

9/21/67

1 draft, please

Gold Rush: 1967

X

I have just had a shattering experience: I've just witnessed a ^{gold rush} ~~gold rush~~.
 This time it happened in Michigan, not in Alaska, and the fairy-tail town ~~was~~ is Manistee, not Nome, and the magic attraction is spelled COHO, not GOLD - but otherwise ^{one suspects things are} ~~it is~~ much the same. First ~~of all~~ there is the mad rush of ^{"prospectors"} people to the place, ^{fishermen and} people of all kinds and descriptions, ^{carrying on their cars or} dragging after them a wild assortment of watercraft, ranging from ^{fragile canoes and} kayaks to expensive cabin cruisers - all of them feverishly bent on catching their share of the ^{amazing} coho salmon.

full page!

~~This rush~~
 For this ^{modern} rush is being waged ^{an off-shore one} mostly from watercraft, ^{and} not on the sandy beaches ^{and} ^{later} on the hills, ^{as in} ~~as in~~ Nome. This rush began ~~when~~ around Labor Day, and at first was fought out ^{mostly} in Lake Michigan, ~~about~~ in an area teeming with coho salmon getting ready to spawn, anywhere from one to eight miles from where the man-made channel from Lake ~~Michigan~~ Manistee empties into Lake Michigan. The first rush "peaked" two weekends after that, ^{a conservation officer told me,} ~~just in the big lake,~~ when ~~(I was told by a~~ ^{state officer} ~~friendly conversation)~~ it was conservatively estimated that 5000 ^{fishing} boats were swarming over the water between Manistee and the Platte River to the north.

"When you figure that each boat ^{carries} carries an average of three fishermen," ^{he told me,} "that is one hell of a lot of fishermen." I nodded. [Hook in next]

Hook → No 917

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"Yes," I said, feeling a little faint at the very thought.

"And when you figure that most of them were taking their limit of cohos, that is ^{one} hell of a lot of cohos caught."

"How many would that be?" I asked.

"Lord only knows, but assuming that none ~~of them~~ was taking more than his limit" -- he smiled -- "a ^{rather} violent assumption, I may add -- that would still run into many thousands of cohos."

"What is the limit?"

"Ten pounds and one fish."

"Then if a guy catches ^{one} twelve-pounder as his first fish, ~~that's through~~ ^{is he} through?" I asked.

"No, in practice it allows him to take two big cohos of any size. Or, ^{again} he could ~~take~~ ^{take} five two-pound 'jacks' -- those are second-year cohos -- and still ^{catch and keep} take a monster."

"What is a monster?"

"The largest, ^{that was ever} officially weighed ran 22 pounds 4 ounces, but through the grapevine we know there were far bigger ones ~~been~~ caught."

"Don't you check every fisherman?"

He spread his hands and rolled his eyes, "How can we? Some of these boats come in by water ^{from} as far away as Chicago, and leave the same way, when this mad rush started there was only one conservation officer stationed in Marquette, Joe Sighe. Since then seven more of us have been ~~to~~ rushed in to help him, but..."

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Morbid curiosity drew me ^{Wiley Clark and} ^{to Mamatee} ~~to~~ the
Tuesday following ^{the first} ^{day} ^{of} ^{the} ^{trip} ^{to} ^{the} ^{lake} ^{with} ^{the} ^{party}
had fly-fished together ^{the day before} at a fishing club he belongs to
near Baldwin ^{and} ^{that} ^{Monday} night we met ~~a game~~ Conservation
Officer Glen Wiley of Baldwin (one of the officers ^{is} ^{assigned}
~~is~~ to ~~the~~ Mamatee to help Joe Sigge). Glen told us
enough tales about the coho rush that we decided to go ~~there~~
see for ourselves.

"Matter of fact I'm taking my own boat over
to Mamatee ^{to do little fishing}
~~there~~ tomorrow -- it's my day off -- and I'll be glad
to take you two out in the lake for a look."

"You remind me of the postman who ~~took~~
went for a hike on his holiday," Wiley said.
"It gets you, sooner, it gets you," Glen said, ^{never to leave}
"I'll meet you men at one o'clock tomorrow
at the public boat-launching pier," ~~Glen said,~~

Wiley had some chores to do Tuesday morning,
so I drove ^{over} ^{early} ^{and} ^{we} ^{agreed} ^{to} ^{meet} ^{at} ^{the} ^{pier}
^{at one o'clock.} I arrived about ten and started ~~cooking.~~

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[Hook in] The gold rush fever gripping ^{the town} Ananistee became evident even before I hit ^{it's} town. ^{As I approached it} Every motel I passed had a "no vacancy" sign, roadside bars and restaurants were swarming with cars, and I passed or was passed by dozens ^{and scores} of cars ^{with} carrying boats -- all headed for that new El Dorado, Ananistee. In town I passed ~~over~~ a chamber of commerce building choked with parked cars. I came to the ^{public laundring} ~~public~~ laundring and drove in but was shoold away by an attendant. "You'll have to park across the street," he told me.

I drove away and saw a sign "Parking \$2.00", so out of pride, not penny-pinching, I drove into the parking lot of a ^{roadside} bar instead. Inside the bar was

~~Howie~~
jammed with coho fishermen with their arms held out ^(measuring absatz) ~~(describing cohos)~~ like men playing invisible accordions.

"How's business?" I asked the bartender after I had ordered.

"This is nothing," he said. "Last weekend four of us worked our butts off all day and half the night. Never saw anything like it."

I asked him about the parking lot down the street. "How many cars can they park ^{there} in a day?"

"About 400."

"Not a bad day's take," I said, doing some rapid calculation.

"No, not considering it was a vacant lot the guys' been trying to peddle for years. And now he's ~~making~~ clearing practically 800 bucks a day on weekends

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and from two to four hundred on weekdays." He shrugged,

"But I suppose we got to make it while the getting is good."

