

Waging Worldwide War on Rats

Poison Gas in New Use Against Disease Spreading and Destructive Rodents



STACK OF WHEAT RUINED BY HUNGRY RODENTS

FEARFUL of the rapid spread of bubonic plague through the different Mediterranean countries and of the many cases that have recently occurred in some of the cities of the United States which border the Gulf of Mexico, the departments of health of every seaboard city in the United States have begun a stringent campaign toward the extermination of the rat, that pestiferous rodent which indirectly is the cause of the dread disease. The crusade also has been taken up in many inland sections.

Gov. Allen of Kansas inaugurated one of the greatest drives in the war against the rodents when he proclaimed a "rat killing week" beginning August 23 in the interests of health and food preservation. Aside from spreading disease rats cost the nation hundreds of millions of dollars annually in food and property destruction. Incident to Gov. Allen's proclamation it was stated that in Kansas alone \$30,000,000 a year is lost in foodstuffs through the ravages of rats and mice.

The war against the rat, however, is not confined to this country; it is being waged the world over.

Fighting the Pests in New York.

The Board of Health of New York city, at the piers of which thousands of ships from foreign ports dock yearly, has for some time been helping in the war on rats on an extensive scale. The work carried on here to prevent rats from getting into the country, and to exterminate those which are already in, typifies the work that is going on in other American cities.

Dr. Royal S. Copeland, Commissioner of Health in the metropolis, has recognized the importance of ridding the country of rats and in view of the recent outbreak of plague in various parts of the world, including some of the Southern cities of the



METAL DISKS GUARD HAWERS OF STEAMERS IN NEW YORK

GASSING RATS IN LONDON THOSE NOT ASPHYXIATED ARE POUNCED ON BY TERRIERS.

United States, has begun a vigorous campaign that he believes will be successful in preventing the dread disease from getting a foothold in this country. "The importance of exterminating rats cannot be overestimated," he said. "In New Orleans recently 10,000 of these rodents were rounded up in one week and eight of them were later found to be plague carriers. A single pest might be sufficient to bring endless agony to many people, and our campaign is toward the prevention of even one such rat entering our city. The ravages of the plague may be realized when it is considered that in one Southern city, where there was a slight epidemic recently, out of thirty-five cases of plague brought to the attention of the authorities thirty-two proved fatal.

"The bubonic plague is caused by a parasitic flea which thrives on the body of the rat. This flea needs warmth, with the result that when the rat dies the flea immediately seeks the first warm and living body that is at hand. In many cases this hap-

pens to be the body of a human being. The person, if infected, will die usually in about forty-eight hours. The recent outbreaks of the disease are the first of serious moment that have occurred since 1903, when it raged in Russia and other Eastern regions. "An excellent means we have found of preventing rats from entering this country is with the aid of a large round metal disk which is attached to the hawser of all ships before they dock. These disks prevent the rats from finding a runway to the docks. The fight against the rodents, however, is really begun as soon as a ship leaves a country where the plague is prevalent, such as the ports of Algeria, Tunis, Egypt and others in the Orient. These measures are taken to prevent rats getting aboard the vessels. Then, during the voyage, the ship, if it does not carry foodstuffs or other cargo that is liable to be damaged, is thoroughly fumigated with cyanide gas.

"As soon as the ship docks every hawser is equipped with one of the metal rat guards. Besides this precaution we have made a

rule that the placing of gangplanks shall go on only at the time of the loading and unloading of the vessel's cargo. But we go even further than this. While the gang planks are down during the unloading guards are placed at either end to prevent any stray rats from getting ashore. If, despite these precautions, rats do happen to get ashore, all of the docks are equipped with up-to-date traps, which make the rats' existence a short one. With these precautionary measures we feel confident that our city will not be afflicted with even one case of plague."

New York's Food Loss.

Dr. Copeland then explained that the structures along the waterfront, which are often made of wood, unfortunately offer an exceptional refuge for the rodents. In some years when the war on rats was not on more than \$1,000,000 worth of foodstuffs along the New York docks has been destroyed by them. As a further means of exterminating them the Department of

Health has solicited the cooperation of the owners of docks and storehouses, and hereafter these structures are to be built of concrete.

In view of the campaign that is being carried on in this country great interest is being shown by both municipal health authorities and the United States Department of Agriculture, which is doing research work to help wipe out rats in a new device that has just been put into operation in Great Britain and which has been found very effective in killing off these pestiferous rodents.

