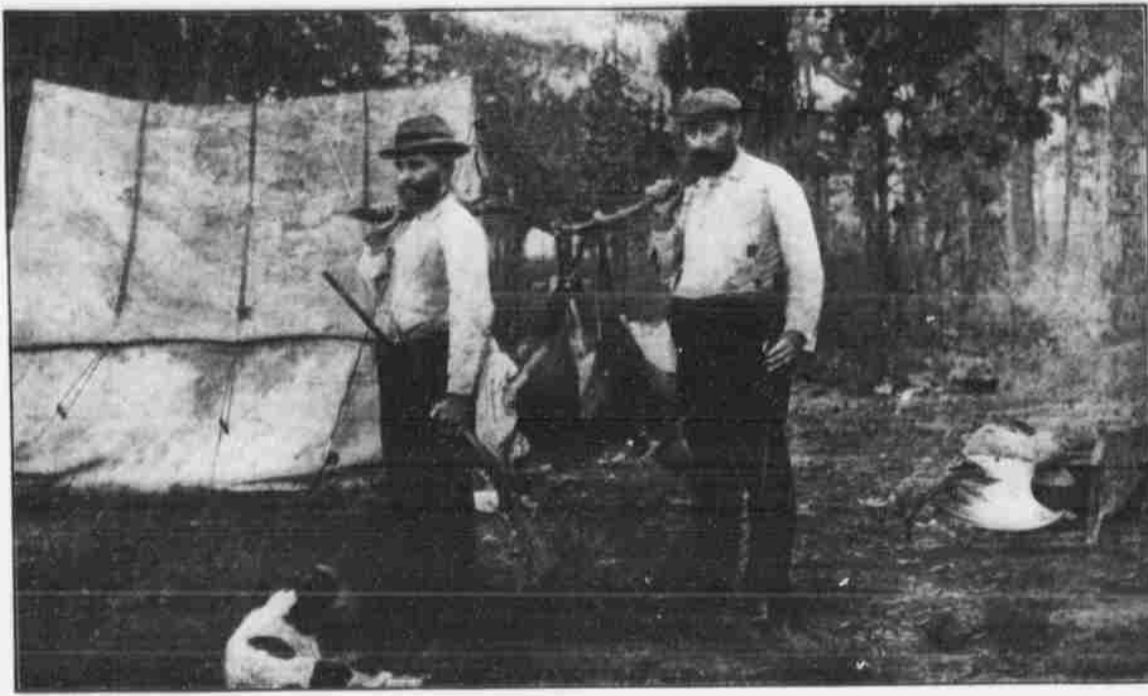
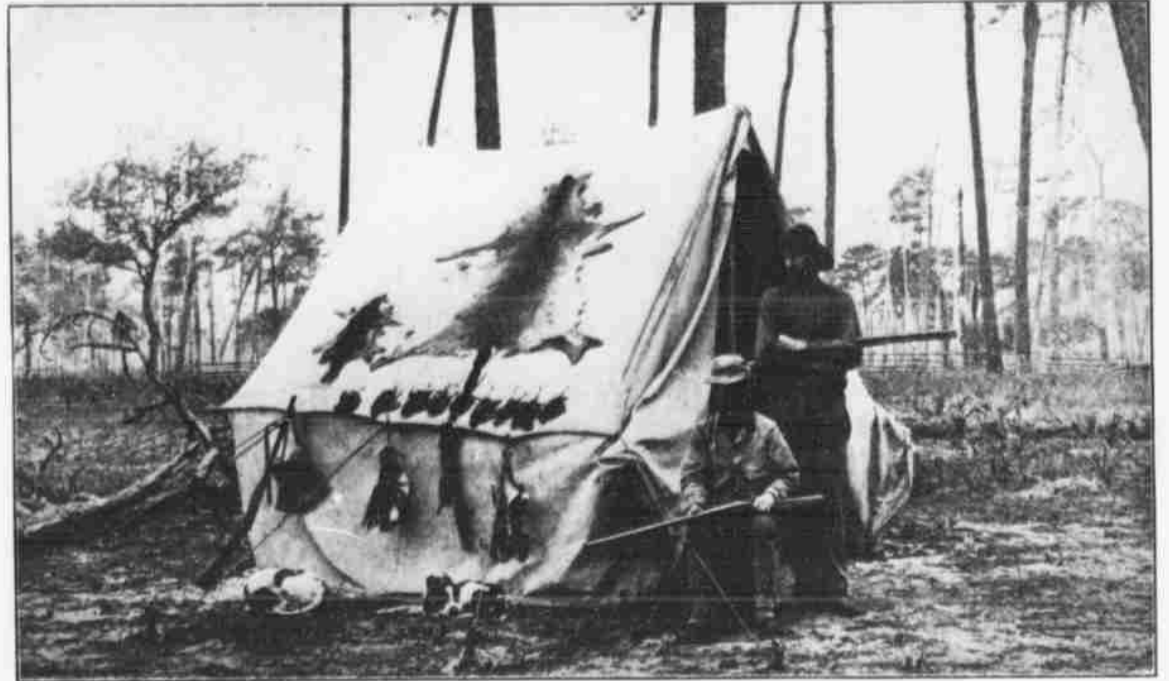


