

S. C. - Cities and Towns - Chester

State

CARLISLE WHITE'S PONDS

Dec 18, 49

When Carlisle White heard that Charlie Brice and I were going up to Chester to talk about the South Carolina Wildlife federation, he asked us to come early enough in the afternoon to see his ponds. Since both Charlie and I were anxious to do just that, we accepted with alacrity. Charlie had seen some of the ponds before, but not in the most interesting season—winter.

We got in an old Plymouth, which seemed to know enough to respond to Carlisle's commands to go anywhere—aided by ground-gripper tires—and we set out.

The first set of the 32 ponds visited proved an eye opener. Instead of being located down in a hollow on a stream, they were set upon a hilltop. Carlisle said they told him that with too much water he could not fertilize, so he got up on top of the hill away from the water. The ponds were full and, despite a recent rain, the water was clear in all of them except for one little mud hole which acted as a settling basin for the supply of rainwater.

All these hilltop ponds were fairly small, being formed by bulldozing up dams at the lower edges of depressions. At least one of them was dammed on three sides. Despite their small size Carlisle said he had caught three and four pound bass out of them.

One or two small ducks, coots and didappers (grebes) were seen, but Carlisle explained that these were not his real duck ponds. The chain follows on down a watercourse to the river.

As we drove along a dirt road that circled Chester to make a flank movement on the other side, Mr. White told of some of his experiences. A little hesitantly he confessed that his favorite type of fishing had been mountain fishing for brook, brown and rainbow trout, his favorite being brookies, and he used to go through the mountains with a pack on his back, stopping at mountain houses at night. These pursuits were in accord with my own ideas and practices, except that I camped out.

He also told of a nice companion he had at one time, a beautiful, good-natured rattlesnake that had crossed his path. He caught it and carried it around with him for two weeks in a small box. He said it was the nicest, friendliest snake he ever saw and never tried to bite him. But his father wrote him every day, "Be sure to kill that snake today," and finally he did away with it.

The next series of ponds visited was on a small stream, one after another. Carlisle told us of plans for raising one or another to give more depth and cover more area.

He explained that he had spent about \$78,000 on the project, and didn't know if he would come out or not. He had purchased or rented equipment with which to build both dams and roads.

He pointed out his "honor system" iron pots with sheet metal covers locked on top. In the top was a slot for the reception of money and on the side was a little pocket holding envelopes in which the money was to be put with the number and variety of persons in the party. Men, as I understand, were charged 50 cents a day, and 25 cents for a half day; women, 25 cents a day; children free. That's as I recall. These prices are not official. He started taking in revenue three years ago and it has rapidly increased till last year he took in \$3,250. At that rate he should pay for his ponds in a little over 25 years—if he doesn't build any more. However, revenue is liable to increase. But he says it's only a hobby. He made the money in advance on some of the land. Only a few people fail to pay. Mr. White keeps pretty close check, and is liable to turn up at a pond any minute.

At one pond, where a comfortable lodge had been built last year we saw a number of small ducks—scaup and probably ringnecks—on the far side, with plenty of coots and didappers. We also saw a nice flock of mallards come out of one pond.

Driving up a side road we parked on the edge of a field next to a pine-studded broomgrass hillside. We go out and, under Mr. White's direction, proceeded to the edge of the pond. As we neared the water a nice flock of mallards swam out from the bank, about 35 yards distant, then a pair of blacks got up and I made a nice dry double on them.

Followed the whirr of wings and flock after flock of mallards and blackheads beat the water and flushed out of the wooded area farther out in the pond. They kept coming, even after it seemed that all must have departed.

Soon the whole sky was dotted with circling ducks, and before long many of them started back in. I would not attempt to make an estimate of the number of waterfowl that came out of that pond. In the first place I didn't see anything like all of them. Many of them skimmed out low and were hidden by the trees, so they could only be heard.

Carlisle said he had not fed the ducks as he feared that might tend to make them tame and easily killed elsewhere. Nor had he planted anything for them and he did not know what they were eating, not having killed any. We supposed they were feeding on the seeds of grasses and possibly a little mast from the trees, the pond having been built only about three years ago. Mr. White said that even black gurns in that area died when water was put on them, whereon around Columbia they are often found growing in water.

Some geese have visited some of the ponds, and at one time Carlisle killed several of them as well as ducks. But, as he progressed in making places for the birds he lost interest in shooting them, getting more kick out of protecting them.

The first pond was built in 1920, but the majority of them have been built in the last six years.

We stopped back by the lodge on the lake, built so that in summer the sun falls on the terrace overlooking the lake only late in the afternoon. The house was made from an old one located elsewhere on the tract and the lumber, including hand-made, half-hewn beams that are visible in the basement, is 150 years old. The place is used extensively by the family and friends of Mr. White, and he noted, without comment or visible emotion, that "those boys" who had recently used the place, had just about dried out his stock of refreshments. He has the place equipped with refrigerator and a wood circulating heater for warmth in cold weather. The sleeping quarters contained 14 beds and double-decker bunks.

