

# Lake County Examiner

VOL. XXIV.

LAKEVIEW, LAKE COUNTY, OREGON, THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 1903.

NO. 13.

## TRAPPING IN LAKE COUNTY

**A Lake County Trappers' Method of Snaring the Wary Coyote and Many Wild Animals.**

(PAUL DELANEY IN PORTLAND JOURNAL.)

Many are under the impression that with the departure of the Hudson Bay Company from the Northwest trapping for furs in this region has ceased. That the advancing civilization drove the old-time manner of earning a livelihood to Alaska and other more isolated climes. While in the main this is true, still there are many places in Oregon and Washington where trapping is carried on by individuals and a living is made in this way. William Hammersley, the well-known trapper of Lake County, has spent his life on the desert and in the mountains, and every spring finds him in Lakeview with a wagon load of furs which he ships to the San Francisco and New York markets, and he gets a good price for them, too, for his furs from the animals of the Oregon desert command a good price. The snow falls in the higher altitudes in October and lies on the ground until April following, and with the steady cold weather throughout this period the furs grow with a uniformity that gives them the high standard they hold in the markets.

The Lake County trapper selects an isolated place at the foot of the mountains bordering the desert about the time the snow begins to fall and remains there throughout the winter. By this location he gets a chance at all of the wild animals of that section. The coyotes live beneath the rocks at the foot of the mountains, and the wildcat and marten and cougar remain higher up in the mountains and roam the desert at night in search of prey. Sheep is the main object of all of them, but the jackrabbit must supply the demand when the herder is too watchful of his flock.

It is generally thought that the coyote is the only enemy of the sheep, but this is not true. The wildcat is numbered next as a destructive pest. He will kill a sheep, especially a lamb, as quickly as a coyote. He is not a wanton murderer, however, as is the coyote. While the coyote will kill as long as he has access to the sheep, and one has been known to kill a dozen or more in a few minutes, the wildcat will only kill one in one night. He only kills when he is hungry to satisfy his present appetite, while the coyote kills at every opportunity in order that he may strew the plains with carcasses for future use. Cougars are very scarce, and as an enemy to the sheepmen, they are not regarded seriously.

I made a trip with the Lake County trapper to his winter home at the foot of Mount Juniper. This is one of the farthest points from civilization in the desert. It is 100 miles from Lakeview and only a few settlements intervene, the nearest being more than 40 miles from the trapper's home. His home, which was temporary, consisted of a tent. This was fitted out with a small stove and cooking utensils, provisions, bedding, traps, guns and ammunition. A small shack near by, built of brush, furnished shelter for his horse. His traps were all ordinary

steel traps, varying in size from a mink trap to one large enough to hold a grizzly. They were the accumulation of years. His home was situated in a cluster of juniper bushes at the foot of the mountain near the mouth of a large, narrow, rock-walled canyon. Along the bed of this canyon he sets his traps for any kind of animal that might pass that way and up among the cliffs on the mountain he places his traps for wildcat and marten, while the desert was strewn with traps for coyotes. A sheepman had his camp farther around the mountain and the trapper had selected the place near by, as the coyotes always linger near the sheep. By day they watch from the distance and at night they approach closer by stealth and never lose a chance to pounce down upon the unguarded herd.

I accompanied the trapper on his rounds examining his traps, and was fortunate enough to see him take coyotes, wildcats and one cougar from them. The traps were set in a circuit of five miles in front of his camp. Upon arriving in early winter he would start out with his traps in his buckboard and make a complete circuit in front of camp. He carried plenty of bait, also, in the form of hunks of mutton, sage hens, rabbits and other meats. In every trail, in every secluded spot, near every landmark, he would place his traps. He did not bait the traps, but attached the bait to a stake or other stationary object and set a number of traps around it. The bait tied to the stake was left in plain view, while the circuit of set traps around it were covered with light earth, or small bunches of grass and sage limbs. He explained that the coyote was so wary that he would walk around a bait for hours before attempting to eat it, and would then begin scratching from a distance and unearthing it. In this manner he often undermined a baited trap, stole the bait from the underside and escaped with it. But by the means he had adopted he had generally caught the animal before it made up its mind to touch the bait. While it was walking around it it usually stepped into one of his traps.

Wildcat and marten were not so intelligent, however. They did not suspect the trap, and it was set and baited in the regular way and placed where they would find it, and if the bait suited them he usually caught them.