# Industrial Conditions Improve Big Game Hunting



SENATORS CLARENCE LEXOW AND JOHN LEWIS CHILDS OF NEW YORK, WITH DEER SHOT BY FORMER.



HON. W. A. REEVES OF PATCHOGUE, N. Y., IN CAMP WITH HIS GUIDE AT MOHAWK, Fla.

**A** STRANGE, utterly unexpected effect of the mighty industrial spirit of the United States is making itself felt beneficently in the field of sport with rod and gun—the very last province in which one could expect it. That the “commercialism” of the nation should work to improve and increase the hunter’s and angler’s pleasure seems paradoxical at first. But the reasons for it are as simple as any other simple business reason.

What the effort of sportsmen, continued through many years, had been able to accomplish only step by step in the way of game protection and game propagation the suddenly alert power of business promises to fulfill almost at once.

The United States as a whole and most of the states individually have become firm converts to the principle that wild game is one of the great sources of individual and communal wealth. The passenger-carrying railroads have plunged into the work of improving sport and of protecting and propagating game in the country reached by them. Many of the men who have been made immensely wealthy by the opportunities of the past few years have helped by either leasing or buying outright thousands of acres of woodland and other unimproved country. Other men, who have owned great tracts of poor, wild land for years without deriving any benefit from it, have joined in because they have learned that this hitherto useless property can be made a source of excellent income by being held as a sanctuary for the animals and birds that are sought by the sportsmen.

Moose and elk have been re-introduced into New York state, New Hampshire, by protecting deer, moose and caribou the whole year round, has so fostered the increase of the deer that it is uncommon to march a day through the woods in some parts without seeing at least one. Maine is gathering more income each year from the big game hunters. New Jersey, under the influence of especially clear and especially well enforced game laws, is fast becoming one great hunting preserve.

And the “New South,” the south of industrial regeneration, is becoming a sportsman’s heaven.

Tens of thousands of acres have been placed under right protection; some by the owners themselves, who lease out shooting privileges, others by rich sportsmen, who form themselves into clubs and either buy the property or obtain hunting rights for financial considerations, such as paying the taxes.

All this posting and preserving naturally reacts favorably on the unposted and unreserved lands where hunting and fishing are free to all, for the game cannot absolutely be penned in the preserves.

Exceptionally quick to see the advantage of tempting sportsmen, the southerners are beginning to treat the wild things as if they were gold. Many hotel owners have acquired hunting rights over the country surrounding their property, and they permit their guests to shoot and fish there. One hotel man thus controls 25,000 acres in ideal game country.

As a result the New South is fast becoming a magnificent game country. From Tennessee east and from the Chesapeake south, it furnishes today every variety of wing shooting, from turkeys to snipe, and in big game it offers deer and black bear.

Quail are so plentiful this year that the reports from all parts of the south are the same—“the finest of quail shooting is promised for this year.”

Old Man Bear still grumbles his surly way through the woods of some of the southern Appalachian mountains and the forests and canebrakes of Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia and Arkansas. He is hunted in many ways. Some men like to follow him day after day, sleeping on his trail at night, until the endurance of the wild beast is conquered by the endurance of the man; others hunt him with dogs that drive him to stand at bay. Some of these sportsmen carry their regard for the ethics of the chase so far that they bear no rifles or shotguns, but follow Old Man Bear simply with a revolver, so that when



BOY GUIDE AT THE JOLLY PALMS, FLORIDA.

he finally makes his stand the hunter must go in boldly and make a distinctly personal matter of it.