In England, as in America, for years traps of every description have been used, but the rats have refused to be caught. It seems now, however, as if this heyday is about to pass. In Great Britain the war on rats is being most successfully conducted with the aid of poison gas. Already the efficiency of the gas machine abroad has given rise to the belief that if an organized campaign along similar lines is carried out in this country and other countries through-

out the world the complete extermination of the pests will be only a matter of a short time.

The mechanism of the gas machine is simple. It is of a light and portable type, consisting simply of a generator, a fan with handle attached and a reversible tube.

In the process of charging ordinary rock sulphur is wrapped in a piece of dry paper, which is ignited and placed in the generator. Sulphurous fumes of a high strength are produced, and these are driven by means of the fan along the tube, the mouth of which is placed in the rat hole. At the first demonstration held in England the fumes killed most of the rats in the hole, only those which were far away in the run being able to escape, and they were killed by an alert terrier.

Other Means of Killing Rats.

Of earlier methods of rat destruction, squill poison has generally been conceded to have been among the best. Barium carbonate was also found very effective, inasmuch as about two grains would kill a rat, while fifteen grains are harmless to a chicken and one hundred grains has no effect on a dog. Strychnine is effective against rats, but too dangerous for general use. The same holds true of phosphorus and arsenic.

Trained terriers play a part in poison gas attacks on rats. They stand at hand ready to pounce on the victim as soon as the fumes have driven him from his lair. Sometimes as many as half a dozen stagger out from one hole. Little Mr. Terrier then starts to work. Nets also are used at the mouth of the hole to capture the rodents driven out by gas.

T. A. Clayton, an ex-soldier who had some experience with gas machines during the war, devised this gas machine for rat destruction. He declares that two hundred rats is a conservative estimate of the average number of the rodents on an ocean going liner.

In England as well as America the farmers are great sufferers from rats, which annually consume enormous amounts of grain.

Valley Dwellers Give Mohawk Turnpike New Hold on Its Name

Historians Call Recent Appellation of "Onondaga Trail" a Gross Misnomer for Schenectady-Rome Highway—Thirty Organizations Join in Stirring Public Sentiment

THE people of the Mohawk Valley are "out to tomahawk the make believe Indian who foisted the name of 'Onondaga Trail' onto the old Mohawk Turnpike." The historic road running from Schenectady to Rome, and to perpetuate the name given the highway when it was built by the State 120 years ago. This movement receives its greatest impetus from the recently organized Mohawk Valley Historical Society and has the support, too, of Col. Frederick Stuart Greene of Albany, State Commissioner of Highways; Col. John W. Vrooman, president of the Herkimer County Historical Society; the Rev. W. N. P. Bailey of the Catholic Reformed Dutch Church of New York; Dr. James Sullivan of Albany, State historian; Nelson Greene of New York, a native of the Mohawk Valley, who has written much about its history, and many others.

The new historical society itself represents thirty or more organizations of kindred interests, including several chapters of the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution. It was organized largely through the initiative of the Herkimer County Historical Society at a meeting held August 6, anniversary of the battle of Oriskany, at the Gen. Herkimer homestead, on the State reservation, three miles east of Little Falls. The federation of historians and patriotic bodies was formed with the general purpose of placing before the public in a more definite and extended manner the Mohawk Valley's richness in history and beauty of location. Its program calls for the erection of markers and monuments, preservation of places having special historic interest and the further sifting of records to clear up historical incidents which are still veiled in uncertainty.

Mohawk Turnpike Gains First Attention.

Popular interest linked with the importance of the Mohawk turnpike, both as a present day trunk line for motorists and a highway famed in history, impelled the organization to bend its first efforts toward correcting what has been termed a grossly inappropriate and misleading example of arbitrary nomenclature. The leaders of the movement are confident that the name "Onondaga Trail" will fade quickly in the light of the highway's true history, and in fact declare that public sentiment already has waxed strong for "Old Mohawk Turnpike" as the accepted and official designation.

Nelson Greene of New York has assisted in the campaign to impress the approved name on the public mind by setting forth the rightful claim it gains from history. "I have just come across a recent map of New York which carries on its back an automobile route map of the State," says Mr. Greene, in his historical sketch of the Mohawk Turnpike. "To put it mildly, I was astonished to find that the Mohawk Turnpike was therein designated as the 'Onondaga Trail,' a name which I had never seen used in connection therewith and a name which I believe is largely an invention, thoroughly inappropriate, and one which should be abolished by the force of public opinion."

