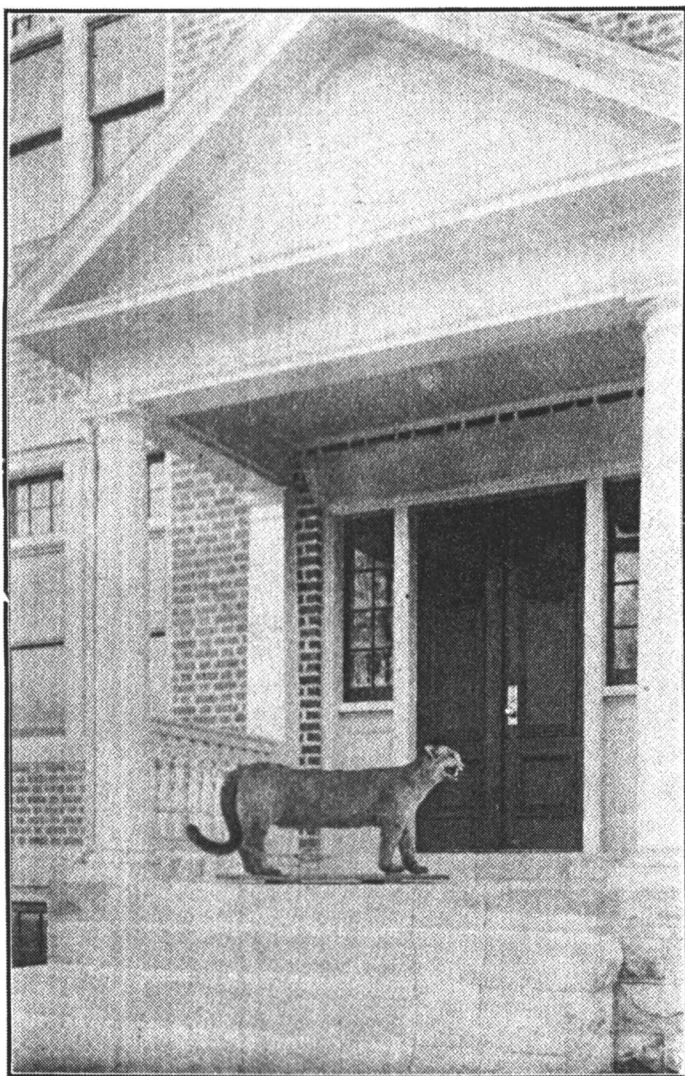


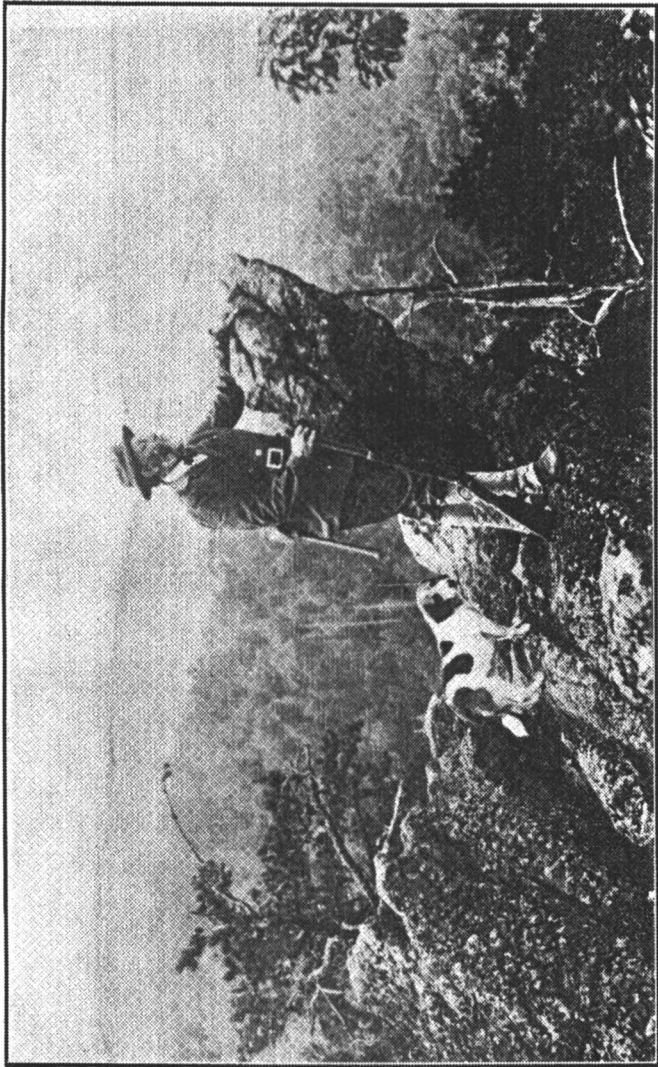
PENNSYLVANIA LION
OR PANTHER
— & —
FELIS CATUS IN
PENNSYLVANIA?

Henry W. Shoemaker





THE DORMAN PANTHER
At Albright College, Myerstown, Penna.
(Frontispiece)



To DR. J. T. ROTHROCK

**Founder of the Pennsylvania Department of Forestry, Scientist, Nature Lover, Splendid Gentleman,
These Pages Are Respectfully Dedicated by the Author**

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INDEX.

