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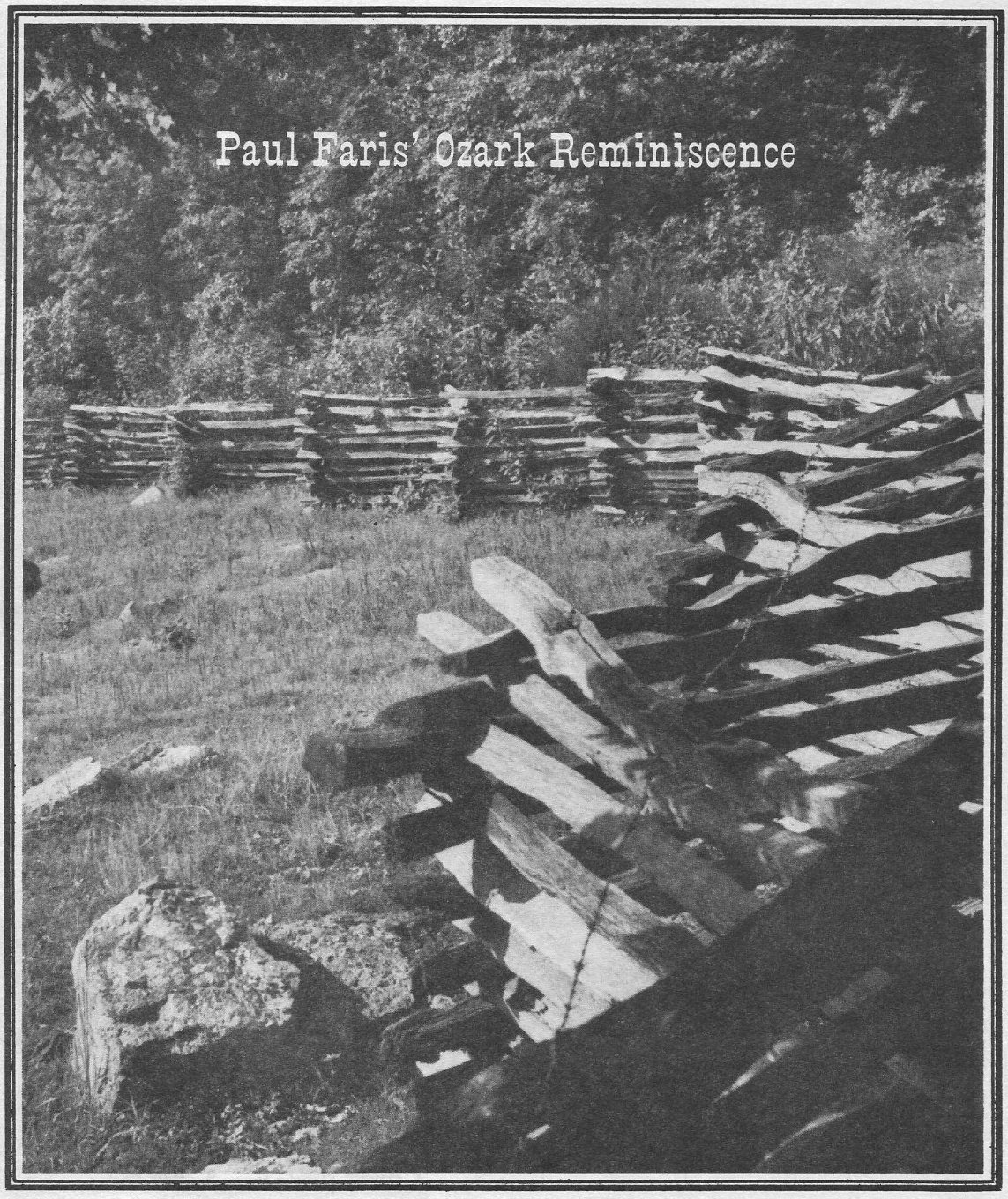

A matter of responsibility

Robert E. (Bob) Ritchie, II, sixth president of the Ozark Society.

Big thoughts seldom come easy. Einstein calculated the relationship between matter and energy in the first years of this century, yet how many of us even today think of hours or miles as anything but absolute measures? It takes a while for such new perspectives to sink in.

Whether we're ready for them or not, great leaps of understanding carry us with them. Einstein's work back in the horse and buggy days opened doors leading into the space age. Next thing we knew we were seeing ourselves, our planet, from an utterly new perspective. For the first time we were gazing at Earth as a whole, without the personal, political or even regional differences that separate us in our normal day-to-day nearsightedness. It was a big and beautiful vision.

Like all realizations of vast importance, that one has not found a ready-made niche in human understanding either. We have enjoyed this extraordinary view of ourselves for nearly two decades now — it is as familiar to us as the formula "$E=MC^2$" — but as the experience of Einstein's formula also demonstrates, familiarity has little to do with understanding. Einstein taught us that the old, conventional ways of looking at things are not always right. The whole earth photos gave us a new context in which to think about ourselves and our interdependence. But the ethic that ought to accompany such information has been slow to develop. In everything from the growing of soybeans to water impoundments to tree plantations, too many of us still operate on the theory that bigger is better, and that ain't necessarily so.

If we see anything in the view of ourselves from space, it is that we represent an organic unity, a living, breathing sphere that is neither infinite nor invulnerable. The life of the whole depends on the health of the parts. It sounds simple, this notion of an organic planet, yet it has been almost geologically slow to take hold. Against a backdrop of global deforestation, contamination of the seas and nuclear annihilation, such a modest ethic as caring for the environmental character of one's own backyard tends to be obscured. Yet it is for this humble and supremely important purpose that the Ozark Society exists.

By working to preserve wilderness and the last of our free-flowing streams, by introducing new members to the pleasures and intricacies of our immediate environment and by speaking out against practices that threaten this corner of the world, we help to preserve not only our own niche but life everywhere. It is a way of loving and assuming responsibility for the piece of Earth we inhabit. The concept of regional preservation is one of those big, fundamental ideas whose significance is still largely overlooked. It is to our credit that the Ozark Society, one of the first environmental organizations of its kind in the country, has been devoted to this concept for more than twenty years.

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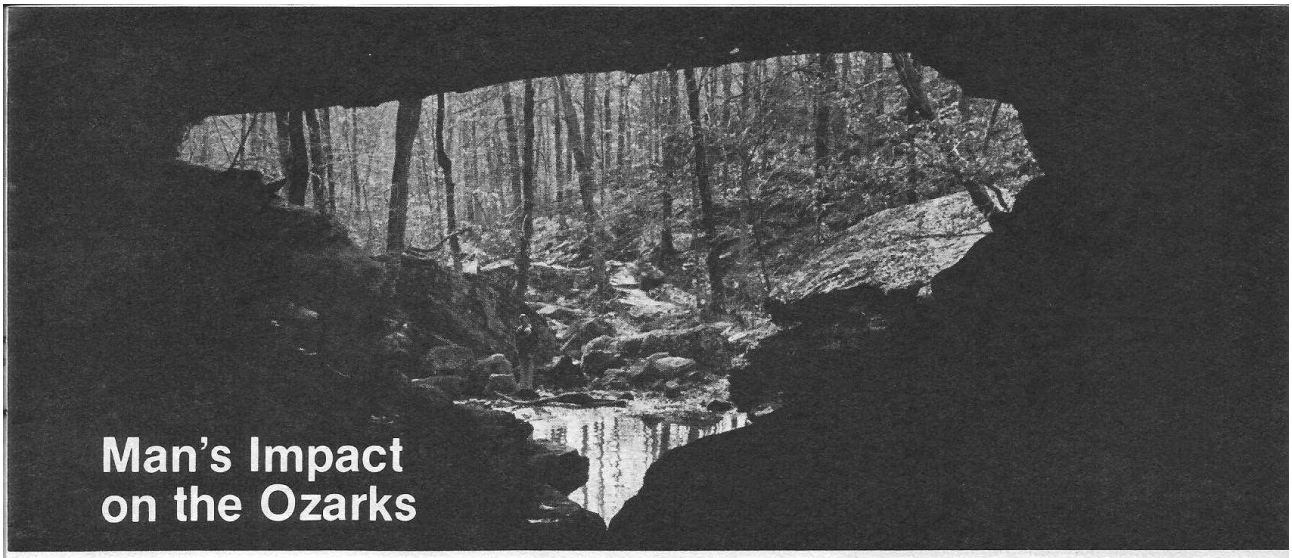
Cover: Ozarks fence, by Paul Faris



Man's Impact on the Ozarks

(Editor's note: One portion of this report, entitled "The Hydrology," was published in the last issue of the ***Journal****. In response to several requests, the rest of that report is presented here.)*

By Neil Compton

THE ZOOLOGICAL RESOURCE

Twenty thousand years ago North and South America, which had lain for milleniums in isolation from Eurasia, were teeming with a distinctive array of animal life almost beyond imagination. Present on the land were representatives of the world's megafauna: the mammoth and matodon, the giant ground sloth, the American horse, the giant bison, the saber-toothed tiger, the American cheetah, the dire wolf and many more. In the air, great flights of passenger pigeons darkened the sun. In the unfished waters along the New England coast, lobsters five feet long scuttled about on the bottom.

Then man appeared upon the scene, a creature that my old zoology instructor at the University of Arkansas, Sam Dellinger, once termed "the most devastating predator that ever came along." He was the Paleo-Indian, the direct ancestor of the native population present here upon the arrival of Columbus. But he was different in his hunting style and ability from his descendants. He was no haphazard stalker with spear and club. In the old world across the Beringian Land Bridge he had perfected an effective system of stampede hunting that employed tribal cooperation along with the use of fire and the spear. He burst upon this virgin western universe and spread southward a few miles every year, pushing before him those giant but vulnerable beasts. Their numbers dwindled to below their critical breeding level somewhere around seven or eight thousand years ago when they disappeared from the map. With the big herbivores went the carnivores that preyed on them, leaving the smaller fleet-footed fauna that were here when the Europeans finally arrived with their blunderbusses.

