

Chapter 10

My poisoned dog

One night when Billy was camped about a mile north of me and I was out on the open flat country with very little protection there was a terrible snow storm of real blizzard dementions comming streight from the north and I together with my little dog tried until midnight to hold my herd against the storm but it got so bad that at last I just had to let them go and drift with the wind one reason was I could not hold them any longer and another thing if Billy was unable to hold his herd we would have a mixup but it so happened he had better shelter and was able to hold his sheep.

I went back into my camp wagon and tried to sleep and as soon as it was light and the storm had subsided a little I went after my herd and found them about a mile farther south in a small ravine where they had a little shelter and apparently they were alright with the exception of one that had been killed by coyotes, I got them back to my camp for the storm had subsided a little just as Mr. Wakefield rode over to see how I was getting along and had managed during the storm, then he moved me to a more sheltered bed ground. Later one day I saw a coyote in a trap and as it jumped around I saw the trapper comming in a small buckboard and as I was going down that way I stopped to watch him dispose of the coyote and also watched while he

reset his traps, first he shot the coyote between the eyes with a 22 pistol so as not to mutilate or disfigure the pelt and placed it in his buckboard then he took a piece of horse meat about six or seven inches across with the hide attached and drove an iron stake about a foot and a half long through the meat and underneath it he placed the two rings of the trap chains and drove the stake into the ground then he dug a small trench for to bury the chain in and a bigger trench for the trap one on the north and one on the south side of the bait then he buried the No. 4 steel traps on either side and smoothed the ground so as it would appear level, after the traps were carefully set he dug a small hole on the east and west sides about the same distance away as the traps and put some of his scent composed of dead fish well rotted with an awful odor in these small holes and covered that over too, this he explained "will cause a coyote to smell the scent and go to the other side where the traps are" So I had learned something about trapping coyotes which later in life I made good use of.

This same trapper though had also used poison to get coyotes with and one day my little prickeared dog came to me and I knew he had found some of the poison bait for he came to me and lay down in a terrible fit of agony and I could do nothing to help him and my poor little friend died at my feet, I sure felt like crying for he was so devoted to me and helped me so much and was a sure true friend. Mr Wakefield got me another dog but it was not as good. The way they had of lambing did not seem to be a very good one so Billy and I decided to quit before that time and go down to Wyoming

Billy had been working longer than I had so his check was for about three hundred dollars while I had only about eighty dollars coming to me, I had drawn some of my money and bought myself some clothes and a brand new black stetson hat of which I was very proud for in those days a stetson was considered high style. So when we both quit and left Spencer we decided to take our time and stop on the way to Wyoming at every town and look it over, we would buy a ticket from one town to the next some times and some times we would ride a train without buying a ticket and just before we reached Blackfoot we had got on to the front of end of a passenger car and stood on a platform about a foot or a foot and a half wide with absolutely nothing to hold on to with our hands and as the train was going at a high rate of speed a gust of wind took my Stetson hat and as I tried to catch it I came so near losing my balance that I shiver to this day when I think how near I came to falling down under those car wheels. When we reached Blackfoot we went around a back street to a store and bought another hat. When we arrived in Idaho Falls and walked all around the place we came to a saloon where they had just been cleaning the floor with water and it looked nice and cool in there so Billy and I went in to rest for a while, we went over to one corner where there was chairs and a small table. This saloon was owned by some Swedish men and we had not sat there long when in came three round faced good natured looking swedes jabbering away in the Swedish language and one of them nodded his head in our direction and said, "Yag unura vim de tvo are hen ie hornerna Yag vil betta de vil leka ha littta arbete ferchana non ting te atata"

My swedish spelling is not so good but this is what he said, "I wonder who those two are over in the corner, I will bet they would like a little work to earn something to eat" Billy was about my own age and we both could understand what he said so I nudged Billy and said, "lets go over and have a drink and as we approached the bar they looked surprised when I said, "Nu ne can com ock dricka mad mi for yag har penga te batala ma."which is Now you can come and drink with me for I have money to pay with, they were so taken back that they shook our hands and laughed so much, they would not let us buy any drinks at all.