Canebrake bear hunting is the exciting sport. The yelping bear dogs are trained to hang just close enough to a bear to make him run and still to keep just far enough away so that he cannot reach them when he turns in his recurring attacks of rage. After they have started him going the hunters can hear the crashing of the cane and the splitting and tearing of underbrush as the big, black chap pounds his way through. When a bear, thus set to running, comes down her long on a man in the canebrake it means quick shooting and good shooting. Old Man Bear is red hot and he means to destroy everything from a bush to a man that stands in the way of his escape from those dogs.

The bear lives in cover too thick to permit hunting on horseback. But for that the chase of this fierce old game would have been one of the standard field sports of the southerners long ago. They try to hunt nearly all other kinds of southern game and beasts on horseback.

A southerner rides on horseback to shoot quail. He courses wild turkey on horseback. He hunts deer and wild pigs, foxes and rabbits on horseback. His one sorrow is that alligators cannot well be hunted on horseback. It is the only drawback to the pursuit of this hard-shelled southern animal.

Shooting hardly entered into hunting as defined by the old-time southern sportsman. His hunting was the chase almost exclusively. But now that he has become a devotee of the shotgun, his enthusiasm for the sport of wing shooting is as keen and his regard for the finest points of the game is as perfect as they ever were for hunting on horseback. Consequently the game gets a fair chance and will get a better chance still in years to come throughout the south.

Quail wintered so well last season and a succeeding excellent grass season gave them so much fine cover and food during hatching time that many second broods were raised, thus doubling last year’s quail supply in many sections, notably throughout east Tennessee.

Owing to the vast spread of the old plantation, the wing shooting for quail is

largely over open lands, making it clean, untrammelled sport, with not as much need as there is in the north for forcing one’s self through the woods and brambles to follow frightened coveys.

Another shooting that is feeling the effect of game laws is the wild fowl shooting along the sounds and inlets of the coast from Chesapeake capes to Florida. Especially is this the case in Albemarle and Pamlico sounds, where the water birds are protected by all sorts of laws. One law actually prohibits men from sailing or rowing over the waters of Currituck sound on Sunday for the purpose of locating wild fowl for shooting on any future day. There are laws covering shooting from batteries, shooting with any sort of big gun or other firearm except a gun held to the shoulder, laws prohibiting killing of birds before dawn and after dark, laws covering shooting from any moving boats not anchored, laws providing even for the exact mode of anchoring and the distance from shore where such anchoring shall be done.

Currituck, Albemarle and Pamlico sound waters, often present wonderful sights in the season when the wild fowl begin to arrive there during their southern flight. It is possible at times to see thousands of birds, big and little, swimming, diving and flying wherever one may look over the water. Wild fowl of every kind, from the great wild swan to the tiny butter ball duck, from herons to the most diminutive of the snipe family, pitch into those glorious water hunting grounds.

Florida, hard hit for a time by the feather and plume hunter, has improved game laws now and the Federal Lacey act helps it in its work. In addition, railroads and road improvement have given access to tracts that were not to be reached a few years ago, except by long, slow journeys. There is a good deal of deer shooting in the state. The deer are not large, but they are shy and wise enough to make hunting a true sport. Occasionally a panther can be bagged in the swamps and thickets. Alligator skin-hunting nearly cleaned that reptile out a few years ago, but lately there has been an opportunity for fun.

The alligator isn’t a game animal, but his pursuit is as exciting as most ordinary sportsmen can wish. The alligator may be

hunted in day or night time. Each form has its own peculiar attractions.

In the day time, he may be “stalked” and shot with a rifle as he lies on a bank or bar; or the shooter may go in a canoe which is paddled softly toward the reptile until the hunter is close enough to use a shotgun with effect.

Night hunting for alligators is one of the weirdest forms of American sport. The canoe glides softly over coal black water, with heavy trees hanging over the banks and everything lost in gloomy mystery. A lantern with a strong reflector is carried. The dazzle of it makes a drifting or swimming alligator hesitate just long enough to provide a good chance for a shot. Sometimes the lantern is affixed to the bow of the boat. Sometimes it is affixed to the front of the sportsman’s hat, so that its beam of light shines straight in the direction of the line of aim.