The Ozark area was witness to this first act of human depredation as the Folsom and Sandia points found here in a few places tell us. As for the great mammals themselves, we have positive evidence of their presence at such places as the Conard Fissure, or the Bone Hole and Peccary Cave on the Buffalo River and at a number of other locations.

The American Indian, with his bow and arrow, was living in equilibrium with the remaining wild creatures of the forest and prairie when the white man arrived. There is no need to go into detail as to what happened to the deer, bear, and the buffalo after that. The last bear in the Ozarks was killed up near Mulberry in 1906; something of a comedown for Arkansas, "The Bear State." The deer were completely extirpated except for possibly a few down in the Ouachitas. When I was a babe in arms in 1913, the very last one we ever heard of came through the Falling Springs school yard and my Uncle Ira got out the dogs and chased it off into Indian Territory.

The red wolf hung on in the Boston mountains until several years after World War Two when he was exterminated by government trappers for no reason at all. Those of us who cared about him and would like to have heard his wolf music out there in the hills realized his plight too late to do anything about it.

In my early days, nothing bigger than coons, possums, and skunks had survived in our part of the Ozarks and they were under pressure from country boy fur trappers, a means of livelihood now about out of style. That was in the days of the big red apple and our orchards were full of quail and rabbits, and every fall flights of ducks arrived on our upland ponds. There was good hunting for small game but that was to change in surprising ways.

These smaller creatures were to be deprived of their habitat by the disappearance of the orchards, strawberry patches and old, overgrown fields. First came the massive poultry industry and then widespread cattle ranching, turkey farming, soybean fields and hog lots. It was made possible by the new agritechnology employing the brush hog, the bulldozer, the chainsaw and 245T spray. We never see quail or rabbit hunters in our part of the country anymore, nor do the ducks and geese land on our small ponds in the fall. What's left of their once great flights follow the Mississippi flyway or simply fly on over to that new seaway where the Arkansas River used to be. In the world of songbirds, man's meddlesome introduction of the starling and the English sparrow has severely depleted the numbers of bluebirds and other desirable species due to competition for nesting sites. The first starlings appeared in our part of the Ozarks in 1945. They, and some of our pestiferous natives such as blackbirds, grackles and cowbirds, have multiplied unbelievably in the last four or five years. They have adapted to the ranchlands that now cover so much of the Ozark country.

But while all this was going on, another unexpected zoological phenomenon was developing that would restore a few species that we once thought were gone forever. It was related to the stirring of man's conscience about what he had done to wildlife and to his persistant tribal instinct to go out to hunt or catch something. Members of the Wildlife Federation assembled here today are shining examples of such individuals willing to sacrifice time and effort for the

continued existence of the creatures of forest and field.

In the Ozarks, it began up in Missouri in the late 1800s with an effort to maintain an adequate fishery in that state, resulting eventually in the establishment of the Missouri Conservation Commission, one of the best in the nation. Their leadership in wildlife management has resulted in re-stocking the Missouri Ozarks with deer, bear, wild turkey, grouse, prairie chicken and other species. In Arkansas border areas like Benton County, the deer population has spilled over from Missouri, repopulating the rougher hills and protected places like Pea Ridge National Military Park and Bella Vista with sometimes troublesome, garden-eating white-tails.

But Arkansas was not far behind its sister state to the north. A few deer were still left in the Ouachitas and our early day Game and Fish Commission trapped a few back in the 1920s and stocked the Sylamore Division of the Ozarks National Forest with them. In no time there was overgrazing and the surplus was moved to other parts of the National Forest and to newly created game refuges about the state. Now we are privileged, on driving our by-ways, to see their graceful shapes bounding through the woods, a comforting testimony to man's ability to correct wrongs once done.

Extending the same principal to other species, the black bear has been brought back to our forests along with the wild turkey and the problem-posing, tree-killing beaver along our streams. Currently, efforts to re-establish the elk are underway, with curious results, and also, along the Buffalo River, the ruffled grouse are being re-stocked.

Probably the biggest upset of our zoological apple cart came in our rivers. All along, the American Indian knew how to make fish traps and how to use buckeye to poison fish in the streams. He also knew how to use hooks and spears and how to noodle, grab and seine. Methods of early whites were little different until the advent of dynamite around the turn of the century. That put a good dent in our native fish population in many of our Ozark streams. But many species persisted in rivers like the White in scarcely diminished numbers. Up until the Second World War, we had a distinctive sport fishing species in the Ozarks, the smallmouth bass. Because of it, the North Fork of White River was known as the best bass fishing stream in the world. That came to an end with the construction of the incredible system of so-called "multipurpose" high dams all over the Ozarks. The native fish, mussels and other water creatures could not tolerate the cold tailwaters released from these reservoirs. They simply disappeared all the way down the White River to the Mississippi. The biggest fresh water commercial fishery in the country, at St. Charles, closed shop. The several species of native bi-valves, upon which button and mother of pearl industry had been based also disappeared. These have been replaced by a small Asiatic species of mussel which has become numerous enough to interfere with engineering hydraulics in some places.

The first settlers were overwhelmed by the vastness and variety of the great Eastern forest . . . They set about getting it out of the way.

Pre-dam fishermen in our part of the White River used to occasionally catch what they called a spoonbill cat, gone now of course. Up in Missouri they were especially plentiful in the Great Osage River. When the Bagnell Dam was built on that stream they actually increased in numbers since they had anandromous habits, spawning in the numerous gravel-lined tributaries of that relatively stable reservoir. Up there the paddle fish, as they were called, were real monsters — some weighing up to 200 pounds. They are particularly interesting since they are of ancient lineage going back directly to the earliest fishes that lived in the paleozoic epoch 400 or more million years ago. But the Lake of the Ozarks behind Bagnell Dam was not good enough. Something had to be done to commemorate Missouri's Great Man and so the Harry Truman Dam was built above it, wiping out all of the prime breeding streams of the paddle fish which which had become an important sport fishing species. Now, in order to salvage the paddle fish, the Missouri Department of Fisheries is obliged to breed and stock them artificially, placing them at the mercy of legislative appropriation like the introduced rainbow trout and the striped bass, which the government has had to underwrite at public expense in the big impoundments and their tailwaters.

THE VEGETATIVE COVER

The first European settlers in North America were overwhelmed by the vastness and variety of the great eastern forest. The aborigines had not the ability to alter it but with axes and saws of iron and steel. The newcomers set about getting it out of the way for their grain, tobacco, and cotton-raising enterprises. Some of this vast source of lumber was used for building houses, bridges and ships but the most of it was cut and burned on the spot. The great forest stood in the way of the kind of progress they had in mind. It was incompatible with the destiny of great cities in the east and with the intensive agriculture that would be necessary to maintain the population. The Ozark plateau lay on the western margin of this marvelous woodland and maintained most of its integrity until after the Civil War. In the Boston Mountains the finest stand of hardwood timber in the world remained until the 1880s. During the next few decades railroads were built into the far recesses and it was all removed by a generation of sawmillers, great and small. Not an acre was eventually left undisturbed even in the soon-to-be-created National Forests. The preferred species were (and continue to be) logged the hardest, rendering many of them almost absent in their former range. They are the white oak, the black walnut, the better varieties of hickory, ash, sugar maple, birch and beech. No effort has been made by the entrepreneurs who cut them, nor the government who sometimes gave permission to do so, to replant any of them anywhere. As a result they will no longer be a prominent feature of the Ozark forest which some now labor mightily to convert to pine. Recovery after logging can be rapid and second, third and fourth cutting is not uncommon, the end result being an often impenetrable thicket of undesirable weed trees like blackjack oak, box elder, cork elm and mulberry. A recent solution to that is to bring in bulldozers to scrape it all away and to convert it to the monotony of ranchland.

A most severe intrusion into the integrity of the Ozark forest has come about through human carelessness and ignorance. The eastern forests were affected first but accidentally introduced pestilences spread relentlessly to the west. In the 1950s the Ozark chinquapin, which is a true chestnut, was struck by the chestnut blight more than 50 years after it had appeared in Pennsylvania. The chinquapin was one of our finest mast trees but today it is, for all practical purposes, extinct. The Dutch elm disease followed a very similar course, wiping out the American elm except for a few specimens here and there. Those who

remember the old landscape miss them sorely.

Our forests are in distress not only from diseases such as the blight or the wilt but from the invasion by other woody plants. Perhaps the most serious is the expanding grip of Japanese honeysuckle which has been around since just before the Civil War. Formerly, it was confined mostly to towns but its seeds are distributed by birds. During the last few years it has appeared out in the forest where it relentlessly binds and strangles all new woody growth. A more gross and smothering vine is the kudzu, also from Japan, which was foolishly introduced in the 1880s in the deep south but which is now beginning to appear throughout the Ozarks. Other unfortunate introductions are: the multiflora rose from Japan, once sponsored by the Soil Conservation Service, but which has proved to be a bane wherever it occurs, the ailanthus which has become a weed tree in some parts of the forest, the Chinese elm of which the same can be said and the California privet, a large shrub or small tree, which during the last few years has taken over some of the forest land, especially in the eastern Ozarks.

