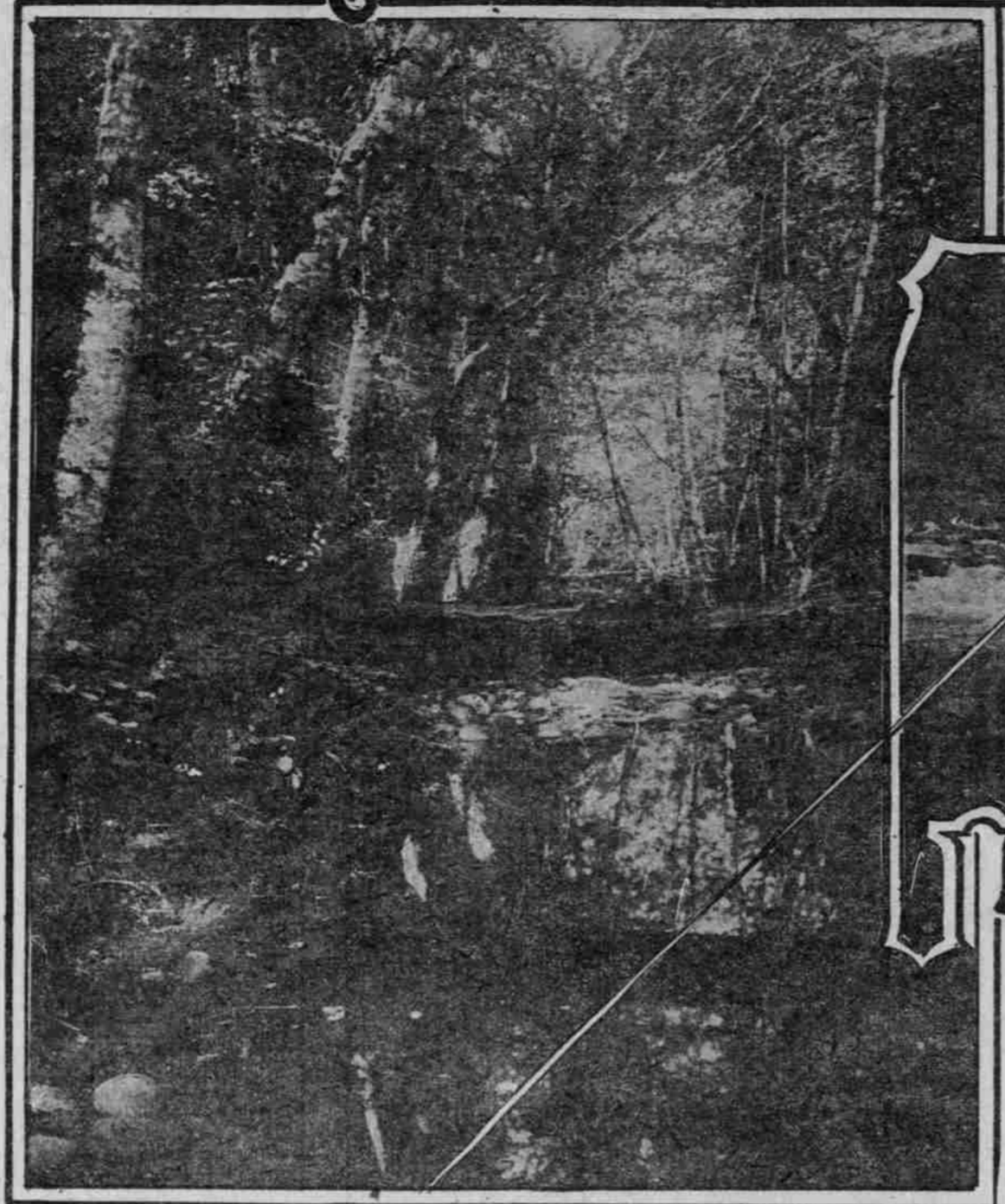


# Along With "Uncle George" on the McKenzie

## Annie Laura Miller's Experience With the Nestor of Fishermen on Oregon's Finest Trout Stream

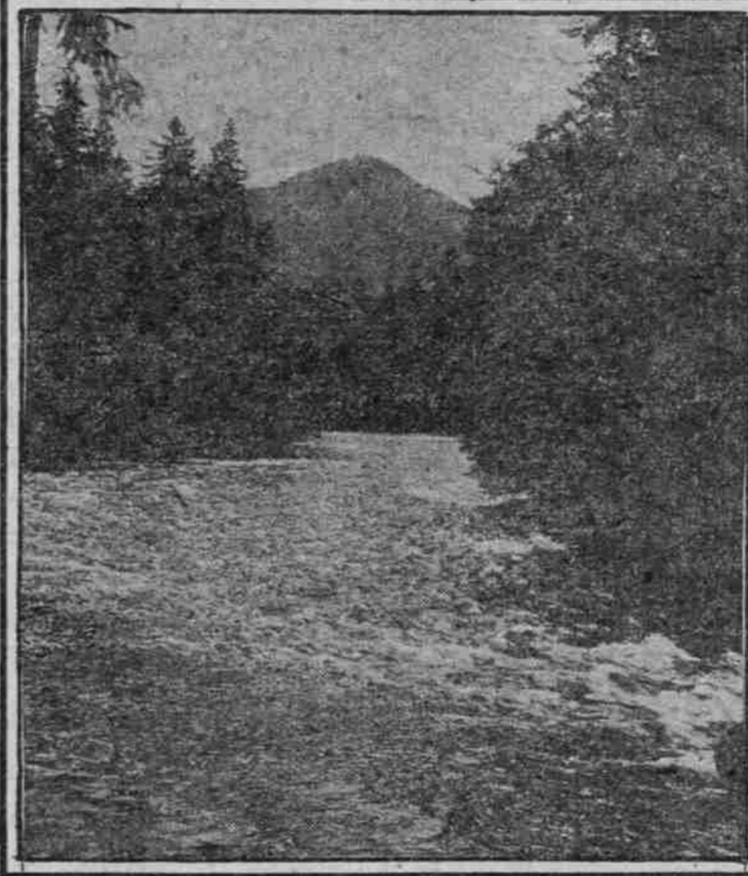


MARTIN RAPIDS ON THE MCKENZIE, PHOTO BY DORRIS, EUGENE.



TODAH

A QUIET POOL IN THE ALDERS PHOTO BY DORRIS, EUGENE.



HORSESHOE BEND ON THE MCKENZIE, PHOTO BY DORRIS, EUGENE.

BY ANNIE LAURA MILLER.

"UNCLE GEORGE, who discovered the McKenzie?"

"McKenzie did."

But as Uncle George didn't know where he discovered it or how, and as the newspaper office suggested as authoritatively some 50 miles away and probably knew only the highest facts, McKenzie began to grow in my imagination. Little things grow to great size in the keen mountain air: a scrap of fleecy cloud becomes a thunder storm, a tiny trout becomes the enormous fish-that-gets-away, a little story grows to be a mighty yarn, and so McKenzie the name became, to my mind's eye, an actual man.

One hot summer day in the early '80s I saw him climbing a rugged mountain-side. There were fir trees and streams in the ravines, but he was climbing up among low brush and rocks with the sun pouring on his back. It was slow going, for there was no trail, only rocks and thick, unyielding brush, and he, poor man, wasn't your typical lean mountaineer, but a short, stout, middle-aged Scotchman, with his habitually red face almost purple from heat and exertion. An hour or so later he had puffed and scrambled to the summit, and I saw him sitting there in the shade of a lichen-covered rock. He took a drink from his whiskey flask and looked at the river below running out of the far eastern mountain and dancing away to the west. He looked long, his stolid Scotch face showing no emotion, although he knew himself to be the first white man to see the beautiful stream. The next day I saw him riding eastward up the river leading a pack-horse loaded with provisions and blankets, but he vanished soon in a mist like the mist that hung over the mountains this morning, and I didn't see the solitary explorer again.

