would drop in...~~ ^{has and eye infections}

Outside the blizzard screamed "Whew-u-u-u"
~~u-u-u~~ "Only ~~eight~~ 8 more months
'til Christmas. (Note: The next day
the trumpeting of the snow plows heralded
the ^{approach} ~~coming~~ of the next glacier!)

1.07
Apr. 26, 1953

draft

Parkes,

~~the~~ district attorney

For many years I was ^{the} District Attorney
of this bailiwick, and during that time I naturally
~~collected~~ had much to do with game wardens
and, ^{of course,} ~~hunters and fishermen~~ with ~~the~~ over-zealous
citizens who collided with ~~the~~ ^{first} hunting and
fishing laws. Indeed, I learned about some
of my best fishing spots through these uneasy
encounters; and while the following yarn
is scarcely a fishing ^{story} ~~yarn~~, in any sporting
sense, it is about trout and ^{about some of the} trout waters
~~that~~ I discovered while plying my trade, ^{P. O.} as D. A.
It ~~is~~ ^{is} also so droll a yarn ^{in itself} that I can't quite
resist ~~including~~ ^{squeezing it in this book,} ~~recounting~~ it here.

It is also about some of the ~~trout waters~~
~~the best trout~~

2 please

1953: There ^{had been} were 4 hauntingly lovely ~~spring~~ ^{in a row} days, the earth ^{smoky and} fragrant with the yeast of spring, the sky cut by the curling lash of honking geese. Last night the wind swung abruptly to the east and the thermometer and barometer joined hands in a suicidal nose dive. Hank Scarffe, Al Paul and I set out in 34° weather, the rainy sleet freezing to the windshield upon landing. All plans awry, we foolishly tried to reach the Moose Creek beaver dams, but got stuck ^{up to the radiator} in the first ~~long~~ drift. We then ^{retreated} headed west and pushed and slugged our way through acres of rotten snow into Frenchman's Bond, where Hank and I huddled like wet robins ^{and watched} watching Al and his new telescope girder vainly test the pond with worms. Then came the snow, and there were whitecaps on the pond! ^{Al folded his girder and we} ~~We~~ looked at each other and shrugged and ^{slunk} silently ~~sneaked~~ away. No one proposed even a drink. Once home I drained the fish car radiator, took a giant slug of whiskey, and ^{leapt} ~~slumped~~ morosely into bed, ^{pulling} and put the covers over my head. There I remained until nightfall, dreaming uneasily that I was a boy again and lo, it was Christmas--and I had ^{just} found ^{my stockings} ~~filled with coal.~~ ^{filled with coal.} ~~coal~~ in my stocking. I awoke to hear the blizzard screaming ^{incoherently} outside, "Whee-e-e-e.". I crept downstairs in my bathrobe and drew every shade in the place, lit a roaring fire in the Franklin stove, built a foot-high highball, put on a mile-long piano concerto by Delius, and settled down with a book about ^{There were no pictures of fish!} hunting in Africa by a guy named, of all things, John A. Hunter. Was charmed to learn that the pygmies of the ^{Ituri} Ituri forest cure certain eye infections by urinating in the ^{bad} ~~infected~~ eye. I ^{Found myself wishing that} ~~sorta~~ wish the red-eyed weather man would just sorta kinda ^{drop in.} ~~drop in.~~ ^{Ho hum, only} ~~only~~ 8 more months ^{Otil} Otil Christmas. (NOTE: The next day the trumpeting ^{were abroad heralding} of the snow plows ~~heralded~~ the approach of the next glacier!)