



# Outers' Book—Recreation

*Edited by Dan B. Starkey*

*Edward Cave, Contributing Editor*

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*Starting for a delightful day on the Manitowish chain—showing the character of the second growth timber*

## In Dam, Sturgeon and Benson Lakes

*By E. C. Potter*

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

*Editor's Note: This is the second of a series of articles by Mr. Potter descriptive of northern Wisconsin lakes. The first, which appeared in the April issue, dealt with Rest Lake. Other lakes in the Manitowish chain are to be described in subsequent issues, and later other chains will be treated in the same manner. Our aim, in this series, is to furnish accurate, dependable information concerning the fishing grounds in these several lakes for the benefit of the anglers who would like to fish them but cannot afford to employ guides.*

**I**N the April issue of OUTERS' BOOK-RECREATION I gave a topographical synopsis of the shore lines, weed beds and bars in Rest Lake, one of the principal lakes in the Manitowish chain, of which there are nine in all. In a subsequent issue I will similarly describe some of the other lakes in this chain, but before continuing up the chain I want to tell you about the Manitowish River below the dam.

The headwaters of the Manitowish are in about the center of Vilas County, Wis. In geographically illustrating the

great North Woods of Wisconsin-Michigan, Vilas County, and especially the northern central portion, might well be compared to the apex of a cone. From this apex the waters flow to all points of the compass. The Presque Isle and Ontonagon Rivers beginning here, flow north to Lake Superior. Slightly to the east, and starting in an easterly direction, are the headwaters of the Wisconsin which soon turn to the south, a little later to the southwest, finally reaching the Mississippi. Near the eastern boundary the outlet of Kentuck Lake, noted for its excellent bass, becomes the Pine River, which flows to the east into the Menominee River, which contributes its share to Lake Michigan by way of Green Bay. Numerous streamlets from the southern central portion of lake-starred Vilas county wend their rippling way south to the Wisconsin, and on the western slope the Turtle and Manitowish waters join the Chippewa and continue to the Upper Mississippi.

The Manitowish River loses its identity about fifteen miles below the town of Manitowish, where it combines with Bear Creek, the outlet of the Flam-

beau waters, forming the Flambeau River. The dam at Rest Lake is a bar to the passage of the fish up stream, but for many miles below, in fact clear to the Park Falls dam in the Chippewa River, there is nothing to prevent the fish from following their instinctive habit of traveling up stream and making the submerged stumps and weed beds of Benson, Sturgeon and Dam Lakes their summer home.

These three lakes might best be termed bulges in the river, but they are quite a spread as compared to the average width of the river, in fact much more so than the maps show. The Manitowish River from the town of Manitowish to the Rest Lake Dam is one of the most winding of all rivers. While the distance by auto is a matter of nine or ten miles, it is said to be twenty-two miles by water. The trip is an excellent one by canoe as the current is not swift and no difficulties in paddling will be encountered except at the rapids between Benson and Sturgeon, and Sturgeon and Dam lakes, and it is an easy matter to portage around them, for, as most everywhere else in the Great North Woods in cases of this kind, there

is a trail. The river probably averages about a hundred feet in width, though in many places it is not fifty; a winding, twisting stream with clear, deep pools—some large, some small—connected by narrow channels branching off in various directions, making innumerable small brush islands and peninsulas. Most of it, however, is comparatively shallow water. The shores are mainly scrub timber and brush, and in a day's trip you will see an infinite number of small fur bearing animals, minks, muskrats, marten, skunks and porcupines, as the shores provide excellent cover. Song birds flit everywhere, while loons, hawks, crows, eagles and ducks seem to regard the Manitowish as their own.

Occasionally you will float around a bend just in time to see a deer alertly picking its way along the water's edge, or wading across some shallow spot.

The portion of the river from the town of Manitowish to Benson Lake is the most winding of all. It is said that in Manitowish one of the most frequent subjects for a wager when one of its citizens seems unable to walk decorously is whether he has imbibed too freely of the product that has traveled the worm of the distillery, or has just been out on the river.

When the Great North Woods was in the midst of its lumber producing activities millions of logs were floated down the Manitowish. Many are jammed in the banks and sunk, and in some of the pools the bottom is almost entirely covered with them, making an excellent cover for fish.

