

January 15, 2010

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ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORY
COMMISSION

Dear Environmental Quality Board:

I'm enclosing an article I wrote for our local weekly paper (Canton Independent Sentinel) that reflects my fears and concerns as a Canton (Bradford County) citizen. Please read the "2015" entry.

Note too that the paper refused to print this article in spite of their initially asking me to write it. Why? Because the gas companies started taking out full-page color ads in the paper. The editor John Shaffer told me he couldn't bite the hand that was now feeding him.

Given the power the gas companies have over the media and the populace, who will stand in the gap, address the people's fears and strengthen Chapter 95 water regulations? It must be you.

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ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY BOARD

Thank you -

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The Marcellus Massacre by Lynne Whelden

This could be the rough outline for a science fiction film. Or it could be the overactive ruminations of an environmental pessimist. Or it could possibly be the way things turn out in the future. I'll let you decide.

2011 The recession continues. Unemployment remains high. The middle class begins to unravel under the burden of runaway inflation and high taxes. Riots in New York City and in Los Angeles prove that America is no longer a nation united under any banner. A resentment towards the rich upper class begins to take hold. Meanwhile, there are 114 gas millionaires (aka gas-instant-millionaires, gims or gimmies) living in Bradford County.

2012 At 9:20 PM on a hot July night a late-model Hummer rear-ends an '89 VW Rabbit at the intersection in Canton. The owner of the Rabbit jumps out of his car to examine the damage. As a crowd gathers, they recognize the Hummer owner as a 'gimmie.' Suddenly, the mood shifts. Sensing the hatred and anger, the Hummer driver throws his vehicle into reverse, ramming the truck behind him. Shots ring out from the second floor of the building behind the crowd. The Hummer owner responds with a 9mm handgun, firing from behind bullet-proof glass. By the time police arrive, four townspeople lay dead. The horrific incident becomes known nationally as the Marcellus Massacre.

2013 Gas millionaires, now totalling 1003 in the county, have fortified their homes and land holdings with razor wire, pit bulls, guard towers and night scopes. Two wells on Armenia Mountain burst into flames, sending shrapnel up to a mile away. Word on the street is that some local residents using acetylene torches hatched the plan. However, a year-long investigation by the FBI reveals that the terrorist organization Al-Qaeda has been directing its U.S. operatives to target gas fields in northcentral PA.

2015 A joint study by Geisinger Medical Center and Guthrie/Robert Packer Hospital concludes that birth defects have risen a staggering 600% over the past 10 years. Drinking water is their prime suspect. One month later, a gas company whistleblower steps forward with the evidence. The

classified industry document reveals longstanding company knowledge and cover-up of an underground chemical reaction involving radioactive radon and a "fracking" compound, creating a deadly carcinogen never before seen by the medical community.

There are 2401 gas millionaires registered with the county. Very few still live in the area.

2019 A new drilling technique permits use of a pad with a much smaller footprint. The townspeople--those left behind in the boom years and struggling just to survive--begin selling their homes to the gas companies. Within a year, Canton's population plummets by 90% as houses are razed and replaced by wells.

2022 The last family farmer in the county decides to close down, citing age and the constant struggle to make a profit. The next day his fields, which had been in his family for 7 generations, are bulldozed over by the gas company. Not surprisingly, nationwide food shortages have become a way of life.

