

# Outdoor Life

FEBRUARY 1971 60¢

**WEATHERBY'S**  
**THE FISHERMAN'S RESORT**  
Grand Lake Stream, Maine 04637

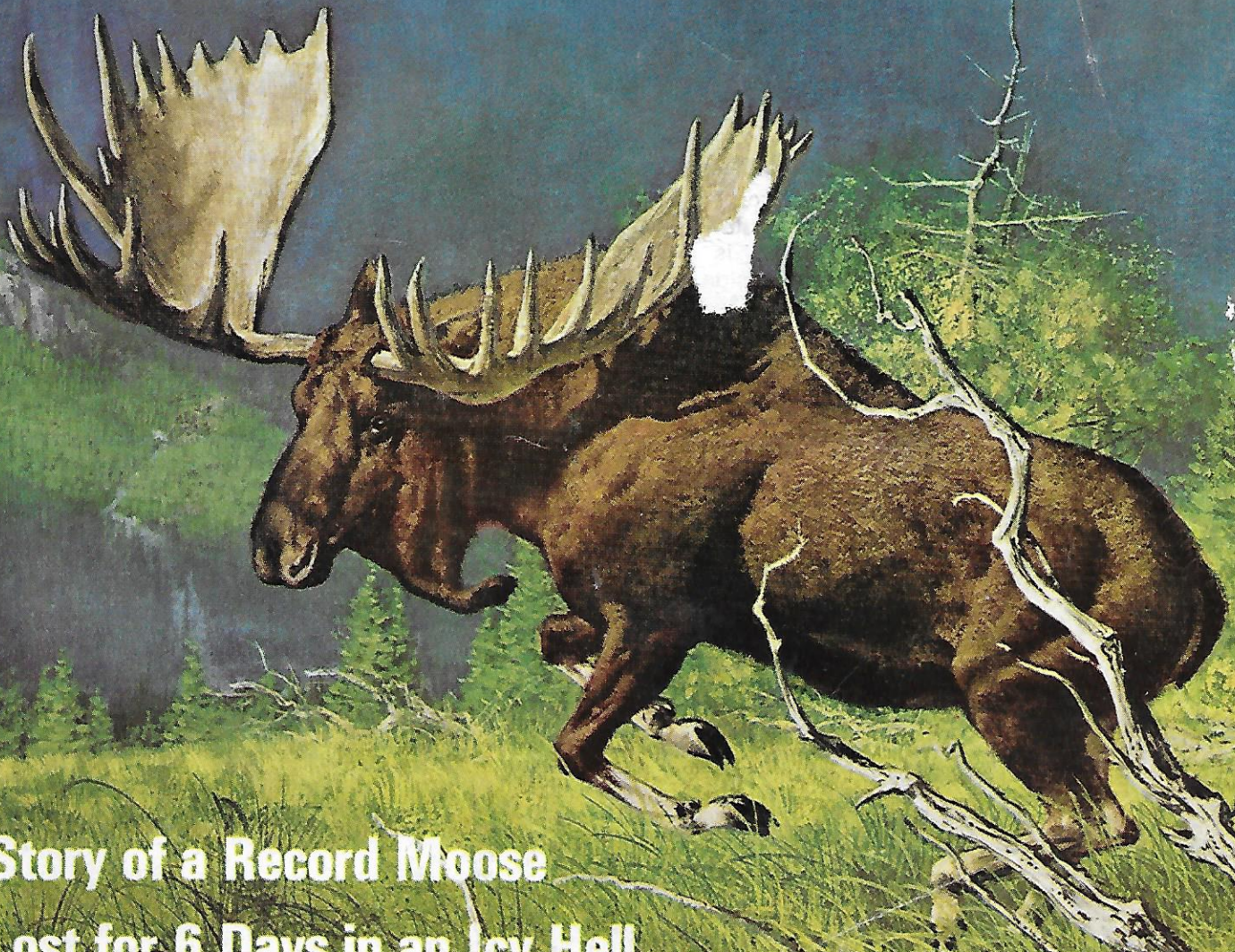
**Winter Quail Hunt**

**And Winter Bluegills**

**Mexico's Madcap Fishing**

**Deer and Antelope**

**Can We Save Rock Creek?**



**Story of a Record Moose**

**Lost for 6 Days in an Icy Hell**

**Hey, Ice Fishing's Fun!**

**Tragedy of India's Game: O'Connor on Sheep**



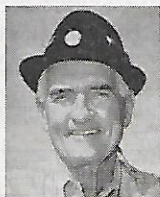


On Maine's beautiful Grand Lake Stream, I battle an acrobatic landlocked salmon that rose to my No. 12 Green Drake dry fly

