

Chapter 8

That Mountain Lion

After lambing was over I was given a small herd of ewes and lambs to herd and also a tent that was placed at the upper end of an open draw and George Winn was given a like herd in a similar draw south of me, in between us was a wide ridge or up land that was heavily covered with brush and tall timber.

One day I let my herd go down the draw into the basin and I could see Winn's camp so I decided to go up there and visit, I could see all my herd from his camp so I stayed nearly all day

near evening my herd turned to return to their bed ground near my tent so instead of going down around them I decided to go straight through the timber to my tent, high up on the rim of the hill was a large bank of snow that had not all disappeared and the water still ran down the hill between our camps. Near the middle of the patch of timber I stopped thinking I had heard something and as I looked into a very thick clump of brush I saw two very big eyes looking straight at me not more than thirty feet away, the noise I heard was made by a small trickle of water that ran down from the snow bank above and as I stood there almost paralyzed I saw another movement about seven feet away it was the end of the mountain Lion's tail that kept twitching like a house cat will do when they are about to bounce upon a mouse, I was so frightened I could not move as I gazed straight into his eyes for some time, at last he began to slowly crawl away behind the brush and disappeared behind the brush and I likewise disappeared in the opposite direction and hurried to my tent, that night I slept with my rifle at my side and I was sure my little faithful dog would warn me if that beast should come to my tent. After docking, dipping and shearing was over I was told they had plenty of experienced herders and they did not need me any more so the foreman Dave Martin took me down to the Rathburn ranch and I received my pay at the rate of \$35.00 per month, I think Lou and Will who had been with some other camps must have left too for I never saw them again, Poor Will Hale, he had never done any of his own cooking before and I heard some of the fellows had a lot of fun with him because they told him the best way to cook beans was to

frythem in mutten fat and he tried it but never got themmdone enough to eat.

I left the Rathburn ranch on foot to the Paw and Ma Holdon ranch that was on the main road to Labarge and Big Piney where I stopped and bought my dinner and was almost stund when they chraged me fifty cents, I had never before paid more than twenty five cents for such a meal, after dinner I walked on up the road and over the hill to the Hy Smith ranch on Labarge creek and asked for a job which I got as it would not long before haying time would start and then Hy would need lots of help.

Hy Smith was a rather big man and was a great lover of fine horses and plenty of whisky. He had several log stables and a large frame barn with a shingles roof, there was a neat bunk house where the hired help slept, they always had plenty to eat and Mrs Smith was a very nice lady and had thre children, one the youngest that his Father called him, Cheese and swore he would be a tinhorn gambler when he grew up, ofcourse he did not mean it, Mr Smith was a very strange man, he would leave home without any one knowing it and be gone for several days and just as like as not he would return with an exceptionally good looking team of horses with him and would also show signs of some very heavy drinking and at home sometimes he would get some of the freighters who must pass close to his house on their way to big Piney and the upper country to bring him a gallon jug from Opal which he would hide some place and we would not know anything about ti until we would see him so drunk that he could hardly walk at such timees he would come out where we were working and throw his arms around our necks and tell us "you are working to hard" and

tell us all about the wonderful horses he had and anything else to bother us but after he sobered up he was just the reverse and cussed and carried on because we had not done anything to earn our board and how worthless we all were and even abused his wife and children at such times. Mrs Smith sometimes would telephone to Opal and have some whisky sent up by the mailman to the post office at the Bess ranch and then confide in me to bring it to her when I was sent after the mail but not to tell anyone and she would give him a little at a time just to sober him up.

When haying time came he gave me a team of horses and the dump rake and it was my job to rake the hay into winrows so the hay loader could pick it up.

After the haying was all done we had a patch of about ten acres of grain that we must cut for hay as it had been frosted a little and only good for hay, this was raked into piles and pitched on the rack by hand. Sam Kennington was working there and his wife also helped Mrs Smith with the cooking and house work, Sam and I were sent to haul this grain with one of the hayrack we used with the loader which had a sort of hook on the rear end that was used to fasten the loader to the rack, this hook was about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and perhaps $\frac{1}{2}$ in in diameter and when we had finished with all the piles down at the lower end with me pitching the hay up to Sam on the wagon who drove the I jumped up on the rear of the rack and rode up to the top of the field and when I slid down off the wagon not thinking about this hook or finger thing which caught me in my rear end and tore my trousers and entered near my rectum where I hung for some time before I could get loose while Sam got down off

the wagon and rolled on the ground with laughter but to me it was no laughing matter as the blood went streaming down my legs, soon when I got loose and managed to get to the bunkhouse I washed myself and changed my clothes after I got the blood stopped and for a long time I was very sore. Mr Smith noticed how I walked and asked what was the cause seemed to be quite vexed with Sam for not telling him about it for as he said it might have been very serious.