I ^{next} tried phoning Joe Tighe, the local game warden, but there was no answer. So I drove out to the Coast Guard station on the edge of the lake to see what I could do. It

was nearly a mile and the channel on both sides was lined with ^{boats and} shore fishermen. When I ~~got out there~~ I saw

a conservation car parked at the Coast Guard station, so

I wheeled in there and parked and approached ^a the conservation officer chatting with three coast guardsmen on the station porch.

"Are you Joe Tighe?" I inquired of the pleasant-looking crew-cut officer. "No, I'm Lake of ^{the} fisheries division, here taking census," ^{he pronounced} "Joe's probably ^{out} on patrol. Can I help you?"

I told him who I was and he turned out to be a ^{real} cultured guy and discerning reader, ^{who} would read most of my books. "I'm here casing the gold rush," I said. "That figure there must be some sort of story in it."

"Stories?" Lake said, gesturing at the guardsmen. "The boys here and I could tell you stories all day about what's going on here. Gold rush is good."

"Like what?" I said.

"Like the weird boats that go past here piling out into the lake. One guy ~~had~~ nailed some boards to two pontoons and hooked a motor on it. He got fish. There have been lots of canoes and kayaks, with and without outboards. We haven't spotted any submarines -- yet."

too.

"Any boats been lost?"

along with motors. A young coast guardman answered that one. "Seven,

"Any lives?"

"Not yet," but we're ^{helping} ~~not yet~~ ^{robbed} on the wooden porch. "Not yet, but we're ^{helping} ~~not yet~~ ^{robbed} our fingers crossed."

"How do you account for that -- with all these greenhorns and tenderfeet?"

"Mild weather -- plus a dispensation from divine providence." He wagged his head. "We were ~~on~~ ^{out} on patrol ^{in a} ~~the other day, about eight miles out, and this~~ ^{guy in a} ~~ton or twelve foot row boat~~ ^{cutting} ~~What are they fishing with?"~~ I asked Officer Lake, as this was down his alley. ^{our} ~~It looked out at~~ ^{the} ~~mob of milking boats.~~ ^{cutting} ~~What are they fishing with?"~~ I asked Officer Lake, as this was down his alley.

"Virtually all ^{of 'em are} trowling metal spoons or flat fish, most of 'em silver colored to imitate the Aleutian the coho's are ~~feeding off~~ ^{gorging} off of."

"Hardware fishermen!" I said with all the snobbish ^{disdain} ~~disdain~~ of an unreconstructed fly fisherman.

"Of all the fishermen I've interviewed in my ^{whole} ~~whole~~ I only encountered one fisherman -- an old timer -- who used this only."

"Any luck?"

"The old boy caught his limit."

I again ~~He~~ looked out over the lake, where hundreds of boats were trowling back and forth. "Lots of boats, lots of hardware," I said.

"Only three or four hundred," Lake said. "You ought to have seen it last weekend."

"Do they give you ^{boys} much trouble?"

"Mostly themselves, cutting each other's lines with their propellers," a coast guardman put in. "For our part our biggest headache is improperly lighted

cutting our way to Blowing? and we pulled and he ginned it and how did you get out into the lake?

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and numbered boats. It's surprising how many people out there haven't the foggiest notion that there are federal regulators governing boating on the Great Lakes.

"Any ramblings?"

"Surprisingly few, ^{though had to} ~~fish~~ a few fishermen out of the water before the cobs got them."

Looked at my watch and ~~it~~ ^{it} was nearly time to meet ~~the~~ ^{Dark} Wiley and Glen Wiley back at the Lake Manitoba launching pier. So I said my goodbyes and Officer Lake walked me back to my car.

"Just thought of another story," he said.

"Shoot."

"Recently a lone fisherman goes ^{way} out there in a ten foot yawl which ^{was in calm water} was nearly swamped by a big outboard he had hooked to it. He gets way out there and two cabin cruisers pass him, on either side, making a big ^{deep} whirlpool. He and boat and motor go down in it and only he comes ^{back} to the top -- he was wearing a life jacket.

"Yes?"

"Well, he's bobbing around ^{there} like a cork but no one comes to his aid -- in fact the two hundred-odd boats in the vicinity melted away like mist.

Finally a lone guy in ^{another} small boat picked him up and brought him in -- but the man overboard disappeared and never reported."

"How did you ^{well} know about it?"

"From the guy who brought him in."

Wiley can you afford of
"Hardware fishermen?" I said, shaking his hand
taking off for
and ~~working~~ to town for my date.

Wiley Clark and Glen Wiley were ^{already} there, waiting
for me, so I swallowed my pride and ~~left parked the~~
and mortgaged ~~left~~ my car ^{with the} Bonanza Parking Lot. In nothing flat we
were ~~chugging across dirty Mamster Lake, bound~~
for the channel leading out into the main lake.

"What's that?" I asked Glen, pointing.

"Dead coho salmon."

"Any luck this morning?" I asked Glen.

"None. No one is having ^{and aren't fishing} any today. Looks
like the cohos have started upstream. That's why there
are so many boats right here in the smaller ^{sub} Mamster
Lake. Heard there are ^{still} others fishing upstream in the river."

"What's that?" Wiley Clark asked, pointing.

"Dead coho. The whole area full of them."

"How come?"

"We don't rightly know. Some might ^{have} died
of exhaustion after being hooked and breaking off. ^{the}
They've been so thick out in the lake ^{we} I speculate that some
might have been hit by whirling propellers. Maybe it's
something to do with spawning."

"Is it true that all these ~~or~~ big cohos will
die after their spawning run?" I said.

"That's so, both male and female. They have
a three-year life cycle."

"Love can be beautiful," Wiley Clark put in.

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On the way ^{out} to the big lake we ^{and were passed by} passed all manner of boats, going both ways, some anchored and their occupants ^{still} fishing. Glen explained that all this commotion had started

when about three-quarters of a million coho fingerlings gotten from the state of Washington -- actually nearly six miles long -- were planted upstream and

in the ^{general} area in the spring of 1966. "Their growth has exceeded our wildest dreams," he went on. ~~But sort of~~ ^{repeat} ~~source of~~ what happened to a ^{U.S.} trout transplanted in ~~North~~ America. Washington has cohoes, but nothing like this.