We had made several rounds without finding an animal in the traps, but luck changed at last, and the old saying that "it never rains but that it pours" was demonstrated. A heavy snowstorm came up one evening and continued all night and the following day. We were housed up in the tent all of this time. But the third day the weather cleared up and we started out on the regular rounds. The snow melted as soon as it struck the ground on the desert, but the mountains retained it on the large coating already received, and the animals were put on the alert for food. We found a number of coyotes on the rounds, but the most interesting capture was near the carcass of a sheep. The trapper had found the carcass and discovered that the coyotes had been visiting it nightly. He placed his traps at proper distances all around this dead animal and obscured them as usual. Upon our

## M'GOVERN KNOCKED OUT IN THE 11TH.

A dispatch from San Francisco yesterday afternoon, said that "Young Corbett" had knocked out McGovern in the eleventh round. The fight was a "hot" one from start to finish. Some money changed hands among Lakeview sports on the result.

arrival four of the animals were struggling at the chains which bound the traps to sage roots and other fastenings. Some of them were caught by the hind foot and some by a front foot, and one was caught by both a hind and a front foot. Their struggles became terrific upon our arrival. They tried to gnaw off the imprisoned limb, and leaped against the chains as if they would tear them from them. But the delay was not prolonged. The trapper dispensed with them with his rifle, dragged them some distance from the traps where he afterwards returned for them with his buckboard, set and obscured the traps again and we pursued our journey.

Upon our return from the desert we entered the canyon to see what luck he had had there. We did not go far until we saw a sight that was a sight that was both interesting and sad. The trapper had set a trap at the entrance of a crevice in the rocks. In this trap a female wildcat had been caught, and the male cat and three kittens were rolled about her, apparently trying to relieve her from her imprisonment. On our approach the male cat made his escape into the den, followed by the kittens. The imprisoned mother set up a wall such as only wildcats can, and this brought the male cat back to her rescue. But he had scarcely leaped upon the scene when the trapper put an end to his life with his rifle. Then the kittens became anxious and they ran out in regular order in complete bewilderment. One by one the trapper ended their lives and then killed the imprisoned mother. I remonstrated for the kittens, but he said their scalps were worth \$2 each; that the law did not specify the size of the animal. Here he had captured \$10 worth of scalps in a few minutes, besides two large furs of great value.

Farther up the canyon we found the biggest catch of all. At the mouth of a sub-canyon which cut its way in from the north side of the main canyon we found a large trap holding a "monarch of the desert." But he was only a monarch in name. His past greatness had long since vanished. It was a cougar, or mountain lion. It had lain down and had completely given up all hope, if it had any before it was captured. Upon our approach it rose up slowly with a sort of look of resignation as if our approach was a relief, and it was. The animal, which had been a large specimen of its kind at one time, was now a mere skeleton. Its eyes were hollow, and its head looked abnormally large, as compared with its flat, emaciated body, while its long, limp tail gave the whole animal an elongated shape that made it an interesting specimen. The center of its stomach stood out like a large ball, resembling a small chicken snake that had swallowed a large egg.

We approached within a few rods of the animal and the trapper, non-

plussed at the sight before him, raised his rifle with the remark:

"I will put the thing out of its misery."

He released the dead animal from the trap and immediately slit its stomach with his hunting knife. The cause of the animal's condition was soon revealed. Reduced to the severest straits of starvation the animal had come upon a porcupine and had devoured it. The quills of the animal thus placed in the cougar's stomach had punctured it through at a hundred points. Thus moping about in a dying condition it had ended its miserable existence by falling into Hammersley's trap.

### We Will Celebrate.

The Fourth of July meeting which was called by Mayor Whitworth last week, was held in the court house last Friday. The meeting was well attended by Lakeview business men, and everyone entered into the business of the meeting with a spirit that showed they intended to do something. The mayor called the meeting to order, and on motion he was elected as chairman, and A. Y. Beach secretary. A motion was entertained that called for the appointment of a committee of six on general arrangements, with the Mayor as chairman. The following were appointed: H. C. Whitworth, E. C. Ahlstrom, C. M. Smythe, W. A. Massingill, D. J. Wilcox, G. Schlagel. A committee to solicit funds was then appointed as follows: W. M. Harvey, Geo. Harrow, V. L. Snelling, and A. Bleber, treasurer. The committee on general arrangements were authorized to appoint all other committees, and they selected the following as a committee on music.