While we were working with this grain we saw an antelope that kept coming in sight out on the open flat north of us so one Sunday I took a rifle and went out to try to get it, I saw it alright but it was along way off but I tried a shot at him anyway and I may have hit it a little someplace for as it ran away some distance two coyotes appeared on the scene, one of these coyotes started to chase the antelope and some how managed to get it to run in a big circle bringing it back near the starting place where the coyote rested and the other coyote took up the chase, I could see the two coyotes were doubling up on the antelope so I fired several shots at them to chase them away so the antelope was safe for the while anyway.

Shortly after that I quit working for Smith and went farther up just above Midway where I got a job for a Mr. Bullard a batchlor who lived in a one room house, he was a diabetic and before each meal he would take about a quart of warm water and go out side and drink it then immediately vomit it up again, I never knew what good it did him.

While I was there with him one day some men brought a large herd of large beef steers from the upper country taking them to market and placed them in

Bullard's large corral which was made of very large poles and about six feet high, in the morning very early before it was light one of the men went down to the small steam to get some water for their breakfast and as he passed the corral he stopped to rest with his load and while resting he lit a cigarette and when he struck that match the suddenness of it cause those steers to stampeed, they all struck the side of that corral at once and swept it away as if there was nothing there and then ran for miles I guess for it took several days riding to get them gathered again. Long Jim Harminson was freighting to the logging camp above Big Piney with six or eight teams, with one wagon fasted to the rear of the other wagon and he rode his right wheel horse and drove with a jerk line, One day he came along and stopped at our place and instead of unhooking his teams he simply took their bridles off and placed a nose bag on each horse with oats in them and went into the house while they were eating oats, something frightened them and as he had several horses that were not ever trained to the wagons some of them jumped around somehow and fell across the hitch between the wagons and got themselves all tangled up, Jim heard the noise and instead of trying to untangle he went after them with his big bull whip until he finally got them streighened out again. A few days after that some men camped out side near our house and made a small camp fire to make some coffee and fry some bacon and while one of them was so engaged he bent over some how and the sixshooter he had in his holster fell out and struck on the frozen ground and went off the bullet struck the fellow in the chest and kill

ed him dead. One day Mr Bullard rode down to the post office at Midway where the McGinnis girls lived and kept the post office and when he came back he acted so cheerful I started kidding him about his best girl.

It was while there I got a terrible tooth ache and heard that a Dr. Bone up at Marbleton just above Big Piney could pullit for me if I went up there so I took a horse and rode up there and found this man who pulled my tooth and on the way back I thought if I took a chew of tobacco it might stop the bleeding but it seemed to do just the opposite for as I sucked on the tobacco it seemed bleed more so I threw it away and went on back and it soon healed. I did'nt stay with Mr. Bullard long, I had a little money and decided to go home but before I left one day Jensen came along with his peddle wagon and with his other horses he had my mare (that I had turned loose on the range when I started to herd sheep) and I asked him what he was doing with my mare? Well, he said, "she came over by my place and I was afraid she would get lost so I took her into my pasture to keep her for you and thought it would'nt hurt to use her and a little more such soft talk, he knew I had paid fifteen dollars for her so he said he would give me that for her, I should have made him pay me double that amount for her but I did'nt and let him have her. I got down to Opal some way about night and I was going to be smart and ride to Montpelier cheap so I looked up a brakeman on a freight train and asked him how much he would charge me to ride his train to Montpelier? How much have you got? Well, how much do you want? he said,

two dollars and fifty cents, I was fool enough to pay him that amount and he put me in abboxcar where I rode until we arrived at a side track down near Peagram where the boxcar was sidetracked and me with it and the train went on with out me, I just waited thinking they would come back but they did'nt and at last I managed to catch another train and climbed on top of a open coal car and almost froze to death before we reached Montpelier as that black coal was turned to white with the frost, I manage to get down to the ground but I was shivering so bad I could hardly walk, I went into the depot and got a little warm and after a while when the Mose Lewis store opened I bought me a suit of clothes in jew fashion the suit, a ti a pair of socks and some suspenders all for so much, (don't remember how much) I got a ride with the mail man to Afton and stayed at home for a while and help to saw wood and not much else but I wen away again out to Kemmerer and got acquainted with an old man by the name of John Carrol who wanted me to go with him up ham's fork and work for a man by the name of David Ferguson who by th way owned the exact piece of land that Father intended to own when we lived in the tent, this man wanted us to make a road up to some timber and get out some barn logs for him, he was going with us the first day to break a road through the deep snow but it was so deep we just could'nt get through so Carrol and I went down to the rail road again and decided to gotto Cokeville where J.D. Noblets was the dept agent and Carrol said, "heknew him very well since he was agent at Hams fork before, when we got to Cokeville we did get a job for one of Mr. Noblets contracters me driving