## The Maine Thing

### FISHING

Joe Brooks



I HAD FISHED in this very spot 25 years earlier, and the stream hadn't changed. The fast water talked merrily as it rushed into the pool, but off to the side the surface was slick, with a circle here, a circle there, and a plop closer in as landlocked salmon took naturals from the surface. I was using the same dry fly that I had caught landlocks on so long ago, a No. 12 Green Drake.

I cast the fly out, dropping it quietly to the surface, and it floated right down over the spot where the nearest fish had shown. He didn't respond. But four tries later I saw a flash under the fly, and the fish took. I pulled back gently on the rod and felt him, and he immediately came straight up out of the water, wriggling all over, beating his fins. He splashed back in, and when I still had him on after five more jumps I began to think that maybe I'd land this high-flying two-pounder.

I finally did, and he was a beautiful sight—bright silver and a fine-looking chip off his forebears, the Atlantic salmon. I put him back to grow and take some other angler's fly.

I was fishing Grand Lake Stream in Maine. Grand Lake, out of which the

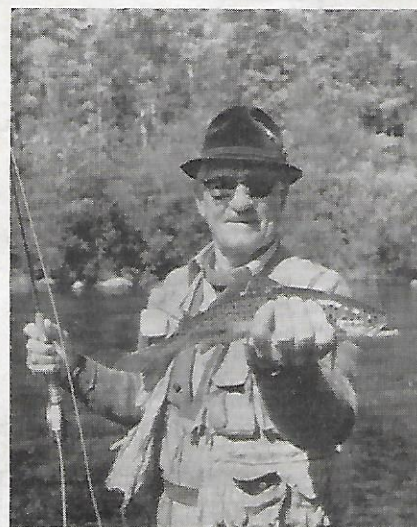
stream flows, and three other lakes—Sebago, Sebec, and Green, or Reed's Pond—are believed to be the only spots where the Maine landlocked salmon originally occurred. In the *Maine Sportsman*, published at Bangor in June 1903, Dr. C. Hamlin gives some of the history of this fascinating fish and describes his fishing experiences with them in the late 1800's. Landlocks were so plentiful then that at one point Hamlin hooked 25 fish in 25 casts.

Hamlin learned from his Indian guide, Peol Toma, that a Captain Farrar, pioneer sportsman and author of books on fish of northern Maine, and H. L. Leonard, hunter and fishing-rod manufacturer, had found salmon in the tributary waters of Sebago Lake. The next year, Hamlin went to Sebago with some friends and they caught 98 salmon.

After that, landlocks were introduced into many other lakes and streams in Maine, and they are now widespread in the state. Landlocks from the Maine stock have also been planted in lakes and rivers in many other states. And their most lengthy journey was to Argentina, where they were stocked in the waters around Bariloche in the Andes. They took hold and flourished there and today furnish some spectacular fishing.

In all his forays for landlocked salmon, Dr. Hamlin never took a fish of over four pounds.

In my fishing at Grand Lake Stream 25 years ago, the top fish I took weighed 4½ pounds; on this latest visit, the



Above, I admire a streamlined 2½-pound landlock. Below, Mary hoists two-pound smallmouth that socked her popping bug





top was 2½, the average 1¼ pounds.

That first afternoon, I took a couple more salmon from the first pool I fished. Then they got wise, so I moved downstream. Another angler was fishing the top of the run there, but farther down, near the tail of the long, shallow pool, I saw a tiny dimple. It was hardly big enough to have been made by a large fish, I thought, but I decided to try for him anyway. You never know.

I eased my way back among the bushes, crept down below where the fish had risen, and moved out into position.

I was using a seven-foot two-inch fly rod with a matching double-tapered No. 4 line and a 12-foot leader with a 5X tippet. I made my cast, and the fish took on the first float. I struck and was surprised at how heavy he felt.