"Another remarkable feature of this map is that various roads and highways, all over the State, are designated by the name 'Onondaga Trail.' Others are called 'Iroquois Trail' and 'Adirondack Trail,' these being the only names used. The extreme inap-

propriateness of this road naming is seen in that there is an 'Adirondack Trail' shown running from Yonkers to Port Chester in the New York city metropolitan district; Another 'Adirondack Trail' is shown running from Newburgh to Binghamton; Why 'Adirondack' when it runs through the Catskill section? One of the many 'Onondaga Trails' is also shown running up the west side of the Hudson from Nyack to Newburgh to Catskill; Why 'Onondaga' when it runs through an Algonquin Indian section?

A Misleading Name.

"On the map I mention the 'Onondaga Trail' name is given to the entire New York to Buffalo automobile highway. This is an arbitrary and utterly misleading naming of this route. As it is the most important motor car highway in the entire world, such a stupid appellation is worthy of some attention. This great turnpike is also weighted down with the additional name of 'National Parks Transcontinental Highway.'

"Imagine a motorist asking an Osego county farmer, 'Hey, mister, how do I get to the Onondaga Trail-National Parks Transcontinental Highway?' instead of 'Which way to the Mohawk Turnpike?'

"This 'Onondaga Trail' is certainly a weighty addition to the many historical errors foisted upon the people of the Mohawk valley by enthusiastic but misinformed people. This sort of arbitrary nomenclature ought to be prohibited by law.

"Onondaga refers merely to one tribe of the Iroquois Confederation, resident near Syracuse at the time of the Revolution. To give the New York to Buffalo Highway the name of this one tribe is ridiculous.

"Does the New York Central call its railroad from Albany to Syracuse the 'Onondaga division'? Hardly—it's the 'Mohawk division,' as you will see by reference to its time table, and has been appropriately so called since the road had its present subdivisions.

"Some historical and geographical writers have seen fit to call the Albany to Buffalo road the 'Iroquois Trail.' As a name for this route it is fitting, as the five nations of the Iroquois Confederation were all located directly on and along this route, from Schoharie on the Mohawk to the banks of the Genesee River—Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas.

"The first road into the Mohawk Valley was probably made by Albany Hollanders about 1651, following the Albany-Schenectady Indian trail and connecting the two settlements. Both Albany and Schenectady were known as Skan-ek-ta-de, 'the place beyond the open pines'—the pine woods on the sand flats between Albany and Schenectady. This later became the celebrated Albany turnpike, a famous stage coach route and a line closely approximating the New York Central Railroad.

"For a long time following the Hollanders' entrance into the valley the river was the



FORT HERKIMER CHURCH, BUILT 1767

main transportation route. By 1725 the south shore turnpike had been developed from Schenectady to Fondra and probably by 1730 this road was opened to present Mohawk.

Later it went on to the portage fort at present Rome. Until 1800 it was probably the main valley highway. Just as it is to-day, from Mohawk to Rome. The north shore pike attained its greatest importance in 1810, when the first bridge was built across the Mohawk at Schenectady, thus connecting the Albany and Mohawk turnpikes. The name Albany turnpike was occasionally used also for the Mohawk River road.

