

### Angus Brown, Embittered Pioneer, Killed Many Redskins During Southern Oregon's Stirring Days

(By Ernest Rostel)

Not mentioned in histories of southern Oregon compiled years ago, and perhaps nearly forgotten by the few surviving pioneers, residents in this section before Medford was ever proposed and where Jacksonville had hardly begun, is Angus Brown, a pioneer of the early '50s, who is credited with the killing of more Indians single handed than any other person in southern Oregon. His kin still reside in Medford and Central Point and are members of the best known pioneer families in the state.

Angus, who died only a few years ago in California, resided in southern Oregon only during the Indian wars of 1852 and of 1856, and during that time was one of the most active Indian fighters of this section. He was a nephew of Colonel John E. Ross, whose sons—Thomas, George and John—now reside in Central point, and often fought redskins with Colonel Ross, now regarded as one of the best Indian fighters the west had ever known.

At the age of 19 years, Angus was embittered against the Indians. Brought up in the crude environment of the frontier, he was hardened to life, and the killing of an Indian was hardly more than ordinary routine, according to Thomas Ross, his first cousin, in a reminiscent mood recently in recounting incidents of days long gone by. He was a big, powerful man; knew not the meaning of fear, and would attack a whole tribe of Indians if he had the slightest assurance of being successful in his attack.

#### Redskins Rampage

The Indians were on a rampage in the Grave Creek country above Grants Pass and, together with a group of Jacksonville volunteers, Angus was in that section to aid the panic stricken settlers, who were hearing their wife's end, following numerous daylight and night attacks, resulting in the deaths of entire families, burning of buildings, and kidnapping of women. Angus was with a group which was trailing moccasin tracks mingled with the shoe prints of several white women, following an attack on a settler's cabin.

At this cabin the Indians had killed the men and taken the women alive, including a 14-year-old girl, after having taken two boys, possibly around 6 or 7 years old, beaten out their brains by whirling their bodies by the feet and hitting their heads on the side of the cabin. The little bodies were found by the rescue party, which had then attempted to locate the women.

The party was making fair progress in following the tracks when Angus was inspired to turn back in the thought that other cabins might even have been harassed by the murderous savages. He thought of the cabin of Mr. and Mrs. Harris, parents of two children and owners of a place large enough to employ the services of a hired man. He was joined by a friend who, in fact, was his chum.

#### Cabin Besieged

They turned back and reached the Harris cabin at dusk. Indians were firing at the cabin under the protection of a log and had besieged the premises for hours. The Indians first killed the hired man and placed his body in a spot where it was not found until a year later. The Harris son had been sent into the potato patch for supplies, but after the arrival of the Indians he never returned and his body was never discovered. Mr. Harris was shot as he fled into the house with his wife and daughter, the latter receiving a wound through the arm.

Seriously injured, he told his wife to bar the doors and gave her instructions in using the shotgun, a combative affair, which later considered a relic, was shot several times by Mr. Ross. She held

the Indians back by repeated firing of the gun, but the defense was interrupted by first aid attention administered to the fallen member of the household. However, he died within an hour after being struck.

As the day wore on Mrs. Harris discovered her ammunition to be running low and it was not long until it was gone. Having a good supply of powder still on hand, she did not despair and using paper for wadding, kept firing at the besieging Indians. They would fall back each time she fired, thinking she was still using bullets. Fearing that the repeated use of the paper wadding would set the house on fire, and also fearing that the Indians would set the building ablaze, she left her post in the second story of the house and managed to flee with her daughter into the brush without being seen by the Indians.

#### Brown Arrives

It was not long after she had made her escape that Angus Brown arrived on the scene. He rushed into the house, found Harris crouched in a pool of blood on the floor and on the table found \$200 in money the Harris family had gathered together in apparent preparation to leave the section. Angus took the gold and, becoming crazed with madness and revenge, routed the Indians, or so he claims, who were sheltered behind the log. He rushed into the open, firing his pistol at the marauders, several of whom were struck by his accurately aimed bullets.