He started running downstream, deep, and traveled some 70 feet before he stopped. Then he hung in the current, putting plenty of pressure on the fine tippet. Finally he moved over toward the far bank and dogged it there. It took a lot of doing, but I finally moved him. Then he went wild. He raced right at me just under the surface,



Guide Val Moore does fancy midstream balancing act after netting a salmon for me



Bronzebacks like these offer top summer sport in lakes around Grand Lake Stream

pushing up a bow wave, and then dived and ran downstream again and went through a series of underwater maneuvers that had me hanging on the ropes. Never once did he jump.

At last I got him close and saw that this dry-fly-taking fish was a smallmouth black bass. I pulled him close, grasped him by the lower lip so he wouldn't struggle, and lifted him up to remove the fly. He was a very fit three-pounder, a bronze beauty sporting dark lateral markings.

"It sure is good to be back," I said that night to Bev Weatherby, "and to find that the salmon and bass are still in the river. I remember catching plenty of bass here twenty-five years ago."

"You'll find little change in the fishing," Bev said. "Lots of smallmouth and still a good supply of landlocks, as you've already found out."

My wife Mary and I were staying at Weatherby's Resort, at the village of Grand Lake Stream, just below the

lake. We planned to fish the stream for landlocks and the numerous nearby lakes for smallmouths.

"I've booked Val Moore to guide you," Bev said the next morning. "He has lived and guided here for twenty-eight years and knows all the lakes in the area. I think he knows every smallmouth by its first name."

When Val arrived he was trailering a big canoe.

"We'll fish Wabassus Lake, just a few miles from here," he said. "Plenty of smallmouths and also a good supply of pickerel."

"On my last trip here," I said, "I caught a lot of bass, all on popping bugs."

"This is the right time for poppers now, too," Val said. "Early June is a good time for surface lures."

When we reached Wabassus Lake, Val launched the canoe and we piled aboard. The big Maine canoe, made by Val's brother, was comfortable and safe, and it held the three of us and our fishing gear with space to spare. Val used the outboard motor, which was attached to the square stern, to run a mile down the lake. Then he stopped and paddled us quietly in toward shore.

"We'll fish the wood," he said. "Up here in Maine we call driftwood dri-ki. Like in there."

We looked inshore where Val was pointing and saw a 100-foot stretch of dead timber, weathered white. Some trees and stumps were still standing, stark and ghostly; others had fallen flat; still others were lying where they had drifted in, jutting out here and there into the lake. It was heaven for smallmouths and woodpeckers. And sure enough, from down the shore came the knock, knock of woody himself, having

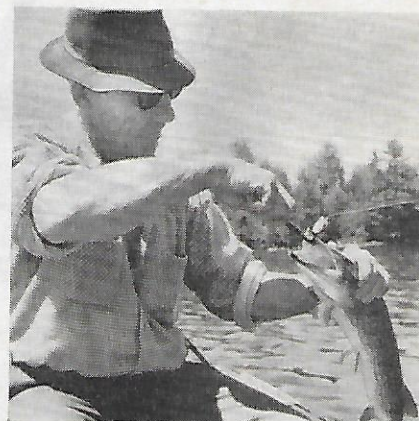
a late breakfast, while 100 feet to our left a bass rose and grabbed a fly from the surface.

"Looks like we're here at the right time," I said. "Everyone is feeding."

"You take it first," Mary said to me.

These big Maine canoes have plenty of room for two trollers or spinfishermen or baitfishermen. But we were using fly rods and popping bugs, and with that gear I like to fish one at a time. Two waving fly lines can easily get entangled.

I was using an 8½-foot rod with a weight-forward No. 8 floating line and a 12-foot leader tapered down from a 25-pound-test nylon butt section to an eight-pound-test tippet. My popping bug was a No. 2/0 and was all-blue with three rubber legs on each side of the body. While the bug was in the water, the legs moved continually and the tail feathers flared outward on each side



Val uses long-nose pliers to remove bug from the mouth of toothy chain pickerel



of the hook to give alluring action.

I cast, and the bug landed six inches out from a stump. I let it lie still as the circles pushed out on the calm surface. Then I gave it a slight pop followed by a couple of harder ones and let it lie still again.

"Here he comes," Val said.

We saw the fish coming out fast from the dark depths under the stump. He hit on a full run, I struck, and water splashed in all directions. The bass came right on up and, propelled by his fast-beating caudal, tailwalked across the surface for 10 feet, showing his tiger markings on the deep-bronze sides, his lower jaw protruding belligerently. He splashed back in and sank slowly, then quickly got his bearings and made a run for the wood. I put on a bit more pressure, and he slowed after about 45 feet and jumped again, high, wide, and handsome, a fighting Maine smallmouth doing his thing, a wonderful gamefish in peak condition.