All of the Ozarks were not covered with forests even in the beginning. Large tracts were open prairie or savannah land. Here grew the numerous native grasses and the forbs dazzling with bloom in the summer. These open lands were the first to be plowed since the settler was spared the labor of clearing. Consequently, the prairie vegetative cover was the first to be destroyed by the white man's doing. Schoolcraft's description of the big bluestem south of Springfield, Missouri, in 1818 is revealing. It was so tall and lush that a man on horseback could not be seen riding through it. In addition, there was the little bluestem, Indian grass, grama grass and the compass plant, the sylphium, the liatris, prairie vetch, a variety of sunflowers and many more. Today in Arkansas' Ozarks they are gone except for a few pitiful remnants. In Missouri, however, a comprehensive system of preserved prairie tracts are in existence thanks to the Missouri Conservation Commission. This now long farmed upland prairie has gone through a succession of agricultural enterprises. First there were the fields of wheat, rye, oats, and corn. Then the tobacco era, to be followed by the orchards and truck farms. Today, in the countryside we see block-long chicken houses, expansive cattle ranches and, of late, even soybean fields. In his quest for a new gimmick man has done real biological damage to our once provident prairie land. Back in the 1920s some misguided soul introduced Johnson grass from Africa. Now it sprouts on all the fields and farms, disdained by cattle and of no use to man, crowding out the last of our native grasses. As if that was not enough, about 10 years ago another pervasive problem grass made its appearance in the Ozarks. It was the fescue, a supposed panacea for all the hungry cattle that we could ever raise. They will eat it, but only as a last resort and so it is baled and kept on hand for winter feed by the ranchers. Fescue has spread like wildfire across the entire landscape displacing everything that was there before — except Johnson grass, which matures later in the season. Now present on the scene is the Russian thistle which is such an obnoxious thing that the legislature has been called upon to to something. Heaven help us!

The tide of empire flowed around and beyond the Ozark region leaving it a rural island . . now you can go to and through Ben Hur at 90 miles an hour.

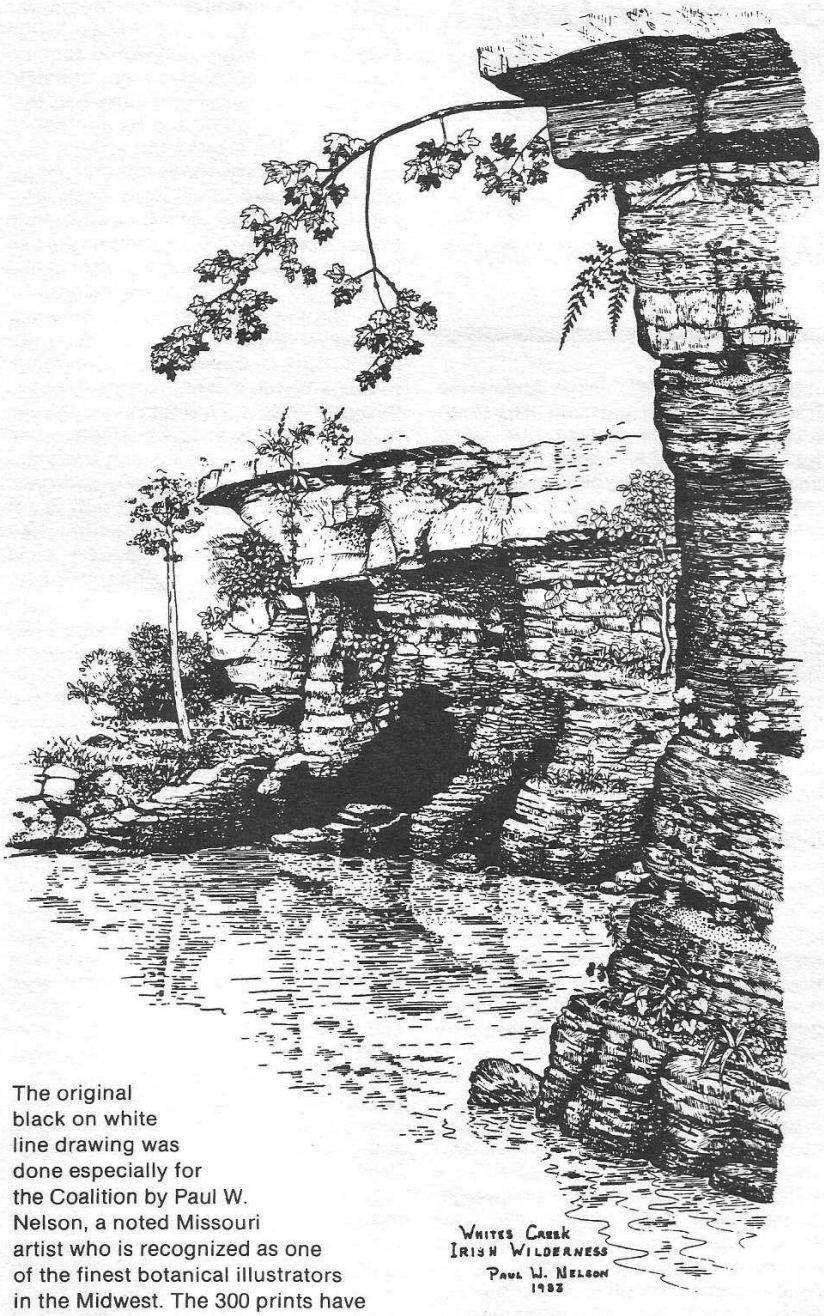
THE TOPOGRAPHY

The tide of empire flowed around and beyond the Ozark region leaving it a rural island, free of urban encrustation, its land surface relatively intact. Before the white settlers came there were only Indian pathways through the hills and a couple of small Caddoan mounds near Huntsville. To build a metropolis or transform the natural order of the land man must have ways to move his goods, and himself, as efficiently as possible. For a while wagon roads and beasts of burden served the purpose. Outside of a few rutted hillsides and monumental mudholes out on the flat there was little impact on the landscape. The same was true of the railroads which required only a narrow right-of-way to move significant amounts of freight and people with remarkable efficiency. They did not obtrude upon the landscape even though several lines eventually penetrated the Ozarks in various directions. Because of their method of operation the small towns and cities that did appear were confined to discreet locations where services were available along the route. They remained small for several decades because the thin soil in the region limited the development of an intensive agricultural base. But the internal combustion engine was to change all this. It would result in a free-ranging vehicle that would demand a wide flat, firm surface on which to operate. In our rough and rocky hills that was hard to come by and for another 40 or 50 years the Ozarks remained a land of dusty country roads, poorly maintained and sometimes impassable. Because of that and for other economic reasons some of the original settlers had begun to leave the Ozark country by the early 1900s. The exodus was to continue until the mid 1960s at which time our highway departments, with priority public financing, had been able to straighten, widen and pave many of the byways through the hills. This activity continues to the present with practically all state highways hard surfaced and the state department now busy letting contracts for county roads. The policy now is not to pave these back roads in situ. They must be laid out on modern grade or to turnpike specifications. That means no curves, no hills, and a 200-foot right-of-way if at all possible. It has been made feasible by the appearance of giant earth-moving machines which, once invented, must be used. Man's instinct to bash and change whatever is there is served perfectly by adequate public funding and the machinery to go with it. The result has been a transformation of much of the Ozark hinterland from an expansive pastoral or sometimes wilderness landscape into a developing urban scene. Winding mountain roads are gone and in their place wide sweeping, high-speed highways scar the land. Massive new bridges span Ozark streams whose waters we see not at all in crossing. New ranch homes line the broad pavement and towers of rural water systems penetrate the sky. Power lines march across the hills to service TV watchers in the farthest recesses. Early urban metastisis is now to be seen on top of Mt. Sherman and Judea Mountain, not to speak of Branson and Silver Dollar City. If you are in a hurry, now you can go to and through Ben Hur, the home of 16 or 20 people for all these years, at 90 miles an hour. What has happened to it and so many other Boston Mountain back roads has opened the way for the rising tide of in-migration in the Ozarks. Now, at last, we can become a part of that grand enterprise long underway in the rest of the nation — the paving of the planet.

For Love of the Irish

The quiet solitariness of the place seemed to inspire devotion. Nowhere could the human soul so profoundly worship as in the depths of that leafy forest, beneath the swaying branches of the lofty oaks and pines, where solitude and the heart of man united in praise and wonder of the Great Creator.

— Fr. John Hogan, 1892.



The original black on white line drawing was done especially for the Coalition by Paul W. Nelson, a noted Missouri artist who is recognized as one of the finest botanical illustrators in the Midwest. The 300 prints have been signed and numbered by the artist. These 20" x 29" prints are suitable for framing and have been produced on specially texured paper designed for excellent reproduction. These prints are available for $25 each, which includes postage and handling. Mail check or money order to: Missouri Wilderness Coalition, 211 B Bluff Street, Jefferson City, MO 65101.

If any area can claim to be the cornerstone and symbol of wilderness preservation in Missouri, it is the Irish Wilderness. For at least a century the Irish Wilderness has been a region of folklore and legend, of twilight stories and somber myths. Stories are told, to be sure, of marauding Civil War guerrillas, of outlaw timber cutters, and of hidden stills up lost little hollows; but so also are tales of courageous settlers, of great natural forests, and of enduring wild beauty.

If people have heard of wilderness in Missouri at all, they have heard of the Irish Wilderness, and most Missourians seem to have absorbed enough of the popular tales that they have formed personalized visions of what this wild heartland of the Ozarks must be like. In some ways, these visions make it hard to write about the Irish Wilderness. After all, such a land of legend and fancy should not be too rigorously scrutinized lest we shrivel or disperse its romantic mystery, but the Irish Wilderness is a real place, with a real history, real natural features, and real boundaries, and those who know the Wilderness firsthand are confident that the spirits of the place will endure in the face of our respectful attentions.

