

Thinking of the Kinni

By Helen Wyman (Oct. 5, 2000)

...Last night I lay awake thinking about the Kinnickinnic. Who had introduced us that wonderful river? It must have been Sherm Krauth from whom we had rented an apartment in their nice home that first year we had come to R.F. He was a great fisherman and he taught Walker to love the sport. The Krauths must have shown us the rock path “down creek.” It was our favorite hike – past the park, the power plant, the dam. In time we’d be taking our sons. I remember dashing to the shelter of a lime kiln, to avoid the sudden shower- or to the Rocky Branch which for several years we could cross on make-shift supports and explore the other side of the river.



I remember one lovely early autumn evening that first year in R.F. when with one of Walker’s fishing companions we had left the car off the Prescott road and had hiked across a field to reach the river. There on the edge of a meadow we looked down in amazement at the little Grand Canyon. The men went on to find that special trout pool while I sat on the grass, very pregnant with our first child, happy and filling my soul with the glory that lay before me.

Our two sons very early learned the joy of hiking “down creek”- all times of year we went. In Spring, I carried my nature book to help me identify the wild flowers. In Summer we found the deep red gooseberries sweet and juicy. In Autumn there was the thrill of glorious color. In Winter, a light snow did not deter us.



Years later- it must have been when we first came back from our five years in Whitewater, we had gone with some of the Fosters (including Bruce’s mother Letha, that wonderful woman). I was walking with Bruce who was hand-in-hand with his little daughter. He had shown us the area where Joel Foster had had his cave. Now we were at the Foster cemetery. When we had first come to town, we had gone there and had seen the sculptures representing the four seasons at the corners of the plat. Now one was gone and the others were damaged. Later I heard they were all gone.

For some years there had been a very active Rod and Gun Club-they raised pheasants and then released them when ready for hunting – and they were concerned with keeping the Kinni in good condition. Many times Walker and Benny Kettelkamp would go out on an early Sunday morning to rip-rap (I think that’s what they called it) the banks of the river. Now years later, the KRLT is here and is saving the life of the river.

