

**PORT ORFORD POST.**

THURSDAY, - JULY 21, 1881.

**A TRIP TO MULE CREEK.**

Messrs. J. Huntley, Stetson and Smith Jaunt into the Rogue River Mountains in Quest of the "Precious."

In company with Messrs. Stetson and Smith I left Ellensburg June 22, for the purpose of prospecting for quartz on the waters of Mule creek up Rogue river near the county line. We had been instructed to visit a certain "pass" and there to search well and long for the precious stuff. We arrived at the Big Bend the following evening, and camped in Charley Foster's blacksmith shop. Our packer left us there, and we were fortunate enough to secure the services of Charley Foster to pack our provisions to Mule creek, 16 miles above. Fortunate is the prospector who travels with Mr. Foster through the mountains. Having lived at the Big Bend since 1852, he has had many narrow escapes from the Indians many adventures with robbers, cut throats and bears, all of which he distinctly remembers and relates in a manner that does not fail to interest the hearer. Charley was a scout for the soldiers in early days and his trials and escapes were as miraculous as any that Ned Buntline ever related. Amongst the many narrow escapes which he related to me, the most interesting one was in getting through the lines of Capt. A. J. Smith's doomed camp at the Big Bend and bringing several companies of soldiers to its succor in the niche of time. The story, however, is too long and imperfectly remembered for me to attempt to give it.

Rattlesnakes, poisonous and plentiful, abound in and about the Bend and on up above Mule creek. I was constantly on the qui vive for these reptiles lest they should bite me or my mule. Of course we had some of Stetson's medicine with us labeled "Stetson's sure pop on snake bites" which I believe he bought of Walker & Vail. Dr. Smith who did the cooking recommended "that we should take several spoonfuls of the medicine each morning to prepare our systems to receive the poison should we be unlucky enough to get bitten. We observed this precaution with great regularity as long as the medicine lasted. On the way from Big Bend to Mule creek, Foster related his method of disposing of rattlesnakes, which I give as near as I can remember it: When he found a rattler by the way side, he would dismount and whip out his ponderous brush knife, and stooping over the reptile, which always curls up when disturbed give it a gentle tap on the side of the head, after which he would place his foot on the snakes head, then with the knife cut the skin close up to the head, and give it a slight jerk, throw the skin on the brush, and mount his horse and ride off, and leave the snake if it recovered, to "skin out" if it could.

Foster has a nice ranch at the Bend a good orchard and vineyard and lives comfortably and is always glad to welcome ye prospectors and impart any information in possession and always offers many valuable suggestions to those who visit that section for the first time. John Billings has a good ranch near Foster's. He is engaged in the stock business, and I believe, mines some. There are several big bars in the vicinity of Big Bend that prospect very well, and some day will be worked with profit. There are good "rocker diggings" as far up as Galice creek where an industrious miner can make \$3 or \$4 per day. From Foster's we went to the foot of Mule Mountain, and camp-

ed on Tommy East's bar, passing such historical places as Tichenor's Defeat, the Devil's Back-bone and His Majesty's Little Stairs, the history of each Charley gave me as we went along. The "Back-bone" is a steep rocky hill a mile over it and Tichenor's Defeat is a rocky place, where Capt. T. abandoned his horse, being unable to get the animal down a huge cliff, and footed it to Foster's a distance of seven miles. He laughingly told me that the boys went up next day and brought the animal over the place without any difficulty, but I am inclined to think they took the horse around or over the hill as the place looked like it would defeat a man and horse with an "Iowa majority."

We prospected around the bar that evening and got some very good colors, but as the bar is claimed we lost much interest in the prospects. Tommy told us he was doing well and was as happy as a big sun flower.

The next morning we were off at daylight and crossed Mule Mountain in the cool of the morning. The mountain is a tough one being steep and brushy. The distance is estimated at three miles, but it depends in a great measure whether a person is on foot or horseback. From the top of the mountain we had a splendid view of the country to the eastward. Rogue river looked like a yellow yellow thread wound through the greensward and canyons beneath us. The cabins situated on the bars on either side of the river looked no larger than fly specks on the wall.