"But supposing they don't reproduce, that conditions aren't right, that ^{all} the gold rush ends abruptly?"

Wylie Clark ~~just~~ asked.

"We're taking no chances. We're stripping millions of eggs and will have plenty of cohoes if none reproduce naturally." ^{He smiled.} "We'll need 'em, too. Towns all over the state are clamorin' for 'em."

"It's gratifying that ^{our} chambers of commerce are ^{getting} filled with nature lovers," I said. "Everybody ^{loves a} wants in on the gold rush. Tell me another story."

Glen then told the story of the ^{recent} shortage of silver lures for the hardware fishermen. None could be bought in ^{mainline} town, or anywhere close, ^{by} there weren't any. So this entrepreneur picks up a couple of bushels of them outstate ^{or somewhere} and set up his shop on ^{the} street corner -- and in two hours ^{had} sold out at five dollars a throw.

"There are strange things done 'neath

amidst the floating beer bottles and cans and general debris
the midnight sun, where men toil and moil for
coho," I solemnly misquoted.

Presto, ^{we looked up} and ~~we~~ ^{suddenly} were in the midst of
^{Troubling} hundreds of boats, plying back and forth, back
and forth. Suddenly there was a big ^{rising} splash
off our bow -- not twenty feet -- and I'd seen
my first ^{rising} coho. ^{I had brought my fly rod and} Remembering Officer Labin's old time
fly fisherman, I ^{cast} ~~took~~ out a white ^{luchtail} streamer, ~~cast~~ at him,
but nothing happened. ^{oragranite} Glen sign - queried scores
of fishermen (by holding out his arms) but all sadly
shook their heads no. In twenty minutes I cast
at ^{nearly} fifty rises, but nothing happened.

"Obvious" "These cohos are illiterate," I said, folding my
rod. ^{they} ~~they~~ ^{don't} ~~can't~~ read my fishing books.

So we ^{slowly} headed back ^{through the bedrocks and back} for the Bonanza ^{about dead water}

Parking Lot -- Glen had some other people to take
out -- and on the way Joe Igoe ^(the local game warden) and his wife overtook
us in another boat ~~and~~ Glen waves them down and
introduced us. ~~It struck~~

"How do you keep your sanity, Joe?" I asked
him. ^{during this gold rush,}

"I'm not ^{so} sure I have -- this has been
going on since Labor Day, and heaven knows what
will happen when all these boats ^{soon} start milking around
at close quarters ^{long} upstream."

"Phoned you this morning but no answer."

"Took the wife out ^{early} this morning to get

her away from the phone. ~~It~~ Rings day and night."

"What for?"

"Coho fishermen. One guy asks my wife, ^(look) where do I go ^{to find} for these here ^{now at} cobos? and my wife, being a ^{bit of a} tease, suggested that maybe he was ^{in the wrong} looking for a civic center in Detroit named ^{after} a former mayor. I mean, that's what he was

And so it goes. I could write a book. ^{like the boats} they use. When I see a guy out there in an inner tube ^{I'll write} ^{one.}

"Why don't you anyway?"

"No time. Everybody's making a fortune around here but my wife and me.

"Don't forget me," Glen put in.

"Gold rush is good," ~~he~~ said, "except that here all the ~~gold~~ pouring in, not leaving."

Glen had to leave and we waved Joe and

his wife goodbye. "Anything I can do for you?" Joe

called ~~shouted~~ after us. "Like helping you ^{to go fishing} ^{or} ^{something.}"

"Thanks, Joe," I ~~shouted~~ ^{looking out at all the bobbing} ^{boats,} ^{I'd sure} ^{appreciate} it ~~if~~ ^{if} you could ^{bring} Willy and ^{some} the popcorn concession."

I looked back at all the bobbing and milling boats ^{churning up the} beer cans and dead cohos. "no thanks, Joe," I ~~shouted~~ ^{help} back. "But I'd sure like you to ^{bring}

lend me the popcorn concession."

2 final, please.
Del number at. Under my name put in paren (Photo by Wiley Clark)

GOLD RUSH: 1967

by

I have just had a shattering experience: I've just
witnessed a ~~gold~~ ^{is a modern → one is going on} gold rush in full spate. This ~~time it happened~~
in Michigan, not in Alaska, ^{gay ministries in this one} the fairy-tale town is ^{bursting} Manistee, not ^{isolated}

Nome, and the magic attraction is spelled COHO, not GOLD—

but otherwise one suspects things are much the same. First

of all there is the mad rush of "prospectors" to the place,

fishermen of all kinds and descriptions, carrying ~~on their~~

~~canoes~~ or dragging after them a wild assortment of watercraft,

ranging from fragile canoes and kyaks to expensive cabin

cruisers—all of them feverishly bent on catching their

share of the ^a mazing coho salmon, ^{first planted in}

Michigan waters in the spring of 1966.

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For this modern ^{day} rush is an off-shore one being waged

mostly from watercraft, not on the ~~sandy~~ beaches and ~~up~~ ^{back} valleys and in the hills, as in Nome. This rush began around Labor Day,

and at first was fought out in Lake Michigan, in ^{entirely} ^{roughly a} ^{thirty-mile-long} area

invasion fleet is teeming with coho salmon getting ready to spawn. ^{in an area} ~~anywhere~~ The fishermen ~~boats~~ are concentrated from one to eight miles ^{out} from where the man-made channel

(and between that and ^{off} the mouth of the Platte River to the ^{beyond Frankfort} north) from Lake Manistee ~~ex~~ empties into Lake Michigan. The first

rush "peaked" two weekends after that, ^{Monday} ~~Wednesday~~

stet

officer ~~ex~~ told me when it was conservatively estimated

that 5000 fishing boats were swarming over the ^{area} ~~water~~ between Manistee and the Platte River to the north; ^{just beyond Frankfort} hot spot.