I finally got the bass in. Val netted him, removed the hook, and slipped him back into the water. He weighed about two pounds, but he had fought like an eight-pounder.

"Your turn," I said to Mary.

We had drifted past the wood. Deep in a bay we saw a patch of lily pads.

"Should be pickerel in there," Val said.

Mary was using a rig just like mine. She dropped the bug next to the pads and gave it a single pop. There was a

flash as a fish streaked for the bug. He hit with a bang and made an arching leap across the surface.

"A four-pound pickerel," Val said. "Look at him go."

Go was right. That arrowlike fish was on the move. He finally slowed and Mary turned him, but he kept broadside, moving slowly to the right.

"He's strong," Mary said.

The unrelenting pressure of the fly rod eventually wore the fish down, and Mary pulled him into the net. Val took the hook out and returned the fish to the water.

A lot of people underrate the Eastern chain pickerel," Val said. "In cold Maine waters they hit hard, jump high, and put up a fine fight. They just can't let a well-worked bug go by."

Throughout our fishing of half a dozen lakes in the Grand Lake Stream area, wherever we found a soft bottom with grasses, reeds, and lily pads we usually caught some pickerel. And as Val said, it only took a couple of pops to get action. Our biggest went five pounds, a very good-size pickerel for sure. Our rubber-legged poppers worked well amid sparse weeds and grasses and along the edge of the lily pads. When the growth was really thick we switched to weedless poppers and had equally good luck.

The pickerel's mouth is armed with needle-sharp teeth, and it is always a good idea to use long-nosed pliers to

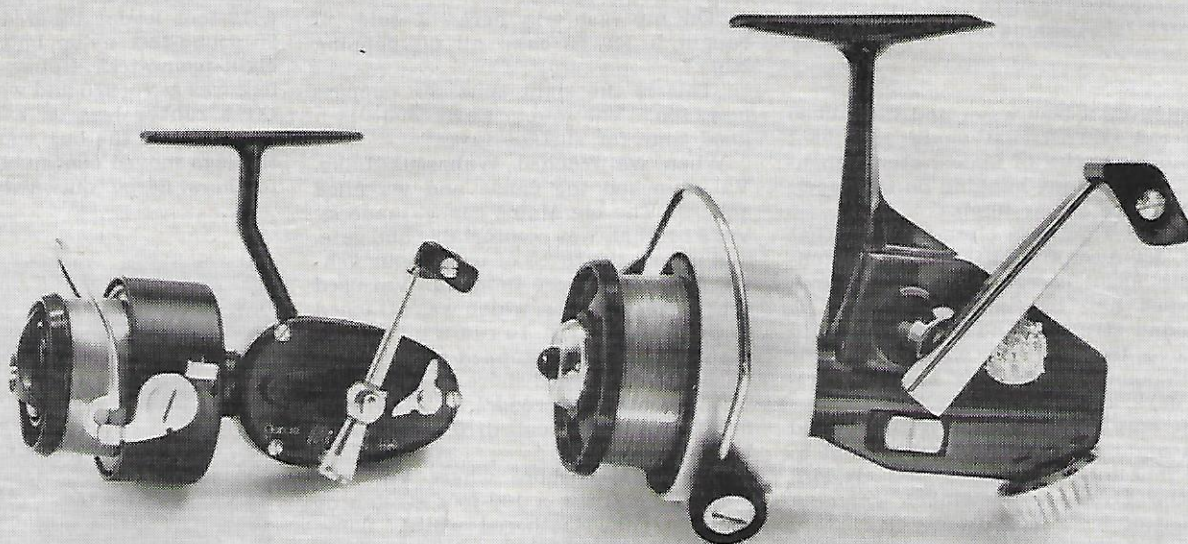
remove the hooks. And though the teeth seldom cut a leader tippet, it pays to check your tippet for frays or nicks each time you catch a pickerel.

In five days we fished six lakes within a short drive of Grand Lake Stream: Compos, Grand Lake Stream Lake, Big Lake, Sysladobsis, Junior Lake, and Third Machias Lake. Our average bass weighed slightly more than 1½ pounds, and we took quite a few of around 2½ pounds plus a few three-pounders. It was nice smallmouth fishing, and Val assured us that bigger ones were around. The largest he knew of in 1969 weighed 6½ pounds, and that same season a five-pounder was taken in Grand Lake Stream.