We were about an hour and a half going down the mountain which is much steeper than the west side. Stetson prospected about and found an old cabin in which we camped. We examined the nooks and corners for snakes and scorpions, and not finding any "sign," we congratulated ourselves on our good luck, little thinking that there lurked in and about our new home the great sleep destroyer—the flea. After preparing and eating a hearty breakfast, we began to look around for evidences of civilization. Finding a small garden adjoining a fine blackberry patch we were satisfied that we would soon be face to face with somebody. I procured a large cudgel and "beat the bush" in the blackberry patch to drive out the dreaded rattlesnake if it should by chance be found lurking thereabouts. I was not to be disappointed in this for I soon got a rattle from a clump of thick vines, and not wishing to encroach even upon a snake, I retired.

We were visited the same day by Mr. Burroughs and Mr. Walker who are engaged at mining in and about Mule Creek. They very kindly invited us to their cabins and offered us all the assistance and information within their power. These gentlemen have good claims, and judging from the comfortable appearance of their cabins they are doing very well. Mr. Walker is working on the Douglas Bar on the north side, and Mr. Burroughs and Stewart are mining on the south side of the river. The latter gentlemen are preparing to wing dam the river which they feel confident will pay them handsomely. Several days afterwards we visited the bar worked by Russell & Co. Though this company are doing well they need more water to make a handsome thing out of their bar. There is a gentleman residing at the Little Meadows whose name I have forgotten, who is engaged in the stock and other business. Owing to the very hot day and the high mountain upon which he lived I did not visit him. Stetson remarked in a careless way, when I indicated that I would not go up to see this gentleman, that the man was "too high" for me any-

how. The next day after our arrival at Mule creek, Foster returned home, and Stetson and I with two days' rations and our gun, blankets and hatchet, we started up Mule creek to see what we could see. We climbed up a big mountain to avoid the canyon, and reached the creek at the first forks about a mile from the river, and as directed, took the left hand fork. For some distance, about a mile, we followed some old blazes, and here and there an excuse for a trail, till we passed the last mining camp. We had intended to go up the bed of the creek, but owing to the rocky character of the bed of the creek and the many canyons, we found it easier to get along the side of the mountain. Sometimes we were fortunate enough to find game trails, but oftener we were compelled to grope our way over precipices and through the brush as best we could. The day was very warm and our progress was necessarily very slow. Once I missed my footing and slid down the mountain on some loose rock into the creek. After I had found bottom my friend Stetson hailed from a cliff, and asked if I was hurt. Knowing that somebody was thinking of me, I took courage and pulled up through the brush as best I could to the place I started from, and proceeded more cautiously. In climbing around a rocky point not far from that place Stetson almost put his hand upon a large rattlesnake. This caused us to keep a sharp lookout, and made it necessary to proceed cautiously. About 4 we came to a creek putting in from the eastward up which we wended our way. We soon found croppings of what we thought was silver bearing rock, and about a mile above found the lead, which was about fourteen feet wide and well defined. This we examined carefully and saw where the lightning had struck it, knocking off many tons of the rock. We located 7500 feet of the ledge and tried to get further up the gulch, but found it too steep. There had evidently been a cloudburst recently upon the peak above us, as the gulch was piled full of broken trees, large boulders and underbrush. The only course left us was to return to water and camp, which we did, being completely exhausted. After we had got rolled up in our blankets, and were conversing about our seemingly good luck, a timber wolf gave a doleful howl upon the mountain above us, close by. Stetson soon built several fires around us to scare off the varmint, and we went to sleep, leaving the wolf to practice his vocal music as long as he wished.

We were up by daylight and retraced our steps to camp which we reached by noon, worn out and hungry. Dr. Smith prescribed and prepared a dose of the "antidote" which we swallowed and soon felt better. We next did ample justice to the pork and beans which he had prepared for us. Our prospect was then displayed, and it was agreed by all who examined it that we had struck it "decidedly good." The next day Smith, Stetson and my "sub," Mr. Chauncey, started up the main fork with the intention of finding the pass where our supposed lead was said to be located, but owing to a rain storm and the fog they could not accomplish anything. They returned the following day much encouraged, and signified their intention of trying it again. My leave of absence having expired, I bid the boys good bye and started for home. I killed five rattlesnakes between Mule Creek and Big Bend, making a total of seven of these reptiles that I had vanquished during the trip.

Should any of my readers wish to visit that section of the country they should not fail to secure the services of Chas Foster. J. H.

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