

COUGAR, PUMA, PANTHER, LION

Whatever They Call Him, Poor Old Tomcat Is Easy.

Cougar, puma, panther, mountain lion—call him what you will. "Felix" in cowboy parlance is merely a synonym for a thief—and a durned one at that! With the cowardly character of all thieves, he is cowardly by day and rarely ventures forth save at night; he will run in terror from a mongrel dog less than half his size and never fights unless cornered after the manner of the cowardly world. Yet this very cowardice makes him the most hated scourge of the range because he always strikes suddenly and from ambush and never once hesitates to fight in the open where he can be shot at, and never fights at night when he can, by any possible chance, save his neck by flight.

From a cowboy's standpoint he has no value, and that is his much to be pitied. He is a coward, a thief, a cowardly thief, and a thief who is cowardly. One of my knowledge killed over 50 sheep out of one southern Colorado flock in less than seven months, eating but a comparative few of the scores he killed seemingly for the fun of it. For over two years he terrorized the herders in that section, against all of whose wives and machinations for his downing he seemed invulnerable. From a peculiarity in his sport—the left hind foot being played from a peculiar experience with a steel trap of which he had, however, cleverly managed to divest himself—his ravages were easily ascribed; he never "lusted" in company and was finally killed by the writer, before whose collar puppy he big coward "tired" on being closely pressed.

A rather clumsily placed flank shot from a Colt's 44 brought him to the ground, where the yelling collie of the range and a third his weight and size, finished him within five minutes, getting, however, pretty badly used up in the scrimmage.

I have seen a healthy, uninjured "lion" over nine feet long from tip to tip and killed inside of that time by two mongrel half-breed dogs (mixed bull and collie) and I have known of one which was actually whipped in fair fight by a mongrel burro dog. Notwithstanding all this, he is the worst colt and calf killer known on the range and more young stock is destroyed by these pests than by all the other range vermin put together.

The animals vary considerably in both color and size. I have killed them in all shades between gray and reddish brown, the tint usually being a more or less blended tan, lightest on the under side and darkest on the back. The largest cougar I ever saw was under seven feet in length, but in '97 I shot one which was 113 inches and heard of another which I was dependably informed measured 16 feet and I have seen one about one third or slightly more of the entire length of the animal and the measurements are made from tip of nose to end of tail, both extended in a straight line.

In 30 years' experience with these beasts during which time I have lived largely in localities infested by them, and have had exceptionally good facilities for their observation and study, I have never once heard the stereotyped "human-like wailing cry" which they are popularly supposed to make for the purpose of luring people to their deaths.

I have seen them under all kinds of emotional conditions—in love and in fury; in the act of leaping upon their prey and the throes of the death struggle; in sickness and health; trapped and at liberty; and I never heard them make any other sound than a low purring, a vicious snarl or a hoarse, coughing snarl. I had two of them associated with me for three years and my observation is that they are the most silent of all American carnivores.

Experience convinces me that their method of attack is generally a pounce upon the victims of their prey, with the track as an objective point. The necks are nearly always broken, seemingly by a wrenching bite, while the loins are invariably scarified by the claws of the hind feet. The leap is usually but not invariably taken from an eminence, and the weight alone of a full-grown lion is enough to break down and paralyze an animal of the collie, cat or deer size, especially when it is remembered that there are well authenticated instances of cougars jumping fully 20 feet upon their victims under favorable circumstances.

In this connection it may be remarked that these animals so seldom make an attack upon human beings that all the instances in my knowledge may be counted on the fingers of one hand, leaving out the thumb and two of these are subject to grave doubt.

He is essentially a timber animal, hunting thick cover, and rocky cliffs by preference, although he makes use of his opportunities among the comparatively open cedar and pinon forests when the migrating deer are on the trails.

He is an adept at stalking, creeping so low and conforming in color so closely to the ground tints that he is almost indistinguishable to an untrained eye even when on fairly open ground. Once he is started, however, he is the plainest object in the landscape by reason of the high curving bounds which seem to keep him continually in the air. For an animal of his size he can, when stalking in small bunches, put in a greater percentage of disappearance than can any other animal larger than a shrew mouse.