While working for the Wood Live Stock co. Bill got acquainted with the dutchman Carl who I worked with and Carl had told Billy if he would come down to Park City in Utah where Mr Wood his relative who owned a big share in the mines he would get Billy a job there and I had partly decided to go down with him when I received a letter from my sister Elvira and her husband George Shurtleff who asked me to come to Weiser. George and a man by the name of Sailing had located and filed on a coal claim jointly and George wanted me to locate and file on the adjoining claim jointly with Elvira. (George always called her Alice) So I changed my mind about going to Park City so when we reached Kemmerer again I bought a ticket to Weiser and Billy got one to Park City so we said boodby to each other and each went his own way. I arrived in Weiser about one in the morning and went to the Vendome hotel and got a room and went to bed.

The next morning I went down and paid for my room and as there was a barber shop near by with two of the blackest negros I ever saw as barbers, however I

got into one of the barber chairs and asked for a shave so I would look more respectful when I met George and Alice.

It was all the style in those days to wear stiff linen or celuloid collars and I had one on so the colored man said, "Does ye want me te shave ye wid dat be collar on?" so I removed the collar and after paying him the fifteen cents he asked for the shave he told me where I could find George and Alice, it was only a short distance to their place and I soon found them, all I had to do was walk one block north and one block east.

They were glad to see me and I certainly was glad to see them and I stayed with them most of the time for about a full year. George and I went down to work in his claim for he and his partner Sailing had a disagreement, Sailing was a big man and a real lazy one, he and George had some trouble because Sailing would'nt do his share of the work, George said, "All I wanted him to do was to throw a shovel full of dirt out each time I did so they had left the hole they had dug in the side of a hill about twenty feet deep which was about one hundred and fifty yards up from Snake River on the north side and about twelve miles west of Weiser, we had a small tent and one day when we were working two men who later we knew as the Doakes brothers came along and stopped to talk to us, they both carried shot guns and said, "they were hunting rabbits", they asked a lot of questions and left, we had staked out the adjoining claim for Alice and I but we had not filed for the Idaho laws said we were intitled to sixty days to locate a valuable amount of coal before it was necessary to file on it, we never found nor opened up a valuable amount

of coal but we did go to Weiser and filed on the claim and in a short time received word that our filing was rejected when it was sent, to Boise the state capitol because some one else already filed on the same piece of land also found out it was the two Dakes who was carrying the shot guns and they had never done a lick of work on it any where. One day George was called to some sort of business in Weiser and I was all alone sleeping in the tent on the ground where we had our roll of bedding and so I got up in the morning and stepped outside right in front of the tent was a very long rattle snake, we had made a trench all around the tent and placed dirt against the canvas to keep out water in case of rain, also snaked but in front it was open and the snake perhaps intended to crawl in there to my bed and keep me company but I saw and killed it so there was no damage done and I believe it was the same day that I picked up an old newspaper that had been used as wrapping paper for some of our supplies and happened to see the headlines which said, "A big explosion in Park City" and it gave the names of fifteen men that was killed and among them was the name of Billy Nelson and I was sure it was my good friend Billy and had I gone with him I too likely would have been among them. After digging in the dirty hole I decided to go down to Snake River and take a bath before going to Weiser and later when I got to Weiser my eyes began to water and my face swelled up until I was a terrible sight, didn't know what it was until someone told me I had met up with poison oak or poison ivy, I guess I got it when I took that bath in the river. Another time when George and I wanted to go to Weiser and a foot