To begin with, there is a rather large region of southeastern Missouri known in history and local tradition as the Irish Wilderness. This traditional Irish Wilderness lies roughly between the Current River on the east, U.S. Highway 60 on the north, and the Eleven Point River on the south and west, including portions of Carter, Ripley, Shannon, and Oregon counties. Today, most of this region is occupied by the Fristoe Unit of the Mark Twain National Forest, still largely forested and very thinly settled. Local storytellers continue to brag about how easy it still is to get "turned around and plumb confused" along the backwoods trails and gravel roads.

In addition, there has developed over the years a proposal to select the very wildest remaining parcel of the Irish region and specifically protect it as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. This "Irish Wilderness" lies in Oregon County, comprising approximately 18,000 acres. No more appropriate location could have been chosen for the proposed wilderness. It lies immediately adjacent to the old site of the log cabin church built by Fr. John Hogan

and his Irish settlers who gave the wilderness region its name.

As a young missionary priest in frontier Missouri, Fr. Hogan had many and far-ranging responsibilities. In spite of the burdens he had already accepted on the north Missouri frontier, John Hogan was deeply affected by the suffering and poverty he saw among the Irish immigrants in the railroad camps around St. Louis. He resolved that he would help these people start a new life and acquire land of their own. For several years, the priest made periodic searches in south Missouri for inexpensive government land. Even at that time, the most desireable land had been spoken for and he finally had to turn to the piney woods land on the broad divide between the Current and Eleven Point Rivers. In 1858, Fr. Hogan led the first group of around forty Irish families down to the wilderness where they set about creating a new life on land of their own. The church they built to worship in stood just east of the presently proposed Irish Wilderness.

The hopes of this little band and their priest never came to fruition. The next few years brought the nation's greatest struggle even to the remote hollows of the Irish Wilderness. The wilderness was a natural hide-out for the desperate outlaws from both sides who marauded across southern Missouri and northern Arkansas. No details are recorded, but when the looting, raids, and murder finally ended, the Irish were no more. Killed or scattered, they left behind only their name, and a lingering presence in the lonliest of the wilderness hollows.

The history of the Irish Wilderness since the Civil War is characteristic for much of the Ozarks. For several decades after the War, the wilderness was largely abandoned, then, around the turn of the century, the great timber companies swooped down upon the Ozarks. They left behind barren, cut-over land where the virgin forests of oak and shortleaf pine had stood. After this episode, only occasional hunters, free-range ranchers, or moonshiners had cause to enter such a wasteland, where the returning brush grew to nearly impenetrable thickness. Finally, in the 1930's, the nation seemed ready to recognize a need for conservation. The Irish Wilderness was one of many Ozark tracts that became part of the National Forest System.

Recognizing unique qualities in the Irish Wilderness, the Forest Service had not constructed permanent roads into the proposed area. Nature has responded to protection by regenerating a natural forest cover for the wilderness.

The true history of the Irish Wilderness does not begin, however, with the story of European immigrants. The origin of the Wilderness might in fact be said to be in the beds of former shallow seas, for it lies within the dolomitic "flint hill" region of the Ozarks where the bedrock consists of ancient deposits of carbonate sediments.

Starting as little more than shallow washes in the rolling upland woods in the eastern and northern portions of the wilderness, such drainages as Bliss Hollow, Whites Creek, Freeman Hollow, and Greenbrier Hollow wander toward the Eleven Point River, cutting down and deepening their valleys along the way. In tracing these drainages to the river, we can begin to understand one of the unique characteristics of the Irish Wilderness. Karst topography is the textbook word used to describe limestone regions of abundant caves, sinkholes, and springs.

Up around the drainage heads, the topography is very gently rolling and pocked with numerous sinkholes. These sinkholes, produced by subsurface drainage, vary in size and depth, although most are relatively shallow. Some are drained, some are permanent waterholes, and still others hold temporary ponds during wet seasons. Some sinkholes have existed for many centuries and often harbor unusual plant species, besides providing water for a variety of forest wildlife in the relatively dry uplands. For example, in very early spring, hundreds of large and brightly colored Ambystomid salamanders migrate through the damp woods to these ponds, deposit and fertilize their gelatinous egg masses in the shallow waters, then retreat back to the forest where the drying summer drives them deep into the rocky ground. Their gilled larval young usually are able to hatch, develop, and transform into lunged, air-breathing adults before the ponds dry up. Without these ponds, such wildlife could not survive in the dry upland woods of the plateau region.

As the drainages gather volume, they gradually begin to develop signs of permanent flow. Sycamore and Ozark witch-hazel begin to grow along their gravel banks, and trickles of water flow over the rocks from pool to pool. Just as the streams seem to be flowing well, we come to long stretches of dry gravel wash. Such "losing streams" are characteristic of karst country and indicate where water has descended underground to help feed the subsurface water systems. Whites Creek, in the heart of the wilderness, is an excellent example.

Further down the valleys we discover the surface outlets for these pirated underground drainages. Small springs such as Fiddlers Spring and Bliss Spring emerge from dolomitic rock ledges in mossy grottoes. Like the water holding sinkholes, springs provide habitat for a specialized flora and water for many species of wildlife.

On some hillsides, former spring outlets have been left high and dry by the downward cutting streams. Such entrances into the abandoned underground waterways form caves, and the Irish Wilderness is shot through with them. Whites Creek Cave is the best known and is a good introduction to the underground Ozark world. Located high on the above stream slope, the cave leads through large, black chambers past typical cave formations like stalactites, stalagmites, and columns. Life forms adapted to cave conditions are unique and fragile. Further exploration of other caves in the wilderness may well lead to the discovery of such communities.

As we have already been able to see, the biology of the Irish Wilderness closely reflects geological and geographic factors. Although the original stands of gigantic pine and oak are long gone, the basic forest cover, especially oaks, has returned in force, and with every passing year more closely resembles the virgin forest. It has been suggested that the Ozark Highland was the birthplace of the widespread oak hickory forest type, and in the Irish Wilderness the variety of oaks can indeed be bewildering: white oak, chinquapin oak, red oak, scarlet oak, pin oak, shumard oak, Spanish oak, blackjack oak, and post oak have been recorded. Scattered along the cherty upland ridges, stands of shortleaf pine grow toward full maturity.

Solitary hikers also report that powerful spirits inhabit the Irish Wilderness. It is claimed that these relate somehow to the moody waters of the Eleven Point River on the west, to the shadows of furtive animals only barely sensed, to the glimpse of tall pines swaying on a far ridge in a gray November bluster, or even to the lingering wraiths of Indian and Irish hunters.

Beyond any other Missouri place, the Irish can quicken us to a special wilderness music, remind us with special force of the existence and immensity of the non-human universe. It seems that we have yet much to learn of that universe, far to travel through it, and it may be that the Irish Wilderness will help us find our way.

As early as 1949, the Ozark's own conservation writer, Leonard Hall, proposed that the Irish be designated as wilderness. Just a few years later, Dan Saults in the *Missouri Conservationist* wrote perceptively and sympathetically of the "space and breadth and clean loneliness" of the Irish Wilderness. These men, and several others, were ahead of their time in appreciating the inherent value of the all-but-forgotten Irish forest. We now have the opportunity to fulfill their vision and insure that the Irish Wilderness will always be a place where "solitude and the heart of man" unite "in praise and wonder of the Great Creator."

(Reprinted from H. R. Schoolcraft Chapter Newsletter)