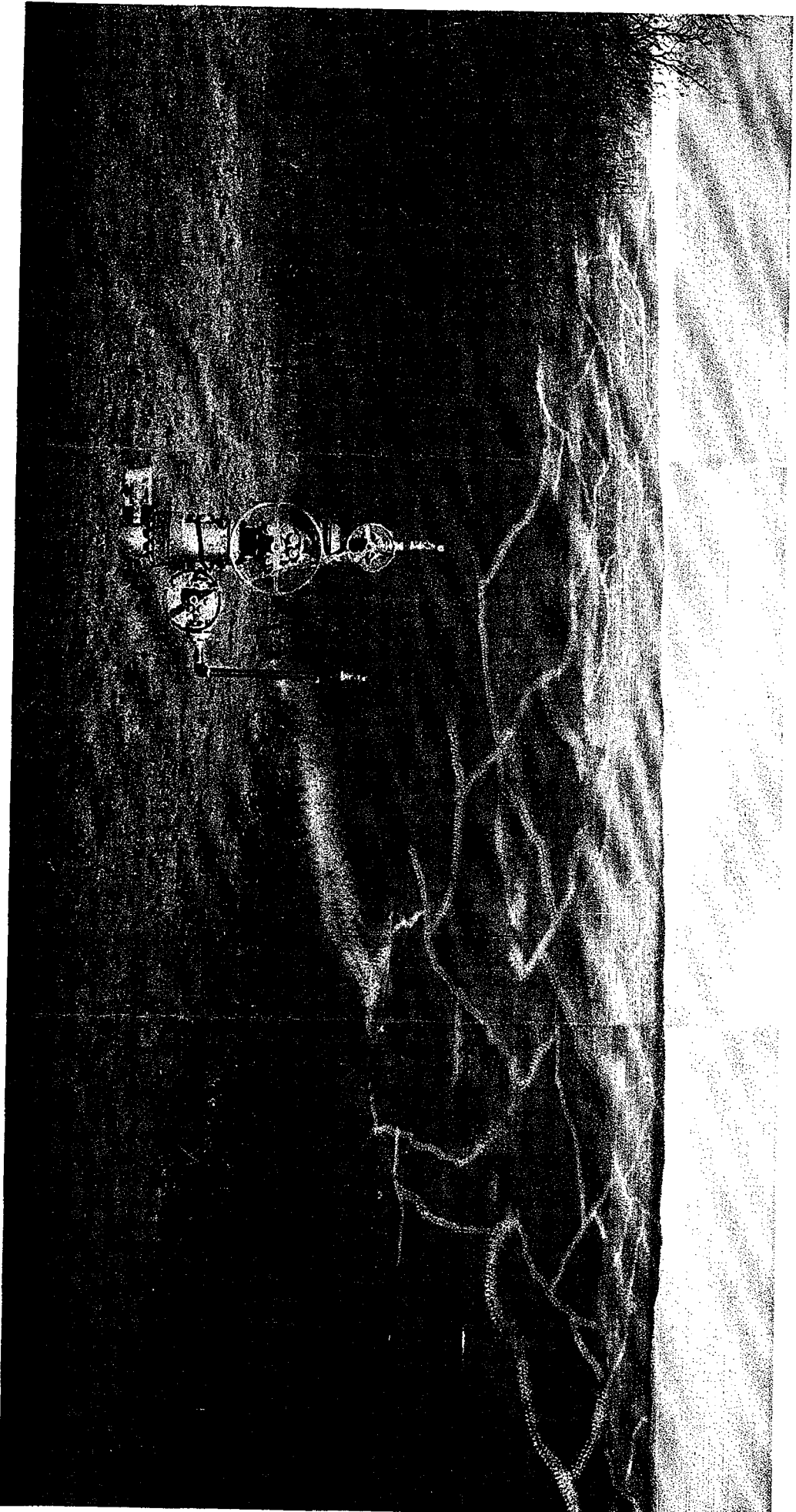
On a brighter note, one "gimmie" has bucked the trend by becoming a humanitarian to the thousands of county residents down on their luck. A refugee camp has sprung up around their gas compound as the good Samaritan provides free meals and trucked-in water to the huge crowds who show up daily.

2025 Flying over Canton in a Bell-Lear solar-powered helicopter, a New York Times reporter describes the scene below: "Rolling hills, once covered with lush hardwood forests, are stripped bare of everything green except briars and scrub grass. In place of majestic trees, grey metal pipes and valves protrude from the brown earth every 100 yards. Transmission lines radiate towards the horizon like so many spokes on a bicycle wheel. A few cement and stone foundations are all that is left of the former boom town of Canton, thus joining Masten and Laquin in a long line of celebrated ghost towns."

There are 13,791 gas millionaires who own land in Bradford County. None live in the state.

2030 The holy Grail for cheap energy production is finally achieved with a process known as cold fusion. All carbon-based fuels are banned by the one-world government. Oil, coal and natural gas production are phased out over the next five years.

Antique telescope view from Mt. Pisgah County Park - 2012



Views from Mt. Pisgah County Park - 2002