Back at the town house we freshened up before having steaks with Bob Abell, secretary of the chamber of commerce, and met Mrs. White, who we were interested to learn is sister to Dode Phillipps, who, we all agreed, was the best all round back in South Carolina football history and Carlisle's son. We sat around talking about hunting, while Mrs. White no doubt grew impatient to get back to her Santa Clausing, which we had interrupted.

The boys had put out handbills about the meeting and a good crowd was on hand. Bob Stevenson is one of the hardest workers on the Cause—and he doesn't hunt and seldom fishes.

Since a strong club was started the trip was a high success in every way.

Nicholson Hotel Built In 1839

The Chester News - April 30, 1952

According To Ex-Manager

The last issue of The News carried a photograph of the old Nicholson Hotel building on Lancaster Street which is being torn down. The News offered \$10 in cash to the first person who could authentically tell us when this building was erected.

During the past week The News has received varying information regarding the date this building was constructed but not until Tuesday was the correct information secured.

The information came from Mr. J. I. Hardin who secured the hotel construction date from Mr. Nicholson of Crouse, North Carolina who at one time operated the hotel. He is now 102 years old.

Mr. Hardin received the following letter from Mr. Nicholson's daughter in answer to a letter he had sent her.

"We received your letter Saturday night and we were glad to hear from you. Dad often speaks of his old friends in Chester and he would love to see them. He remembers all about the hotel. I am writing this as he is telling it to me. His memory is good and his health is very good, considering his age.

"It is a sad story to see the old Nicholson Hotel torn away. It holds many memories for us. I was born in it and my grandfather, the late William Moore Nicholson, died there on October 24, 1872. He owned the hotel.

"George — built it in 1839. He died in North Carolina long ago. The dear old place was built a long time before the railroad was built and a long, long

time before the Civil War.

"Sarah Grace Vinson Nicholson and her son, my father, W. M. Nicholson, ran the hotel until they moved to North Carolina where my grandmother died, Sarah Grace Vinson Nicholson.

"It breaks our hearts to see the dear old hotel torn away and the memories of it we will never forget. My father took his wife there as a bride.

"I certainly appreciate the paper and pictures. Father sends his best regards. I hope this is the information you want. It is correct.

Yours truly,

W. M. Nicholson, Sr.

written by daughter, Mrs.

Sarah Grace Nicholson Black"

LAND DEED OF 1796 ORIGIN PRESENTED LOCAL LIBRARY

Of much historical value is a land deed dated in 1796 in South Carolina which has recently been presented to the Chester county library by Mrs. J. H. McLure.

The deed has been well preserved and the writing is legible although in some spots over the paper it is beginning to fade. It will be added to the library's collection of interesting documents.

Attached to the document is a seal of the State of South Carolina as it was used then. Copies of these seals are rare, and most of them are in museums over the state. The seal is impressed on beeswax, and the mold has a diameter of about three inches and a thickness of about one-half an inch.

The document first belonged to the late Judge J. J. McLure of Chester. He was the father-in-law of Mrs. J. H. McLure. The McLure family has no record of how Judge McLure came into possession of the document, but it is thought that he perhaps recognized its historical value and purchased it many years ago or that it had been a gift to him.

Origin Of Seal

The presentation of the deed to the local library has brought up interesting discussions of the origin and changes in the state seal. The seal has now been reduced in size and the impressions on both sides are superimposed to create a flat one-sided seal. This was done, according to the state historian, to make the seal easier to handle and to conserve space for keeping such documents.

The following is a copy of the deed:

"The State of South Carolina. To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting: Know ye, that in pursuance of an act of the legislature, entitled, "An act for establishing the mode of granting the lands now vacant in the state, and for allowing a commutation to be received for some lands that have been granted, and by these presents do grant unto William McCottry, his heirs and assigns, a plantation or tract of land containing 393 acres, surveyed for him the 30th day of October, 1795, situate in the district of Georgetown on the waters of the Black Mingo, bounded NW by land not known, by John McCottry's and vacant land, SE by John Gregg's land, having such shape, form and marks, as are represented by a plat hereunto annexed, together with all woods, trees, waters, water courses, profits, com-

modities, appurtenances and hereditaments whatsoever here unto belonging: To have and to hold the said tract of 393 acres of land, and all and singular other the premises hereby granted unto the said William McCottry, his heirs and assigns forever in free and common soccage.

"Given under the Great Seal of the State.

"Witness his Excellency Arnoldus Vander Horsh, Esquire, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the said State, at Charleston this fourth day of July, Anno Domini 1796 and of the Independence of the U.S.A. the 21st."

Attached to the deed is a certification paper which reads:

"I do hereby certify for William McCottry, a tract of land containing three hundred and ninety-three acres surveyed for him the 30th day of October, 1795, Situate in the district of Georgetown on the Waters of Black Mingo, bounded NW by land not known, NE by John McCottrys and vacant land, SE by John Gregg's land, and hath such form and marks as the above Plat represents, Given under my Hand this 13th day of June, 1796.

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