OZARKS REMINISCENCE

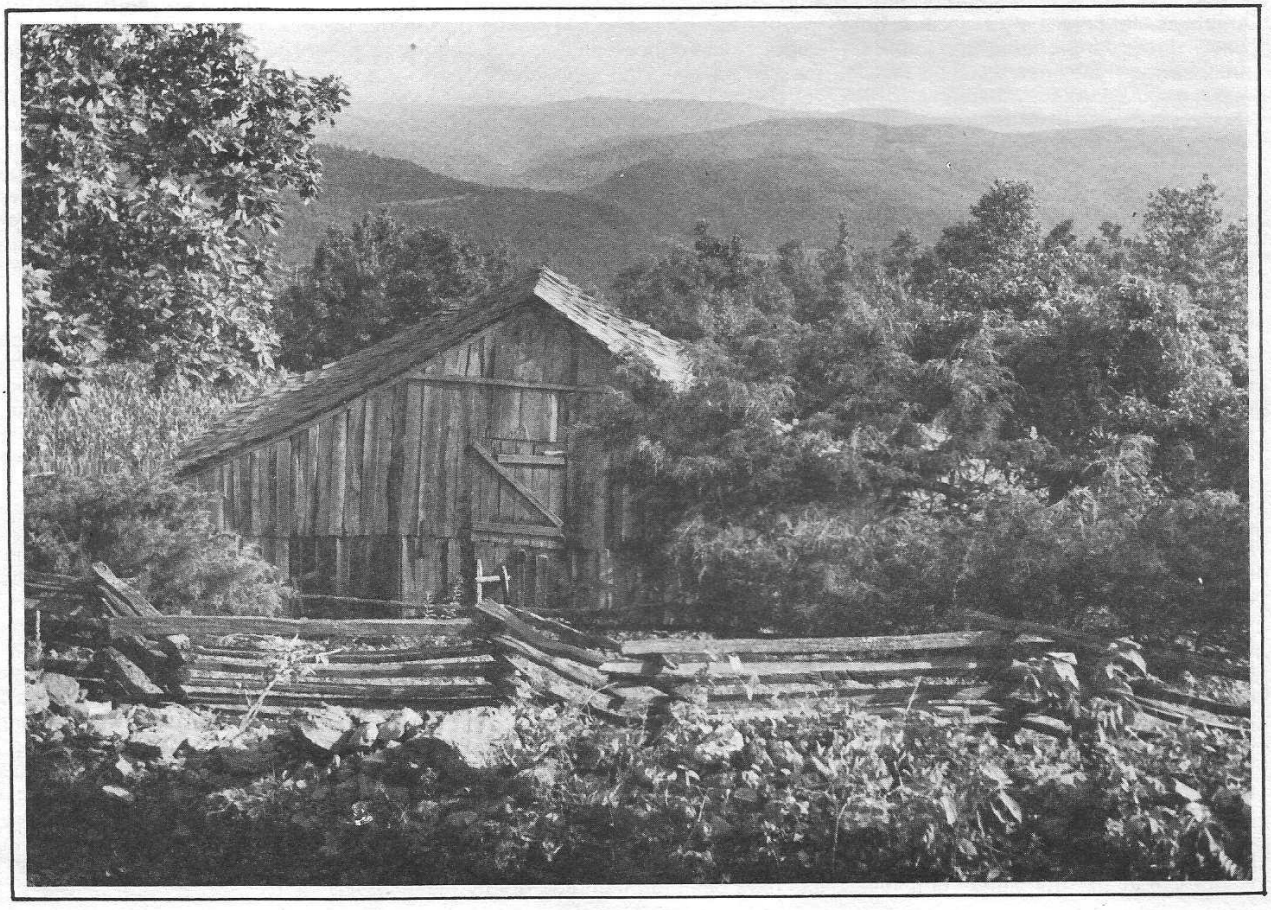
by Paul Faris

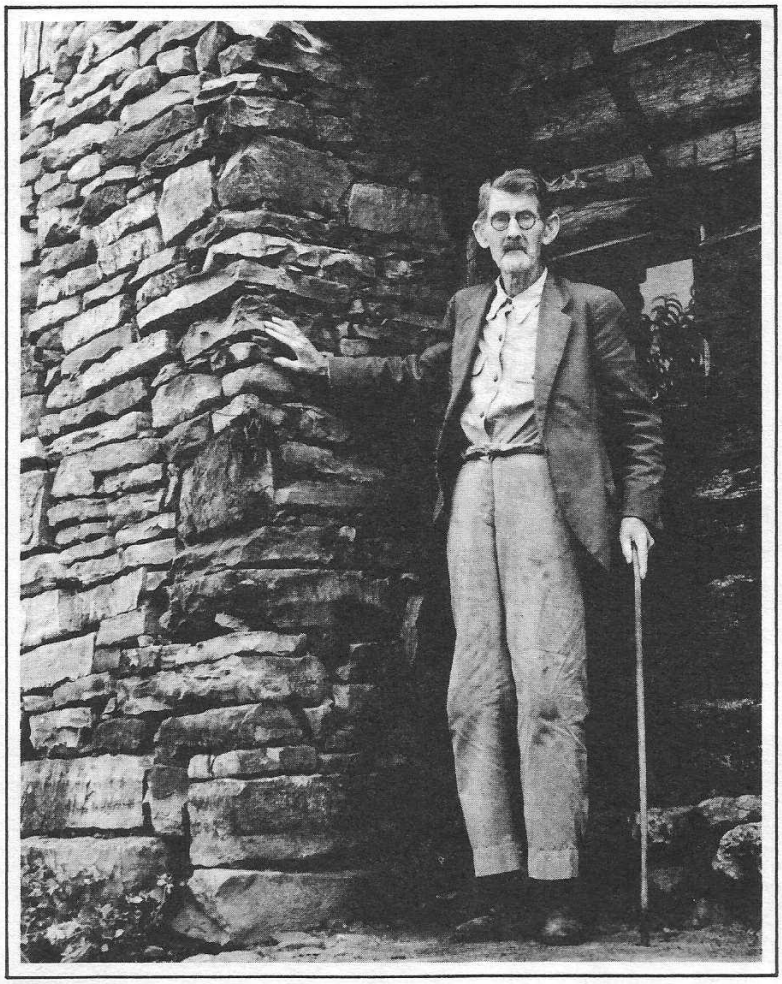
A photographic chronicle of a vanished way of life

During the four summers from 1949 to 1952, Paul Faris, a college English professor from Conway, trekked the Arkansas Ozarks in search of the fundamental architecture of the region, log cabins. He found more than a hundred of them, many of them empty, some being used as barns, a few still inhabited. Though roads at mid-century were far from easy, Faris carried his camera into the back regions of twelve Arkansas counties, chief among them, Madison, Newton and Searcy. His photos from those journeys recorded mostly old people and an old way of life, both of them now gone.

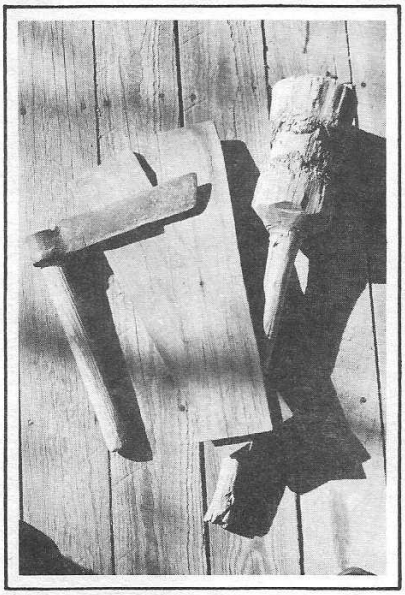
Twenty years later, Faris captured the poignancy of that disappearance by returning to many of the places he'd visited earlier. The photos on the following pages tell the tale more succinctly than words. By 1969, not only most of the log houses but the way of life they'd sheltered had passed into history.

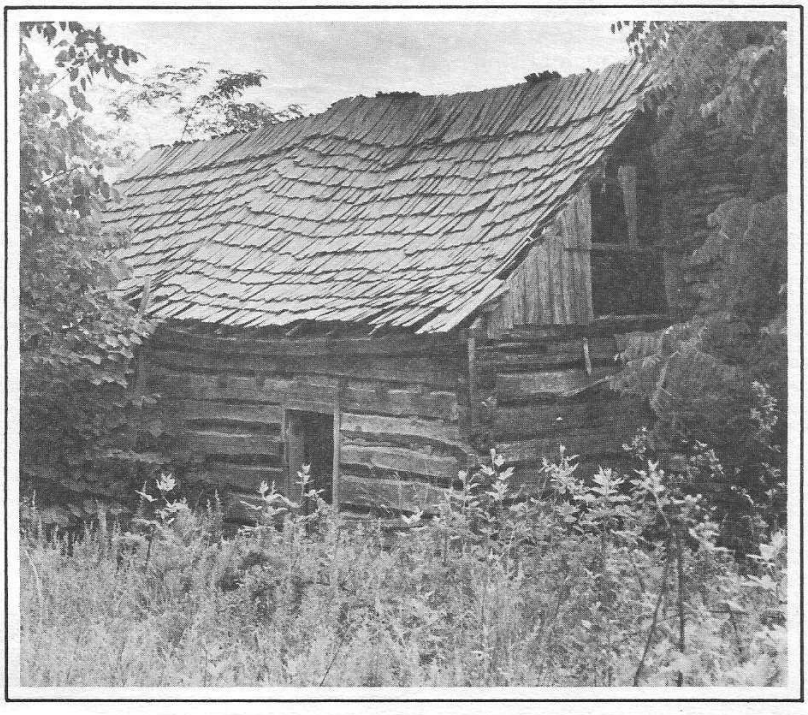
A few log cabins still dot the Arkansas landscape, and a revival of interest in them has prompted a new generation of log houses. But they're not the same. Fortunately, in 1983, Faris published a collection of his photographs, entitled "Ozark Log Cabin Folks." Available from Rose Publishing Co., in Little Rock, it is the best — the only — record of its kind.

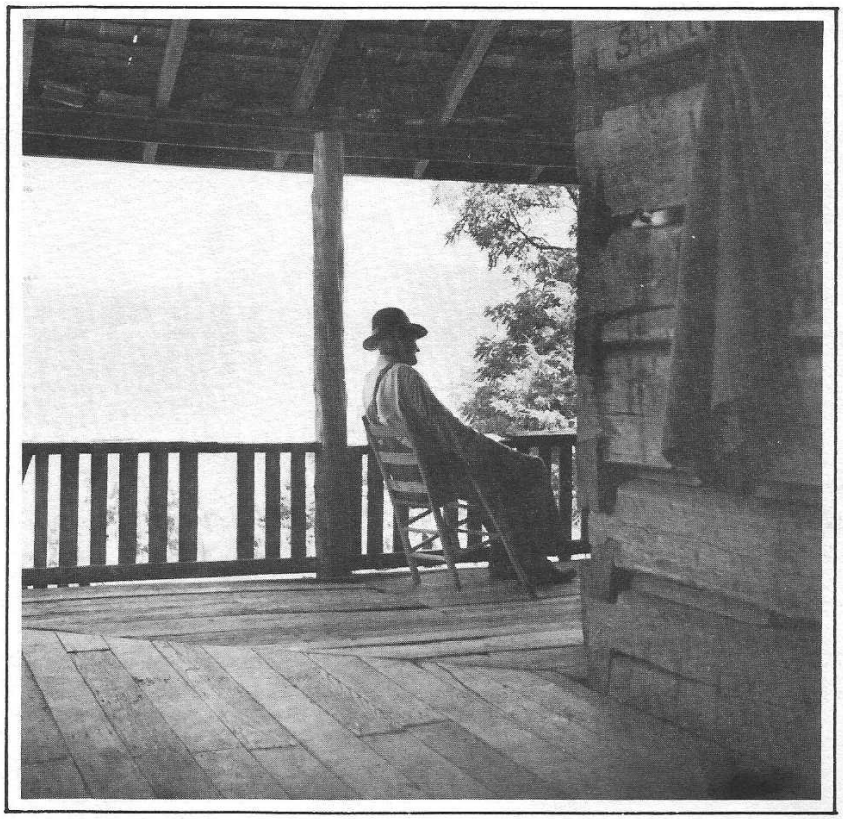


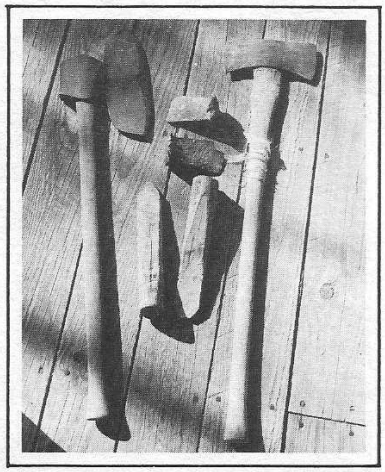


Parson Albert Wilson built his log cabin near the community of Nail in the spring of 1893 and lived in it for more than half a century. His basic tools were a broad ax, metal wedges, wooden wedges called gluts, and a chopping ax. He built his chimney by hand as well, and sixty years later it was as sturdy as when first constructed. The photograph at the left was taken a few months after the Parson's 100th birthday. Twenty years later, all was overgrown.