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"When you figure that each boat carries an average of three fishermen," ^{he went on to tell} ~~he~~ told me, "that is one hell of a lot of fishermen." I nodded. "And when you figure that most of them were taking their limit of cohos, that is one hell of a lot of cohos caught."

"How many would that be?" I asked.

"Lord only knows, but assuming that none was taking more than his limit"--he smiled--"a rather violent assumption, I may add--that would still run into many thousands of cohos."

"What is the limit?"

"Ten pounds and one fish."

"Then if a guy catches one twelve-pounder as his first fish is he through?" I asked.

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"No, in practice ^{this} ~~it~~ allows him to take two big cohos
of any size. Or again he could take five two-pound 'jacks'--
those are second-year cohos--and still catch and keep a
monster."

"What is a monster?"

"The largest that has been officially weighed ran 22
pounds 4 ounces, but through the grapevine we ~~know~~ there ~~is~~
^{are} ^{being} far bigger ones caught."

~~have learned~~
around here
are pretty sure

"Don't you check ^{on} every fisherman?"

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He spread his hands and rolled his eyes. "How can we?"

There is no human way to do it.

Some of these boats come in by water from as far away

as Chicago, and leave the same way. When ^{all} this ~~med~~ rush

started there was only one conservation officer stationed

in Manistee, Joe Tighe. Since then seven more of us have

been rushed in to help him, but..."

Morbid curiosity drew Wiley Clark and me to Manistee

the Tuesday following the first big peak. We had fly-fished

together the day before at a fishing club he belongs to near

Baldwin and that Monday night we met Conservation Officer

Glen Wiley of Baldwin (one of the officers ~~rushed~~ ^{sent} to Manistee

to help Joe Tighe). Glen ~~told~~ ^{regaled with tall} us enough tales about the coho

rush that we decided to go see for ourselves.

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"Matter of fact I'm taking my own boat over to Manistee tomorrow to ~~hexax~~ do a little fishing--it's my day off--and I'll be glad to take you two out in the lake for a look ^{quick} ^{All.}"

"You remind me of ^{the} postman who went for a hike on his holiday," Wiley said.

"It gets you, man, it gets you," Glen said, rising to leave. "I'll meet you men at one o'clock tomorrow at the public boat-launching pier."

"It's a date."

Wiley had some chores to do ~~Tuesday~~ ^{the next} morning, so I drove ^{Tuesday!} ^{early} over to nearby Manistee ~~early~~ to case the place. The gold

rush fever gripping the town became evident even before I hit ^{there:}

~~every~~ ^{proudly sporting} motels I passed had a "no vacancy" sign, roadside bars and restaurants ~~swarming~~ ^{passing or being} swarming with cars, and I ~~passed or was~~

passed by dozens and scores of cars carrying boats--all headed for that new El Dorado, Manistee. In town I ~~passed~~ ^{stalled but decided to skip} a chamber

of commerce building choked with ^{parked} cars. ^{next} I came to the public launching pier and drove in but was shooed away by ^{some sort of} attendant ^{with a}

^{first full of dollar bills.} "You'll have to park across the street," he told me. ^{with a} "This is only for loading and unloading boats."

didn't have a boat so ↓
I drove away and saw a sign "Parking \$2.00," ~~so~~ [≡] out of

pride, not penny-pinching, I drove into the parking lot of
a roadside bar instead. The ~~bar~~ ^{joint} was jammed with coho fishermen
with their arms held out (*their caught or lost* measuring ~~absent~~ cohos) like
men playing invisible accordians. *This town, I saw, was coho mad...*

"How's business?" I asked the bartender after I had
ordered, *always the way.*

"Today
"~~This~~ [^] is nothing," he said. "Last weekend four of us
worked our butts off all day and half the night. Never ~~say~~ saw
anything like it."

I asked him about the parking lot down the street. "How
many cars can they park there in a day?"

"About 400."

"Not a bad day's take," I said, doing some rapid calculation.

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From there I drove to the nearby state police post, and the pleasant officer at the desk, *Corporal Max Tyree,* helped fill me in. Was the mass influx of coho fishermen giving the local and state police a hard time? I asked.

KTYREE

Surprisingly little, ^{he said;} ~~was his answer;~~ he guessed the boys were too intent on catching cohos to ^{maybe} ~~raise much hell.~~ ^{get into much mischief.} Were there any fly fishermen among this mob? I next asked. Very

few, he guessed; most cohos were being caught on trolled "hardware," that is ^{deep-running} metal spoons and ~~deep-running~~ flat-fish.

Who was a knowledgable fisherman I might talk to? Well,

there was Mike Welch, a fisherman and sportswriter from Chicago, ^{who generally dropped by every day or so.} "Here he is now," he ~~ex~~ added as ~~Mike~~ ^{He looked up.} ~~walked in.~~ a tanned smiling slave to the outdoors walked in.

"How about our going fishing this afternoon?" I suggested ~~to~~ ^{to} Mike after we were introduced, ^{recognizing a real-gone} ~~brother~~ ^{brother} fisherman.

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"Sorry," he said, "but I got a charter party I'm taking out tomorrow, and this afternoon I've got to ready my boat."

He ^{grinned} ~~smiled~~ and spread his hands. "I'd love to join you, Traver, but I hate to lose that 124 bucks."

"I'll catch you when you come to the U. P.,"
"Sorry I can't match it," I said.

"It's a deal."

Tall Captain *Guy Babcock* appeared,

and we chatted and he gave me a map of the area, marking the spots and then I went on my way.

(Now back to last ¶ on p. 8)

X

"No, not considering it was a vacant lot the guy's been trying to peddle for years. And now he's clearing practically 800 bucks a day on weekends and from two to four hundred on weekdays." He shrugged. "But I suppose we got to make it while the getting is good."