and Carrol making ties and mining props we went up to grade canion but turned off south up a very steep gulley or draw clearup to the top of the mountain where there was a log cabin and where Carrol was to stay with another old man of German decent while I stayed with Ed Jurgeson and made my daily trips up to get the ties and props the two, made and some times I must chop my own load and when the snow got soft near spring I took only one bob sled and let the ends of the long timber drag behind and when spring really came I quit there and went to work for Frank Mau about three miles south of Cokeville he was a very nice fellow until he got mad, he used to like to go into Cokeville and play cards (solo) and each time the game ended someone, the loser would have to buy the beer and he always insisted I go with him to help drink up the beer because sometimes the beer would come so fast that he did not want it all. He was also good to me in many ways and told me, "Take the shot gun and go down and kill some ducks or geese or go fishing if you like so one day it was snowing one of those rather warm spring storms when I was down with the shot gun near bear river by an old stack yard and saw several geese real close too, I thought here is where I get a goose I leveled at a nice one and fired but they all flew away, I could'nt understand it for I was close enough and had a good shot at it, the only thing I could think was the trouble was the shells in the gun was made of brass and it might be possible that the shot somehow had been jared loose and fell out of the gun.

I only worked for Mau about six weeks when I got me another small horse and an old saddle and rode up to the Pomeroy basin this time to the south end where

Walt Fenner had his herds with Dave Salmon as foreman and as I rode up to the first camp I met Dave and three others, there was Al and Lee Payne, and Billy Pickerel who Dave had just brought up from Opal to help with lambing and I asked for a job and got it and soon we were all busy with the lambing then docking and shearing and when we were ready for the summer range I was given the job of camp mover for Vane Iverson from Brigham City, Utah and on the trail up to the summer range I would take the pack horses and our camp and go up as far as we thought the sheep would go for that day and put up my tent and cook the dinner and then ride back to Vane and let him ride and eat his meal which I had left on the hot coals for him.

Each day was about the same until we reached the summer range where there was plenty feed and the sheep were very much contented then we did not have much to do. One day as we both lay in the tent I had just cleaned the only rifle we had in camp and placed in on the bed full of cartridges while Vane had been reading when all at once we both looked up and there stood a nice fat deer not more than thirty feet away looking at us, Vane shouted "there's a deer, where's the gun?" with that he grabbed the gun and fired at the deer but the deer ran off and Vane running after it pumping the lever of the gun as he ran and I followed behind him and picked up three loaded cartridges he had ejected from the gun in his excitement before they had been fired, he was gone for about two hours and returned without any deer.

Some time in the middle of the summer

one of the herders with one of the other herds quit and Dave come and asked me to take that herd with Al as my camp mover and he got some one else to go with Vane but there was one little incident that happened while I was moving Vane's camp that I must tell I had been down to the ranch to get salt and camp supples and on coming back it became dark before I reached camp but I came to one of the other camps which was near the road in some willows so they called to me to turn my horses loose and come and stay with them until morning so I took my packs off and followed a path through the willows behind one of the boys who had come in the day time when he could see where he was going, I had brought some mail for some of the boys so I went back to my packs to get it for them but in going back I did not find the right trail through the willows and all at once I plunged headlong into about three feet of water in a deep hole, the others heard the splash and knew what I had done, took the wrong trail. they helped to fish me out and lucklily it was a warm night so it was not to bad.

Al and I got along fine and in the fall when we were working back down we camped in the Pomeroy basin one night near a small stream of water near the timber and I had let my herd scatter in the thick timber on the hillside in such a large territory that when I started to round them up I had to much of a job to get them down to the tent so I gathered them together on a big open knowl and let them bed down there and I went back to the tent, this knowl was perhaps one 100 yards across with very thick timber on all sides. In the morning when I got back to them real early I found some-

thing had disturbed them during the night and then found some loose dirt where bear tracks showed real plain so I took my rifle in my hands ready for anything and went up above the know in the thick timber looking for Mr. bear hoping all the time I would not see him, as I climbed higher I saw where a large pine tree had fallen straight down the hill and in falling it had dug a very deep hole where its roots had lifted the soil and as I climbed by the side of this tree I saw something move a little in this hole, I thought sure it was the bear but soon found that it was one of my ewes that had been beaten so badly that her head was a mass of blood and she was almost dead so I shot her to relieve her suffering and as I did so a bunch of about twenty head of sheep came bounding down from above which I am sure Mr. bear had cut off from the herd and was holding them for future meals, the next night I got the herd all down below the tent and in the middle of that night Al and I were rudely awakened with a sort of rushing noise and a small bunch of sheep came rushing past the tent the bear had apparently tried again to drive some of my herd away, both Al and I fired in the darkness and we heard an awful noise as the bear rushed away up through the timber.

In a few days we reached the separating corral where we were to separate the lambs that were to be sold and shipped to market, here I met Vane again who seemed so glad to see me as he would a lost brother I don't know why but he acted real tickled, to see me again.