Now, of course, since I wanted to make the acquaintance of McKenzie today, I had to imagine him, but equally of course, I couldn't imagine the early settlers who followed in his track. So I asked Uncle George, who has lived 77 years at the bridge and knew them all in the old days. There was "Ole Man" Peasant, a Frenchman, who kept the eating-house at Gate Creek. He is dead and so are "Ole Man" Belknap and "Ole Man" Sims, who lived far up the river in the big timber. "Andy" Hickson, tall and gaunt, a great hunter in days gone by, has retired now from the life of the trail and works at the salmon hatchery, while "Pook," his dog, and "Mouser," the little blue pony, grow fat and lazy with inaction. "Ole Man" Finn, "the greatest liar on the McKenzie," lives still in a lonely white house with "Finn's Hotel" painted in long letters on its side. As we went up the river the stage-driver pointed out to us the rock that Mr. Finn pulled out of the road with his pair of stout little black mules. To prove the story, the rock stands there as big as a meadlin'-house, immovable since time began.

Uncle George told me another of the "Ole Man's" stories:

"Finn went hunting one day and killed a bear and hid it on his back; then he killed a deer and put him on his back and waded the river and went home. He took the deer off and went to workin'. Pretty soon somebody says, 'Ain't ye goin' to take that bear off yer back?' 'Well, by golly,' he says, 'I plumb forgot it was there.' And that night, when he took off his rubber boots six big redskins fell out of 'em and went flappin' around on the hearth."

Uncle George arises early in true mountaineer fashion. This morning when we came down to breakfast he was driving the cows out of the barn lot to pasture. He is some 60 years old, the "Isaak Walton of the McKenzie," the greatest fisherman on the river, but he covers the ground like a boy, and behind his round spectacles are keen eyes that can see a fish far down in the water where untrained eyes see only the rocky river bottom. He wears sad-

colored clothes in deference to the fishes' feelings, an old gray felt hat, a brown sweater coat, gray trousers and a blue flannel shirt.

"There's always an old woman is only a pound Dolly Varden on the back porch, and as Uncle George was in the garden below I went to ask him the where and the why of the fish. He said that he had caught the Dolly "walking in the garden among the cabbages." There is a beautiful big pool just beyond. The garden is the pride of his life. There are rows of raspberries, blackberries, rhubarb, peas, beets, turnips, onions, carrots, a plot of potatoes, cucumbers, cabbages and...

"It won't be long now, maybe a week," said Uncle George, as he lifted the leaves to find the string beans, and felt of the ears of corn as he cooked for me," he said, cutting a cabbage head.

If the garden is the pride of his life, the love of his life is "Auntie," his sweet old wife, a plump, little, old lady, who walks with a cane. She was never known to say a harsh word, the postmistress at McKenzie Bridge. Next to Auntie in his affection comes Brutus, the old asthma-stricken white terrier.

"He might be ill," Uncle George says, "if he was always old, terriers is only bulldogs, anyway—no play in 'em."

There is "Snooter," too, white like his father, "Sport," a spotted terrier, and "Buster," small and black. There they were this morning at Uncle George's heels, all in a string like the tail to a kite, all that is but Buster, who lay in the shade of the above, looking into the garden. He is forbidden the garden, so he waits outside to take his place at the end of the string. This morning Brutus had had a fight with Snooter and there were streaks of blood on his white coat. The only living thing I ever heard Uncle George speak of with contempt was a dog that followed every one.

"There's something the matter with that dog," he said, "he'll go to anybody; he ain't got no master."

We carried some lettuce to the chickens.

"He've got 150 young chickens," he said, "not big enough to fry yet; an' I tell you I don't like to kill 'em. Do you know that? They know me an' come runnin' to me."

I picked up a bucket of fallen apples and carried them to pigs, fat to the bursting point with frequent meals.

"See where the limbs are broke on the trees," he said, as we went through the orchard. "When the high water came some of those big redskins roared on the limbs. That's what broke 'em off."