[Here put new Insert]

I next tried phoning Joe Tighe, the local game warden, but there was no answer, so I drove out to the Coast Guard station on the edge of the lake to ^{look around.} ~~see what I could see.~~ It was nearly a mile ^{away} and ~~the~~ ^{on the way I saw that the} channel on both sides was lined ^{moving and anchored} with boats and shore fishermen. I saw a conservation ^{pickup} ~~car~~ parked at the Coast Guard station, so I wheeled in there ~~and parked~~ and approached a conservation officer chatting with ^{several} ~~three~~ coast guardsmen on the station porch.

X

"Are you Joe Tighe?" I inquired of the pleasant-looking crew-cut officer.

"No, I'm Lake of the fisheries division, here taking *fish* census," he answered. "Joe's probably out on patrol. Can I help you?"

I told him who I was and he turned out to be a real *discerning and* cultured guy ~~and a discerning reader~~—he'd read most of my books. "I'm here casing ~~this~~ *your* gold rush," I said. "Figure there must be some sort of story in it."

"Stories?" Lake said, gesturing at the guardsmen. "The boys here and I could tell you stories all day about what's going on here. Gold rush is good."

"Like what?" I said.

"Like the weird boats that go past here~~p~~ piling out into the lake. One guy nailed some boards to two pontoons and hooked a motor on it. ^{he} got fish, too. There ^{we} ~~has~~ been lots of canoes and kyaks, with and without outboards. We haven't spotted any submarines--yet."

"Any boats ~~been~~ lost?"

A young coast guardsman answered that one. "Seven ^{so far,} along with motors."

"Any lives?"

He rapped on the wooden porch.
"Not yet, but we're keeping our fingers crossed." *that tragic*
conversation took place five days before Black Saturday,
September 23, 1969, when in a sudden squall over a
hundred boats capsized and, at last count, over seven
coho fishermen ^{were} ~~damned.~~

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"How do you account for that--with all these greenhorns and tenderfeet?"

^{unusually} mild weather--plus ^{I swear,} a dispensation from divine providence."

He wagged his head. "We were out on patrol the other day, about eight miles out, and this ^{in his shirt sleeves} guy in a ten or twelve foot

row boat with an outboard drew near and hollered, "Which way

to Chicago?" and we pointed and he ^{away} gunned ^{it} and headed ^{heading} farther out into the lake."

I looked out at the mob of milling boats. "What are they ^{mostly} fishing with?" I asked Officer Lake, as this was down his alley.

^{dear-} "Virtually all of 'em are trowling metal spoons or flat fish, most of 'em silver colored to imitate the ^{alewives} ~~alewife~~ the cohos are gorging off of."

NOTE TO EDITOR:

The Plural of

[Alewife does not ^{I gather,} become wives but ^{R.T.} wifes.]

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"Hardware fishermen!" I said with all the snobbish disdain of an unreconstructed fly fisherman.

"Of all the fishermen I've interviewed in my work I only encountered one ^{solitary} fisherman—an old timer—who used flies only."

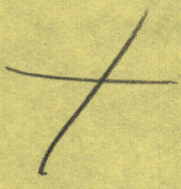
"How dreadful. There ought to be a law. Did he have any luck?"

"The old boy caught his limit."

I again looked out over the lake, where hundreds of boats were trowling back and forth. "Lots of boats, lots of hardware," I said.

^{so far today,}
"Only three or four hundred," Lake said. "You ought to have seen it last weekend."

"Do they give you boys much trouble?"



9 "Mostly themselves, ^{accidentally} cutting each other's lines with their ~~propellers~~ propellers," a coast ~~guard~~ guardsman put in. "For our part our biggest headache is improperly lighted and numbered boats. It's surprising how many people out there haven't the foggiest notion ^{about boating protocol or} that there are federal regulations governing boating on the Great Lakes."

"Any rammings?"

"Surprisingly few, though we've had to ^{pluck} fish a few fishermen out of the water before the cohos ^t go them."

It was nearly time to meet Wiley Clark and Glen Wiley back at the Lake Manistee launching pier, so I said my goodbyes and Officer Lake walked me back to my car.

→
← "Just thought of another story," he said.

"Shoot."

X

"Recently a lone fisherman goes out there in a ten-foot yawl which even in calm water was nearly swamped by the ~~big~~ ^{grotesque} outboard he ~~had~~ ^{hid} hooked to it. He gets 'way out there and two cabin cruisers pass him, on either side, making a ~~10~~ ¹⁰⁰ deep whirlpool. He and boat and motor go down in ~~to the abyss~~ ^{to the abyss} and only he ~~comes back to the top~~ ^{surfaced} ~~He~~ was wearing a life jacket."

"Yes?"

gaily on their way. the cabin cruisers speed ~~away~~

"Well, he's bobbing around there like a cork but no one comes to his aid--in fact ⁺ the two hundred-odd boats in the vicinity melted away like ^{murmur} mist. Finally a lone guy in another small boat picked ^S him up and ^{fetched} brought him in--but the man ^{whirlpool} ~~overboard~~ disappeared ^S and never reported ^S."

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"How did you ever know ~~about~~ ^{them} about it?"

"From the ~~guy~~ ^{gone samaritan} who brought him in."

"What can you expect of hardware fishermen?" I said, shaking his hand and taking off for town for my date.

Wiley Clark and Glen Wiley were already there, so I swallowed my pride and mortgaged my car ^{at} ~~with~~ the Bonanza Parking Lot.

"Any luck this morning?" ~~I~~ asked Glen.

"None. No one is having any today. Looks like the cohos have started upstream and aren't feeding. That's why ~~there~~ ^{today} are so many boats right here in Lake Manistee. Heard there are still others fishing upstream in the river."

"What's that?" Wiley Clark asked, pointing.

^{About a ten pounder.}
"Dead coho. [^] The whole area's full of them."

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"How come?"

field officer
"We don't rightly know. [^] Some might have died of exhaustion
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out in the lake I even speculate that some might have been
hit by whirling propellers. Maybe it's something to do with
spawning."

