

HOW SOME THINGS HAPPENED.

From RECREATION magazine 1899,
Hunting with Ed Staley about 1889

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Stepping into a news stand, some months ago, RECREATION caught my eye, and the thought flashed upon me, "That is what I need." Looking to see who the editor was, imagine my surprise. What! George Shields, whom I met in Montana many years ago chasing antelope all over the Flat Willow Country! Well, I will just take that magazine home and read it. If anybody has gone through the mill that boy has. If anybody knows what is required to make such a magazine interesting he does. You will find no half dozen pages in his magazine devoted to an account of the killing of one poor little fox squirrel down in Indiana.

I took this little magazine home and never enjoyed reading anything more in my life. I started in at the first page and wound up with the advertisements of the guides and old hunters in the back, and a better lot of men than these same guides never fired a gun. I know them all, including Ira Dodge, who was chewed up by a grizzly bear a few years ago; and old Dick Rock, who can ride, rope or tame any animal that wears hair. It has been several years since I saw him, but I remember as well as if it were but yesterday the last time I met him. He was riding a bull moose which he broke to ride, and which would not let anyone else get within 200 yards of it.

Another old guide and hunter, at Lake P. O., Idaho, by the name of Ed. Stailey, should have his advertisement in RECREATION. A better hunter never lived. Ed. is about 40 years old, weighs about 200 pounds, is 10 feet long, has crooked legs (from riding), arms at least 5 feet long, smooth face, and a heart in him that I think must weigh 75 pounds.

I remember going out hunting elk with Ed. about 10 years ago. We had one of the tallest, longest, and thinnest old yellow cayuses along that I ever saw. We used him for a pack horse. Ed. insisted on packing the bedding on him, which made him look like an overgrown camel. He had a gait like that of a snake. I never saw a horse with such a serpentine wobble in my life. I never expected to get him back from the trip, and we did not.

We left home about noon. I stuck my 45-00 Winchester in the roll of bedding, in "Old Yaller's" pack, thinking we would have no use for it until we made camp that night. We had gone only about four miles when, on riding ahead, I looked over across a little flat, and saw a large porcupine sitting up on his haunches near a puddle of water. I concluded to try my gun on him, and, stopping Old Yaller, pulled out the Winchester, got off my horse, and sat down. I judged

the distance to be about 150 yards, but it proved nearer 200. When I thought I had him lined up I let go. The bullet seemed to strike just in front of him, in the mud and water, which completely covered him. If ever a porcupine ran, this one did. I kept dropping in bullets behind, in front, over, and under



ONE OF THE OLD GUIDES.

him as long as he was in sight. I cut very close several times, but do not think I touched a quill.

We went on about two miles farther, and found a poor old horse in a mine hole, with just his head and neck out. He was almost tuckered out, but had strength enough left in



THE MAN WHO DUG THE HOLE.

him to whinny when he saw us. We cut some poles, and worked about an hour before we got him out. If you never helped take an animal out of a mine, when he had been in a day or two, you don't know what a job it is. We fixed a pry under him. While Ed., with his old, long legs, straddled the hole and got a "tail hold," I pried the horse up with a 20-foot pole. I can see old Ed. lifting on that tail now, and I can hear it crack. I never knew a horse's tail could stand so much. Well, we got him out at last, and the old fellow grunted his thanks; but he could not get up. In fact he was so weak it was all he could do to lift his head. We took our hats and brought him some water, which he drank eagerly. Then we pulled him away from the hole, took our hunting knives, cut him a lot of grass, and bade him good-by. He must

have got over it all right, for we came back that way a few days later and he was gone.

We punched up the pack horse a little faster, to make up lost time, so as to make a certain camp we had in view, where we knew there were elk. I was riding ahead. Just before we came to the point where we were to leave the main road, and half a mile from where we were to camp, I saw a **big six point bull elk and two cows**, not 30 yards from me, gazing at Old Yaller. I tried to telescope myself back to that 45-90 on the old horse. I got hold of the gun, but the sights caught in the pack ropes and stuck. All the time I was tugging at the gun, I was trying to watch the elk. I noticed the old bull standing with his head away up in the air. Just as I finally got the rifle out of the pack they all turned into the timber, and I never saw them again. It makes me hot yet to think of it. Ed. said,

"Never mind, we'll get plenty of elk here in this timber." He called me to come and look at the tracks in the road. We counted **where 61 elk had crossed, that day**. Ed. felt so sure we would get game that we did not bring any meat—only a little piece of bacon, a little flour, 12 cans of baked beans, and some coffee.