	Pages.
I. Preface	9-12
II. History	13-15
III. Description	16-18
IV. Habits	19-21
V. Early Prevalence	22-24
VI. The Great Slaughter.....	25-27
VII. The Biggest Panther.....	28-31
VIII. Diminishing Numbers.....	32-34
IX. The Last Phase.....	35-37
X. Re-Introduction: Sporting Possibilities	38-40
XI. Superstitions	41-43
XII. Tentative List of Panthers Killed in Pennsylvania Since 1860.....	44-45
XIII. Ode to a Stuffed Panther.....	46-47

The Pennsylvania Lion or Panther



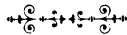
A Narrative of Our Grandest
Game Animal



By Henry W. Shoemaker

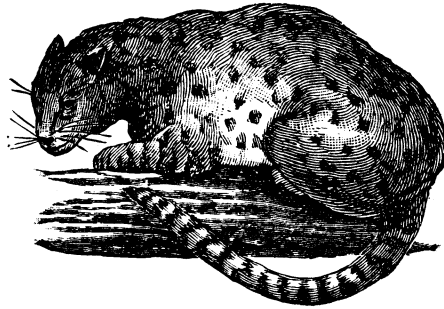
President of

THE ALTOONA TRIBUNE COMPANY



Published by
THE ALTOONA TRIBUNE CO.
Altoona, Penna.
1914

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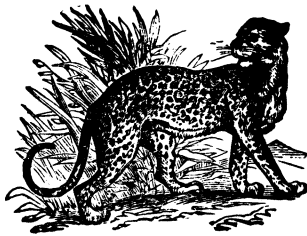
I. PREFACE.

THE object of this pamphlet is to produce a narrative blending the history and romance of the once plentiful Lion of Pennsylvania. While pages have been written in natural histories describing this animal's unpleasant characteristics, not a word has been said in its favor. It has never even had an apologetic. In reality the Pennsylvania Lion needs no defenders, as those who understand him realize the nobility of his nature. From reading John W. Godman's "American Natural History," published in 1828, one would imagine that the Pennsylvania Lion, or as it is most commonly called, the panther, was a most terrible beast. Among other things he says: "In the day time the cougar is seldom seen, but its peculiar cry frequently thrills the experienced traveler with horror, while camping in the forest for the night."

Even Mary Jemison, "The White Woman of the Genessee," speaks of "the terrifying shriek of the ferocious panther," as she heard it in her childhood days on Marsh Creek, Franklin county. In reality the panther was an inoffensive creature, desiring only to be let alone, yet brave when attacked by dogs, and respectful of man. A single hunter in St. Lawrence County, New York, met five panthers together, of which with his dog and gun, he killed three at the time and the next day the other two. The first settlers finding it in the woods set out to kill it as they did with every other living thing from the paroquet to the heath-cock, from the Northern hare to the fawn, from the passenger pigeon to the wild turkey, without trying to study it, or give it a chance. Economically the panther was of great value for the hide, meat, and oil, and as the finest game animal which Pennsylvania produced. As Governor Glynn, of New York, said in a recent message to the Legislature, "Game should be conserved to furnish a cheap food supply." In the following pages will be found the bulk of the information which the writer has been able to collect on the subject of the panther in Pennsylvania. It has been prepared from the point of view of the old hunters, whom the writer has interviewed. While there are many statements which are liable to be declared scientifically incorrect, they are printed for what they are worth, as the authorities were as reliable as unscientific observers can be. The writer has consulted practically every book which contains a mention of the panther in the Key-

stone State, and also many other works on the cougar of the United States and Central and South America. He does not seek to "split hairs" and make the Pennsylvania Lion a separate variety, greater or grander than its relatives in other parts. The statement is herein made that Pennsylvania panthers were the largest known in the East, and this the writer believes to be correct. The romantic part of the panther's sojourn among us has been dilated upon whenever possible. This animal, above all others, added most to the legendary lore of the State. But the chief effort of these pages will be to disprove many of the stories derogatory to the animal, to give a hearing to its side of the case and a wider knowledge of its beauty and usefulness. This is done in case a time should come when "red-blooded" sportsmen will decide to re-introduce the panther as our leading game animal. Then there would be at least one published work which would show the misjudged "cougar" in a favorable light. Though lacking in scientific exactness these pages would contain a brief for its existence. Southern panthers may still visit the wilder localities of Pennsylvania, and a wider knowledge of the animal might help prevent a general onslaught against these wanderers. In this connection it might be well to state that the wandering panthers are smaller than those which held their fixed abode in a single valley. In Algeria, where wandering leopards or "panthers" are found, they are called Berrani, whereas those which remain in one locality are called Dolly. The Berrani, strangely

enough, is smaller than the Dolly. Natural history has many parallels, coincidences and mysteries. All of them teach us the wonders of existence and should make us deal gently with every form of God's lesser creatures. We have no right to say which animals shall be destroyed and which spared. Just as we look with scorn on the wasteful methods of the old-time lumbermen of Pennsylvania, we will before long cherish the same opinion of the men who wantonly destroyed the wild life of the Commonwealth.





CLEMENT F. HERLACHER

With Hunting Trophies, Including a Panther Cub Taken in Treaster Valley in 1893

II. HISTORY.

FROM the earliest times the Pennsylvania lion or panther has been unjustly feared. The first Swedish settlers on the Delaware hunted it unmercifully. They could not but believe that an animal which howled so hideously at night must be a destroyer of human life. When William Penn first landed at Philadelphia the range of the panther still extended to the outskirts of the City of Brotherly Love. In a letter to his friends in England, written during his first visit to his Province, he said: "Of living creatures, fish, fowl, and the beasts of the wood, here are divers sorts, some for food and profit, and some for profit only; for food as well as profit the elk, as big as a small ox; deer, bigger than ours; beaver, raccoon, rabbits, squirrels, and some eat young bear and commend it. The creatures for profit only, by skin or fur, and which are natural to these parts, are the wild cat, panther, otter, wolf, fisher, minx, musk-rat, etc." This shows that the sagacious Quaker was awake to the commercial possibilities of the panther and other animals. On a number of occasions he expressed himself in favor of the protection of fur bearing animals, except when their coats were in prime condition. The Mingo Indians hated the panther, classing it with the wolf and wild cat, as one of the few animals which were at perpetual war with their God of the chase, Kanistagia. By the beginning

of the eighteenth century the panther was driven back as far as the Western limits of the present Chester County. By 1750 it was rarely found East of the blue Mountains. Here it made its stand for more than three-quarters of a century. By 1830 it was driven further West, its limits being approximately a line drawn across the State in a Northeasterly direction, beginning at the Eastern border of Fulton county, through Perry county, thence along the North Branch to Wilkes-Barre, and from thence across to Honesdale. By 1870 the range was closed in to the following counties: Clearfield, Centre, Mifflin, Clinton, Potter, Lycoming and Susquehanna. By 1880 Clearfield, Centre and Mifflin contained only native panthers, though wanderers from West Virginia continued traveling through some of the Western and Northern counties. In 1895 the range was limited to two valleys only, viz: Hayvice and Treaster, in Mifflin county, when the last native race of panthers disappeared. Dr. J. T. Rothrock, former Forestry Commissioner of Pennsylvania, heard the weird cry in Treaster Valley, in 1893. Of all the animals of Pennsylvania the panther is by far the most picturesque, and has been treated in the most fantastic manner by early writers. In an old history of the Lenni-Lenape, published nearly a century ago, a writer states: "There are many animals which the Indians in Pennsylvania were accustomed to hunt, some on account of their value, and others because of the mischief they did. Among these the panther is a