"Is it true that all these big cohos will die after their
spawning run?" I said.

"That's so, both male and female. They have a three-year
life cycle."

"Love can be beautiful," Wiley Clark ^{*sighed.*} ~~put in.~~
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On the way out to the big lake we passed and were passed
by all manner of boats, going both ways, some ~~are~~ anchored
and their occupants ^{Wiley started taking pictures.} still fishing. Glen explained that all
this commotion had started when about three-quarters of
a million coho fingerlings gotten from the state of Washington--
actually nearly six inches long--were planted upstream and
in the general area in the spring of 1966. "Their ^{survival and} growth
has exceeded our wildest dreams," he went on.

"But supposing they don't reproduce, that conditions
aren't right, that all this gold rush ends abruptly?" Wylie
Clark asked.

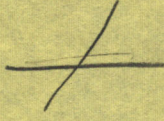
"We're taking no chances. We're stripping millions of
eggs and will have plenty of ^{young} ^{even} ^{if} ^{none} ^{reproduce} naturally."
He smiled. "We'll need 'em, too. Towns all over the state are
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/

"It's gratifying that our chambers of commerce are getting so ^{clogged} filled with nature lovers," I said. "Everybody ^{picturesque} loves a gold rush. Tell me another story." ^{Do they have dancing girls yet?}

Glen then told ^{us} the story of the recent shortage of silver lures for the hardware fishermen. None could be bought in Manistee or anywhere close by, there simply weren't any. So this ^{resourceful} entrepreneur picks up a couple of bushels of them outstate, or somewhere, and sets up ^{an impromptu} his shop on a Manistee street corner--and in two hours had sold ~~it~~ out the lot at five dollars a throw.

"There are strange things done 'neath the midnight sun, where men toil and moil for coho," I solemnly misquoted.



Presto, we looked up and suddenly were in the midst of
 hundreds of trowling boats, plying back and forth, ^{hussily}
 amidst the floating beer bottles and cans and general ^{all the cartons and depressing}
 debris. Suddenly there was a big noisy splash off our

bow--not twenty feet--and I'd seen my first rising coho. *It was a savage
 thrashing rise.*

I had brought my fly rod and, remembering Officer Lake's
 old time fly fisherman, I cast out a white bucktail streamer
 at him, but nothing happened. ⁴ Meanwhile Glen sign-queried

scores of fishermen (by holding out his arms) but all sadly
 shook their heads no. In twenty minutes I cast at maybe

magazine-cover

^{savage} fifty rises, but ^{still} nothing happened.

Love had replaced hunger. fishing

*It was par for the course;
 every time I try to show off a little, it's thousands
 of time nothing....*

~~Obviously~~ "These cohos are illiterate," I said, folding
 my rod. "Obviously they haven't read my fishing books."

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So we slowly headed back through the ~~beer cans~~ ^{floating trash and swirl} and bloated dead

cohos for the Bonanza Parking Lot--Glen had some other people

to take out--and on the way Joe Tighe (the local game

warden) and his wife overtook us in another boat. Glen

waved them down and introduced us.

Joe is a handsome, tanned, out-doors guy with a radiant smile - the ~~best~~ ^{looked like a rope-twirler in a TV cigarette commercial!}

"How do you keep your sanity during this gold rush, Joe?"

I asked him.

"I'm not so ^sure I have--this has been going on since

Labor Day, and heaven knows what will happen when all these

boats soon start milling around at close quarters 'way upstream."

"Phoned you this morning but no answer."

"Took the wife out early to get her away from the phone.

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AM

"Why don't you anyway?"

"No time. Everybody's making a fortune around here but my wife and me."

"Don't forget me," Glen put in. "Gold rush is good, except that ^{in this one} here all the gold is pouring in, not leaving."
^

X

get back

Glen had to ~~leave~~^{get back} and we waved Joe and his wife goodbye.

"Anything I can do for you?" Joe called after us. "Like ^{maybe} helping you guys ~~to~~ go fishing?"

I looked back at all the bobbing and milling boats churning up the beer cans and ^{blasted} dead cohos. "No thanks, Joe," I shouted back. "But ^{I sorta wish you'd} ~~be~~ sure ~~like~~ you ~~to~~ help land me the popcorn concession."

(This story was written first three days before that tragic Black Saturday ^{September 23, 1967} when, during a sudden squall, ^{more than a} ~~over a~~ hundred fishing boats capsized and ~~several~~ fishermen drowned. I have not changed it. Robert Traver.)

Written by:
John D. Voelker
Deer Lake Road
Ishpeming, Michigan

No. 28

GOLD RUSH: 1967

by

Robert Traver

(Photos by Wiley Clark)

I have just had a shattering experience: I've just witnessed a gold rush in full spate. This ~~is a~~ ^{gold rush is} modern ~~one~~ going on in Michigan, not in gay nineties Alaska, in this one the fairy-tale town is bustling Manistee, not isolated Nome, and the magic attraction is spelled COHO, not GOLD--but otherwise one suspects things are ^{pretty} much the same. First of all there is the mad rush of "prospectors" to the place, fishermen of all kinds and descriptions, carrying or dragging after them a wild assortment of watercraft, ranging from fragile canoes and kayaks to expensive cabin cruisers--all of them feverishly bent on catching their share of the amazing coho salmon, first planted in Michigan waters in the spring of 1966.

For this modern-day rush is an off-shore one being waged mostly from watercraft, not on the beaches ~~and~~ ^{or} back in the valleys and hills, as in Nome. This rush began around Labor Day, and at first was fought entirely out in Lake Michigan, roughly a thirty-mile-long area teeming with coho salmon getting ready to spawn. The invasion fleet is concentrated one to eight miles out from where the man-made channel from Lake Manistee empties into Lake Michigan and between that ^{point} and ~~off~~ the mouth of the Platte River beyond Frankfort to the north. The first rush "peaked" two weekends after that, a friendly conservation officer told me, when it was conservatively estimated that 5000 fishing boats were swarming over the hot spot.