we decided to walk up about a mile to a side track on the rail road where it was possible to flag the passenger train which would stop long enough for us to board and ride to Weiser, we flagged it alright and it simply slowed down to a stop as we rushed to climb on to the first car we saw which proved to be a baggage car with a kind of platform on the front end with a railing around it the engineer thinking we were safe about started the train again and when we looked for the door to enter the car there was none so all we could do was sit still until we rode that eleven miles to Weiser in broad day light and when we got there some of George's friends started kidding us for bumming our way on the rail road. When we learned that the Doakes had threatened to take our claim we had a lawsuit on our hands and had to hire lawyers that cost us a lot of money and one day George met one of the Doakes on the sidewalk and an argument started, Doakes was a very strange built man he looked like an over sized pissant or a bag of grain with a band tied around his middle so in the talk that followed George called him a G.D. pissant and a fight started, George was getting the best of it and had Doakes on his back on the ground when a policeman pulled them apart and took them to the justice of the peace and they were both fined ten dollars a piece for fighting and disturbing the peace. then a few days later as George was passing the Vendome hotel where Sailing was loafing and leaning against a big support post under the Vendome awning and just as George got near he lunged at George and called him a G.D. son of a bitch because he and the Doakes were working together against us trying to get that coal claim

Again the police came and this time they took only Sailing and fined him twentyfive dollars, a few of George's friends chipped in and paid the first ten dollars for him and soon after that the courts decided in our favor but we had spent so much money on the thing that we decided since we had not even found any coal we better give it up the idea and we never done any more with the coal mine. One reason we thought there was coal there was because four men had dug a coal mine across the river on the opposite bank and had got plenty of coal to use firing their engine on a steamer they operated up and down the river.

After a while I got a job driving team for a livery stable operated by Matthews and Moulton delivering coal and other things, and since my team was coal black I was asked to drive the hearse at funerals, the team was so used to backing heavy loads of coal so when I tried to back the hearse they came back with a bang and nearly threw the coffin out the back end.

Later in the summer in fruiting time I got a job making boxes and packing prunes for an old man by the name of Swaughner in a packing house or barn and later it was my job to carry and supply fourteen girls with all the different things necessary for packing the prunes such as boxes, crates and paper, and each time a girl filled her crate she would call out "ready" then I must rush over and take the crate to the bench where the top was nailed on and furnish her with any other crate to be packed, these girls stood in along row by the packing bench, maybe forty feet long and before we had finished the job we had packed and shipped thirteen

rail road cars some of them going as far away as Liverpool England.

George and Alice had a homestead close to Weiser besides their other fruit farm about nine miles east of there, which they had rented to a man by the name of Oldfield. They had wanted to have a change from farming and fruit raising so they moved to Weiser and was operating a pool hall and small confectionary store, George was a great one for new ideas, he thought he could make some money making and selling oyster cocktails so he ordered a forty gallon barrel full of ketchup and also a supply of fresh oysters that was to arrive each week from Seattle Washington, he bought a good supply of small wide mouthed jars and started to make cocktails by placing about five or six oysters in a jar and then filled it up with ketchup, of course these oysters were small and fresh and he began to deliver them to all the saloons in town where they went like hot cakes for some time for when some drunk insisted on having more drink when he had already had enough the bartenders would suggest they try a new drink and gave him one of Shurtleff's cocktails, George had also been a bartender and had a lot of friends both in Weiser and Payette and was very well liked by all.

One day George made a deal with a man for an island in Snake river where the Weiser river emptied into the snake and in high water time the Weiser river forked and part of it going on either side of this island, it was unsurveyed land and could not be sold for want of a deed but the man could sell a house and other improvements and in order to hold the place someone must live on it, the man gave George a team of horses, a wagon

and some other things besides the island for a piece of George's homestead land. George wanted me to live on the island in order to hold it and told me he would give me part intrest in if I would, on the island was a large collection of different sized boats that had likely come down the river from someplace up stream, most of them were old and some very much rotted, one of these though had a very good frame or ribs so I took it apart and bought some new lumber and proceeded to make myself a boat and when it was finished it was about twenty feet long and very narrow and would scoot through the water at a very fast speed, in the spring of that year when the ice broke up somewhere away up above it came down in such large chunks and so many of them that the river was a big moving mass from shore to shore and sometimes a huge chunk would end up several feet in the air or it might be a boat anyone unfortunate enough to get caught in the mess would surely perish. After the ice had quit floating down and the river still very high I used to watch the river which I could see for a mile or more up stream and each time I saw something bobbing up and down in the water, generally a log of good fire wood I would get in my boat and go up and meet it and if it was a good log I would fasten it to my boat with a hook fastened to a rope and pull for the shore, I generally landed it in a sort of eddy or still water by the island where I fastened it to trees that grew on the shore, however one day I hooked on to a sort of framework made of real heavy plank, it was about ten feet wide and twenty feet long but the thing displaced so much water that I was unable to land at the island and it took