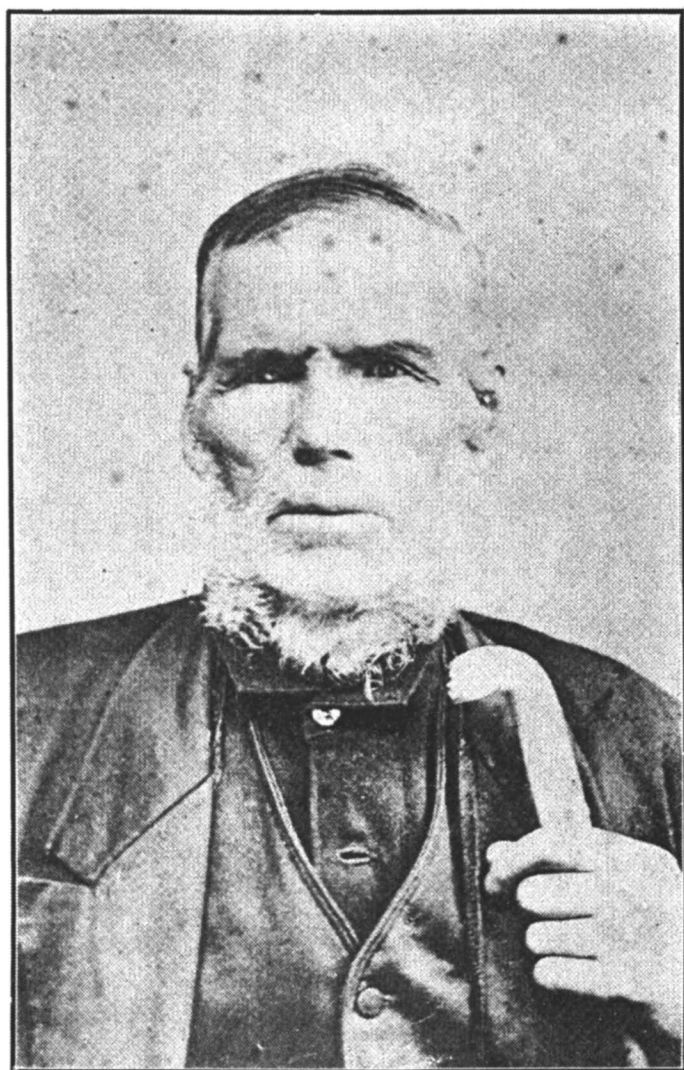
terrible animal. Its cry resembles that of a child, but this is interrupted by a peculiar bleating like that of a goat, which betrays it. It gnarls over its prey like a cat. It possesses astonishing strength and swiftness in leaping and seizing hogs, deer and other animals. When pursued, even with a small dog, it leaps into a tree, from which it darts upon its enemy. If the first shot misses, the hunter is in imminent danger. They do not, in common, attack men, but if hunters or travelers approach a covert, in which the panther has its young, their situation is perilous. Whoever flies from it is lost. It is, therefore, necessary for those threatened with an attack to withdraw gently, walking backward, and keeping their eyes fixed on the animal, and even if they miss their aim in shooting at it, to look at it steadfastly." It was these early inaccurate accounts which caused the public clamor against the Pennsylvania lion, resulting in the enactment of bounty laws and speedy extermination. In 1850 John Hamilton, a surveyor, encountered a female panther and two cubs crossing the Coudersport pike, going in the direction of Little Chatham Run. Though within twenty feet of the huge female, the animal made no effort to molest the gentleman. So much for the great danger of approaching where "a panther has its young!"

III. DESCRIPTION.

AFTER interviewing many old time panther hunters, and persons who saw the Pennsylvania lion alive or recently killed, among them Jacob Quiggle (1821-1911), John H. Chatham, George G. Hastings, Seth Iredell Nelson (1809-1905), Clement F. Herlacher and others, the writer has evolved the following description of the Lion of Pennsylvania: Body, long, slim, head large (averaging eight inches in mature specimens, wide in proportion to length); legs strong, short; tail, long and tufted at end; color greyish about the eyes; hairs within the ears grey, slightly tinged with yellow, exterior of ears blackish; those portions of the lips which support the whiskers, black; the remaining portion of the lip pale chocolate; throat, grey; beneath the neck pale yellow. General color, reddish in Potter county, shading from a dull gray to a slate further South in the State. Georges Buffon, whose French work on Natural History is an authority, in speaking of the *Cougar de Pennsylvanie* says: "It is low on its legs, has a longer tail than the Western puma; it is described as five feet six inches in length, tail two feet six inches; height before, one foot nine inches; behind one foot ten inches." Dr. C. Hart Merriam says that the head of the Adirondack panther was disproportionately small. The head of the Pennsylvania panther was large and round. George G. Hastings says that the ones he killed had heads "like