We made camp that night. Next morning we were up at daybreak and out after elk, but never saw a hair. There were any amount of signs, but everything was so dry we could not get sight of anything. Next afternoon we moved camp farther up the creek. In going around a cliff the old horse's legs got tangled up, at a critical point, and he fell about 1,000 feet straight down in the canyon. Poor old Yaller! He was gone and so was our grub. It was a long trip down to him, but we finally got there and found him dead. He was all broken up where he struck on the rocks. I don't suppose he knew what hurt him. We got our bedding off from him, but the only grub we had left was canned beans, the flour and coffee being scattered all over the canyon.

Next morning we ate a few beans, drank a lot of water, and started out after elk. About **50 yards** from camp we saw about **20 blue grouse**. I was going to clip off a few heads, but Ed. said:

"Don't shoot. I see fresh elk tracks here, in the mud, and we will find them up the creek, at the salt lick."

So I let up on the grouse. I had three in range, so I could hit the first one in the head, and the bullet would get the next one about the craw, while the third would get it about the centre of his back. I have always kicked myself for not making that shot. But it was elk we wanted, so Ed. said.

We went up the creek a little farther, and I saw a **yearling deer** standing on the creek bank, about 40 yards away. I pulled down on him, and could have punched out his eye, but again Ed. said:

"Don't shoot, you blooming idiot. We'll get an elk up here if you will only keep that

blank old gun still. So I let the deer go, and every time I think of it now it reminds me of beans, straight.

We got up to the licks, and there was not a hoof in sight. There had been probably 25 elk there that morning, but, alas, where were they now? We made a circle of a mile around the licks; saw fresh signs everywhere, but did not catch sight of an elk. Nor did we as long as we camped there, and I never saw sign more plentiful anywhere. We worked hard morning and night. We were both considered good hunters, and have killed plenty of elk since, but if it had not been for those measley beans we would both have starved to death.

As it was we staid there until we starved out. Then we packed up and started for home. It was along in the middle of the afternoon. We were riding toward home, talking. I remember our voices were husky from eating beans. I looked over across a flat, and saw a 3-point bull elk standing looking at us. At first I did not seem to realize what it was. I don't know why, unless I had beans on the brain. I turned around to Ed. and said:

"What the — is that thing over there?"

He caught sight of it at once, and said:

"It's a bull elk, you chump. Why don't you get your gun and nail him?"

By that time the elk had started to walk slowly away toward the mountain. I jumped off from my horse and grabbed my rifle, wondering at the same time whether I had better try my Lyman sight on him or not. Judging the distance at 250 yards I gave the sight a few turns, and told Ed. to watch where my bullet struck, so as to learn the distance. I pulled for the elk's shoulder and let go. He simply stopped and looked at us. I did not see where the bullet struck, and Ed. said

he saw no dirt fly, but that I had missed. The elk stood a second or two, and then started slowly toward the mountain, broadside on. I was at a loss to know how to hold for height, as I had never shot the gun before, but I tried again for the shoulder. Ed. said: "You missed again."

I was just going to try another shot when he went down.

"Meat at last!" we both yelled.

I jumped on my horse and ran over to the elk. Ed. pounded up the pack horses, and all came flying. We looked to see where the bull was shot, and found that both bullets had entered the middle of the left shoulder, not over two inches apart. He was dead when I got to him. But the greatest surprise remained. The elk fell in some brush. Ed. threw a rope around a hind leg, and fastened it to the horn of his saddle, to pull him out to where we could skin him. When he started up his saddle horse a bell began to rattle. Ed. looked around and said:

"What in hades is that?"

On examination we found that the elk had a leather collar on and a bell without any clapper in it. I would give \$50 for a picture of Ed.'s face as it looked at that moment. I don't believe I ever felt so mean in my life. I felt as if I had shot an Indian squaw in the back. We wanted meat mighty bad, but you bet we never put a knife in that elk. It had been a pet elk, sometime, and as the animal's neck grew the tongue in the buckle had torn out until it came to another hole. Three or four holes had been torn out in this way. We covered up the carcass with brush and sneaked off, like a pair of poisoned cayotes, and I have not gotten over the sneaking feeling yet.

Neither have I ever gotten over my violent hatred of the sight or smell of beans.