A peculiar habit of the cougar is the "caching" or covering with leaf and stick trash of any kill which is not at once devoured. At these caches he is easily trapped should he return to them, which, however, he seldom does unless compelled by hunger arising from an extreme paucity of game. I have known a cougar to kill and cache five deer in one day, neither of which was afterward disturbed by him.

Occasionally a cougar is caught at a disadvantage in open country, generally absorbed in a meal on some unfortunate yearling or surprised while crossing between covers. In such cases he affords the reckless cowpunchers considerable fun, which is fast and furious while it lasts. One particular instance of this kind I recall with a vivid distinctness.

In company with two well known New Mexican "buckeros," Tom Dole and Chan Butler, I was riding for strays on the broken mesas below the La Sal mountains in Utah. We were working for the Lacey outfit, and had very good strings. It happened this particular day that we were riding the top horses of the whole L-C "cavey" and they were fairly fresh.

We had not got more than a mile from camp when Tom spied something near the foot of a cedar bluff and swung in behind it to investigate. We were leisurely joggling along at a fox trot when we heard his gun, and looking around saw the smoke of his second shot. Almost at the same instant we saw a long line bounding object directly ahead of him and coming quarteringly toward us.

"Lion!" said Chan, putting the iron into his horse, riding wide to head the cat off, while I pulled up so as to complete the triangle and let him between. I cannot now recall a more beautiful bit of action than the going of that beast. He hit the ground like a coiled spring in long, easy, graceful bounds that never seemed to tire, gaining feet with every spurt of dust that Tom threw up at his heels— for he was shooting beautifully clear considering the distance between them and the fact that his horse was jumping nearly as fast and high as the lion was.

Apparently not seeing either Chan or myself, who were on slightly lower ground and somewhat screened from his view by a thin line of high greasewood, the big cat got almost directly between us before he discovered his predicament. His only chance was to keep straight ahead as we closed in upon him and he went through like a flash, heading for a timbered gully some mile ahead of us.

Our horses by this time had caught the infection and for a minute I was content of only one thing—and that was the extremely small chance I would have of ever going cat coursing again if old "Durango" ever fouled a ladder hole. Then the mad delight of the chase possessed me and I hugged the leather and frantically yelled encouragement to the horse who was going like a cyclone and rapidly eating up the gap between me and the animated ball ahead.

But as fast as he was, old "Highball" was faster and almost with despair I saw that lean, gray head creeping past, and caught a whiff of sulphurous smoke from the Colt's whose report was lost in the thunder of the hoofs. Low and behind I noted with a fierce sense of ungenerous satisfaction as I threw my own gun up and took a snap at the elusive form. The cat gave a great jump sideways and I was nearly unseated by the attendant whirl of old Durango, who instantly changed his course conformably. Again and again I fired with no effect and Chan was like unfortunate. Then, as the lion turned once more in my direction I ripped a chunk out of his hem and he doubled up with a snarl. Durango stopped instantly and I nearly went over his head, recovering just in time to see Chan swing his 44 once more on the again running cougar who turned a double somersault at the report and lay still. My first cat course was over!

I have coursed the yellow scourge many times since, but only once with success when unaccompanied by dogs. In the bleak adobe barancas that lie along the Big Sandy, between the Huapili and Aquarius mountains in Arizona, I once encountered a cougar feeding on a porcupine in a little box wash. Being unarmed I ran him just in a spirit of mere sport and was surprised to find that, although I was but indistinctly mounted on a big American cavalry horse of no particular speed, I was actually able to run over him several

BILLIONAIRE BEIT BETTER.