They fled and the mother and frightened daughter were then found by Angus and brought to Jacksonville. Mrs. Harris lived to a ripe old age and her daughter was married to a son of a southern Oregon pioneer family.

At the Harris cabin, after the Indians had been routed, Angus planned vengeance against the entire Indian race and swore he would kill every Indian he met. It was not long until he became known as a killer.

"Once Angus was riding down a trail," said Mr. Ross in telling of his Indian fighting cousin, "and saw a young buck. The buck made his friendly sign and Angus made his. The Indian dismounted and walked toward him, but before he'd gone far Angus whipped out his pistol and shot him dead. He took pride in telling of his killings, thinking he was avenging the massacres of Grave Creek.

"Another time there was a friendly Indian employed by the Beall brothers between Central Point and Medford," Mr. Ross continued, "and one day Angus, along with the Lealls and others, including the Indian, set out after range cattle. Angus didn't like the Indian, although he had been a faithful employe. As they were riding along the Indian turned and started to go in an opposite direction. Angus asked him where he was going, and was told that he was going to join the Apikates, a treacherous Indian tribe. Angus didn't wait for another word and shot the Indian from the saddle, and put his gun up untroubled by the experience.

#### Had Close Call

"Once he nearly met his Waterloo, though, when he engaged in a fight with a husky, brave, another friendly Indian. He was one of several redskins employed by some cattle owners to move cattle to another range. Angus was in the party when the cattle stampeded, frightening the savages, one of whom grabbed at him for protection, but he thought the Indian was attacking him, and immediately drew out his knife. With a mighty lunge he sent the knife into the region of the Indian brave's ribs, but the blade broke off.

"And then, you should have seen the fight," related Mr. Ross. "He killed that Indian with the broken off knife, but I was told by Angus himself that it was a fight if even two men fought. Both were of the same weight and strength, with the only advantage held by Angus with the knife. The Indian was fighting for his life and the other was fighting to kill. The Indian fought hard, but in vain, and another redskin paid for the sins of his fellows.

"Even after the war with the Indians, Angus' vengeance did not die. There was a medicine man who made regular trips to Jacksonville, coming through the pine groves west of Central Point, and it seems Angus even bore hatred for him, peaceable and likable man that he was.

#### Slayer Boasts

"The people of Jacksonville missed the old Indian and about a week after his disappearance, Angus boasted to some one in a certain log in the grove he would find the missing man. The old Indian was found covered up with weeds and leaves, but Angus was never bothered for killing him.

"Another time," continued Mr. Ross, "perhaps it was several years earlier, Angus shot an Indian along a fence. The red man fell down and Angus rushed over and scalped him, taking his long black hair in one hand and the knife in the other and cut his scalp. This was hung on his saddle horn and he rode feebly to Jacksonville.

"Other riders, possibly it was a pack train (I was told the Beall brothers were in the party) came riding by the same place, saw the Indian and imagined they saw him move. When they arrived in Jacksonville they saw Angus' horse and on the saddle saw the fresh scalp, with blood still dripping. It was not so very long until they heard him boasting about killing another 'red demon' and they told Angus about seeing the Indian along the train and told him about seeing or thinking they saw him move.

"That worried Angus," continued Mr. Ross in his narration, "and Angus had someone go and see if the

Indian was dead, but he soon received reports that the Indian was gone. That worried him more and he went and saw another Indian and bargained with him to find and kill the missing red man for a pony and a blanket. This offer was speedily accepted and for this proof the killer was to bring back his victim's scalp, cutting it around the place where Angus had two scalps from the same Indian.

Slew 60 Indians  
"I guess there were many other cases of Angus' killings," said Mr. Ross, "for he told me once when I was still a youngster that he had killed about 60 Indians. He killed five of these in a fight after he left here for California, where he married a Mexican woman and resided at San Bernardino. He married a daughter of the governor of the state of Sonora in Old Mexico and raised a family of several children.

