

Some say Peench and those reprobates south of Winchester say Painch-gut, then some snot-nosed reporter started spelling it Pinch — so that's how it stuck. But what it means is something else altogether. Where the Gayoso Bayou tried to shake hands with the Wolf there was a small lake just right for mooring flatboats. The catfish were plentiful and so was the rubbish lumber on its shores. If Fortune provides the food and the board who's going to turn it down? So the landless entrepreneur, the great American adventurer with little but the clothes on his back and his hands with which to labor settled in Pinch.

Naturally those who lived in Sodom south of Union resented the tenacity with which the Pinchite clung to his poverty and independence. But even more resented the swelling numbers of Pinchites, for numbers meant power at the voting place. Old Ike Rawlings took offense at the taverns in Pinch — well when whiskey is 25¢ a barrel, why drink water? He also took offense at the smell of Catfish Bay and as mayor he thought to enforce the nuisance laws in Pinch. The Pinchites zealously defended the constitutional rights of the poor working man and charged that Car's tannery was at fault by the occasional emptying of its vats into the bayou thus killing the fish and making the water unpotable. To defend themselves against Sodom's tyranny, they elected Seth Wheatley mayor. Two nights after the election an unknown party, no doubt a poor loser from Sodom, released the malodorous juices of the tannery. A veritable tide of ooze and muck flowed upon the Pinchites. The flatboats and shanties moved to the northernmost eddy along the bluff and still in Pinch territory. And it's been pretty much that kind of battle for Pinchites ever since.

—Pat Waters

Publisher's Note: This is not the first publication in modern times to be entitled Pinch: the last attempt was in the fall of 1975, but it was, as denoted on its masthead, a mock attempt in every way, an utter flop and not even issued from the Pinch at all. Therefore, I felt no compunction about second-handing that idea and redeeming the only redeemable aspect of that previous attempt at a Pinch.

by Brad McMillan



# MARGINS OF AN INK DROUGHT

No doubt I am obliged at the outset of this undertaking to explain by what presumptions I have been authorized to publish. I am collecting material for print intending to amuse takers as well as to tease and provoke the inkless wordees among us to settle back to their typewriters for the sheer pleasure of it. On their off hours people enjoy a plenitude of pastimes – boating, tinkering, knocking about with some sort of ball, or playing at governing – and many of these require and are provided adequate arenas for exhibition; the same is not generally so for avocational writers – letterwriting being a private exception and not an insignificant one either.

The material herein and hereafter is the produce of self-expression and an affectionate indifference to literature; this journal will not serve as a forum for persuasion excepting that subtle argument of suggestion which is the only legitimate form of instruction open to art. (Excuse that loaded word ‘art’: here I mean it as a term of approach in the selection and treatment of subject, not in the semi-religious, hierarchical sense.) These writers are not professionals: that is, they do not usually receive money for writing and are probably not recognized as such by those who do. However, that does not imply that they are any the less intent on what they do or that what they produce is of any less value. I have functioned for the last several years with the conclusion that developing writers cannot progress without a medium and repository for displaying, transmitting and storing the personal expressions of ideas: individuals need references, criticism and, above all else, to perpetually digest their mental stock by launching reflections with regularity.

There is a hefty chance that something printed within Pinch during its lifetime will be something worthy of endurance. For better or worse, at least to begin with, I must draw on my own experience, my own resources, within my sphere, to attract material and in editing it – both being jobs for which I have no qualifications other than that of self-proclamation. Regarding discrimination, I am convinced at this point in my life that there are but a handful of people on this planet worth even upsetting one’s stomach for – this is not elitism, it’s local reality; perhaps Pinch exposed is Pinch requesting, and thereby will its reading be broadened. As for editing, this is my production, my money, my gift to reader, writer and myself – and, I might add, my ass in the event someone gets inordinately PO’d. Pinch will not emanate from some bold-faced organization, so I do blush a bit when I declare that my tastes will dominate. Should they be very incongruous or out of sync they will, to be sure, perish, as they should, along with this journal – but so what.