There are no resorts along the Manitowish River from Manitowish to the dam, and it is most practical for the average outer to make his headquarters at one of the resorts on Rest Lake and make the trip below the dam a one, two or three day camping trip. Good camping spots can be found most anywhere you happen to be. All three of these

## Old Hunting Days

By James Russell Price\*

"You've risen early today, for once you've waked your dad; I think that Ma is in your scheme, my sixteen-year-old lad. What! got the bullets molded, boy, the rifle loaded, too. And fireplace all blazing bright! Now, what you going to do?"

"The buck you shot last night, Ma says, is old and tough and dry: To the old salt lick I'm going now to get a fawn to fry. If I should shoot a two-year-old, I'll load and fire again. You bring the pole to carry him, as it will take two men."

"Just hear our boy a-talkin', Pa. He now is most a man. He finds his game and gets it, too; he knows just how to plan. There, now I hear the rifle pop, wait—there's another shot. Take clothes-pole, Pa, and hurry up and to the salt lick trot."

"Yes, Dad, I killed a two-year-old, put bullet through his head, Then loaded rifle up again to do as I had said. A sly old fox stuck out his head behind that pile of rocks. I got him, too; I need his fur to line these cotton socks."

\*The clever little poem entitled "I Dassent Cry," which appeared anonymously, by accident, in the April number, was from Dr. Price's pen.

lakes are very much alike in character, most of the shoreline being stumps and weeds, and all of it is excellent musky grounds. The average river below a dam is fast moving water. Here in the Manitowish the volume of water ordinarily passing over the dam is not large and as it spreads out into Dam Lake covering considerable area it loses all perceptible current.

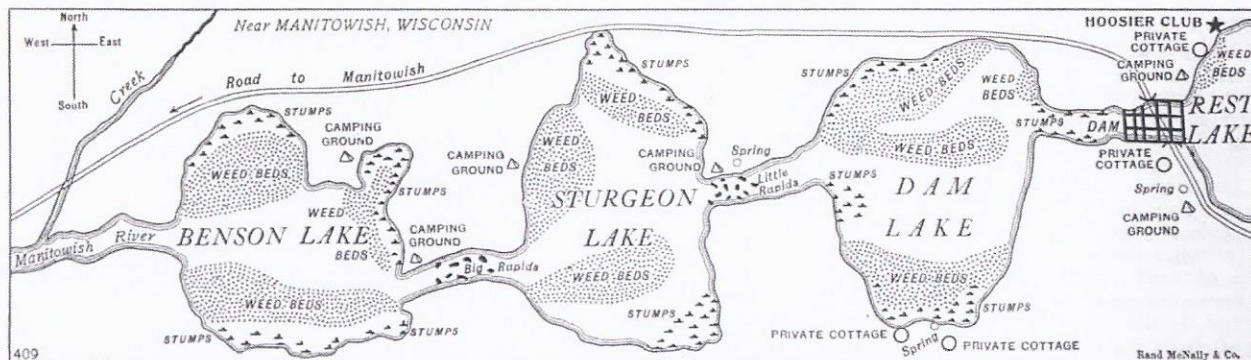
In describing the fishing grounds in Dam, Sturgeon and Benson lakes, the map tells most all there is to be said. All three are very much alike, and about the only other description that can be given is of general character. Different from Rest Lake, it is not a case of locating a bar or weed bed in the middle of a clear lake. All three are principally a choice location in which to cast for muskies, or when you have gotten your bearing as to location of weed beds, to troll for them. They are also excellent pike grounds. Bass are plentiful in some spots, but your luck with bass will depend on finding where they are feeding, while muskies will be found most anywhere around the weeds, in the hooked bends of the river and around the overhanging alder clumps. The pike frequent the deep holes along the river and the

nearby water below the dam. They move in schools from one hole to another, and your success will depend on your finding where they are. Try a likely spot and when you get a strike drop anchor and work there a while. If business isn't good go on to the next promising pool. All the way down the river are occasional clumps of lily pads and little sandy points that are likely bass spots and always worth a few casts. In these waters, as above the dam, the pickerel is conspicuous by his absence.

