

Early Day Hunting On Mount Pitt

(By John B. Griffin.)

While in Ashland a few weeks ago I met many old friends and was imprompted to write a hunting story for the Ashland Tidings. I was so royally entertained while there that I could not well refuse, so I promised, and now I will proceed to fulfill that promise, and I hope that the reader will not be disappointed in this story, as I am going to write of one of my most successful hunts, and besides the friend who was with me is one of Ashland's old-timers and most substantial citizens—no other than Hon. Robert Neil, ex-mayor and vice-president of an Ashland bank, but in this story I am going to call him just plain Bob. Now, no doubt, there are a great many people in Ashland who will be surprised to know that Bob ever hunted bear or ever hunted at all, for that matter, but let me tell you, don't deceive yourselves, for thirty years ago there were few men in Jackson county who could give Bob Neil any pointers on either hunting or shooting, if he did miss the Sugar Loaf bear that I told about in the Record some time ago. Well, to make a long story short, I know that I couldn't lay it over him any, but that is not saying very much. However, I used to hate awfully bad to be beaten by anyone when it came to hunting, but I sure kept me jumping sideways to hold my own when I went out with Bob.

I and Bob used to live neighbors in the Dead Indian country a long time ago, and it was from there that we started on the hunt that I am going to tell you about, and the region around Mt. Pitt was our destination, where bear, deer, elk and gray wolves abounded in more or less numbers, and we went loaded for bear, for bear was what we wanted, and besides we had old Traller, the famous old dog the readers all know about, and Ranger, one of the best helpers he ever had, and we were ready to follow them to the end of the trail. We started out with five horses and a .44 apiece and lots of ammunition, also plenty of grub. Now at this day and age of the world some hunters will think it strange that a man would go out to hunt big game with a .44 Winchester, but in those days there were no high-power guns, and let me tell you I have been in some pretty close places, when I had only the .44, and I always managed to come out all right.

Well, the first drive we made was to Wetfoot prairie, by noon. Here was an old cabin that had been built several years before by Bob Neil, Bill Daly and others, and had been used as a trappers' cabin. There was a prairie here and lots of grass, so while we cooked dinner the horses filled up and at 1 o'clock we saddled up and pulled out, intending to go as far as Elk prairie. There were no trails those days, so we hit straight through the woods, and after traveling about three or four hours we came to a stream of water

that flows out of Black Butte and makes one prong of Butte creek. Here was grass high as a horse's back, and a huge spreading maple to camp under, and one of the prettiest streams that I ever saw in all my life, and full of fish besides. This was too good to pass by, so we just simply unpacked and turned the horses loose, and after resting a while we got out our hooks and lines and in twenty minutes had all of the speckled beauties we wanted. Some were twelve and fourteen inches in length. This same stream can be reached from Ashland now by auto in half a day, but parties would have to walk a certain distance. An auto could very easily be made the whole distance. After supper, which consisted of bread baked by the camp fire, fried potatoes, butter, coffee and fried fish, we concluded to take a walk out to Elk prairie, which we knew could not be very far, and here I did a foolish trick and discovered it when it was too late. I went without my gun! I wanted to leave the dogs in camp, and knew if I went without the gun they would not want to follow. So Bob took his gun along and I sauntered along behind, not thinking for a moment that we would see any game that would be worth shooting at. But in this I was mistaken, for after traveling perhaps a half or three-quarters of a mile we came to the edge of Elk prairie, and lo and behold, right out in the prairie, not over 125 yards, were two big gray wolves, busy feeding on the carcass of a deer which they had probably killed. I need not tell you that just about this time I would have given a kingdom for my gun, and watched as Bob pulled up his Winchester and took careful aim at one of them and let her go. At the crack of the gun the wolf leaped high in the air and turned round and round and tumbled over. The other one sprang off a few yards and stopped to look and listen. The lever went down and up, and quicker than it akes to tell it, another bullet sped from the .44 and caught him in the thigh. Away he went now towards the timber, dragging one hind leg, and away went Bob, too, stopping to shoot about every twenty yards. How it would have ended is hard to tell, but just then I heard the dogs coming. I stopped Traller, but Ranger passed by like a cyclone and saw the wolf. You could just see a black streak going across that prairie. The wolf could not make much headway, and it was plain to be seen that Ranger would overtake him before he could get to the timber to save

his life. Bob kept going, but did not shoot any more after Ranger passed him. The race was soon over, and when the wolf saw he was soon to be overtaken, he stopped and swung around to face his foe. Ranger was too foxy to close in on him, but instead ran round and round him, and every chance he got would try to get him by the ham. Bob soon got there and the old Winchester cracked, and I saw Ranger seize him and commence to yank him around. I let Traller go now and I went also. I know he was disappointed when he got there, but I couldn't help it. He was too valuable a dog to take chances on getting him hurt by a wolf. Bob wanted to skin them, so we went to work and took the hides off. Bob said he would pack the hides, and was gracious enough to give me the gun, but of course we supposed there was nothing between there and camp. I confess I was a little down in the mouth, and kept thinking it would be a cold day when I left my gun in camp again.