me about a half mile below before I could fasten it to the shore but when I did land it I went and got the team and wagon and after knocking it to pieces I had a good wagon load of wood for it. altogether I collected several loads of wood for George. Later in the spring when Mr Olfield his renter wanted to leave as his lease was up George wanted me to go up to his fruit farm and take care of things but said nothing about my part of the island so I went up there and went to work cleaning the accumulated manure from the stables and yards, milked the two cows and took care of things there, I did not have much money saved and did not expect any from George because I had stayed with them so long.

A neighbor by the name of Thacker told me he would give me a job for a few days if I wanted it so I went and worked for him but still took care of George's place but I sent word to George that I wanted to leave, I know he and Alice did not like it very much but I wanted to go back home to Wyoming. They both dropped up and made some arrangements so I left them and went to Payette and bought a rail road ticket to Montpelier and from there I rode again with the mailman to Afton and as we were going up the canyon I felt that wonderful cool breeze that I had not felt up in the fruit country.

I spent some time with my Mother and sister Idalia but soon was off again to Cokeville where I got a job with the Lew Marks sheep outfit where Dave Martin (the same Dave Martin I worked for with Miles and Rathburn) was foreman and the fall I got away up by the north Piney lake and one day I let my sheep go down near the lake while I went fishing and such fishing I never saw before nor since.

I caught sixteen trout, not one of them weighed less a pound and a quarter in less than a half hour, mean time my herd had split into two bunches and I had a hard time getting them together again carrying those fish and more than once I felt like throwing them away they got so heavy, but I didnt.

Soon after that one day Dave came to our camp and asked Mont Russel my camp *Mover* if we were going to stay there all winter? Mont told me ~~then~~ we together we told Dave we had plenty of feed for the sheep, the weather is fine and more could he want? he answered well, it might be fine now but it might start to snow any time and another thing I want you to get ready so we can rush past those poisen medows where so many sheep have been poisoned lately so with his help the next day we started down the trail towards Cokeville and we all including our dogs were all worn out with that long days work but we passed the poison medows with out any loss of sheep. When we reached the separating corral near Cokeville and the lambs were taken out and the herds made ready for winter range some of us quit our jobs maybe by invitation including Pete Nelson a rather big man and a Swede and he was almost broke and wanted to sell me a 30-40 winchester rifle with a box magazine for fifteen dollars so I bought it from him. We stayed in Cokeville for a while and then Pete and I went up to Kemmerer together and there we met a Jimmie Brabson who was working for Blar and Hayes from Rock Springs. Jimmy had been on a big drunk and spent all his money and was unable to get seven head of horses out of the livery stable because he could not pay the feed bill, he told Pete and I if we would

lend him money enough to get his horses out and would go with him to Rockspring he would see to it we got a winter job so we went with him after paying the fee bill and getting his horses out then the three of us started for Rockspring early the next morning, Pete and I were very liberal with our money for we were going to have a job and everything was going to be alright, at Opal I met my old friend Al Payne again who had saved his money and got started in the saloon business and was going fine so ofcourse we all had a few drinks at his bar and bought a quart to take with us then we continued on our way until we arrived at Green river and although it was long after dark Jimmie insisted we go on to Rock Springs fifteen miles farther and it was very late when we got there so Jimmie took us over to Big Jack Anderson's saloon where he had rooms and beds upstairs so we got a bed and went to sleep thinking in the morning we would get a job and go to work but in the morning we found out that Blar and Hays had fired Jimmie and he had gone away to ride the sheepmen's lease on the range and we never saw Jimmie again and we were almost broke besides in a strange place with no job, we tried every place to get something to do but with the exception of a few hours here and there we were out of luck, we explained our situation to Jack Anderson and he said, "we could have a bed at his place as long as we wanted to and pay for it when we went to work but we must also eat so we kept trying and after a very long time when we both went very hungry Pete met a little Swede like himself who promised to try to get him a job with the man he was working for and so Pete told me as soon as he earned some