Leaving the dam the banks are very irregular, plenty of snags and weeds, and small, deep holes where the fish are sure to stay. The last time I cast these holes I got a vicious strike in one and something

started down the stream at a speed there was no stopping. Out went nearly seventy-five yards of line, I shut down harder on the reel—I knew I'd have to stop that something someway before he reached the end of the line—but no use, the line parted and that was the end. We had an old guide with us that day. He said, "Oh, about a fifty-pound musky; there's lots of 'em here, it's just a case of finding where they're feeding and bein' there when they're bitin'." Following on down the south shore, in the south side of Dam Lake, you will find a big weed bed covering the entire south portion. On the bottom there are hundreds of logs, stumps and roots making ideal cover for the fish, though not the best place in the world to land them, but if when you hook a big one here you will work out toward the center of the lake you're not apt to lose him. You will lose tackle here occasionally, of course, but what's more important you will also get fish. The north shore is similar in character and equally good grounds.

Leaving Dam Lake and following down the river you shortly come to what is known as the Little Rapids. A rowboat will practically take care of itself through



Fishing grounds' map of Benson, Sturgeon and Dam Lakes, often termed "the Manitowish River below the dam," adjacent to Rest Lake in the Manitowish chain and reached from the town of Manitowish, Wis. The distances between these lakes are much more than the map indicates, owing to the necessity of confining the map to the limits of the page. While but a few camping spots are shown, one may camp most anywhere



*The view is from the east end of the south shore of Benson Lake, looking northeast directly across the lake*

these, if you will watch that it doesn't turn sidewise in the current, but if you have a detachable motor on it you'd better take it off or get out in the water and guide it carefully down stream for there's some good sized rocks clear up to the surface of the water. If you have a canoe be careful you don't hit any of them at high speed. Just at the foot of the Little Rapids at times the bass fishing is excellent. Put on a minnow and let it float down in the current and see how quick your line starts off in some direction other than with the current. Just let it alone a bit till Mr. Bass has time to turn the minnow and swallow it, then strike and you'll have something that will repay many fruitless casts.

Passing the rapids we are in Sturgeon Lake. It is said to have been at one time inhabited by enormous sturgeons. The guides say there are still some there and that they were seen through the ice last winter. Our guide also said several things about the size of some somebody saw, but this story is detailing facts, not fairy tales. On the east shore where the river enters the lake is an excellent camping ground. There is a spring near by, pure, clear and cold. Sturgeon Lake has some rock and gravel shores. It is probably the best of the three for bass. We found the bass there very fond of pork rind, notwithstanding the guide said it wasn't good bait. In the forenoon we caught twelve averaging three pounds apiece. Our success in this instance seemed to be due to cast-

ing back among the rocks, snags and logs, as they would strike after the bait had gone four or five feet, while casts further out from the cover were not successful.

While eating lunch near the weed bed on the north side of Sturgeon Lake we saw the bass feeding on flies at the edge of the bed so we rigged up our fly rods. Our success was phenomenal, except that the fish were rather small, the average not being much over a pound and a quarter. A bass that size, where the water is cold most of the year, will put up a wonderful scrap on a four ounce fly rod however.

With these exceptions Sturgeon Lake is very much the same as Dam Lake, principally a choice location in which to cast for muskies and to troll for them as soon as you get a sort of line on the location of the weed beds so you can troll without snagging weeds.

Starting out after lunch toward Benson Lake we met a party from the Indian

Trading Post and Outfitting Camp on Rest Lake, making a picnic trip down to Benson Lake, so we all went down together. They had two large boats with detachable motors. Two in each boat were trolling with wooden minnows and buck tail spoons. Circling the central part of Sturgeon Lake twice they caught three muskies averaging about twelve pounds apiece in less than twenty minutes. I don't know what the put-put-put of a motor boat will do for bass, but it doesn't scare a musky any more than a red flag scares a bull.