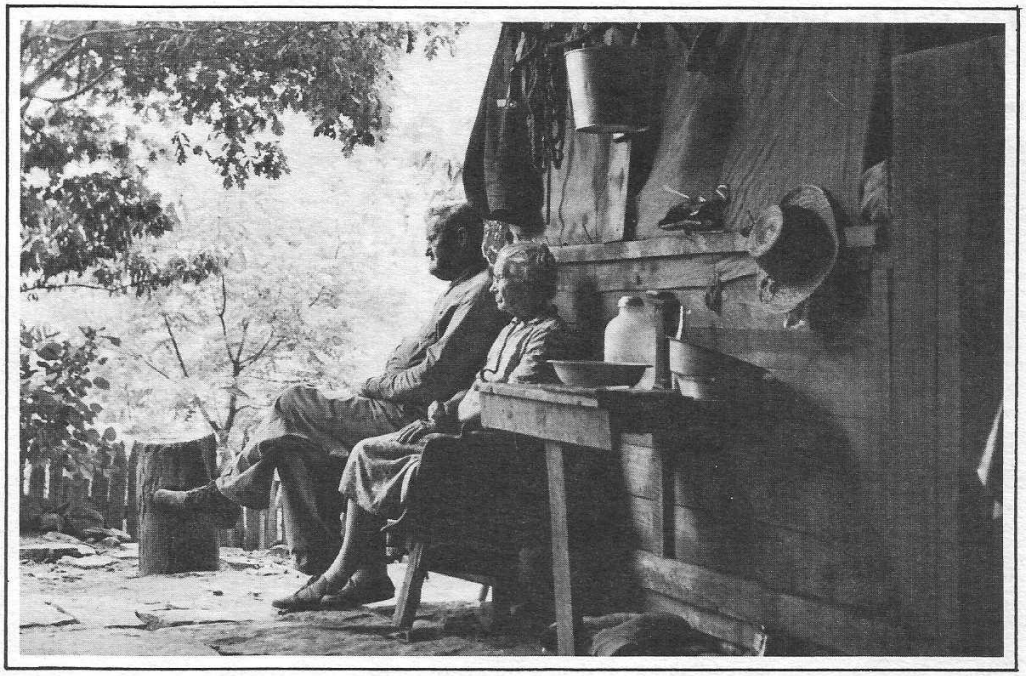


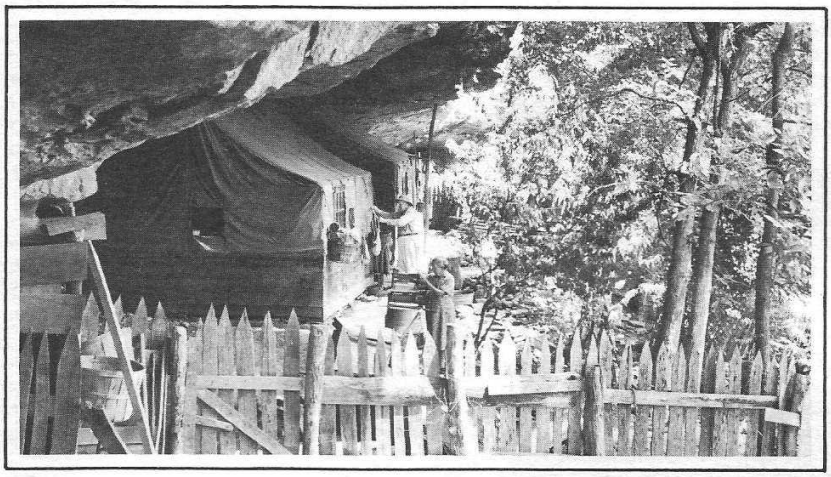


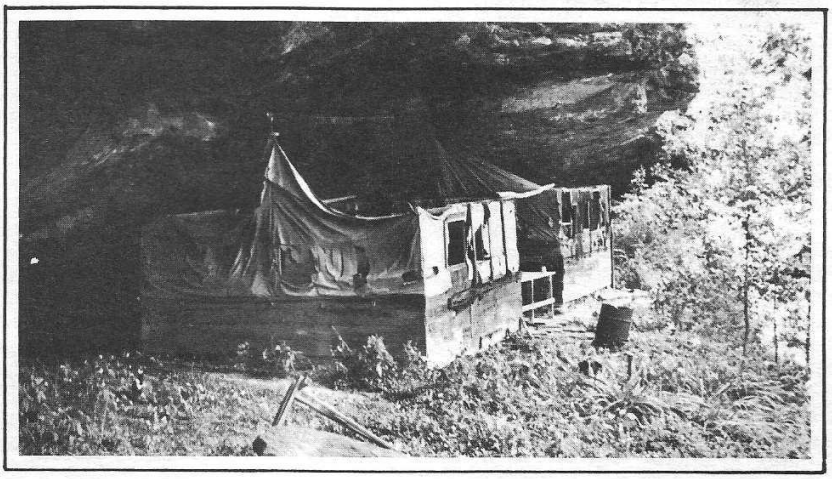




When a mudslide tore Milas Wisham's cabin apart, he simply collected the logs, moved them to a site further up the hill, and put the house back together again using the tools of his time. Shown here are a froe and maul for riving shakes and longer, heavier boards. By 1969, the once-tidy front porch was on its way to ruin.







Henry and Betsy Rush had lived in a pair of tents tucked under a 200-foot bluff in Newton County for more than 12 years when Faris visited them in 1950. A spring in the back of the cavern provided a constant flow of pure water, and temperatures there were perfect for refrigeration. The roof of the cave was 16 feet high at its broad, southern exposure. Up above, the Rushes had a large garden, a barn, and plenty of animals. In the evenings, an old wagon seat offered a favorite resting spot. Two decades later, however, the order and serenity had passed; only the seat remained.

The Call for Wilderness Has Been Calm, Informed and Persistent

The Ozark Society Speaks Out

Many voices have been raised in defense of Arkansas' last remaining wilderness. As the effort to preserve what is left reaches final action in Congress, it is worthwhile to record here some of the dialogue that has taken place thus far.

The Ozark Society members who attended the wilderness hearings in Washington in May returned filled with praise for the in-depth understanding of Arkansas wilderness issues displayed by Congressman John Sieberling (D.-Ohio) who chaired the Interior Subcommittee on Public Lands and National Parks. Politely, but firmly, Rep. Seiberling demolished the claims of opponents about loss of jobs, timber revenues and monies for area school districts while giving some of the Arkansas school superintendents a liberal education in how the Forest Service works — as opposed to how they **thought** it worked. The timber industry didn't fare much better.

Throughout the wilderness debate, the bitter opposition of the timber industry, Weyerhaeuser in particular, has been a source of puzzlement to veteran political observers. When the rhetoric is all boiled down, the timber industry will be impacted very, very little by either wilderness bill, but their strident opposition has eroded what little good will they have been able to garner from the outdoor community. Their ludicrous attempts to make a "Mom, Flag and Apple Pie" issue out of wilderness have made professional environmental analysts and wildlife pros wonder what's really behind it all. Especially, when no less an authority than Dale Robertson, associate chief of the U. S. Forest Service, admitted under questioning by Seiberling that wilderness designation would result in no loss of timber harvest that couldn't be made up elsewhere on the forest (the potential yield is 307 million board feet, Robertson said, with some additional investment, but the allowable yield on Arkansas' two forests is 223 mbf; the average sales, however, are only 202 mbf, leaving a cushion of some 21 mbf, far more than the 12.6 mbf on Arkansas wilderness lands).

Consider this interchange from the official hearing testimony:

Mr. SEIBERLING: "All I can say is there is a margin for making up the loss of any sales from these lands (wilderness), either through the fact that the sales have averaged less than the total allowable cut or from the fact that through proper management you can increase the yield; isn't that true?

Mr. ROBERTSON: "Yes."

Seiberling also got Robertson to admit that wilderness was a "minor percent of the total forest," but that "there are local operators in that area who are dependent upon timber from this general area." Uh, huh. Now one can begin to understand the politics of anti-wilderness among some sawmill operators who consider the sole purpose of the national forests to be to furnish them with a steady supply of timber much cheaper than they could obtain from private lands.