bulldogs." Of the three mounted specimens now in existence, all of which are fortunately mounted with the skulls, the heads are large. The size of the head and jaw of the specimen in the Museum at State College, which is magnificently mounted, is the most noticeable feature of the manikin. The hair of the female panther was somewhat longer than the males. Many naturalists claim that the tails of the female cougars are shorter than the males. Pennsylvania panther hunters aver that the tails of the females were as long as the males, although very few females were captured. The Pennsylvania lion was known by a great variety of names. William Penn called it the panther, why, cannot be imagined; it is colored very differently from the *pantheres* of Northern Africa which he probably had in mind. The backwoodsmen called it the *painter*; there is a Painter Run in Tioga county, a Painterville in Westmoreland county and *painter hollows* and *painter rocks* innumerable all over the state. Semi-humorous persons alluded to it as the Pennsylvania lion, but this in turn has become its most dignified cognomen. It is interesting to note that Peter Pentz, the famous Indian fighter, killed a *maned* male panther near McElhattan Run, Clinton county, in 1798. The Indians told the Dutch settlers on Manhattan Island that the hides of panthers they brought there to sell were from females, that the males had manes and were difficult to capture. Perhaps the earliest form of the panther possessed maned males. They may be a modification of the prehistoric lions

which Prof. Leidy called *felis atrox*, and which ranged parts of the continent. The Indians may have repeated an old tradition, and not something made out of the whole cloth. Panthers lived in shallow caves along the steep slopes of the rockier of the Pennsylvania mountains. Peter Pentz, it is said, crawled into a deep cavern to kill the maned panther and its mate. George Shover blocked up a panther in a cave on Little Miller Run, Lycoming county, in 1865, built a fire and suffocated the beast. There have been a few Pennsylvanians who called the Pennsylvania lion the *cougar*, and a still smaller number who alluded to it as the *puma*. There has been a wide range to the scientific nomenclature. Mr. S. N. Rhoads, the Philadelphia naturalist, who knows more about the panther than any other man in the State, gives preference to *felis couguar*. This is undoubtedly superior to *felis concolor*, which conveys very little. Others have referred to it as the American Lion, Brown Tiger and Catamount. The last title refers more properly to the Canada Lynx, or big grey wildcat. The Pennsylvania Germans used to call the panther the Bender.



**JAMES DAVID, Beech Creek, Pa.
A Celebrated Hunter of Panthers**

IV. HABITS.

IT is unfortunate that when the Pennsylvania lion was prevalent no local naturalists made an attempt to study the habits of the noble animal. Mr. S. N. Rhoads in his "Mammals of Pennsylvania and New Jersey" gives us the most complete account, but it was written years after the animal's disappearance and mostly from hearsay evidence. In the first place the panther of Pennsylvania was not "unnecessarily cruel." It fed mostly on decrepit and wounded deer and elk, sickly game birds, rabbits, also on mice, rats, bugs, worms and berries. It was also a scavenger, eating animals which had died after receiving wounds from hunters and those which succumbed from natural causes. In a forest it was a decidedly beneficial element. It never killed more than it could eat under any circumstances. There is no authentic case of the Pennsylvania lion having attacked human beings, even when wounded. There is a story prevalent in Lycoming county of a doctor having been eaten by a panther about 1840; later researches prove that he was lost in the snow and died of exposure. Wolves, panthers and hawks picked his carcass, not knowing enough to respect a human corpse, but that was the very worst. Another case, on Pine Creek, on the Clinton county shore, is that of a child going after the cows, which had to pass under an overhanging timber of an abandoned dam, on which a panther was crouched, and the

brute springing on the child devoured it. This was supposed to have happened about 1820, but no names are obtainable. The child was probably lost in the woods or kidnaped by the Indians who camped at the mouth of the creek. When wounded, panthers courageously attacked the dogs, but refused to molest hunters. When about to be knifed or shot, these animals are known to have looked the hunters in the eyes and shed real tears. It is recorded that panthers made interesting and affectionate pets. An admirer in Philadelphia sent a young Pennsylvania lion to Edmund Kean, a celebrated English actor. It followed him about the streets of London, attracting more attention than Alderman Parkin's team of quaggas. Several "pilots" on the West Branch of the Susquehanna kept panther cubs on their rafts, which were as playful as kittens. In Pennsylvania the rutting season usually occurred in December, and according to the old hunters, the period of gestation lasted three lunar months. Audubon says 97 days, and Dr. Conklin, former director of Central Park Zoological Garden, New York City, claims 91 days as the period. Three to six pups was the number of young produced by Pennsylvania panthers. Audubon says there have been instances of five at a birth, in speaking of the species in general. Samuel Askey, the great Centre county panther slayer, obtained four pups in a nest on more than one occasion. In 1871 Cal. Wagner, of Banner-ville, Snyder county, when crossing the Seven Mountains near Zerby, found a pantheress stretched out

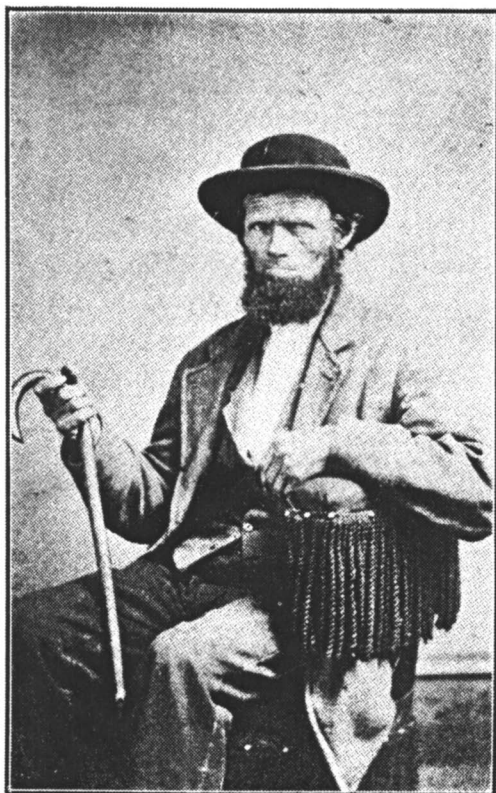
across the path, playing with six healthy looking pups. He was unarmed, and as the panthers made no move to vacate, he took a detour to pass them. Hurrying down the mountain he obtained a rifle from a settler near Penn's Creek, and returned to the spot, but the animals were nowhere to be seen. On the return, he encountered a herd of about thirty deer, another unusual occurrence for that time. The young panthers usually followed the mother until almost full grown. They hunted with her, but when two or three years old left to seek mates. The males and females, except mothers and young, kept separate except during the mating season. The panther was a silent animal except at this season, and when its young was taken. Its love song was majestic, but its cry of maternal anguish one of the most doleful to be conjured by the imagination. W. H. Schwartz, the brilliant editor of the Altoona Tribune, recently wrote: "Anent the cry of the panther. This writer had many conversations with a gentleman who was born in 1768 and who was one of the pioneers in this vicinity. Many times did he make our young blood run cold by the tales of the panther and its habit of crying through the night like an abandoned child. More than that, the writer, some sixty-two years ago, heard a plaintive cry one night as he spent the night with his grandmother, near Canoe Creek, and was assured by her that it was a panther. The cry was repeated several times."