In going back we kept up nearer the foot of the hill, and just as we got well into the timber, out jumped a big five-point buck and tore out through the timber at a terrific rate. It was open timber here, and in those days I was a pretty good shot on the run. The lever went down and up, and quicker than a flash I sent a bullet whizzing after him, which by good luck struck him near the bulge of the ribs, and ranging forward passed through the heart. He ran a few yards and up-ended. Say, believe me, all my troubles disappeared right there, and I could smile now as well as Bob. This was pretty good luck. Fish, buck meat and wolves to start in with, and several miles yet to go before we would be to our permanent camp.

The next morning we packed up and went out across Elk prairie, across Butte creek, up past Fish lake, and along the trail towards Lake of the Woods for four or five miles, then turned to the left and kept around the foot of Mt. Pitt a few miles, and landed high up on a creek called Paradise, that empties into Lake of the Woods, where we found a beautiful place to camp—lots of grass, lots of water and lots of huckleberries, and we hoped lots of game. The balance of the day was spent in fixing up camp, making a fir hough bed and also racks to jerk meat on. Late in the evening we took a little round and scared a bunch of grouse near camp. They flew up and lit in the pines all around us. We turned loose and killed five, shooting the heads off of three. Bob did that. We also saw some bear signs, but not real fresh. We were in a wild country now, and had big expectations as game here had seldom ever been bothered, and we had such good luck to start with that we felt confident of getting all the game we wanted. So next morning we were up bright and early, and after a fine breakfast of fat buck meat we got ready and started out. I took the dogs and went up on the east side of the creek, and Bob crossed over and went up the ridge on the west side and was supposed to follow it up towards Mt. Pitt and keep high up so that in case Traller started a bear he would stand a better chance to hear him. By the way, Bob cautioned me before he left to be sure and take my gun, which I thought was not very good taste in him, but I smothered it down. I had not got a half mile from camp when I discovered where a big bear had come down off the hill from the huckleberry patch and went down towards the creek. The dogs were a little distance back, so I gave the horn a few quick, short toots, which was the signal for them to come and come quick. It was hardly a minute until they were there, and I could tell as quick as Traller got his nose on the track that it was fresh. They both went to work like they meant business, and were down across the creek and going up the hill on the track in just a few minutes. Pretty soon I heard them turn loose to yelping, and over the hill they went and out of my hearing in just a short time. They were going towards where Bob should be, so I stayed where I was, hoping it would make a turn and come back my way. But in this I was disappointed, and after waiting some little time I made up my mind to go on over across the creek and up on top of the ridge and see if I could hear them. Sure enough, when I go up there I did hear them, away down near the trail that leads to Lake of the Woods from Fish lake. I could tell from the sound that they had overtaken and were baying him. The old scamp wouldn't climb. I lit out down the ridge, and, believe me, there was no grass grew under my feet, either. I was satisfied that Bob would be following up on the other side, and if the bear made a break, which he was nearly sure to do, one or the other of us stood a

show to head him off. I kept on going and had got up to within probably two hundred yards, when, sure enough, away he went down the hill towards Black Butte. He made quite a run this time before the dogs brought him up, as it was brushy, but as soon as they struck open timber they made it hot for him again and he couldn't make much headway. I gave the horn a toot and Bob answered me, only a short distance ahead. He waited until I caught up with him, and on we went. We could hear the dogs going after the bear now, and could tell he wasn't making much headway. Pretty soon they came to a deep canyon and he made a run on them down into this, but as he came up on the other side we had got to the brink and could see them as they fought backwards and forwards, first one grabbing him by the ham and then the other. Now was our chance, and as he turned with his side to us we both fired. Down he went on his belly, clawing at the ground for a few minutes, then over and over he rolled down the hill, both dogs yanking at him as he came. We went down to where they were now and made the dogs quit. Both bullets had passed through behind the shoulders, one at least through the heart. He was a mealy nose brown and about as big as they generally get. We dressed him and straightened him around in good shape and started back for camp, as we knew it would be noon or after when we got there, and besides Traller had run enough for one day.

(To be concluded next Monday.)