Alfred Beit, the billionaire owner of South African diamond mines, declared to be the richest man in the world, is rapidly recovering from the spell of apoplexy which threatened to terminate his life. When his condition warrants, it is now Mr. Beit's intention to sail for England in which country he would prefer to die.

times and finally forced him to tree in a low scrub where I held him until a nearby prospector went to camp and got his rifle. Examining him we found that not only his forepaws, neck and breast, but his tongue, jaws and nostrils as well were bristling with porcupine quills, which may account for his inability or disinclination to run.

Couraging cougars with dogs is, to my mind, but very tame sport, the whole event resolving itself into a matter of old scent trailing and a consummating shooting of the beast out of a tree. There is in this kind of hunting neither danger nor excitement other than the rough and tumble finish which some men seem to delight in forcing their poor dogs to make. The scent of a cougar lies so strong that almost any dog

SPOOK'S SKIN HUNG TO DRY.

Medium's Phosphorescent Pelt Was Lugged Off—Captured After Exciting Struggle.

Spook-hunting is the latest attraction Los Angeles has to offer to the blasé eastern tourists, says the Times of that city, and from all accounts it is about as lively and entertaining a quest as can be found this side of the jungles.

As an evidence of the results of yesterday's sport in this line a fresh spookskin, taken from the spook last night, is now on exhibition at the Times office.

People with ordinary perceptive faculties might call it only a large sheet of cheese-cloth, daubed over with cabalistic characters done in phosphorus; but the discerning mind knows it is a real spook-hung, and the man who captured it can testify to the activity of the spook.

This hunter, Henry Messenger of No. 205 Wilmington street, tells of its capture as follows:

"For some time I have been investigating the work of spirit mediums, and a couple of weeks ago friends told me they had found the best ever seen in these parts—a Mr. Feaser, who could make the spooks come to time good and proper."

"Sunday, a week ago, I went to one of her seances at No. 265 West Seventh street, and, sure enough, the ghostly-looking figure arose out of the cabinet and beckoned to various people in the room to come up and gaze on its unreal reality. When my turn came, two confederates of the spook priestess held me firmly by the arms, but they let go as I turned away, and reaching my hand back I found real substance behind the ghostly garb."

"I determined to continue my investigations, and this evening, between 8 and 9 o'clock I again visited the Feaser materializing seance at No. 554 South Main street. There were twenty-one people present."

"I had an idea the mediums had me spotted; so tonight I blacked my

eyebrows, wore a wig and false whiskers. When my turn came to go forward and view the spook, the curtains parted and there suddenly flashed upon me a figure in floating drapery, from which shone glowing stars, crescents, Masonic emblems and the three links of Old Fellowship."

"The ghostly figure came to the front of the cabinet and stood still before me. With a quick jerk I freed my hands from the grasp of the man and woman on either side of me, and made a rapid grab for the spirit. In a second I had an armful."

"It was a lively spook, and gave me some pretty hard digs and claws. First went my whiskers, and then the spook scalped me; but in return I skinned the spook. I grabbed the garment with its luminous figures, and held on to it."

"In an instant all was confusion in the room. While I was struggling with the spook in the room began to yell, 'Kill him! Kill him!' He's killed the medium and we must kill him! and after breaking away from my ghostly adversary I was beset on all sides, and blows rained down on me from all sides."

"However, several people at the back of the room came to my rescue, and in the excitement I got to the door, still clinging to my spook skin."

"I held it up and called out for the audience to look at what I had captured, and that they should demand their money back, and then I slipped outdoors."

"In the rush I lost my hat and got some other man's. He can have it by calling and exchanging at the Times office. I'm also out one scalp, but I'm ahead one spook skin."

Parties who remained after Mr. Messenger had made his exciting exit, say the medium came forward and paid money back to the worst kickers, but pacified the other dupes by stating that conditions were not just right for materialization, and that they would be given a free seance next Wednesday evening.

TOMATO PACK.