V. EARLY PREVALENCE.

LIONS in British East Africa were never more prevalent than was the panther in Pennsylvania a century or more ago. The woods teemed with them. Yet they made no inroads on the myriads of elk, deer, heath-cocks, wild turkeys, grouse, quails, wild pigeons, rabbits and hares which shared the forest covers with them. The first settlers destroyed all game mercilessly and when it grew scarce blamed its disappearance on the panthers, lynxes, wildcats, wolves and foxes. A warfare was waged against the miscalled predatory beasts; they were exterminated, but game became scarcer than ever. It is now only that people are beginning to wake up to the fact that the panthers were the victims of a cowardly plot to avert the white hunters' culpability. Mr. S. N. Rhoads states that in Luzerne county bounties amounting to \$1,822 were paid on the scalps of panthers between 1808 and 1820. More than fifty of these superb animals were killed in one year. J. J. Audubon relates that "Among the mountains of the headwaters of the Juniata River, as we were informed, the Cougar is so abundant that one man has killed for some years from two to five, and one very hard winter seven." This was written about 1850. Samuel Askey, of Snow Shoe, Centre county, killed sixty-four panthers between the years of 1820 and 1845. These were taken in a limited district, and all of this great

hunter's neighbors were engaged slaying panthers at the same time. During these twenty-five years it is estimated that six hundred panthers were killed in Centre county. At no time, however, was the range of the Pennsylvania lion evenly distributed. While it was teeming in Centre, Clearfield and counties further South, it was a rare visitor in Potter, McKean and Warren counties. Yet it was almost as plentiful in Tioga, Bradford and Susquehanna counties as it was in Centre or Mifflin. Hundreds were slain in Susquehanna county and Blackman's history of that county abounds with instances of its appearance among the early settlers. It was killed by the hundreds in Wyoming and counties directly South. It bred in the inaccessible swamps in Susquehanna county and among the rocky fastnesses at the headwaters of the Lehigh River. It was never plentiful in Clinton county, but was found in great numbers in Lycoming and Sullivan. The limited range and the limited amount of wild territory in Pennsylvania set an early doom on the native lions. Gradually civilization closed in, and the number of hunters increased yearly. Panther skins were as prevalent on the walls of old-time farm buildings as raccoon skins are today. Almost every backwoods kitchen had a panther coverlet on the lounge by the stove. Panther tracks could be seen crossing and re-crossing all the fields, yet children on their way to school were never molested. The late Jacob Quiggle, of Pine Station, Clinton county, when a small boy was followed to school every morn-

ing for a week by a brown wolf. In an early day in Centre county hunters who had killed fifty panthers were of no rare occurrence. Young bloods dared not pay court to a girl unless they could boast of having killed a panther or two. Even preachers and missionaries joined in the chase and some of them held high scores in the awful game of slaughter. Panthers insisted in returning to spots where they had reared their young the season before. The hunters were soon aware of the panther "ledges" or "clefts" and robbed them annually. They lay in wait for the old animals, killing them without quarter. A dog which would not trail a panther was held to be of small value. Tame panthers were used to attract their wild relatives out of the forests. A pioneer in Northern Juniata county killed eleven panthers in seven years in this way. He is said to have covered one entire side of his barn with panther hides. He thought so little of them that they rotted where they hung and were blown apart by heavy gales. German buyers secured many panther skins, as there was a steady demand in the "old country" for these hides, like there has always been for walnut. Schroeder & Co., of Lock Haven, sent their last consignment to Germany in 1893.



**SETH IREDELL NELSON, Round Island, Pa.
A Famous Panther Hunter**

VI. THE GREAT SLAUGHTER.

ANIMAL drives, similar to those once held in South Africa, were as plentiful in Central and Southern Pennsylvania as in the "Northern tier." As they occurred in the remote backwoods districts where no written history was kept, accounts of them have well-nigh lapsed into oblivion. One of the greatest drives ever known took place about 1760, in the vicinity of Pomfret Castle, a fort for defense against the Indians, which had been constructed in 1756. "Black Jack" Schwartz was the leader of this drive, which resulted in the death of more than forty panthers. Schwartz, or as he is often called, "The Wild Hunter of the Juniata," must not be confounded with Captain Jack Armstrong, a trader, who was murdered by Indians in Jack's Narrows in 1744. History has confused the two men, but as the wild hunter offered his command of sharpshooters to General Braddock in 1755 there can be no doubt that they were different persons. Panthers and wolves had been troubling the more timid of the settlers, and a grand drive towards the centre of a circle thirty miles in diameter was planned. A plot of ground was cleared into which the animals were driven. In the outer edge of the circle fires were started, guns fired, all manner of noises made. The hunters, men and boys, to the number of two hundred, gradually closed in on the centre. When they reached the point where the

killing was to be made, they found it crowded with yelping, growling, bellowing animals. Then the slaughter began, not ending until the last animal had been slain. A group of buffaloes broke through the guards at an early stage of the killing, and it is estimated that several hundred animals escaped in this way. The recapitulation is as follows, the count having been made by Black Jack himself at the close of the carnage: Forty-one panthers, 109 wolves, 112 foxes, 114 mountain cats, 17 black bears, 1 white bear (?), 2 elk, 98 deer, 111 buffaloes, 3 fishers, 1 otter, 12 gluttons, 3 beavers and upwards of 500 smaller animals. The percentage of panthers to the entire number killed is an interesting commentary on the early prevalence of these animals. The choicest hides were taken, together with buffalo tongues, and then the heap of carcasses "as tall as the tallest trees," was heaped with rich pine and fired. This created such a stench that the settlers were compelled to vacate their cabins in the vicinity of the fort, three miles away. There is a small mound, which on being dug into is filled with bones, that marks the spot of the slaughter, near the headwaters of (Upper) Mahantango Creek. Black Jack's unpopularity with the Indians was added to when they learned of this animal drive. The red men, who only killed such animals as they actually needed for furs and food, resented such a wholesale butchery. The story has it that the Wild Hunter was ambushed by Indians while on a hunting trip and killed. Animal drives did not cease with