This method of night hunting is known as “shining.” If the gator is asleep when the “shine” falls on him, he will glare stupidly at it for a moment or two before he is awake fully enough to get away into the darkness. Then is the time to shoot. The shotgun is most used for this kind of hunting and the charge is sent into the joints between the head and shoulders.

One of the exciting stages of alligator hunting is after the beast has been hit. As a dead alligator sinks almost at once, it is necessary to get hold of him quickly. Sometimes it happens that the creature has not died as he should, and in that case there will be vast trouble, a great deal more interesting to read about than to experience. A ten-foot alligator, hurt grievously and crazy mad, a canoe that remains right side up even under ordinary circumstances only because the occupants are lucky, a pitch dark bayou and black water full of various undesirable reptiles, from water moccasins to other alligators, makes a combination equal to a first-class nightmare.

Many alligator-skin hunters in Florida and the gulf states carry marks that accrued to them because they made such a mistake about the “death” of an alligator. “Stalking” an alligator with a rifle is a pretty sport, especially if the hunter is a blue blood and willing to call it a fair deal only if he shoots the reptile through

the eye. An alligator eye is not big. If the bullet even so much as grazes the bony eyesocket, the chances are that it will glance off and the alligator will plunge away, unharmed except for astonishment and anger at the unreasonableness of man.

Everybody knows about Florida fishing. But not everybody knows that the men who go there to catch big fish really do not taste the finer degree of sport with rod and line. Estimating the quality of sport by the hundred weight has a full pleasure of its own. But in recent years many tarpon anglers, having caught their ton or so of the great Silver King, have turned with a sigh of relief to the light split bamboo rod and the thin line and find the true sport in taking the smaller game fishes of the coast, with tackle so light that it is an absorbing question as to which end of the line will win.

Such fishing as casting spoon or bait—and sometimes the fly—for croakers, snappers and Spanish mackerel is fishing that can be excelled for real sport only by extra good trout and black bass fishing. When the splendid, flashing, brave-hearted mackerel “strike in” on a Florida beach, the fishing is something to be remembered. Running in undismayed schools that glitter sometimes for miles; savagely hurling themselves at the bait; fighting from the first touch of the hook until they are beached—they provide unblemished sport.

Another noble game fish is the barracouta—slim, wicked, a reincarnation of the old pirates of the Spanish Main, he darts along, blue and silver. So swift is his dash that the eye cannot follow him even in the clearest of water. The writer had an experience in the Windward Passage of the incredible swiftness of the barracouta. He was fishing in water so clear that little fish and weeds fifty feet below were clearly visible. He was watching his baited hook, drifting about ten feet below the surface, when a barracouta took it. Yet, despite the fact that everything that went on in the water was as visible as if it were going on under glass, the fish was so swift that before the eye could perceive him the line was running out and the fish was leaping on the surface.

West Indians fear the barracouta more than they do sharks. Bathing places are fenced in on many island beaches to prevent the savage fish from reaching bathers. They have been known to dash at swimmers and bite off their toes and fingers clean.

## Never Touched Them

The pair of nonfriendly felines on the back fence had been caterwauling at each other for about forty-five minutes before the patience of the man in the third floor back room of the boarding house became exhausted.

“Gosh blame their mangy hides!” he muttered, ferociously, as he hopped out of bed in the darkness; “I’ll fix ‘em. I’ll throw my—”

No, he did not say to himself that he’d throw his bootjack at the cats, for the simple reason that he had not seen a bootjack in exactly twenty-four years, such articles only being employed nowadays in the imaginations of professional funny-ists, who live backwards.

He threw his water pitcher at the cats. “Never touched us!” they hissed back at him and then they went right on expressing their opinions of each other until dawn.

## Life Preserved

Judge: “There seems to be considerable excitement in your town today,” said the visitor.

“Yes,” answered the native. “Several o’ the fellers is presentin’ a life-savin’ medal to Henry Piller.”

“What sort of a hero is Piller? Did he rescue some one from a burning building, stop a runaway or drag a drowning person from the raging waves?”

“Nope; nothin’ like that. You see, our town has been local option for nigh onto a year an’ Piller runs the only drug store we have.”