If our forests are to be truly managed for multiple use, then wilderness should legitimately be one of those uses even if it does inconvenience the timber industry and focus public attention on timber management practices — like those around Flatside — that the industry would just as soon the public not see. In view of the fact that the timber industry's economic arguments against wilderness appear invalid, in light of Forest Service testimony, perhaps the real reason they are so opposed to wilderness in general, and Flatside in particular, is revealed in this statement Weyerhaeuser requested be added to the hearing record on HR 2542 and HR 2917:

"Weyerhaeuser Company owns 5,000 acres of intensively-managed forestland adjoining and/or within one mile of the Flatside boundary — clearly visible from many points in Flatside. We have concern that if Flatside is declared a wilderness, public pressures will be brought to apply new laws and regulations to extend the non-management regime to adjacent private lands, via buffer zones, protected vistas, etc."

In other words, once the public begins to frequent this remote area, and gets a good look at what "intensively-managed forestland" looks like, they might recoil in horror as many of the rest of us have done and begin to wonder what all this wholesale clearcutting is doing to water quality, wildlife, soil erosion and, in the large sense, the public's health and well being. Wilderness, then, would be an embarrassing reminder of what the Ouachitas used to be before this forestry fad achieved prominence.

We can't help but remember the Wall Street Journal article of not long ago that emphasized how several large timber corporations in the Pacific Northwest had miscalculated and destroyed the economy of several sawmill towns because of an embarrassing gap of between 10 to 15 years before the next mature "crop" would be ready to harvest. Without jobs, the workers were forced to leave. It noted that these same timber corporations were pulling out and moving back south to Louisiana and Arkansas. Is the same fate in store for us in the Ouachitas?

John Heuston, in *Pack and Paddle,*
January, 1984

Like the Buffalo River question in the Sixties, the preservation of the eleven areas specified in Congressman Bethune's Bill and the designation of these areas as "wilderness" is one of the most important land use decisions Arkansans will ever have. Unlike the Buffalo, we are not asking the expenditure of any federal funds, and we do not desire the taking of any private land. We are only asking that eleven areas of exceptional natural beauty be left as they are.

Theodore Roosevelt's advice in 1903 about the natural beauty of the Grand Canyon is equally applicable to the natural beauty of Arkansas evidenced by these eleven areas:

"Leave it as it is. You cannot improve on it. The ages have been at work on it, and man can only mar it. What you can do is to keep it for your children, your children's children and for all who come after you . . ."

Last month I prepared an article about the status of possible legislation concerning wilderness in Arkansas. The article was for publication in the *Arkansas Gazette,* the oldest newspaper west of the Mississippi River, published in Little Rock. I did not know what title to give this article, but the editor, Bob McCord, titled it *Our Chance To Bequeath The Wilderness.* That title accurately expresses my sentiments now. However, I think Congressman Bethune's bill is more than just our chance to bequeath the wilderness. It is our last chance and only hope to preserve these 11 areas for present and future Arkansans, their

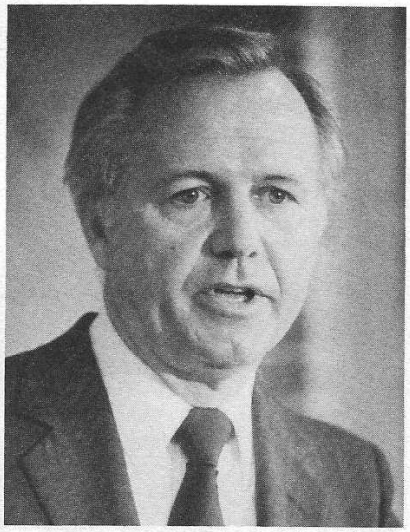


photo by John D. Simmons

photo by Kitty Francis

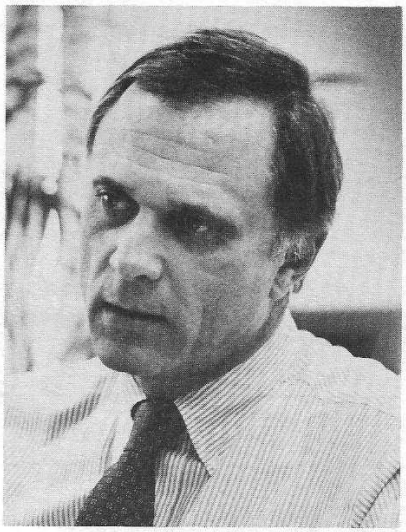


photo by Barry D. Arthur

neighbors and their friends who may one day wish to visit these outdoor museums so that they may see, feel, or study the origins of their cultural inheritance.

Don F. Hamilton,
Congressional Hearing,
May 26, 1983

Since 1976, with the beginning of the Second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation, the Ozark Society has been at the forefront of the wilderness movement in Arkansas. At that time, the Arkansas Conservation Coalition appointed the Society to manage a statewide wilderness review on behalf of the organization as a whole. This review was undertaken by the Conservation Committee of the Society. Eleven field teams were developed, consisting of professional naturalists, resource managers, and interested citizens, and these teams surveyed on foot over 400,000 acres of National Forest land at an expenditure of approximately 7,000 manhours of effort. At that time the Society was interested in seeing about 142,000 acres given an "instant wilderness" recommendation by the Forest Service. Instead, the Forest Service was able to recommend only 26,000 acres or 14% of the 185,000 acres considered by them during RARE II.

Between 1978 and 1980, the Arkansas Conservation Coalition was reorganized. More groups became members, by-laws were rewritten, and priority projects were identified. Since 1980, the wilderness issue has been the dominant activity of the Coalition.

Since The Ozark Society has learned to adopt the regional perspective, we have expanded our understanding of the relationship between the Interior Highlands area, that is, the Ozark and Ouachita Mountains, and surrounding urban and rural communities.

Mr. Chairman, the action taken by your subcommittee in recommending these areas for wilderness designation will be well received by the mid-America region. Everyone is aware that wilderness recreation use is growing quickly — as more wilderness areas are designated and as people begin to understand the delights of the wilderness experience.

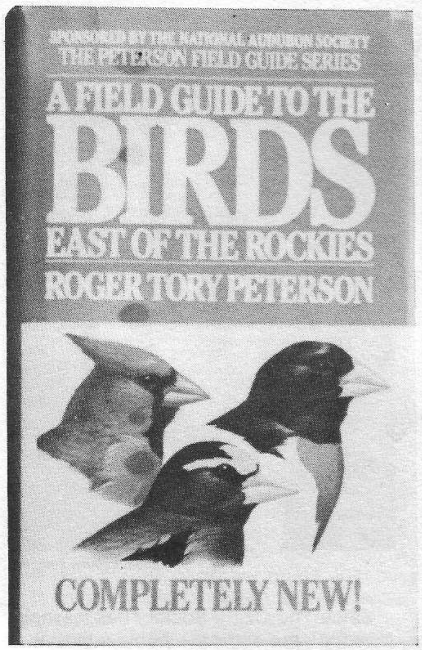
In fact, the Forest Service recently published a fine summary of recreation use in the National Forests. That summary shows that wilderness use in the forests increased by **73%** nationwide between 1972 and 1982, while overall recreational use grew by only 27% in this same period. This demonstrates a remarkable trend, Mr. Chairman. People **enjoy** the wilderness, and they will make use of these areas in greater numbers as the years go by.

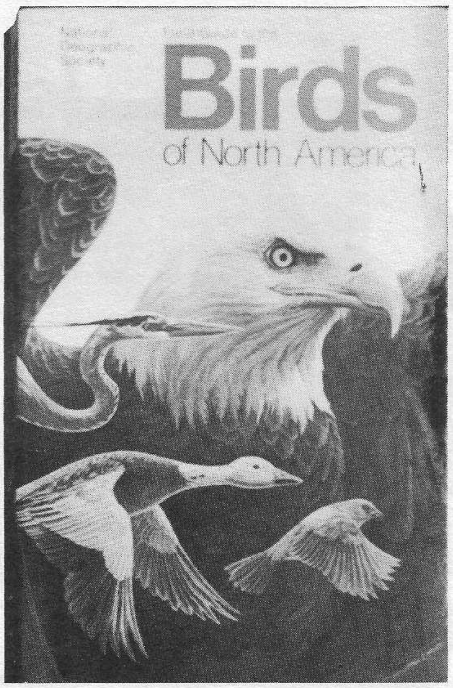
The Ozark Society recently examined a Forest Service model of future wilderness demand. We assumed that wilderness users within a 300-mile radius (the Forest Service uses 250 miles) would make use of Ozark and Ouachita Forest wilderness areas. Within this 300-mile zone, approximately 12.5 million people now live, which is likely to grow to about 17 million by the year 2000 (a 1.5%/yr. growth rate recommended by the Forest Service). Using this Forest Service model of visitor use ratios and area carrying capacity, we were able to estimate that over 250,000 acres of wilderness will be needed to satisfy the demands for this type of recreation by the year 2000.

Senator Dale Bumpers and David Pryor have jointly introduced S.2125, entitled the "Arkansas Wilderness Act of 1983," which includes all eleven of the wilderness areas recommended by the Society and the Arkansas Conservation Coalition's Wilderness Task Force. The eleven areas are, essentially, the same ones embodied in Congressman Ed Bethune's H.R.2917.

This is our conclusion, Mr. Chairman: H. B. 2917 is needed to help satisfy current and future wilderness demand. There are no measurable disbenefits to counties, municipalities, commercial establishments or individuals from wilderness designation, but there will be many positive changes such as improved land values, increasing demand for recreational goods and services, improved opportunities for research and education, and other, less quantifiable benefits that follow the federal definitions of wilderness (i.e., opportunities for solitude, etc.). Arkansas serves as a focal point for wilderness advocacy since it contains the largest percentage of federal lands of any state between the Appalachians and the Rockies. This helps explain the intense interest of regional conservation organizations such as The Ozark Society.

