

TRUE BEAR STORY AS TOLD BY FRANK CLARK, MALAD, IDAHO

Your request for the story of "Old Ephraim" shall be told to you just as it happened, by the one who killed and trapped him.

It will require that we go back to my arrival upon the scene of Old Eph's range of operations. I arrived on the right hand fork of Logan Canyon on July 13th, 1911, as a herder and pardner of Ward Clark Co. sheepmen.

At that time bears were very plentiful and the first season killed 154 adult sheep.

Now before we go any further let us look into a bear's habits as I have found them during forty-five years in the mountains, having never missed but two summers in that time. They never kill their prey but catch and eat what they want, such as the udder and brisket of sheep that were thus maimed, 23 in one day, and during the summer there were very few days that I did not have to shoot at least one or two. I have also seen the tragedy of a mother deer robbed of her fawn or destruction of birds nests, all caused by bear. As a lover of nature and nature's animals I do not hunt.

I have sworn eternal vengeance on bears and it shall be mine. Old Ephraim was the hardest of them all. By July of 1912 I was pretty well acquainted with Old Eph and his range because of a deformed foot, he only had three toes on one foot, evidently having been born that way. He was a killer but not one of the particular kind described above, he generally killed a sheep or other animal and carried it off to eat at his leisure. I had the pleasure of making him drop a full grown sheep once as he was making off with it. I shot at him several times but was unable to hit him as he was going straight up the side of a mountain.

In 1913 I started to trap for him and others. I caught thirteen bears that year, but Ephraim was not one of them. No other bear ever bothered his range for long.

In 1914, I determined to get him so set a trap in his wallow. He removed the trap without setting it off time and again. He was getting worse as a killer and many fellows followed his tracks and one or two got shots at him. I have had some good ones myself but - big as he was - I never touched him.

From 1913 on to the day he was caught, August 21st, 1923, was an everlasting battle every summer, but he was just too smart. In all those years I used everything that I could devise at his wallow and spring to get him

into a trap. I never saw any sign of him at any other spring and this canyon and spring is still known as Ephraim's Canyon.

Now to the final act: On August 21, 1923, I visited the trap and he had drummed the wallow into a newly built one so I carefully changed the trap to this newly built bath. I was camped one mile down the canyon in a tent. That night was a fine, beautiful, starlight night and I was sleeping fine when I was awakened by a roar and groan near camp. I had a dog but not a sound came from my dog. I tried to go back to sleep but no chance, so I got up and put on my shoes, but no trousers. I did take my gun, a 25-35 cal. carbine with seven steel ball cartridges, and walked up the trail. It was darker than hell and plenty cold for B.V.D.'s. I did not know that it was Eph, in fact, I thought it was a horse that was down. Eph was in the creek in some willows and after I had got past him he let me know all at once that it was not a horse. What should I do? Alone, the closest human being three miles away and Eph between me and camp. I listened and could hear the chain rattle and so did my teeth. I decided to get up on the hillside and wait for him. I spent many hours up there, I had no way of knowing how many, listening to Eph's groans and bellows. Daylight came at last and now it was my turn. I can assure you that no Indian ever went to the attack with more joy than I did this dawn. Eph was pretty well hidden in the creek bottom and willows so I threw sticks in to scare him out but he slipped out and went down by the tent and crawled into the willows there. I tracked him down there and when I got close to the tent I could see a small patch of hide so I fired at it and grazed the shoulder. And now for the greatest thrill of my life, Ephraim raised up on his hind legs with his back to me and a 14 foot log chain wound around his right arm as carefully as a man would have done it and a 23 pound bear trap on his foot and standing 9 feet 11 inches high. He could have gone that way and have gotten away but he turned around and I saw the most magnificent sight that any man could ever see. I was paralyzed with fear and couldn't raise my gun and he was coming, still on his hind legs, holding that cussed trap above his head. He had a four foot bank to surmount before he could reach me. I was rooted to the earth and let him come within six feet of me before I stuck the gun out and pulled the trigger. He fell back but came again and received five of the remaining six bullets. He had now reached the trail, still on his hind legs. I only had one cartridge left

in the gun and still that bear wouldn't go down so I started for Logan, 20 miles down hill. I went about 20 yards and turned, Eph was coming, still standing up, but my dog was snapping at his heels so he turned on the dog. I, then, turned back and as I got close he turned again on me, waddling along on his hind legs. I could see that he was badly hurt as at each breath the blood would spout from his nostrils so I gave him the last bullet in the brain. I think I felt sorry I had to do it.

The horses had all been scared away and I was alone but I wanted to see someone badly. I finally found a horse down in a wash where the others had knocked it in their flight. So I rode three miles to the camp of another herder and had a rest before returning to Eph.

We buried Eph after skinning him. Boy Scout troop No 43 of Logan, Utah dug him up and I've been told that his head is in the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D. C. I have a part of the hide but souvenir hunters got everything else.

I will now give you a few facts: He bit a 6 inch aspen log off in one bite that was 9 feet 11 inches above the ground. He also bit a 13 foot log, 12 inches in diameter, into eleven lengths as if they had been chopped.

He was named Ephraim from a story about a grizzly bear that bothered the people of California in a book by P. T. Barnum. Sheep herders named him.

Of the men who saw him, one is somewhere in Colorado, but the one who helped skin him is dead.

There is a monument of rocks on his grave that was built by the Boy Scouts, I have told the story to hundreds of Scouts at the grave.

The range has been mine for the last 39 years. Sam Kemp and I killed a grizzly bear there in 1912. ~~It~~ also saw a grizzly bear eating a lamb on August 31, 1936 but had no gun. Saw his tracks again in 1941.

In 1913, I captured a cub bear with a white ring around its neck and a white breast and took it to Logan to a man named Rolfolson for \$15.00 Kids fed him so much candy that he died.

I have only missed two summers without getting at least one bear, the summers of 1913 and 1915.

I have eaten lots of bear meat and it is good meat if you don't see it before it is skinned. There is one shepherd up there that they call "Bear Meat" because he likes it so well.

Six of us eat a small bear without any of it spoiling.

I am going back for more next summer.

Now these are facts and not fiction.