All importunate correspondence insisting that Pinch is a pollutant and that its publisher should desist promptly should be addressed to Pinch Trashbin, 357 North Main, Memphis, 38103. Meanwhile, I assure you that these few copies will be disposed of sanitarily. I recommend that each of you keep your copy of Pinch on your coffee table – if you dare – where you may be benefitted with a quick discernment into the character of your visitors should they pick it up – gaining an infallible roadmap of them should they read it. Note carefully where they snicker or grimace, for these are most telling signs. Should you deem the material puerile, pass it on to a child for test – but please no adolescent readers, for they clearly are not children and have too much of the stuff of critics.

– Gerald D. Murley, Jr.

RECOGNITIONS

*At times  
I awake feeling lost to myself  
and all day  
the presence of something I almost remember  
rises to me  
like a slow continent of clouds  
bringing rain  
and at the edge of my eye  
I catch myself walking away  
a lunatic  
dazed by the sudden sun beyond the walls of himself  
  
this is how I come to myself  
  
as upon a stranger  
setting out  
to lead some life  
I shall never live  
  
to love a woman I shall never love  
  
to bear children  
whose names are not my own  
  
so I sit alone  
listening  
as a gull registers its sudden god  
and I wonder what other life  
is calling me now  
  
whose path I wander  
  
and in what solitary fugue  
I shall find myself  
  
dreaming perhaps  
of evening and the smell of rain*

*Alone*

*it is though I awake  
to the bare room of myself*

*wondering as I listen  
if this tenement of voices  
comes from others  
beyond these walls I have built*

*or  
if it is the grief  
of all I did not say*

*or  
still say  
perhaps sitting like this  
in another life, another room  
with you*

*each day  
I pass again the hour of my death  
and always  
the shadow of some nameless sorrow  
returns  
the memory of something I know  
and cannot place  
like a man  
blind  
before the mirror of himself  
a man  
deaf  
to the voice which calls  
his name, his heart  
in words he almost mistakes for  
silence*

# A CHRONICLE OF THE REVIVAL OF MOLEHILL

## PROLOGUE

Two years ago, while making a tour of the middle southern region, I made an astounding archaeological find in a place known as Molehill. To be honest, this discovery could hardly be dignified by so scientific a description, for I really found the artifact while rummaging through a waste basket in a long-abandoned building (I was looking for unspoil paper to use in typewriting).

The find was a manuscript: A Chronicle of the Revival of Molehill by one, Gibbin Nash.

Now Molehill is kind of a city within a city. To be accurate, it's the older section of a city — the place with the past and the large, clustered buildings. It rises, only slightly, above a vast farming plain and stands all to one side of a forbidding river. (Historians are quick to attribute the cynical and uncooperative behavior of the Molehill citizenry to a sense of impotence incurred by residing beside so unapproachable a body of water.)

Mr Nash makes frequent commentary on the character of Molehillians, his general view being that in Molehill one either works, diverts or sleeps — sometimes simultaneously: ' . . . the work is intermittent and insignificant (beyond its peculiar function); . . . during leisure hours citizens who are not engaged in some amateur sport are to be found buried within the confines of their domiciles — and there, too, is a good bit of amateur recreation . . . !'

The forthcoming transactions are of but a moment in what has passed in Molehill; curiously enough, though, the episodes in this journal represent substantial lapses, in that they read in segments dated, and presumeably recorded, at intervals of no fewer than twenty-one days each, condensed as if they were summations of a diary. Those familiar with Molehill will readily recognize that these events account for little or nothing today. Contemporary Molehill is so changed that those for whom the present holds too great a distraction will have to strain their imaginative faculties to reach that particular sweep of the second hand in the biography of Molehill.

Nash, the spectator of this chronicle, has, from notes and my advanced perusal of his journal, intimated that he was himself involved in what is to follow; however, his role is nebulous throughout.

But let him relate the essentials.