Then we went fishing. Something was wrong, I knew, when I came down stairs. It wasn't the fishing rod, for Uncle George himself had chosen the small bamboo pole, tied to it a stout, dark line, a black leader with a lump of lead and a small bait hook (one of my jointed polio rods and hooks of many-colored fiber for Uncle George). The trouble wasn't my brown denim suit.

"The clothes is all right," he said, "but that hat won't do—too bright—the fish'll see you comin'." So a battered gray felt took its place and we started.

In the edge of the forest Uncle George uncovered his head.

"It always take off my hat when I go into the woods," he said, "reverence."

For three quarters of a mile we followed the trail, past the catch of red huckleberries, under the giant fir trees. The sunlight came glancing down through the vine maple and made bright spots on the thick moss where Oregon grape, delicate ferns and oxalis grow with occasional bunches of Indian pipes, the ghost flowers of the woods. A pair of gnatcatchers ran down a fir tree, far away a russet-backed thrush sang his loud, clear song, reared was a tiny brown wren singing the sweetest warbling song imaginable, and just above the trail, on a low-swinging bough sat a young Alaskan robin, as yet too ignorant to fly away from human beings. Pine squirrels were chattering up in the tree tops, and once we came suddenly on a chipmunk, so frightened at our approach that

his throat throbbled as if his heart had jumped there and his poor little sides were heaving with terror. We came to where Horse Creek went to pieces and ran this way and that, many small streams, seeking the river through a jungle of vine maple.

"There's some pools up there on Horse Creek that nobody knows, and there are big spotted fellows there that have never seen a white man nor woman," Uncle George said.

We passed an old abandoned cabin and went through an opening scaring up a boy of quails. A jay called in a burnt street, a pheasant drummed nearby and overhead a flock of merry chickadees sang "chick-a-dee-dee, chick-a-dee-dee" as they hopped about in the alder boughs.

Uncle George went rapidly ahead gliding through the woods more like a brook than like a two-legged human being; at his heels was the string of four dogs and I followed shouting questions:

"Uncle George, aren't you ever sick?"

I asked.

"No," he answered, "and I'll soon be livin' on borrowed time too. O, a person hasn't hardly got time to be sick. If you want to be well, just keep a gait and don't sleep in the daytime. Some folks don't know how to live; they never learned how to eat; they'll get up with headaches and set down and eat a meal that a logger hadn't ought to put away. I always look on the right side and the bright side and when I hear people begin to talk about their pain, I don't say a thing, but I just sneeze off," and we went over the steep bank down to the first fishing hole.

"There, that's the place," said Uncle George as he broke the alder boughs and pointed to a big smooth spot above a rock. "A little more lead." And the hook battered with a fat yellow strampon floated right in the front door of a family of redsides. Well, here they are, I knew, they would bring me back to come into every letter I write for months in spite of attempts to keep them out, for being an amateur fisherman, I am proud of those two redsides that weighed a pound and a half apiece. The first one "bit savage," and then, how he fought! rushing up stream, rushing down stream, suddenly bring still, jumping to the surface, plunging to the bottom, lunging toward midstream while the tough bamboo pole bent and my arm ached, and Uncle George at my elbow gave me warnings and advice, and swore mildly and unconsciously at the fish. After ten minutes the fish had fought himself tired so he was brought next the bank and landed without a net. Uncle George took him off.

"You devil you," he said to the redside, and to me, "That's a fine fish."

Then if I had been "one of those Portland fellers" we would have celebrated with a drink of whiskey for which Uncle George has a true fisherman's liking, but he took a chew of tobacco instead and, as the fish had to go in the basket, we took our lunch out and ate it, and the four dogs ate theirs; and afterwards I caught the other redside in the same pool.

"You see," said Uncle George, "that's where they live. They're at home now."

A two-pound white fish took the hook next and made a great fuss until we discovered what he was and landed him without ceremony.