"When you figure that each boat carries an average of three fishermen," he went on to tell me, "that is one hell of a lot of fishermen." I nodded. "And when you figure that most of them were taking their limit of cohos, that is one hell of a lot of cohos caught."

"How many would that be?" I asked.

"Lord only knows, but assuming that none was taking more than his limit"—he smiled—"a rather violent assumption, I may add—that would still run into many thousands of cohos."

"What is the limit?"

"Ten pounds and one fish."

"Then if a guy catches one twelve-pounder as his first fish, is he through?" I asked.

"No, in practice this allows him to take two big cohos of any size. Or again he could take five two-pound 'jacks'— those are second-year ^{male} cohos—and still catch and keep a monster."

"What is a monster?"

"The largest that has been officially weighed around here ran 22 pounds 4 ounces, but through the grapevine we know there are far bigger ones being caught."

"Don't you check on every fisherman?"

He spread his hands and rolled his eyes. "How can we? There is no human way to do it. Some of these boats come in by water from as far away as Chicago, and leave the same way. When all this started there was only one conservation officer stationed in Manistee, Joe Tighe. Since then seven more of us have been rushed in to help him, but..."

Morbid curiosity drew Wiley Clark and me to Manistee the Tuesday following the first big peak. We had fly-fished together

the day before at a fishing club he belongs to near Baldwin, and that Monday night we met Conservation Officer Glen Wiley of Baldwin (one of the officers sent to Manistee to help Joe Tighe). Glen regaled us with enough tall tales about the coho rush that we decided to go see for ourselves.

"Matter of fact I'm taking my own boat over to Manistee tomorrow to do a little fishing—it's my day off—and I'll be glad to take you two out in the lake for a quick look see."

"You remind me of the postman who went for a hike on his holiday," Wiley said.

"It gets you, man, it gets you," Glen said, rising to leave. "I'll meet you men at one o'clock tomorrow at the public boat-launching pier *in Manistee.*"

"It's a date."

Wiley had some chores to do the next morning, Tuesday, so I drove over early to nearby Manistee to case the place. The gold rush fever gripping the town became evident even before I hit there: motels proudly sporting "no vacancy" signs, roadside bars and restaurants swarming with cars, and I passing or being passed by dozens and scores of cars carrying boats—all headed for that new El Dorado, Manistee. In town I stalked but decided to skip a chamber of commerce building choked with parked cars. Next I came to the public launching pier and drove in but was shooed away by some sort of attendant ^{*brandishing*} with a fist full of dollar bills, ^{*evidently being a shill for the joint.*} "You'll have to park across the street," he told me, "This is only for loading and unloading boats."

I didn't have a boat so I drove away and saw a sign "Parking \$2.00." Out of pride, not penny-inching, I drove into the parking

lot of a roadside bar instead. The joint was jammed with coho fishermen with their arms held out (measuring their caught or lost cohos) like men playing invisible accordians. This town, I saw, was ^{plain} coho mad....

"How's business?" I asked the bartender after I had ordered, always the wag.

"Today is nothing," he said. "Last weekend four of us worked our butts off all day and half the night. Never saw anything like it."

I asked him about the parking lot down the street. "How many cars can they park there in a day?"

"About 400."

"Not a bad day's take," I said, doing some rapid calculation.

"No, not considering it was a vacant lot the guy's been trying to peddle for years. And now he's clearing practically 800 bucks a day on weekends and from two to four hundred on weekdays." He shrugged. "But I suppose we got to make it while the getting is good."

From there I drove to the nearby state police post, and the pleasant officer at the desk, Corporal Max Tyree, helped fill me in. Was the mass influx of coho fishermen giving the local and state police a hard time? I asked. Surprisingly little, he said; he guessed maybe the boys were too intent on catching cohos to get into much mischief. Were there any fly fishermen among this mob? I next asked. Very few, he guessed; most cohos were being caught on trolled "hardware," that is deep-running metal spoons and flat-fish. Who was a knowledgable fisherman I might talk to? Well, there was Mike Welch, a fisherman and

sportswriter from Chicago, who generally dropped by every day or so. He looked up. "Here he is now," he added as a tanned smiling slave to the outdoors walked in.

"How about our going fishing this afternoon?" I suggested to Mike after we were introduced, recognizing a real-gone brother fisherman.

"Sorry," he said, "but I got a charter party I'm taking out tomorrow, and this afternoon I've got to ready my boat." He grinned and spread his hands. "I'd love to join you, Traver, but I hate to lose that 124 bucks."

"I'll catch you when you come to the U. P.," I said.

"It's a deal."

Tall Captain Guy Babcock appeared, and we chatted and he gave me a map of the area, marking the spots, and then I went on my way.

I next tried phoning Joe Tighe, the local game warden, but there was no answer, so I drove out to the Coast Guard station on the edge of the lake to look around. It was nearly a mile away and on the way I saw that the channel on both sides was lined with moving and anchored boats and shore fishermen. I saw *spotted* a conservation pickup parked at the Coast Guard station, so I wheeled in there and approached a conservation officer chatting with several coast guardsmen on the station porch.

"Are you Joe Tighe?" I inquired of the pleasant-looking crew-cut officer.

"No, I'm Lake of the fisheries division, here taking fish census," he answered. "Joe's probably out on patrol. Can I help you?"

I told him who I was and he turned out to be a real discerning and cultured guy—he'd read most of my books. "I'm here casing your gold rush," I said. "Figure there must be some sort of story in it."

"Stories?" Lake said, gesturing at the guardsmen. "The boys here and I could tell you stories all day about what's going on here. Gold rush is good."

"Like what?" I said.

"Like the weird boats that go past here piling out into the lake. One guy ^{had} nailed some boards to two pontoons and hooked a motor on it. Got fish, too. There've been lots of canoes and kayaks, with and without outboards. We haven't spotted any submarines—yet."