Black Jack's death, but in some localities they were held annually, until game became practically exterminated. They were held in Northern Pennsylvania, which was settled at a much later date, until about 1830. After the great slaughter at Pomfret Castle, many backwoodsmen appeared in full suits of panther skin. For several years they were known as the "Panther Boys," and in their old age they delighted to recount the "big hunt" to their descendants. Among those said to have taken part in it were Jack Schwartz, Michael Dougherty, Felix Delehanty, Terence McGuire, Patt. Mitcheltree, brother of Hugh Mitcheltree, who was carried off by six Indians in 1756; Abraham Hart, Michael Flinn and Isaac Delaplain. The panther uniforms were abandoned because they became favorite targets for skulking Indians. The savages, infuriated by the arrogance of the white newcomers, spared persons falling into their power occasionally, but gave no quarter to a "Panther Boy." The great slaughter of animals indirectly kept alive ill feeling between the two races in the region of the Firestone Mountains, and probably a dozen settlers lost their lives because of it. However, they went on with their animal drives, as the hardy settlers loved to do what the Indians hated.

VII. THE BIGGEST PANTHER.

WITH practically no written records it is well nigh impossible to gain a correct idea of the general size of Pennsylvania panthers. As far as it is known there are three mounted panthers in existence, one at State College, one at Albright College, and a third at McElhattan. The first, a male, killed by Samuel E. Brush in Susquehanna county in 1856, measures 7 feet 9 inches; the second, also a male, killed by Lewis Dorman in Snyder county in 1868, is 8 feet; the third, a female, killed by Thomas Anson in Berks county in 1874, is 6 feet 6 inches from tip to tip. This would give a fair average of the sizes. The largest Pennsylvania panther on record was killed in Clinton county, on Young Woman's Creek, by Sam Snyder, on January 5, 1858. It measured, a few hours after it was shot, eleven feet six inches. This giant animal had been heard running the deer along the ridges near the creek for several weeks, and several parties had been organized to capture it. It remained for Sam Snyder, a lad of twenty years, with his pack of eleven trained dogs, to run it down. One bright morning he tracked it to a point where it was forced to take refuge on an overhanging branch of a mammoth white oak. He fired at it, the bullet passing through its left shoulder. The wound served to infuriate the monster, and it leaped from the tree, landing in the centre of the snarling,

snapping pack of dogs. Backing up against the butt of a fallen hemlock, with its right paw, which was not disabled, it killed seven of the dogs before the hunter sent a bullet into its brain. The four dogs which escaped were tiny terriers, which were alert enough to keep out of reach of the brute's paw. The huge carcass was transported in an ox-cart to Young Woman's Town, now North Bend, where after it hung for a day in front of a tavern, it was skinned and the hide presented to Hon. Levi Mackey, a noted political leader residing at Lock Haven. The carcass was cut up into roasts and steaks, and the entire settlement feasted off it for several days. One dark night ten years later, Jacob K. Huff, better known as "Faraway Moses," was followed down Young Woman's Creek by a panther. The brute kept along the side of the ridge, howling every few minutes, until it neared the settlement. Evidently the panther had young, and feared that the traveler might molest them. James E. DeKay, in his *Natural History of New York State*, described a panther killed by Joe Wood at Fourth Lake of Fulton Chain, in Herkimer county, which measured eleven feet three inches. Dr. C. Hart Merriam doubts this measurement, though the stuffed hide was exhibited for many years at the Utica Museum. The contents of this Museum were removed, it is stated, to Jacksonville, Florida, about 1870. Dr. Merriam believes eight feet to be a good average size. This would indicate a close similarity in dimensions between the panthers of the