"The only thing the matter with a white fish is that he ain't a trout," Uncle George said, as he threw him back in the river. Then came a whole of a redside who fought until he was done, but just as I was about to land him he discovered what he was and swam, and I tread and dazed to swim, while I sat down heavily on the rocks, and pulled the broken hook out of the top of the alder bush and thrust west, and myself a man so that I might swear. Yet a man is on record at the bridge who lost a huge redside fish, hook and leader all at one swoop, and stood looking at the pool and then:

"You nasty thing," he gasped.

"No more fish came out of that hole."

I guess he squealed. Uncle George said so we kept on down the bank, and if it was a half-pound redside Uncle George said:

"That's a fine fish," and if it was a speckled trout only as big as the law allows, he said:

"That's fine eatin'."

and came back to the fishing only when Uncle George said:

"Don't throw 'in there; a fish never lived in there."

"Now—" as the hook dropped in the edge of the swift water and seven speckled trout came in quick succession. "They're left home and are coming up after it."

When the basket was heavy and it was mid-afternoon we started back. Part

of the vine maple jungle looked unfamiliar and the creek seemed to be running in more directions than ever.

"Goin' the wrong way," Uncle George said as if to himself.

"Are we goin' the wrong way?" I asked.

"No, we ain't; the creek is; it ought to go north and it's goin' south." But he shook down the mud trail and fared along. In the edge of the clearing Uncle George said:

"It's good to go into the woods, and it's good to come out 'o the woods," and I felt like adding "Blessed be the woods."

After supper all the people therabouts began to gather for the night, the trapper who lives across Horse Creek, three of the cattleman's children, the old mountaineer, who is a living botany book; the homesteader's wife, very picturesque in a short skirt, blue flannel shirt and felt hat, with a revolver by her side, the Summer boarder, and a wiry dark man who is the most serious hunter in the forest reserve. I asked Uncle George about the hunter.

"Afraid? He ain't afraid of nothin'. He'll climb right up a tree and shake out a wildcat or a cougar." He ain't even afraid of the devil," said Uncle George, in convincing tones that a picture leapt to my mind of the hunter climbing a tree to shake down the mud trail and fared along. In the edge of the clearing Uncle George said:

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"Fine fish," said Uncle George. "But they say you have the fish streaked out, Uncle George, and can get them when you want them."

"Now you can catch fish," said Uncle George, "but they's some men, the smartest men we have, too, don't know how to figger on fish. A man come up here thought he was a fisherman," and Uncle George chuckled and wiped his beard with a red handanna. "I went fishin' with him on Horse Creek. 'Which side you goin' to take?' he says. 'Which side you goin' to take?' I'll take this side." "Well, I'll take this side," I says. "We fished maybe three hours and I saw him comin' back grinnin'." "Have luck?" I says. "Fine," he says. "I got 13. How many did you get?" "Sixty," I says. "Well, sir, next morning he went to fish in the river and came back in two hours without anything. He says, 'I was a fishin' and I heard a frog a settin' on the bank, and he says: 'Good morning, George; good morning, George.' 'Then go home, go home,' the frog says. And I come home." The four-hour stage came singling in from Eugene, some 50 miles away, and Uncle George took the mail sack in to Auntie.

Just now, as I sat on the upper porch, watching the stars come out above the rugged mountain tops, I saw him starting out patiently with a lantern to find the straying cows.

York, and Rev. Leavitt H. Hallock, D. D., of Mills Seminary, Oakland, Cal. Mr. Himes was then called upon to make a speech. He said it was a great privilege to meet friends from so many different and widely separated parts of the Union, upon this lofty eminence, and expressed a hope that as a result of this gathering a fitting name might be given it by this body—first, because its representatives came to the city at the request of the board of trustees, and second, because this was a traditional council ground of the Indians of the valley, and a place where signal fires were lighted to inform the aboriginal tribes of this vicinity of impending danger.