"Any boats lost?"

A young coast guardsman answered that one. "Seven so far, along with motors."

"Any lives?"

He rapped on the wooden porch. "Not yet, but we're keeping our fingers crossed."

"How do you account for that—with all these greenhorns and tenderfeet?"

"Unusually mild weather—plus, I swear, a dispensation from divine providence." He wagged his head. "We were out on patrol the other day, about eight miles out, and this guy in his shirtsleeves in a ten or twelve foot row boat with an outboard drew near and hollered, 'Which way to Chicago?' and we pointed and away he gunned it, heading farther out into the lake."

I looked out at the mob of milling boats. "What are they mostly fishing with?" I asked Officer Lake, as this was down his alley.

"Virtually all of 'em are deep-trolling metal spoons or flat fish, most of 'em silver colored to imitate the alewives the cohos are gorging off of."

"Hardware fishermen!" I said with all the snobbish disdain of an unreconstructed fly fisherman.

"Of all the fishermen I've interviewed in my work I only encountered one solitary fisherman--an old timer--who used flies only."

"How dreadful. There ought to be a law. Did he have any luck?"

"The old boy caught his limit."

I again looked out over the lake, where hundreds of boats were trolling back and forth. "Lots of boats, lots of hardware," I said.

"Only three or four hundred so far today," Lake said. "You ought to have seen it last weekend."

"Do they give you boys much trouble?"

"Mostly themselves, accidentally cutting each other's lines with their propellers," a coast guardsman put in. "For our part our biggest headache is improperly lighted and numbered boats. It's surprising how many people out there haven't the foggiest notion of boating protocol or that there are federal regulations governing boating on the Great Lakes."

"Any ramblings?"

"Surprisingly few, though we've had to pluck a few fishermen out of the water before the cohos got them."

It was nearly time to meet Wiley ~~Clark~~ and Glen ~~Wiley~~ back at the Lake Manistee launching pier, so I said my goodbyes and Officer Lake walked me back to my car. "Just thought of another story," he said.

"Shoot."

"Recently a lone fisherman goes out there in a ten-foot yawl which, even in calm water, was nearly swamped by the grotesque outboard he'd hooked ^{on} to it. He gets 'way out there and two cabin cruisers pass him, on either side, making a deep whirlpool. He and boat and motor go down into the abyss--and only he surfaced. He was wearing a life jacket."

"Yes?"

"Well, he's bobbing around there like a cork but the cabin cruisers speed ^{gaily} on their way. No one comes to his aid--in fact the two hundred-odd boats in the vicinity melted away like morning mist. Finally a lone guy in another small boat picks him up and fetches him in--but the whirlpool man disappears and never reports."

"How did you ever know about it, then?"

"From the lone samaritan who brought him in."

"What can you expect of hardware fishermen?" I said, shaking his hand and taking off for town for my date. Wiley ~~Clark~~ and Glen ~~Wiley~~ were already there, so I swallowed my pride and mortgaged my car at the Bonanza Parking Lot. "Any luck this morning?" I asked Glen.

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"What's that?" Wiley Clark asked, pointing.

"Dead coho. About a ten pounder. The whole area's full of them."

"How come?"

"We field officers don't rightly know. Maybe the biologists do. Some might have died of exhaustion after being hooked and breaking off. They fight furiously. They've been so thick out in the lake I even speculate that some might have been hit by whirling propellers. Maybe it's something to do with spawning."

"Is it true that all these big cohos will die after their spawning run?" I said.

"That's so, both male and female. They have a three-year life cycle."

"Love can be beautiful," Wiley Clark sighed.

On the way out to the big lake we passed and were passed by all manner of boats, going both ways, some anchored and their occupants still fishing. Wiley started taking pictures. Glen explained that all this commotion had started when about three-quarters of a million ^{five- to six-inch} coho fingerlings ^{raised here from eggs} gotten from the state of ^{in the fall of 1965} Washington—actually nearly six inches long—were planted upstream and in the general area in the spring of 1966. "Their survival and growth has exceeded our wildest dreams," he went on.

Oregon and Washington

"But supposing they don't reproduce, that conditions aren't right, that all this gold rush ends abruptly?" Wiley Clark asked.

"We're taking no chances. We're stripping millions of eggs and will have plenty of young cohos even if none reproduces naturally." He smiled. "We'll need 'em, too. Towns all over the state are clamorin' for 'em."

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"There are strange things done 'neath the midnight sun, where men toil and moil for coho," I solemnly misquoted.

Presto, we looked up and suddenly were in the midst of hundreds of trolling boats, busily plying back and forth amidst the floating beer bottles and cans and cartons and all the depressing general debris. Suddenly there was a big noisy splash off our bow--not twenty feet--and I'd seen my first rising coho. It was a savage threshing rise. I had brought my fly rod and, remembering Officer Lake's old time fly fisherman, I cast out a white bucktail streamer at him, but nothing happened.

Meanwhile Glen sign-queried scores of fishermen (by holding out his arms), but all sadly shook their heads no. In twenty minutes I cast at maybe fifty magazine-cover rises, but still nothing happened. Love had replaced hunger. It was par for the course; every time I try to show off a little fishing, it's thousands of time nothing.... "These cohos are illiterate," I said, folding my rod. "Obviously they haven't read my fishing books."

So we headed slowly back through the floating trash and swill and bloated dead cohos for the Bonanza Parking Lot--Glen had some other people to take out--and on the way Joe Tighe (the local game

warden) and his wife overtook us in another boat. Glen waved them down and introduced us. Joe looked like a ^{cowboy} rope-twirler in a TV cigarette commercial: a handsome, tanned, outdoors guy with a radiant smile.

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"No time. Everybody's making a fortune around here but my wife and me."

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(This story was written but three days before that tragic Black Saturday, September 23, 1967, when, during a sudden squall, more than a hundred fishing boats capsized and seven fishermen drowned. I have not changed it. Robert Traver.)