Mrs. L. F. Conn, Miss May Snider, Miss Ruth Nickerson, Messrs A. A. Graham, J. Q. Willits, Geo. H. Ayres.

The money to be raised this year is expected to be double that of any year previous, and numerous and various legitimate devices will be used to swell the fund. The general committee say they expect to have the finest display of fireworks ever seen in this northern country. From \$100 to \$200 will be expended in this way, and the goods will be furnished at wholesale prices by the dealers. They also talk of having a large platform made about 30x100 feet with an evergreen or canvass cover for the exercises on the Fourth. This platform will afterwards be used for dancing, and will be free to all. Many kinds of games and amusements will be provided, so that people coming from the country will be entertained like they never have before.

Prepare to have a big time in Lakeview on the Fourth of July.

### Not Known Here.

From Ellensburg, Wash., comes the report that Michael Hunt, a waiter, of Tacoma, and Frank McCluskey, of Lakeview, Or., were found dead in a refrigerator car. They built a fire in the car and went to sleep being smothered and burned.—Tidings

## REPUBLICAN PRIMARIES.

**A Spirited but Friendly Contest For the Election of Delegates to the County Convention.**

Pursuant to a call of the Chairman of the Republican Central Committee primaries were held in the several precincts of the county last Monday afternoon. In the two Lakeview precincts there were two tickets put up, and a spirited but friendly contest was waged. In the south precinct which met at the court house, H. C. Whitworth was elected chairman and A. Y. Beach secretary. The north precinct met at Barry's hall, and L. F. Conn was elected chairman and C. M. Smythe secretary. In the south precinct 73 voter were cast, but one was not counted. The following 9 delegates were placed in nomination by W. A. Massingill: E. M. Brattain, Dan Maloy, W. A. Massingill, H. C. Whitworth, Geo. Reed, X. Arzner, S. J. Studley, Ross Anderson, R. T. Stripplin, while the following were nominated by D. J. Wilcox: C. Henkle, A. L. Howell, J. L. Smith, W. B. Snider, M. Wingfield, J. W. Tucker, S. J. Studley, W. R. Heryford, S. V. Rehart. No other nominations were made, and before proceeding to ballot it was announced that democrats would not be allowed to vote. The secretary took down each name as they voted, and everything went off quietly until the end. The first 9 delegates were elected by a vote of 39 to 42, with the exception of S. J. Studley, who received the vote of both factions.

In the north precinct things moved along similar to those in the south. While there was only 45 votes cast, a great deal of interest was manifested. The following 18 delegates were placed in nomination: John McElhinney, W. S. Blair, C. P. Linebarger, J. H. Bull, J. C. Basey, R. H. Day, T. J. Hastings, P. M. Curry, E. M. Brown, S. F. Ahlstrom, J. T. Metzker, Geo. F. Miller, L. F. Conn, J. H. Turpin, C. M. Smythe, E. A. Snyder, J. P. Duckworth. The first 9 were elected by a vote of 23 to 27, with the exception of W. S. Blair who was on both tickets, and he received 44 votes.

The precincts so far heard from elected delegates as follows:

Paisley: M. Lauritzen, W. H. Tucker, J. Simmons, Al. Farrow, J. W. Benefiel, Geo. H. Bogue, W. Y. Miller.

Silver Lake: E. D. Lutz, G. B. Wardwell, John Hayes, Sam Busick, Joe Porter, R. E. Smith.

New Pine Creek: C. C. Cannon, Edw. Hartzog, A. E. Follett, A. M. Smith.

Thomas Creek: B. F. Barnum, S. J. Prose, S. J. Dutton, J. M. Hammersley.

Crooked Creek: C. C. Barnum, S. B. Chandler, E. E. Rhinehart, N. Wilcox.

Summer Lake: Cliff Smith, Harry Aldridge.

North Warner: Willis Seammom, W. K. Barry.

South Warner: L. D. Erakes, Sam Sloan, Tom Calderwood.

Goose Lake: John Noble, Geo. Noble, Jas. McCreary, E. Russell, Rob't Morris.

The Bullard creek flume has been running bank full the past week, owing to the mild weather and warm rains.