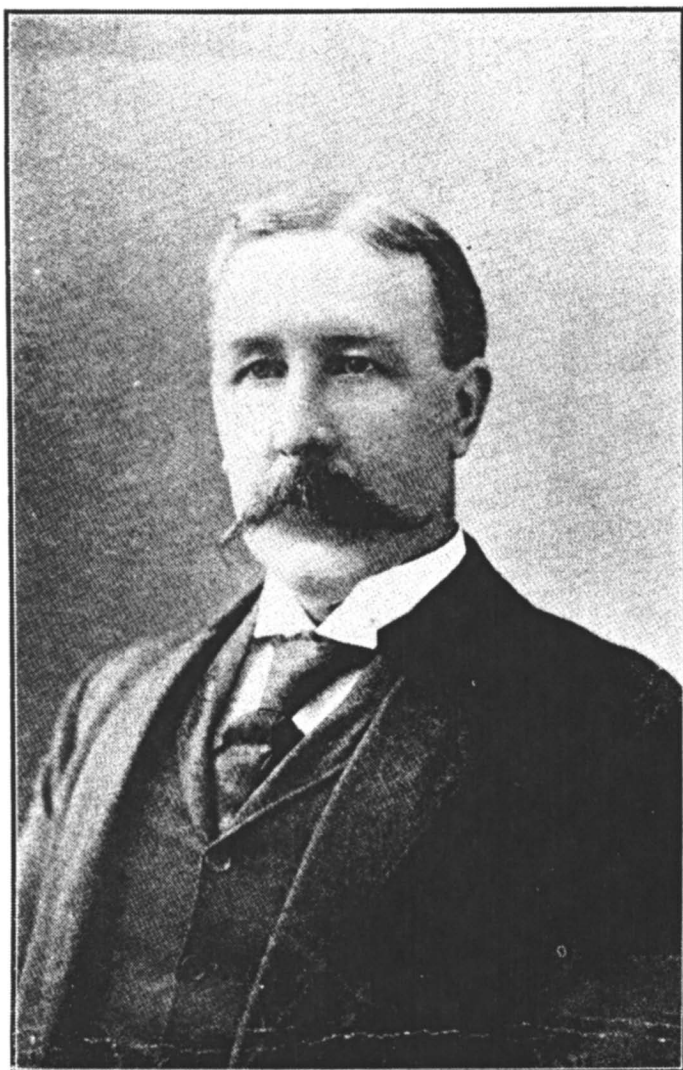
Adirondacks, Pennsylvania and the West. Colonel Roosevelt killed six cougars in Colorado in 1901, which averaged a trifle over eight feet apiece. If anything the Pennsylvania panthers, like the Pennsylvania trees, were larger on the average than those of the Adirondacks. It was the ideal location for them to thrive, for as Prof. J. A. Allen said: "The maximum physical development of the individual is attained where the conditions of environment are most favorable to the life of the species." The panthers which George G. Hastings, of Buffalo Run, Centre county, killed on December 30 and 31, 1871, measured nine feet and eight feet nine inches, respectively. The larger was the female, and Mr. Hastings believed it was the mother of the smaller one. George Shover killed a male panther on Little Miller Run, Lycoming county, in January, 1865, which measured eleven feet from tip to tip. For some reason male panthers were much more numerous in Pennsylvania than females. The opposite was the case in the Adirondacks, according to Dr. Merriam. Of all the instances of panthers noted by the writer of this article, not more than six at most, were females. The information concerning Sam Snyder's record panther was given to the writer by John G. Davis, of McElhattan, who moved to Young Woman's Town with his parents in April of the year in which the beast was killed. He was sixteen years old at the time and remembers the details of the occurrence vividly. Michael Pluff, who died at Hyner, Clinton county, in January, 1914, aged 74 years, also

recalled the circumstance. Hon. J. W. Crawford, of North Bend, Pa., published an interesting account of this panther in the "Renovo Record" of Feb. 20, 1914. He says that Snyder went to the front in 1861 and was killed at Fort Sumter. The story is well known in Clinton and adjoining counties and several persons, including Judge Crawford, who saw the panther when it was brought to Young Woman's Town are still "in the land of the living." The world of sport hails Sam Snyder as a mighty nimrod!



VIII. DIMINISHING NUMBERS.

WITH the hand of all raised against them it is small wonder that by 1860 the panther had become a rarity in the Pennsylvania wilds. Three or four were the most killed in any one year from that date on, until the final extermination. After 1860 they bred in three localities in the Commonwealth, in the Divide Region of Clearfield county, in Mifflin county, and at the headwaters of the Lehigh River. In Clearfield county they had the widest range, and increased most satisfactorily. There was an almost impenetrable evergreen forest at the head of Medix Run, which did not first feel the woodman's axe until 1904, and which was a panther's paradise. A few panthers bred there until about 1892. The cries of panthers and the howling of wolves could be heard there for some years after that. Sam Odin, of Clifford, Susquehanna county, killed the last panther in the northern section in February, 1874. It is described as having been a superb male, red colored and weighing 153 pounds. Its measurements are not given. A female, which was with it escaped, and is probably the same one which was killed by Thomas Anson, a coal-burner on the slope of the Pinnacle, in Northern Berks county, in August of that year. "Forest and Stream" gives the weight of this animal as 146 pounds, length 6 feet 5½ inches. Measured in the study of the writer of this article, where it now



GEORGE G. HASTINGS, Buffalo Run, Pa.
A Famous Panther Hunter

reposes, it is exactly six feet six inches! The old hunters were not all "gross exaggerators" as some would have us think. The story of the killing of this panther is of more than passing interest. The coal-burners lived in a shack on the East face of the Pinnacle, which is the highest point in Berks county. Nearby is the celebrated "amphitheatre" where the Blue Mountains appear to form a horseshoe about the village of Eckville and its surrounding fields. Travelers have compared it to the "Cirque de Gavarnie" in the Pyrenees. On several nights the coal-burners heard the animal prowling about their premises, much to the terror of their dogs. They supposed it to be a wildcat, as these animals were very plentiful in the neighborhood. One evening Jacob Pflieger, one of the burners, went to a farm house to get a pan of butter. It was dusk when he started for the shack, but he was able to observe that he was being followed by a huge cat-like animal. He kept his nerve, and was gratified to find that the monster ceased following him when it reached a large spring. There it began lapping up the water like a cat. He was unarmed, but at the shanty he found one of his companions, Thomas Anson, who owned a rifle. Anson is said to have killed a panther in Wayne county, the last known in that section, in 1867. The two men returned to the spring, finding the panther not far distant. Anson put several bullets into the brute's body, ending its life. To this day the spring has been known as "The Panther Spring." It is a

fine pool of water and is along the mountain road between Windsor Furnace and Eckville. A sketch was made of the spring by Artist C. H. Shearer in August, 1912. How this panther wandered into Berks county, where none of its kind had been seen in fifty years, can only be explained by the fact that the creature was working its way westward in search of a mate. Faires Boyer, a hunter, residing at Centreville, Snyder county, killed a panther on Jack's Mountain in November, 1873. It had been probably driven eastward by dogs. Clement F. Herlacher killed two panthers on Mosquito Creek, in Clearfield county, in February, 1880. For many nights they had been annoying the horses at a big camp, the frightened animals prancing and foaming while the panthers prowled outside. Leonard Johnson, of McElhattan, Clinton county, remembers this incident very well. The panthers in Treaster Valley did little damage and were in a sense protected by the old settlers, who resented "outsiders" hunting or cruising about the valley. Even Dr. Rothrock was warned to be "careful" in passing through the Valley alone. Clem Herlacher learned of these panthers and discovered their "ledge" in the early summer of 1892. He abstracted four pups which were about three or four months old. Returning the following year he found two pups in the same nest, which he also carried away.