Several of the lakes also hold landlocked salmon, but the fish are scattered and anglers usually don't cast for them unless they see them rising. However, trollers go for the salmon with fly rods and streamer flies. The guide moves the canoe along very slowly while the angler gives action to the fly, making short jerks with the rod tip. Grand Lake Stream Lake, Big Lake, Sysladobsis, Junior Lake, and Compos also contain trout—mostly squaretails (brook trout), but a few browns. So the fisherman has a chance at six species: smallmouth black bass, pickerel, landlocked salmon, squaretails, browns, and good-size perch. Perch are very popular with Maine anglers, both for their fighting ability and because they are fine eating.

Probably the most frustrated fisher-

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men in Maine are late-season anglers who hit Pocamoonshine and Crawford lakes, which have outlets to the sea and in which Atlantic salmon sometimes show up.

"I've seen anglers throw everything in the book at them," Val said. "But they just don't hit. I've only heard of one Atlantic being taken in all the years I've been around here."

Though we used only popping bugs for smallmouths, dry flies also are successful when the fish are near the surface. On one lake we fished, the fall of spent spinners (the final winged stage of mayflies) was so thick that the shallower water along the shore looked as if it were covered with scales. When fish are feeding on such a hatch, you would think that your artificial doesn't stand a chance of being taken. But if you use a somewhat larger fly and drop it quickly on the spot where a smallmouth has just snatched a natural, you can get hits.

The smallmouth season in Maine opens on June 1, with fishing limited to flies and lures with single hooks; after June 21, all methods are legal. Spin-fishermen cast for smallmouths with both surface and underwater plugs and with small or medium-size spoons and wobblers. For baitfishing the best naturals are hellgrammites and worms, one inch to three inches long. Some bait-fishermen troll a small minnow on the hook of a dressed fly, and this technique is very successful.

In the hot weather of midsummer, the biggest smallmouths are usually taken on frogs or crayfish in from 18 to 35 feet of water. But big shiners are good, too. Guide Creston MacArthur, who fished with us one day, told of taking three bass from Scraggly Lake one summer day on very light spinning gear with eight and nine-inch live shiners as bait. The three fish had a total weight of 17 pounds.

It's great for fly-rodders that the best fishing for all the top species around Grand Lake Stream occurs at approximately the same time. Fishing with a fly in the lakes is best for all species from late June on. And in the stream itself, where flyfishing is the only legal method, the fish rise eagerly to natural hatches for the entire month of June and on into July. Fishing is slower, but still good, in August and September. The best dry flies for landlocks are the Ginger Quill, Light Cahill, Olive Dun, and Olive Quill, all in sizes 12 to 18. But many other mayfly patterns will bring hits.

Right after ice-out, casting and trolling for lake trout and landlocked salmon in the lakes can be very productive, according to Bev Weatherby. Regardless of the time of year, those who troll for landlocks usually use fly rods, and Val recommends a nine to 12-foot leader tapered to an eight-pound test tippet. The best fly patterns for landlock trolling are the Grey Ghost, Golden Head,

Pink Lady, Black Ghost, Barnes Special, Green King, Green Queen, and Mickey Finn—all wet, of course.

"If I had to limit myself to only two flies," Val added, "they would be the Grey Ghost and the Golden Head tied on number ten and twelve hooks."

On our last day at Weatherby's we again fished the stream for a final fling at those acrobatic landlocks. We fished the pool just below the dam, but the going was slow so we moved downstream a mile. Mary started off with a bang, taking a nice two-pound landlock, a couple of smaller ones, and then three brook trout in the 12-inch class.

In the part of the pool I was working I could see a fish rising across the stream from me, about six inches below and two inches out from a protruding rock. Each time he came up he made a blurb that raised gooseflesh all over my arms. The fish was 65 feet away and in a tough place to get a drag-free float over, but I decided to try. My first pitch with a No. 16 Light Cahill was just short, and drag developed at once. To avoid scaring the fish, I let the fly ride well down the current before picking it up.

The next cast put the fly over him, all right, but it was going a bit too fast. He came for it but refused.

"Hope I haven't downed him," I said to Val. "Maybe I can get into a better position."

I moved a couple of feet downstream, (continued on page 163)

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away in the mountains, that had to be a rifle shot. We answered with two shots of our own and started to stagger off toward the sound. But we walked only a few minutes and gave up. We would wait there and hope for rescue.