— Hastings Merthmill Eaton

## THE IDES OF MARS

The players in this history are numerous and their interrelationships intricate; as I have no notion as to whom this legacy might fall, if anyone, I will inform my reader briefly of each as they happen to my notice and pen. You will be spared my prolixity, for as you shall see I am not a writer but a journalist.

Rumors have come to me today that Cleo Comely and Bric Boogle have met with opposition in their efforts to initiate an appearance code in Molehill. Cleo, a sprightly youth making her way in Molehill, seems compelled to coax and cudgel our community out of its decay, despair and depravity. Pushing and parading her purpose before the

errant eyes of business and civic leaders, she has managed to clean up and entertain the main part of Molehill, and win herself a healthy salary for it too.

Gossip has it that a few months ago she bumped into Bric Boogle in the cosmetic department of an expensive apparel shop, whereupon Bric, an overly groomed Molehill booster eyeing a comfortable city job, enlisted her in his fight to overcome mind-boggling stupidity in bringing about the reclamation of Molehill by the right sort. Bric, who is executive president of the Lots-to-Lose Club of Molehill, reportedly told Cleo that he had a vacancy she could fill, and besides he needed some young ideas.

Several days ago, a local newspaper, *The Business Flyer*, incidentally mentioned the aforementioned proposal of the pair. While a reporter was covering an outdoor concert of the *Dirt-Belly Blues Bastards Band*, he interviewed Cleo, who was not reluctant to recount her past and future achievements to the press. One of those was the Lots-to-Lose Club's upcoming sponsorship of a uniform appearance code before the Aldermen. Shortly thereafter, this statement was apprehended by Luigi Giovanni, who swore he would get his connections to prevent their insidious designs from taking effect.

Luigi belongs to the libertarian wing of the Molehill Snappers, a parody society determined to liven up the community at large by revealing Molehill in travesty. He fancies great civic innovations and accomplishments by that quasi-organization in making Molehill an autonomous commune with an unorthodox culture — by, above all else, providing an environment of entanglement and spectacle. Luigi, not disdaining the notion that to the victor go the spoils, immediately vowed to soil the neat plans of Cleo and Bric and moved to file a legal suit on behalf of the *Flare Shop* — whose clients stood most to be penalized if the appearance code was passed — in hopes of perhaps gaining a new suit for himself.

Soon, too, Issac Pinpoint picked up on Luigi's challenge and was busy editorializing opposition to the code. Issac is a professor of triviology at the local college. He is a frail pedant, with a dry, assuming air about his ideas; he has recently hinted of his early retirement from the schooling profession to take a more active part in the community (no doubt as a lecturer): that is to say, his efforts at publication have multiplied in frantic proportion to the approach of his professorial leave-taking. His local pieces include: 'The Complete History of A. W. Goldberger's Shopping Market'; several pamphlet-length articles on local governmental mismanagement and uncontrolled growth, such as 'Who'll Dot the I's?' and 'What's Wrong With Racoons?', for the *Madison-Molehill Mentor*; and not a few words on 'Life in Molehill in the Year Zero' for the *Clique Reiterater*, a magazine for advertisement which occasionally carries written material.

It seems that Issac's ire was provoked because of some provision in the appearance code which would limit the age of clothing one would be permitted to wear on Molehill streets. Likewise, Penny Cloud, editor of the *Madison-Molehill Mentor*, was eager to publicize Issac's points because of another provision restricting foreign combinations of attire, for instance, French hair-styles with a Mexican Indian blouse and New York knickers or a tailored English vest and cowboy boots.

Penny, a smallish, purposely prickly un-member of the Snappers, has a tight, fidgety physique which she throws around in a sort of athletic manner — just as she tosses about her scant education wherever it might obfuscate opponents, as well as friends, and add to her reputation for being deliberately unusual. And effective her tactics are, too, for she and the Snappers have forced a public debate between themselves and the Lots-to-Losers in hearing before the Molehill Aldermen. There Molehill externals will be addressed.

(Continued Next Pinch)