Larks

They came down in a patch of wheat,
and, as we drew near,
the flock flew away
and left the startled field quite empty.

In the thicket they look like fire;
when they rise, like silver darting.
And they go by even before they go,
cutting through your wonder.

Our poor eyes, knowing only
that the whole flock has gone,
cry "Larks!" to those who rise,
and are lost, and sing.

In the sorely wounded air
they leave us full of yearning,
with a wonder and a quiver
in body and in soul...

Larks, son! Above us sweep
the larks across the plain!

- Gabrielle Minsell
(Translated from the German by
Lemorton Humphreys)

Benedict Arnold's March to Quebec - January Meeting.

Time: 7:30 p.m.
Date: January 27th
Place: 28th St. Church of the Brethren
Union Ave., & 28th St. Altoona, Pa.
DAY: Tuesday

We will be treated to a most unusual program Tuesday evening when Bill Apslager presents his slide talk on a journey he took last year across upper New England to Quebec. Bill was one of the marchers in the reenactment of Arnold's march on Canada. His slide work is quite good and the coverage of this area of our country should be most appealing. Arnold's role has often been misconstrued in history, so in the concern for accuracy and truth join in on an enlightening view of the past.

So much of the Bicentennial seems commercial which might have some basis in the early Yankee outlook on work and profit, but much of the celebration has to do with a reevaluating of the people and the land. Many are looking not only into the past of our nation but into the total or all encompassing identity of ourselves. It is good to put Arnold in his proper place. It is healthy to seek a refined definition of who and what we are and were. This looking to the roots of existence relates to our conservation work for the parts of the ecosystem all interest to create the non-static whole. Our awareness, then, is critical to our healthy existence as a people in harmony with the land.

There has been such a variety of great programs! Bring out the friends and everybody for a nice evening's get-together. This would be another fine program for younger people.

Winter Field Trips

There is talk of having a few outings late in January or early February for birds. Sinking Valley is just right for seeing hawks and larks. In with the lark's could be snow buntings. Definite plans will be made at the Tuesday meeting. If interested in going with these groups of birders call Al Burd or John Orr.
New records were set this year as 32 observers avert a good day countrying. This is the most we have had taking part. A record of different birds seen was set at 49. A great blue heron was seen in the count period but not on the count day for an over-all total of 49—just 1 shy of our best total of 50! We missed some good ones—birds that are expected: meadowlarks were not seen with the horned larks. No golden-crowned kinglets could be found. No winter wrens, cedar waxwings, red-breasted nuthatches, great horned owls, red-headed woodpeckers, purple finches or snow buntings were picked up. If these and some of the others that are known to be winter residents can be found, our count will be going for a total of 60! Few people realize how many winter birds are to be seen here. Our territory is such, though, that some shore and river birds are not as common as elsewhere.

The birds seen are as follows:

whistling swan 1
Canada goose 180
mallard 57
acipenser hawk 1
red-tailed hawk 5
rough-legged hawk 1
marsh hawk 2
American kestrel 11
ruffed grouse 1
ring-necked pheasant 1
turkey 8
killdeer 19

common snipe 6
rock dove 125
mourning dove 27
acreech owl 2
belted kingfisher 6
common flicker 1
piledated woodpeckers 2
red-bellied woodpecker 6
downy woodpecker 1
blue jay 76

common crow 108
blue jay 126
brown creeper 2
brown thrasher 2
house finch 5
mockingbird 6
American robin 1
tiny sparrows 1
ruby or kinglet 2
house sparrow 367
house sparrows 17

The carolina wren total was a high. These southern birds are coming in fast. The house finches were a first as were the red-winged blackbirds. Don Wharton's team saw 6 common grackles—a second first. The Canada geese were in two different fields. Mike and Margaret Chonko saw one; Earl Higgins, Anne Margie Lehrer and Stuart Forer saw the other. Bill Housever's team saw an acipenser hawk. The house finches were seen by Madre Quirk's team in Bellwood. This was a great year for evening prosectibles.

The temperature was 22 to 30 degrees and there was a light snow on the ground. A great covered dish dinner was held, as usual, and many would agree that there is a lot of fun to be had at these affairs.

February Banquet

Make your reservations now for this annual dinner. It will begin at 6:30 p.m. on February 24th—Tuesday—at the 28th St. Church of the Brethren. Price is $3.50. Call your reservations in to Martha Sullivan (695-0052). The final deadline has to be firm and is Sat., February 21st. This will be a home style meal. Dick Martyr, our Mid-Atlantic Field Representative will be our guest and speaker.

Winter Birds Sighted

Dec. 27th—6 snow buntings: Mike Chonko; Dec 28th Mike G., John Orr & John McCall saw 2 snow buntings. All these were in Sink- ing Valley. Bernice Levinson had a goldfinch, 2 house finches and 1 pine siskin at her feeder Jan. 17th. John Orr had 6 male house finches and 3 female Jan. 11th. A great horned owl was photographed sitting in a snow bank near Bellwood last week. Bill Housever was reported by the State Police who were doing their own count and had a lead from someone in the Tipton area sometime near the 21st—23rd on a suspicious character! A building was burned down the 23rd—just one more of a long line of arson in that area. Bill's team covered that section of the circle. This incident shows us how much of going out in the field when some local crime has the whole county funny.

Election of Officers: At our January meeting we will have elections. Bill Housever is listed as the candidate for vice-president. Claire White is slated as the candidate for secretary. Nominations may be made from the floor.

Miscellaneous

1. Anyone interested in owl calling—call John Orr. John and Bruce Black called in two screech owls on the count. Don Wharton and his sister and John Orr called in a few screech owls in late December. We would like to ret the great horned owl and the barred owl.

2. Bluebird Report: Bill Housever reports that the houses this year are being built for Sinking Valley and will be out by March 1st. He's got flying squirrels living in one of his houses now at Prince Collitz's. Tall to Bill about this project at the January meeting.

3. American Bird reports. We are now doing a 4 season reporting to this journal on populations in our general area. Keep lists of birds seen: arrival dates, departure dates, population data, etc. The current reporting period ends April 15th.