"My father, Colonel Ross, went all the way down to San Bernardino once to see his nephew, Angus, but it seems that Angus didn't want to see him, feeling ashamed of himself for having married a Mexican. My father didn't care about that, but Angus took it seriously and I guess they didn't have another opportunity to see each other after that," concluded the speaker.

Angus was a miner as well as a fighter, but he didn't care for money. It was adventure and excitement he craved. He was truly a son of the western frontier. He braved the winter storms and lived in places where others dared not live, but despite that he died a number of years ago in sunny California from an attack of pneumonia, taking his place with the hardy pioneers who had gone on before him, after having prepared the way for the great west that was to come, with its big cities, fertile farms and contented people, free from the dangers of the Indian war drums and savagery of an age gone by.

## Sports

### SALEM FANS LIKE STALLING SYSTEM IF USED AT HOME

The Salem high school basketball team, always contenders for state honors, promises to give the Medford five its hardest games of the season when the two teams clash at the armory Friday and Saturday nights. Tickets for the game tomorrow night go on sale at Crowson's Friday noon, and for the final game Saturday noon.

The starting lineup for the two teams will be:  
Salem: Sigmund F., Melvin C. Kelly, E. Bowerman, Beechler C., McDonald Ecker, G., Morgan R. Kelly, G., Garnett.  
Medford: Beechler is the star of the Salem aggregation and is a big, fast and accurate shooter. The Kelly brothers are also outstanding players.

The Salem team defeated the Chemawa Indians Tuesday night, 31 to 26, on their own floor, after a bitter struggle. Salem employed the "stall" in the closing minutes to win the victory, and the Salem fans who booed Medford during the state tourney went wild with joy at the tactics, according to the Salem Statesman, which notes as follows:  
Late in the second half the

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## NOT A COUGH IN A CARLOAD

### BIG GAME FILMS VIEWED BY MANY GUN CLUB GUESTS

The meeting of the Medford National Rifle Club, held in the Armory last night, was undoubtedly the most successful since the organization of the club. By 7:30 p. m. over 100 people had arrived, and others continued to arrive for some time afterwards, to see the Alaskan and African big game hunting motion pictures which were shown through the courtesy of Gus Peret, representing the Peters Cartridge company. A few introductory remarks were made by Stanley Jones, president of the rifle club, and by L. Walter Dick, in explanation of the plan and general operation and purposes of the National Rifle Club.

Mr. Peret was then introduced and showed there reels of exceedingly interesting pictures of hunting big game in Africa and Alaska, also showing some of the many scenic and geographic wonders of Alaska.

Mr. Peret followed the picture exhibition with a few words in commendation of the rifle club and its general plan, and in discussing general hunting and shooting requirements and experiences with a portion of the visitors, while the others went to the rifle range for practice with 22 caliber rifles, at the invitation of the club president.

A great deal of enthusiasm was indicated all around. Several vis-

itors availed themselves of the opportunity to join the club at the time and a number of others expressed their intentions of affiliating at next week's meeting.

Information regarding the organization may be obtained from any of the club officers, who will also accept applications for membership. The list of officers is as follows: Stanley Jones, president; Carl Fichtner, vice-president; Frank Stinson, treasurer; Ward Hammond, secretary, and Sterling Richmond, executive officer.

#### Bend Man Director

SPOKANE, Feb. 7.—(AP)—C. L. Irsted of Bend, Ore., was elected a director and H. K. Brooks, also of Bend, was re-elected treasurer of the Western Pine Manufacturers' association at the closing session of the annual conference late yesterday. Co-operating with pine manufacturers in California in formulation of a standard grading rules to be used for California and northwest lumber was decided at the conference.

WARSAW.—(AP) Twelve thousand Polish wives are waiting here for visas to join their husbands in the United States. The quota for Poland is only 6000 yearly.

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