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Big Grand Army Camp Closes

Kansas City, Mo., Sept. 1.—The fiftieth annual encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic and the reunions of its auxiliary organizations will close today.

A visit from Charles Evans Hughes, republican nominee for president, the election of national officers and their installation, and the annual "camp fire" of the National Association of ex-Prisoners of War were to combine to make this one of the big days for the Civil war veterans.

Mr. Hughes is to arrive here at 5:50 o'clock this afternoon. He is to be met by an escort of veterans. The veterans yesterday selected Boston as the next meeting place. The camp fire of the union ex-prisoners tonight will be the last evening of the encampment.

Forest Fires in Northwest.

According to figures just compiled in the district forester's office, 54 forest fires out of 119 occurring between August 10 and 20 were caused by careless campers, and the remainder were due to incendiaries, hunters, lumbering and railroads. During the period from January 1 to August 20 there were 370 fires in the national forests of Oregon, Washington and Alaska. These fires burned over a total acreage of 2,437 acres, an average of 6 1/2 acres per fire, and cost \$450 to extinguish. The Siskiyou national forest, during this period, has had 30 fires, burning over 263 acres, and costing \$87, as against 29 fires, burning over 112 acres and costing \$87 for the same period last year.

Phone news items to the Tidings.

Audubon's Name Louisiana's Pride.

Louisiana will always be associated with the name of Audubon. Not simply because the immortal ornithologist was born within the borders of this state, but because it was here that he received the great incentive to pursue to triumphant conclusion the studies that have made him revered the world over. For here, in this wonderful bird parish of West Feliciana, he (not neglecting to duly honor his noble wife's part) earned sufficient funds to enable him to go to England, where his art and other scientific attainments and researches were appraised at their true value.

In Louisiana there are three places to be inseparably linked with the name of John James LaForrest Audubon—Mandeville, where he was born; New Orleans, where he starved; West Feliciana, where he roamed the most beautiful of all Louisiana's beautiful woods, studied his birds, drew their portraits, and earned sufficient to have his work printed and made known to the world.

To those who have studied the life of this noted scholar, as set down by his wife and other chroniclers, it is evident that the most momentous periods of his strangely checkered career were those spent in this state—yet those are the periods passed over in a few sentences or short chapters by biographers. This seems strange since it was here his heart interest lay—especially when abroad.

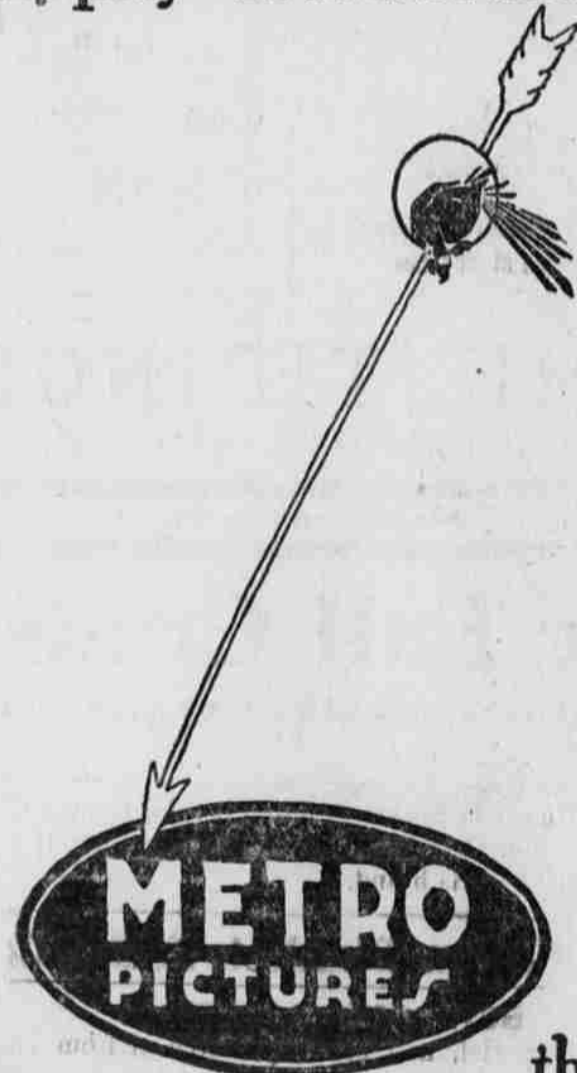
For sale, three cows and No. 4 Sharples separator. O. J. Rathbun, phone 409-R. 24-1f

Mrs. Mary L. Newland, who has taken personal instruction under Dr. Montessori of Rome, has opened an open air Montessori school for children from three to six years of age. Chautauqua hall, phone 441-R 28-4t*

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