The tomato pack of 1932 was the largest on record, and more than double the short pack of 1931. The pack in detail, as compiled by the American Grocer, compares with 1931 as follows, the figures being in cases of two dozen tins each:

	1931	1932
Maryland	1,768,269	4,514,582
Indiana	429,082	992,086
New Jersey	411,150	739,845
California	696,288	737,490
Delaware	212,728	750,970
Virginia	104,812	444,509
Ohio	103,847	314,609
Utah	130,000	248,650
New York	140,043	197,423
Missouri	13,400	98,682
Pennsylvania	27,361	81,091
Kentucky	18,509	62,249
Illinois	25,630	52,539
Iowa	18,180	61,657
Kansas	2,500	29,060
Michigan	34,476	17,967
Connecticut	15,000	12,300
Wisconsin	32,812	6,900
Colorado	47,369	5,800
Nebraska	1,400	3,322
Other states	14,788	20,669
Totals United States	4,238,221	9,282,812
Canada	220,000	211,000
Totals United States and Canada	4,458,221	9,494,812

In the above table one dozen gullions are figured as the equivalent of three dozen No. 3 tins, and three cases of No. 2 tins, as equal to two cases of No. 3 tins. The total pack compares with the output of the nine previous years as follows, in cases of two dozen tins each:

Years—	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932
	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812
	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812
	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812	3,694,812

1929.....7,404,923 1934.....6,568,579
1930.....5,797,806 1935.....4,825,183

Total for 10 years66,172,928
Average per year6,617,293
Average per year 1931-26,620,375

The population of the United States was officially estimated (June 1, 1931), at 77,647,000, an increase in seven years of over 10,000,000, which alone is sufficient to increase requirements 1,000,000 cases annually. The unusual high purchasing power of the people has created an enormous demand for prepared foods, and, in spite of the higher cost of tomatoes, the demand has been urgent and incessant. The total available supply for three years amounts to, in round numbers, 19,750,000 cases, an average annual supply for three years of 6,583,000 cases, or barely enough to meet normal average annual demand. This, in connection with two short packs, explains the small quantity of the total pack remaining in first hands, which is less than 15 per cent, possibly not 12½ per cent, of the total output.

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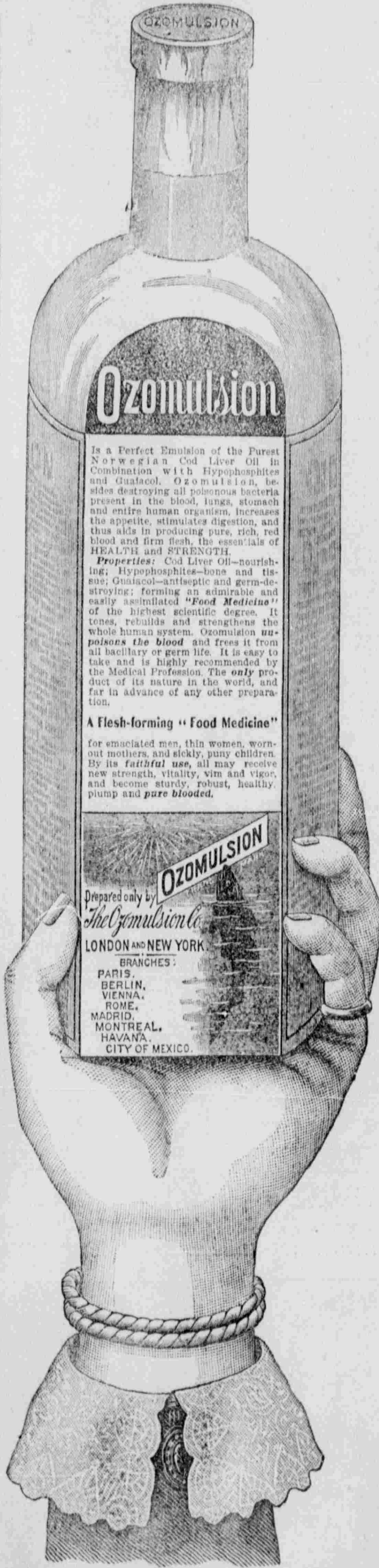
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