Following these remarks one name after another was given, but each one was rejected as not appropriate, until, finally, Rev. Dr. Hallock, formerly of Portland, Me., suggested "Council Crest." This being considered suggestive and fitting, upon the motion of George H. Himes, it was unanimously adopted. In this company were those who had traveled "far and wide" over the earth. With one accord the entire company were enthusiastic over the wonderful scenic surroundings of the city, claiming that "it could not be matched in all the striking diversity anywhere upon this earth or ours. No city in the world has a point so near it from which so much can be seen."

Bunch of Episcopal Kittens.

Everybody's.

A street boy of diminutive stature was trying to sell some very young kittens to passers-by. One day he accosted the late Rev. Phillips Brooks, asking him to purchase, and recommending them as good Episcopal kittens. Dr. Brooks laughingly refused, thinking them too small to be taken from their mother. A few days later a Presbyterian minister who had witnessed this episode was asked by the same boy to buy the same kittens. This time the lad announced that they were faithful Presbyterians.

"Didn't you tell Dr. Brooks last week that they were Episcopal kittens?" the minister asked sternly.

"Yes," replied the boy quickly, "but they's had their eyes opened since then, sir."

## Beauties of Drive to Council Crest

June McMillen Ordway Describes Entrancing Scenery of Road, and Relates Circumstances of Naming of Mountain.

BY JUNE MCMILLEN ORDWAY.

ACCEPT AN invitation for a drive to Council Crest? I would not miss such a pleasure. Leaving cares and business behind, the most perfect of afternoons, September 2, found a merry party soon upon the way. Our kind friend, yes, "everybody's friend," George H. Himes, held the ribbons of a span of lively stepping horses. Leaving the Oregon Historical Society's rooms in the City Hall we were driven to the Canyon Creek road, up an easy grade, through dense groves of fir, yew, cedar, spruce, dogwood and the lovely vine maple, which at this season is donning its handsome Autumn dress of brilliant red. On past clusters of ferns, 27 varieties of which grow in the canyon, "over the hill to the porchouse," where the aged inmates rest in the shade of trees on the well-kept lawn; on lower ground the finest of vegetable gardens are seen.

A yew tree which grows in this canyon, is said to make the best arrows in the world. Will H. Thompson, the champion archer of the coast, says that in early days the Indians came long distances to secure this yew from this locality for their arrows.

The Canyon Creek road was the first plank road on the Pacific Coast. In 1881 the laying of the first plank was celebrated in a fitting manner. The citizens met on Front street, where the procession, led by Thomas J. Dryer, first editor of The Oregonian, and headed by a brass band, took up the line of march; as Mr. Himes expressed it, they "zigzagged" up through the woods, passing the spot where the First Congregational Church now stands, and on out to the canyon, where a gold coin was placed under the first plank laid. As much enthusiasm was exhibited at that attending the driving of the "last spike," on any great railroad at the present day.

The sparkling Canyon Creek, which winds its way between the hills, seems to have assisted the road builders in their work, having cut a wide channel below a great convenience to the early settlers in the "coast country" in hauling their grains, meats and other produce, which were exchanged for clothing and articles used upon the farm.

Leaving the Canyon road we are soon looking down upon the most beautiful farms in the world; farther on, we catch a glimpse of Tualatin Plains, and at another turn in the road Oregon City is distinctly seen. Winding around Marquam Hill so many beautiful scenes appear before us in this grand panorama that we hear "Ohs" and "Ahs!" from many lips, but when "Miller's View Point" is reached the horses are stopped and quiet reigns; our adjectives are exhausted; we look in speechless wonder upon the scene. Mount Hood seems to have arisen from a bank of lacy, veil-like clouds; the atmospheric conditions are such that the mountain looks much higher and larger than when we were on lower ground; it is impossible to describe the enchanting scene. When Joaquin Miller first visited this place, 12 years ago, which was named for him, he did not speak for 30 minutes, so great was his surprise and so enraptured was he of the scene.

Having encircled the hilltops the homeward drive is upon an entirely different route from that which we had driven upon the upward trip. Upon every side are seen many varieties of wild berries and flowers.

Thousands of people, many of whom have seen all the countries of the world, have taken this trip to Council