Mary Smith
Congressional Hearing,
May 26, 1983





A Guide to the Bird Guides

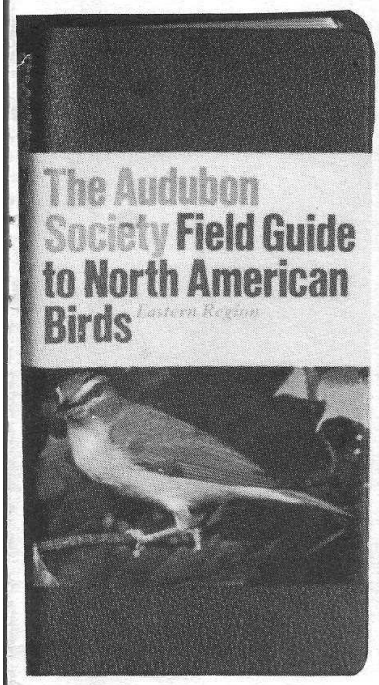
by Mel White

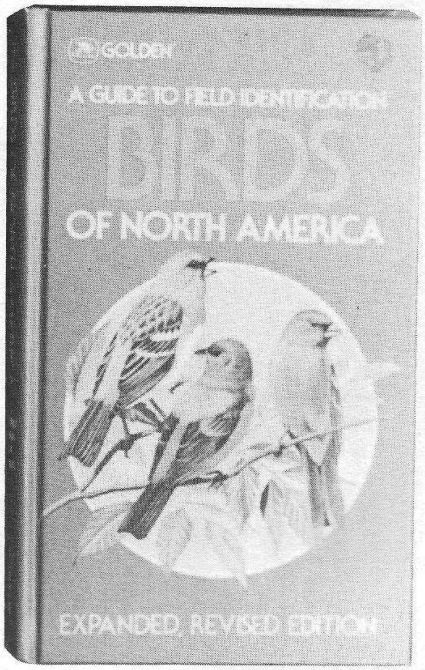
Birding is an inexpensive sport to get involved in; the beginner need obtain only two items of equipment: a pair of binoculars and a field guide to bird identification. Optical equipment is a complicated subject that we may get into another time. What follows are some personal views on the four major bird field guides on the market today.

A Field Guide to the Birds, by Roger Tory Peterson (Houghton Mifflin, $15 hardcover, $10.95 paper). RTP is the godfather of American bird-watching. The first edition of his guide, published in 1934, opened up the world of birds to the layman, and the Peterson Field Guide Series, covering everything from butterflies to wildflowers, now comprises almost thirty volumes. In this edition, the fourth, three to six species are pictured on each right-hand page; on the left are short discussions with identification tips and descriptions of voice, range and habitat. Maps of summer and winter ranges are grouped together in the back of the book, necessitating flipping back and forth to answer the question, "Should this bird be here now?" — something all beginners ask often. Peterson's artwork is the best of any guide's; his birds are simply esthetically pleasing to look at. A combination positive-negative point: This guide covers only the birds found east of the Great Plains. The novice will not be confused by dozens of birds not found in our area but, if he or she wants to do any birding on a trip out west, the companion western volume must be purchased. Recommended.

Birds of North America, by Chandler Robbins, et al (Golden Press, $10.95 hardcover, $6.95 paper). A recently revised edition of what has been for many years the main challenger to the Peterson guide. It has several advantages: It reflects the current "official" names of birds as set by the American Ornithologists' Union; the range maps are with the species descriptions on the pages opposite the illustrations; and all birds found north of Mexico are included, not just eastern birds. The drawings (by Arthur Singer), while falling short of Peterson's as "art," are nonetheless very good, and at least their equal for identification purposes. This book includes "sonograms" of many bird songs, graphic representations that some people find baffling but that are helpful after they have been deciphered. Recommended.

Audubon Society Guide to North American Birds (Eastern Region), by John Bull, et al (Knopf, $12.50 plastic cover). There are several reasons why I don't like this guide. Most importantly, it uses photographs instead of drawings for identification. This idea may appeal to a beginner, since "real" birds are depicted, but practically speaking a photographer cannot control light, color, or a bird's position the way an artist can, and colors are much more likely to be altered in the developing and printing process when photos are used. Secondly, the guide groups birds not according to phylogenetic (evolutionary) order but in arbitrarily chosen classifications of shape, habitat and color — another idea that is appealing on the surface but leads to great problems. Is a robin red or black? Every beginning birder needs to learn taxonomic relationships as soon as possible, not only to facilitate communication with other birders but because it makes bird identification easier. This guide has no range maps, text is





separate from photos, and only eastern birds are included; a companion volume covers western birds. Advantages: text for each species is longer, and it fits in the back pocket of a pair of jeans. This was the first bird guide to make the *New York Times* best-seller list, and I shudder to think how many people gave up birding in frustration after trying to learn identification from it. Not recommended.

National Geographic Society Guide to the Birds, edited by Shirley L. Scott (National Geographic Society, $13.95 plastic cover). This newest field guide of them all is also probably the best. It was put together as a team effort by some of the best identification experts in the country; the illustrations also are the work of several artists. This is the only guide that includes the newest AOU bird names and follows the latest revisions in taxonomic order. All birds found north of Mexico are covered, and more plumages per species are illustrated. Text and range maps are opposite the illustrations, and identification tips are more accurate and complete than in other guides. Disadvantages: While still portable, it is bigger and heavier than the others, and the quality of the drawings varies according to the skills of the various artists. An argument could be made that this guide is too complicated for real novices, but I think a book that provides the opportunity for growth is better than one that limits. You can't get this guide in stores; call the National Geographic book division at (301) 921-1200 to order it. (Shipping is $3.) Highly recommended.

One more thing every beginner needs, and which should be thought of as a vital part of the field guide: a state and/or local bird list showing the birds found in the area, and when they are found there. These are usually available from local Audubon chapters for less than a dollar or two, and can save much confusion. Some people I know spent several days trying to decide whether the birds on their Little Rock feeder were Purple Finches or House Finches; a local list would have told them that House Finches are not found in Arkansas except as very rare strays.

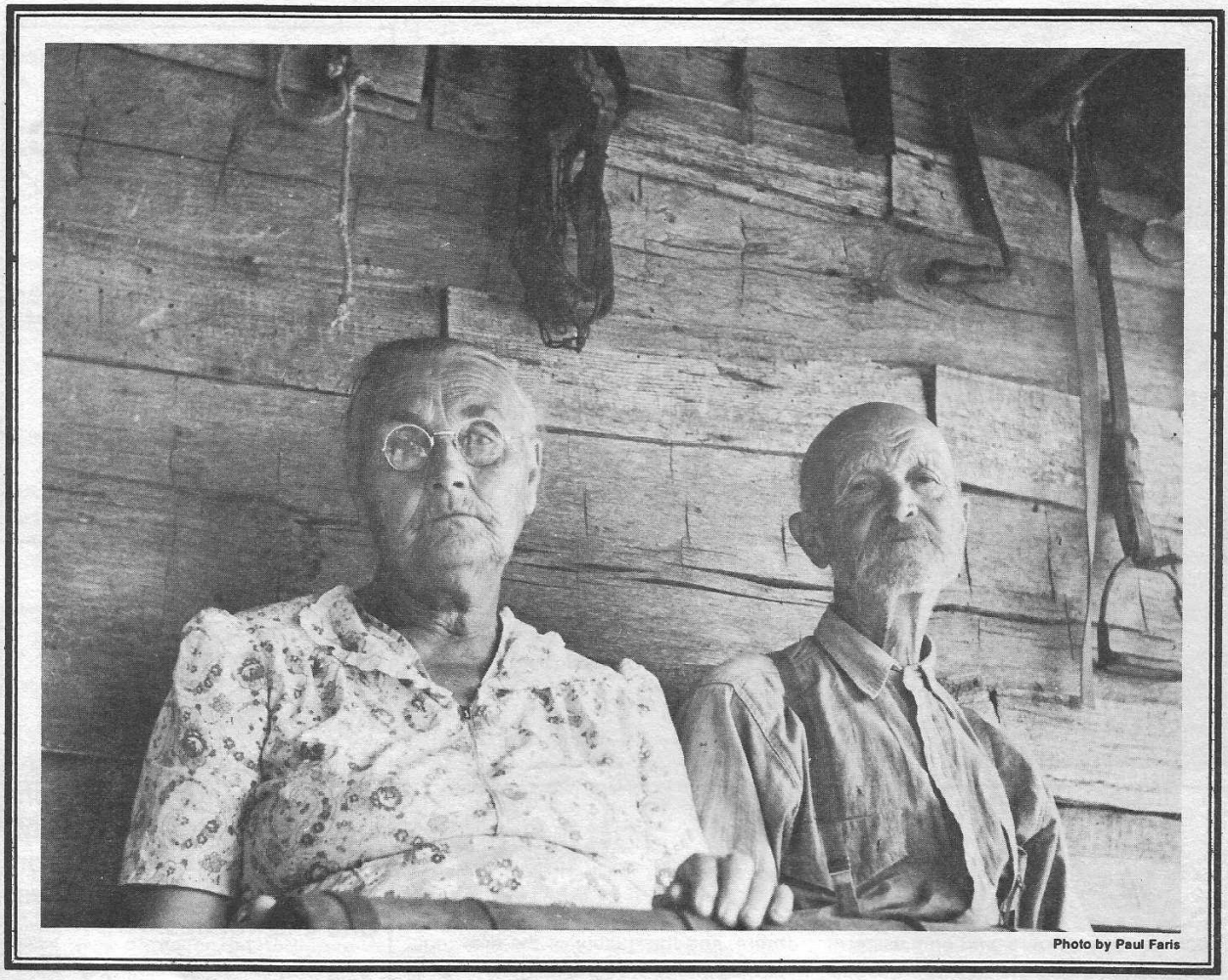


Photo by Paul Faris

Mary and Tom Self on the porch of their Newton County cabin, 1950.

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