Historic Spots Along Old Mohawk Turnpike

- Here are listed some of the many historic places and spots of scenic grandeur along the famed old Mohawk Turnpike:
- Indian Statue (site of old fort and 1690 Indian Massacre).
 - St. George's Church, Schenectady (1759).
 - Union College, Schenectady (1795).
 - Vrooman House, Schenectady (1680).
 - Gov. Yates House, Schenectady (1735).
 - Sanders House, Scotia (1713).
 - Mable House, Rotterdam (1680).
 - Yantapuchaberg Mountain, Rotterdam (1,100 feet above Mohawk).
 - Guy Park, Amsterdam (1766); built by Sir William Johnson for Col. Guy Johnson.
 - Fort Johnson (1742); built by Sir William Johnson.
 - Parsonage at Fort Hunter (1712); site of Fort Hunter and lower Mohawk Castle.
 - Shrine at Auriesville (marks the martyrdom of Jogues, 1646, Jesuit Missionary among Mohawks).
 - Old Court House, Fondra (1836).
 - Butler House, Fondra (1743).
 - The "Noses"—Mohawk River.
 - Canajoharie Falls, Canajoharie.
 - The Van Alstine House, Canajoharie (1750).
 - Fort Frey, Palatine Bridge (1739).
 - Fort Klock, near St. Johnsville, site of the battle of Klock's Field (1780).
 - Indian Castle Church (1769); site of the Great Castle of the Mohawks.
 - Gen. Herkimer Homestead (1764), near Fall Hill.
 - The Little Falls Gorge.
 - First American Lock Canal at Little Falls (1796).
 - Great Lock, Barge Canal, at Little Falls—highest in the world (40 1/2 feet) at time of erection.
 - Marker, site of Gen. Herkimer's birthplace (1738)—South side road.
 - Fort Herkimer Church (1756); site of Fort Herkimer.
 - Marker, site of Fort Dayton (1776), Herkimer.
 - Mirror Lake, Herkimer.
 - The Tory Spy House (Shoemaker place), Mohawk.
 - The Oneida Stone, Utica.
 - Whiteboro Settlement Monument (1784).
 - Marker of the site of Herkimer's camp before the Oriskany battle (August 5, 1777).
 - Oriskany Battle Monument (August 6, 1777).
 - Site of Fort Schuyler, Rome (1777).

When it was the King's Highway. "From 1664 to 1776 the north shore turnpike was called 'King's Highway.' After the revolution it became the 'Mohawk Turnpike' and has so remained ever since, with the increasing addition now and then of the word 'Old'—'Old Mohawk Turnpike.' It never was called the 'Onondaga Trail' by anybody anywhere, so far as the writer can learn. Its name is natural, because the Mohawks dominated the river region up to its headwaters and their villages generally lay close to the river and its paralleling trails. However, there's no use arguing the matter, as names of rivers and highways are regulated by the people living on and along them, and the people of the Mohawk Valley would as soon call the Mohawk the 'Onondaga River' as they would call the 'Old Mohawk Turnpike' the 'Onondaga Trail.'

"The Mohawk River section is one of the most important historically and commercially in the United States—possibly the most vital spot in North America. Its waters make the only link on the United States Atlantic seaboard between those of the Atlantic and the great lakes—a fact of tremendous import to our future transportation, commerce and manufactures—its great railroads and its famous motor highway daily carry thousands through this beautiful region where American history was so largely made. It is vitally important that the name of the valley or its highways should in no way be impaired or its significance ruined. The name 'Mohawk Turnpike' in itself is a tabloid lesson in history, geography and transportation. Notice should be served on map makers, automobile book publishers, &c., that the name is the Mohawk Turnpike, and nothing else.

"Imagine 'Port Plain on the Onondaga Trail,' 'Herkimer on the Onondaga Trail,' 'Canajoharie on the Onondaga Trail,' 'Schenectady on the Onondaga Trail,' 'Amsterdam on the Onondaga Trail,' 'Johnstown, three miles from the Onondaga Trail,' 'Little Falls on the Onondaga Trail,' 'Utica on the Onondaga Trail,' &c.

Plans Road Improvements.

Col. Greene, State Commissioner of Highways, has offered to placard the whole course from Schenectady to Rome with signs bearing the inscription 'Old Mohawk Turnpike,' providing a supply of such signs be given the Department of Maintenance. Placing the signs, he explained, could be done without expense to the State since there are forces already available for the work. Col. Greene also has promised his support in a project to improve the turnpike. He outlined a plan to widen the road wherever practical, making it a two-line highway twenty-four feet in width, with nine feet of concrete on each side and six feet of bitumen in the centre.

This, Col. Greene says, would cost no more than a twenty-foot road, since the bitumen already is in place and can be preserved in the reconstruction. Col. Greene figures that the rebuilt road would be as near accident proof as is possible to make and would last fifty years.

Stage Letter Writing

ONE thing that I never could understand," said a playgoer, "is the manner of writing and addressing letters on the stage. The hero's pen fairly flies across the page and when he comes to address the envelope one sweep of the pen from left to right suffices for that, though the address thus produced must be one that no post office clerk in the world could ever decipher.

"I suppose, of course, the purpose of this manner of letter writing is to give the air of action, despatch; to avoid any sense of lagging in the movement of the play; but would it not be more realistic and striking if it were done with a sufficient measure of precision to make us feel that the letter and the address could actually be read?"