Two hours passed, but they seemed more like two days. Then another rifle shot crashed out, much nearer, and we heard a shout. The voice was Danny Hall's.

We fired our remaining shells one after another and yelled as loudly as we could. About noon we heard horses coming, and then our guide rode out of the fog. We were found at last, on the sixth day of our ordeal.

How far we had traveled in those six days we will never know. To us, both the time and the distance had seemed endless. We had tried to walk each day from daylight to dark, but toward the end we had rested a lot. At the time, I thought we had covered at least 100 miles, but I'm sure now it was far less than that.

Danny had brought along a pocket flask of whiskey, and he gave each of us a drink. It burned like fire, but it took some of the chill out of our bones and braced us for the long trip out.

The guide was riding one horse and leading another equipped with a pack saddle. Both animals showed the effects of the rough country they had come through. They had torn their legs on rocks, and patches of dried blood were on their shoulders and flanks where brush and down timber had taken their toll.

Neither Walt nor I was in shape for more foot travel. Danny helped Walt into his saddle, and I got onto the pack animal. The guide would lead the horses. A pack saddle is not the most comfortable contraption in the world, but never in my life had I been so grateful to have horseflesh carrying my tired body.

Our troubles were not quite over. An hour after we started the ride, on a narrow shelf along the side of a cliff, my horse slipped and went down, throwing me headfirst. I pitched 20 feet down the sheer slope before a narrow ledge broke my fall, in time to save me from serious injury. My head and face were cut and bloody, but nothing was broken. Danny gave me a hand and I clambered back up to the horse.

It took us six hours to reach the packer's place where Danny had stopped the day after the fog had trapped us. Wayland and Faye were there, along with Wayland's wife and two hunters from Oregon. They put Walt's swollen feet in warm water to relieve the pain and gave us a light meal of milk and the broth from an elk stew. It was our first food since we had eaten our prunes and jerky five nights before. By this time we had each lost 20 pounds.

We rode all the next day on horseback to reach our base camp at Magruder Ridge. We found forest rangers and a local sheriff there, directing the fog-hampered search for us. It could be called off now.

Walt's feet were in urgent need of medical attention. We drove out to Darby the next morning and hurried to a doctor. The word we got was bad. He doubted that the feet could be saved since they were in such bad shape.

We pushed on to Declo, and Don Jacobs directed us to another doctor. He said that Walt's feet should be amputated without delay.

Walt and I held a brief conference and agreed we should get back to San Mateo, where I had a personal physician, as quickly as possible. We looked for an airline flight but could find none, and when we realized that the only means of transportation was our pickup truck I offered to make the drive, even though by that time I had a high fever and was seriously ill.

"If you can drive I can ride," Walt answered.

So in late afternoon we hit the road for home. Exhausted and sick as I was, only sheer determination kept me at the wheel as night came on. I don't remember much about the trip. But I pushed the pickup hard, and we reached San Mateo before morning. I had driven that 800 miles with a full-blown case of pneumonia in both lungs.

With capable medical help and Zelda's care, I made a fast recovery. In a few weeks I was as good as new. Walt was less fortunate. He lost all the toes on his right foot and three of his toes on the left.

But unlike Lee Anderson, we were not cured of hunting by the ordeal. Walt went after deer in California a year later and enjoyed himself thoroughly. And one of these days I'm going to try for elk again. But when that time comes I will be a lot more careful about my preparations.

THE END

## FISHING

(continued from page 119)

waded out a little farther, and made my cast. The fly dropped two feet above the fish and floated over him nicely. He rose and took, and I struck and had him. He was a tartar, a brilliant flash of silver as he turned on an aerial performance that was a credit to any salmon. But at last I slowed him down and got him in. Then Val and I both took a very close look at him.

"That's not a salmon," Val said. "Look at the big black dots and that square tail. He's a brown trout. They get to look just like the landlocks in this water. And fight like them, too," he added, as he slipped the fish back into the water.

"Just think," I said to Bev Weatherby that night over coffee. "Landlocked salmon, smallmouth black bass, brown and brook trout, and chain pickerel, all in one week. And such beauty all around."

"Not bad fishing, is it?" Bev agreed. "And the look of the country helps, too. When are you coming back?"

"I won't wait another twenty-five years," I assured him.—Joe Brooks.



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