



The Black Bass Comes East



Stream Blazer

William Murray

1890-1960

N Fork Shenandoah River, Red Banks, Virginia

Harry Murray's grandfather William Murray caught this 5 pound 14 ounce smallmouth bass on the North Fork of the Shenandoah River in 1914 showing how well the species adapted to the rivers in the Shenandoah Valley. As his granddad landed that beautiful smallmouth bass the railroad trip which occurred less than 10 years before the boys went to war (the Civil War) was more meaningful.

Thirty (30) bass bummed a ride on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. In 1854, Mr. William Shriver of Wheeling, West Virginia planned the trip with the help of Mr. A. G. Stabler, a conductor. Both were fisherman.

Virginia Rivers did not. Together they took the small bass from Wheeling Creek where they occurred naturally and placed them in a large perforated tin bucket which was made to fit the water tank on the locomotive. At each water station between Wheeling and Cumberland, Maryland fresh water was added. Mr. Shriver placed them in the basin of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, which had free access to the Potomac River.

By 1865 there were confirmed reports of excellent bass populations 200 miles upstream in the Potomac River and far up the Shenandoah River with numbers weighing 4 to 7 pounds. Various state and federal agencies as well as other private individuals were instrumental in spreading the bass throughout Virginia. Harry says he has never landed a bass which gave him more pleasure than the one Granddad landed at Red Banks 97 years ago gave him.



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