Just before you reach Benson Lake you come to the Big Rapids. They are not falls—they are easily navigable down stream by an expert at shooting rapids either with boat or canoe, and you can pole a canoe up, but with a heavy boat you'll have to get out and wade and pull. The water is from knee to waist deep. The total drop in surface elevation according to survey, however, is about forty feet, so you see they're quite some rapids. Part of the men took the boats down and the rest of us and the ladies went around on the trail. Getting in the boats again we were soon in Benson Lake, which is but a short way down the river. It is a smaller lake than either Sturgeon or Dam Lake, a sort of basin, averaging probably six to eight feet deep, running to fifteen feet in the deepest portions, with many drift logs, stumps and snags and a sand-gravel bottom, an excellent fishing lake. There is very little clear shore; weeds and snags line most of it. Benson is not so much of a bass

## Camp Smoke

By Thos. J. Murray

Erstwhile the smoke had spiraled from these hills  
And trailed war messages to tribes afar;  
In distant years scarred with primeval ills,  
When red men strove beneath their fading star.

Again above the hills the smoke clouds lift,  
Riding the morning mists to float away;  
While youthful campers watch their idle drift  
And sense the romance of a buried day.



*Rest Lake Dam, which turns all the fish back into Dam, Sturgeon and Benson lakes.*

lake as Sturgeon, but apart from this it differs only in location of stumps and weed beds. Like Dam and Sturgeon, it is chiefly a musky lake. In fact, the most vicious strikes I ever had were in the south side of Benson around the stumps inside the weed bed about sundown that day from muskies that would average from eight to ten pounds. We did not hook half that struck. They would hit just as the bait struck the water, the force of their rush would carry them from a foot to a foot and a half above the surface, and it is indeed surprising what a noisy splash such leaps make.

After trolling around the weeds in Benson we decided to cruise down the river a little further to where a creek enters the river from the north. This creek is the outlet from Circle Lily Lake, called Lily Creek, and is considered one of the choicest spots for big muskies. It is the same old story; where a creek or river enters a lake or another river it's good fishing grounds, whether you're fishing for mud cats or muskies. Don't make the mistake of trying to go to Circle Lily Lake by way of this creek, however—it's not navigable.

Here in Lily Creek we had one of the most exciting fishing experiences it was ever our good fortune to enjoy. For some unknown reason, probably laziness, we had borrowed a rowboat with a detachable motor from the party we had just met, they taking our canoe, and it was fortunate for us that we had. We swung into Lily Creek and up toward the bridge on the Manitowish road nearby, and prepared to cast some suckers we had brought with us, for when passing over the bridge it is not uncommon to see a big musky in the shallow water on a sand

bar there. The first cast entirely upset all our calculation and nearly upset the boat. There were three of us and all happened to make our first cast about the same instant. When the baits hit the water it seemed as though the place was alive with fish, for, it was splash, flop, swirl, and each of us had a musky hooked. One started down stream, mine went up stream and the other one went to the bottom and stayed there. Foot after foot, yard after yard of line left our reels and it looked for a few moments as though they would all get away. Gradually we worked the boat in to shore and I got out for we knew if they ever got the lines tangled it would be all off. One of the boys finally worked his in close to the boat and tried to gaff him, but the fish got a sudden jerk against him, the line parted, and good-bye fish. I worked mine in to shore and shot it and after getting him landed they brought the boat into shore and I shot the other one. One weighed twenty-one and one-half pounds and the other twenty-four pounds. The one that got away was about the same size. We fished for over an hour after that, around the creek, but absolutely

without a strike.

Starting the motor we hurried back to Benson Lake just in time to find they were almost ready to eat the picnic dinner—it was nearly sundown—and one of the most distasteful things I have ever had to do was to put off commencing on my share until I photographed the bunch "going for" the meal, which, owing to the spot they had selected, was an extremely difficult job. Afterward we fished around Benson Lake a little while, catching a few small muskies and pike and then set out for Rest Lake in the moonlight. The tale of how we got there, how we got out in mid-stream to our waists and pulled and poled those heavy boats and the canoe up the Big Rapids, with a lantern or two between occasional glimpses of cloud-broken moonlight, while the girls went over the trail; how the four girls with two children in the canoe fought their way up the Little Rapids solely with the paddle, and an occasional feminine snarl at each other's mistakes in stroke, for all the world like picturesque Indian maids of song and story; how we portaged all the heavy equipment around the dam and got back to camp at Rest

Lake at nearly eleven o'clock, might be mildly interesting to some of you—it's been the subject of many a comment by all of us since—but it wouldn't help you to locate the stumps, and bars and weed beds when you wanted to catch a few muskies of your own.