money he would help ^{me} out but while he was gone one day a man came to town and wanted to hire two big men to help one day only at an oil well putting down caseings and offered \$4.50 per day and he finally decided I was big enough so together with another man we rode out to the well and after a big hard day that lasted until it was dark the boss paid us the \$4.50 plus seventyfive cents, saying, "I can't take you back to town as promised but I will give you the seventyfive cents and you can walk down to the siding about a mile and flag the train and pay your way in",

The fellow and I left and as soon as we were out of sight in the darkness I told the fellow, "You can go down and flag the train if you want but I am going to walk to Rocksprings", I needed that seventyfive cents so badly to give it away so we both walked nearly all night back to Rocksprings and as meals were only twentyfive cents I had enough to last me for a few days then Jack Anderson gave me a job so I could pay for my beds by going out to a small ranch where his parents lived to help them butcher some calves for veal and a cow for beef. This old couple were scotch and talked with a very heavy brogue, after we had butchered the cow and the old man was taking out the interals the old lady stood and watched and would shout, "E gud mun ye cut a gut".

Shortly after that I again was flat broke and as I lay in my bed one morning wondering how I could get enough to buy my braakfast with I happened to look in another room as the door was ajar and to my surprise I saw a twenty-five cent piece under a bed and I was not long getting it and another dime too

The room had been used by a rail road

employee who had been called to work in the night and apparently dropped those two coins unawares.

Shortly after that one evening I was in the saloon with some others when all at once Docter, the health officer came in and shouted, "Don't let any one in or out of this place, you have small pox in here," I want you all taken up to the pest house," Jack Anderson phoned his wife who insisted he come home and be quarantined there where she could take care for him, So Docter Reed agreed but the rest of us were taken to the pest house which was about one hundred yards above the hospital and for about six weeks I did get something to eat, not as much as I wanted because they rationed us but I got along and broke out all over my body so thick that one could not place a dime on me anywhere without touching one of the blisters or pox's, there was eight of us altogether beside the janator and one of the poor guys died there.

Shortly after I was put in the pest house someone brought Pete in to the hospital suffering with rhumatism where he remained for a long time.

In the pest house we had as janator a fellow by the name of Angus McDougale who had had the small pox years before and he sure showed it as his face was marked very plainly from it, he was a very good janator and would not allow any of us to touch the dishes or anything that might help spread the disease, a japanese would bring our meals up from the hospital and leave it on a specially made platform near the gate, the janator would get it from there and after we had eaten it the janator would wash and fumigate them and return them to the

platform and the Japanese would come a again and get them. Mr McDougale did not stay with us very long and was replaced with another fellow by the name of Barney McCabe who was altogether differant, he would get the patients to help him wash the dishes and almost every evening he would get ready and go down town and he had a small female dog that went with him and very often dogs would follow him back, one day he got some of the patients to help him coax one of these stray dogs into the pest house and there they tied a tin can filled with rocks to its tail and turned him loose outside, round and round he went and at last headed directly towards the hospital and the tie post where Docter Reed's horse with buggy was tied and if the horse had not been tied securely it would have certainly ran away, for a while the dog lay quietly under the buggy until the Docter came out. I don't know what he thought or who he suspected much less us at the pest house but he quickly release the dog from the tin can. Barney come in laughing and said, "he sure made some good time" Yes I said, "And he may also help spread small pox" As I lay in my bed in the pest house thinking things over I promised myself if I ever get well again and get out of here I will get a job and stay with it and stop this foolish way of spending money and at last the day came when they released me and fumigated me and my belongings and turned me loose and when I started down the road to town I felt so good that if a jack rabbit had challenged me to a foot race I surely would have taken him on, I think with all the puss and corruption that had come out of my

system with those blisters made me feel
that way.