There is one public benefit on the west shore of Rest Lake, however, that I should have included in my description of Rest Lake in the April issue of *OUTERS' BOOK-RECREATION* and I will mention it now, as my next lake description

(Continued on page 470)

## The Out-Door God

By Mary Carolyn Davies

The God of fair stained windows and white altar,  
Of dull, slow chants and dusty mutterings;  
The God they praise with prayer-book and with psalter,  
Guard well life's placid things!

But to the God of untrod paths I'm lighting  
My candles, and my worship shall not fail.  
My fighting arm make strong, make strong for fighting,  
God of the Farthest Trail!

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a buffalo had fallen dead; the herd retreating a short distance. He then crawled up to the dead buffalo, using it as a screen, resting his gun across its body and fired again. Another fell and lay as if dead. He crawled up to it, rested his gun across it and was just at the point of firing again, when the buffalo, suddenly reviving, sprang up and charged him. He fired into him as he was springing to his feet, but failed to stop him. There was nothing left but to run for it. The infuriated bull was at his heels in a moment, and he realized the impossibility of outrunning it, but the thought occurred to him that by springing to one side at the moment the buffalo was about to gore him, and darting off in a different direction and keeping up the maneuver, he might escape, as he knew the furious animal was badly wounded. Suiting his action to the thought, as the bull made a quick lunge at him, he gave a spring to one side, but one horn hit him a terrible blow on the hip, which sent him spinning through the air with such force that when he struck the ground he slid along on his face and shoulder. He was wearing a fur cap, and at the time of firing had taken his fur mitten from his right hand. The force of the blow knocked his hat off, and caused him to drop his gun and mitten. He owed his life to this fortunate circumstance. Instead of pursuing him, the maddened brute commenced to horn and stamp the gun, hat and mitten. While he was doing this, father quickly crawled out of sight behind a small knoll which providentially was near at hand. In a short time he heard the buffalo fall; he then started on the painful crawl to camp, some two miles distant.

Early the following morning we made ready to start for home, after first gathering up all the meat. I found the buffalo lying dead by the gun which he had trampled into the ground, breaking the stock. The hat and mitten were torn and filled with dirt.

We were compelled to take the most direct route home, so could not go back for the meat of the buffalo I had killed on Ash Creek.

Father was confined to his bed for nearly three months, and, although he went on several more buffalo hunts, he had a proper respect for a wounded bull and took no further chances with one in a foot race.

## Some Fish

(Continued from page 441)

bored disgust, the private policeman of some nabob's estate ejected the first trespasser of the day and Henry emitted a sudden falsetto yell. Our balloon was making zingzags and arcs of circles at dizzy speed, and even leaving the troubled surface in leaps behind what was indubitably a real fish.

The aforesaid crew forgot his blisters and his ennui and also executed zigzags and arcs of circles and, if good intention could have done it then our punt most certainly leaped from the waves as well. The writer experienced all the sensations

of a galley slave driven to unconsciousness at the oar, was relieved by Henry, beheld him become exhausted and was himself again relieved before a lucky grab at last caught the line and a mighty heave boated the fish.

He was the original ancestor of all the bass. His huge mouth snapped and his yellow belly writhed in a mighty temper, he seemed as thick as a man's thigh, and, now laugh, you doubters! his length spanned the full width of the stern seat of the boat, shall we say about three feet?

Picture then a little, round-shouldered spectacled and whiskered gentleman bending over that stern seat like a young mother over her first cradle and dancing clumsily on one foot, while the cop and his late enemies vied in applause.

But, alas, truth is stranger than fiction, mustering all his failing strength for one mighty effort, Sir John Smith gave a convulsive flop and left us.

## In Dam, Sturgeon and Benson Lakes

(Continued from page 428)

will be further up the Manitowish chain. This is the Indian Trading and Outfitting Camp indicated just south of the dam on my map of Rest Lake as "Indian Camp." I say public benefit advisedly, because it is. I believe it is the only one of its kind in the North Woods, and if Mr. Bergen, whose delightful story of his last summer in Wisconsin, which has added much charm to perusal of the March and April issues of *OUTERS'-RECREATION*, had struck this Indian camp instead of the young Indian at Flambeau that charged him eight dollars from Flambeau to Pike Lake, it would never have occurred to him to suggest that the railroads liquidate their holdings, go into the auto express business in the North Woods and become wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice. Its "Factor," as the managers of north-west trading posts have long been termed, while a member of the Chippewa tribe, is not an Indian but a gentleman from Texas, who would have made an ideal leading character for one of Zane Grey's charming tales of the generosity of the primitive southwest. It is the Factor's reputation that no man has ever gone to his camp needing anything the Factor had without getting it, whether he had any money or not. This trading post is but a scant quarter of a mile from the Rest Lake dam. Here you can get practically anything you need in the North Woods, from half a dozen live minnows to a complete camping outfit, with or without provisions, and at prices more reasonable than you could purchase the same things in Chicago. The Camp is run more as a benevolent or philanthropic institution out of goodwillship with the Indians and the North Woods visitors than for profit, and the provisions that have been given away in the past and other assistance rendered without charge to patrons and wandering Indians would appeal even to the most indolent exponent of the doctrine

of thrift, but the ever rising costs of all commodities have forced them to discontinue some of this undue benevolence the past year, for while the Factor and his family have other income, there must be a limit somewhere. As many know, it is not always easy for campers to get provisions and supplies in the woods. The resorts cannot or will not spare them, but here you can rent a complete camping outfit for any sized party and be taught how to use it if you wish; you can camp nearby, replenish your supplies at the camp, rent their boats, or just stop and get a cake of ice, in fact get practically anything you want for prices that will seem small indeed to those that have endeavored to purchase such necessities at some of the resorts. That the Factor of this Indian Trading and Outfitting Camp will never become wealthy is a foregone conclusion—they don't seem to care to increase their business or make any profit to speak of on their transactions—they say it interferes with their enjoyment of life—although they do some fur trading with the Indians which I presume pays fairly well, but such a place in the North Woods is to the camper as an oasis in the desert.

## Ornamenting Your Hunting Outfit

(Continued from page 471)

lines at a coating and whether you can cross your lines or not. If you have difficulty in handling your needle, try resting both arms, from hands to elbows, on a table in an easy position. Hold the needle in writing position and rest the second finger of left hand against the needle just below the first finger of right hand, and move the needle by bending fingers instead of sliding the hands.

My outfit is not for sale at any price, and I do not care to do this class of work for anybody, but would like to hear from anyone who tries it. If you desire any more information you have but to ask for it.

## A—What Do You Call It?

(Continued from page 455)

made almost convinced me that I was a fit subject for the padded cell, but a letter to Mr. N. O. Neidner solved the problem, as in his reply he stated a price for making it, did not call me a fool, did not say it would be no good or impractical, or that he would have to get permission from Berlin or the ruler of Africa, or that it would take six months to make it. He also told me what he would put on an "Anticorro" steel barrel for, and the rifle went to him the next day.

I decided for my own particular benefit that I could make some improvements in the shape of the stock, so she gets a brand new one much like the old (a la Wundhimer), except the fore end is made to fit my hand with a place for



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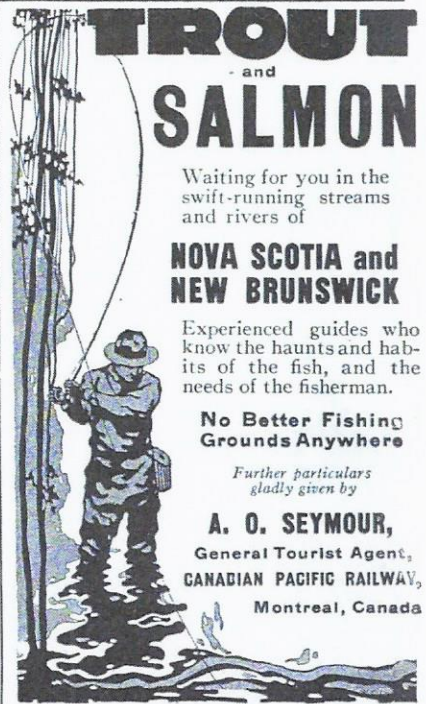
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