IX. THE LAST PHASE.

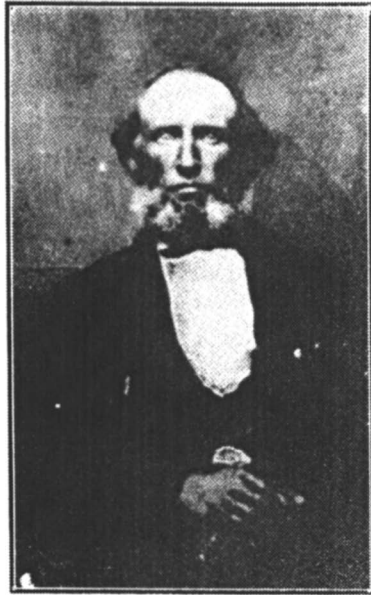
AND now the noble lion of Pennsylvania is reduced to a mere foot-print, a voice, a memory of other days. He is spoken of by persons who have heard rather than seen him. William J. Emert, of Youngdale, Clinton county, whose fish basket was rifled by a wandering panther at his bark camp near Dagusgahonda, Elk county, in 1889, remembers the animal's cries distinctly, and can give an exhibition of unique mimicry. The writer having heard the cries of the panther in a wild state in Montana and in captivity in New York, can vouch that the genial Bill actually heard the real thing. Potter county newspapers in 1911 recorded that the cries of a panther were heard in the vicinity of Sweden Hill, near Coudersport, in the autumn of that year. That same fall a panther was heard near Bare Meadows, Centre county, some nights roaring from the very summit of Bald Top. When calling for their mates they invariably climbed to the highest peaks. This panther was tracked during a light snowfall clear to Stone Valley. Some say that it was killed there. James Lebo, of Lucullus, Lycoming county, tracked two panthers across his fields in February, 1909. They were traveling in a northeasterly direction. During the summer of that year panther cries were heard at different points along the Coudersport Pike, which runs past the Lebo home. Across the road

from this gentleman's residence is the swale where the mangled body of little Edna Cryder was found in 1896. Panther tracks were observed on the Pike by Dr. Rothrock in 1913; in Detwiler Hollow in the Seven Mountains in the same year, by several hunters. In November, 1912, three rabbit hunters scared up a panther which was sleeping under the prostrate top of a pine tree, in Detwiler. In November, 1913, several farmers heard panther cries and one reliable person saw a panther in his barnyard in Logan Valley, near Altoona. Johnstown papers reported a panther as doing much damage to deer and other game on Laurel Ridge, in Somerset county, in the same month. There is probably a panther path leading into Pennsylvania from the Maryland and West Virginia Mountains. This is proved by the killing of a panther in November, 1913, several miles north of Washington, D. C. This wanderer evidently heard or scented the mountain lions at Rocky Creek Park Zoo, lost his bearings, became over-confident and paid the death penalty. The path must lead up the Laurel Ridge to Blue Knob, where it diverges, one line heading north through Centre county to Potter county, the other Northeast along the Bald Eagle Mountain to the Tussey Mountains, thence into the Seven Mountains country. The Seven Mountains was the last stand of the native panthers in Pennsylvania. Clement F. Herlacher camped in Treaster Valley in the summers of 1892 and 1893, as has been stated previously, having heard rumors of a pair of panthers living and breed-

ing there. As the result he captured four cubs in 1892, and two the following year, but the old ones escaped. He says the old panthers "took on" terribly over the loss of their young. It was probably these unhappy creatures which Dr. J. T. Rothrock, of West Chester, heard during his visit to this valley in 1893. His description of the panther's cry, which we give in Chapter XI, is to natural history what Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg speech is to military history; it is the pearl without price. Although the good doctor is now in his 79th year, his mastery of diction is unimpaired. One can feel the clear, cold night, with the effulgent moon above all, and see the ragged outline of the Seven Mountains silhouetted against the cloudless heavens; one can feel the oppressive stillness uninterrupted by the stirring of a single twig until the panther's song begins. And that song, that terrible song, so filled with anguish, a banshee-like song, lamenting the passing of the wilderness, of the brute's supremacy, the loss of cover, of young, of hope, of life itself threatened. It was both a requiem and a swan-song!

X. RE-INTRODUCTION: SPORTING POSSIBILITIES.

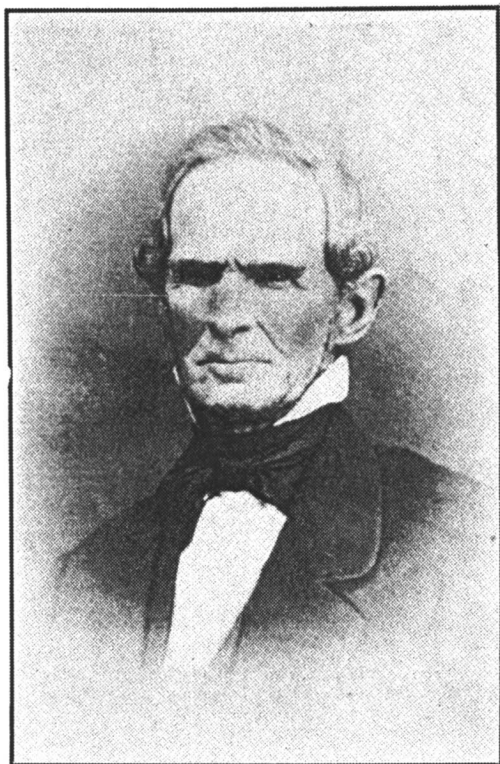
AS man becomes more educated, he will shrink more and more each year from taking the lives of tender, shrinking creatures like squirrels, rabbits and quails. Many will hesitate from destroying gentle-eyed deer or the majestic elk. He will demand a quarry worthy of his status as a man, worthy of his high-powered rifle. His mind will turn to larger and more savage beasts, such as the brown and black bear and the panther. He will ask the re-introduction of panthers and the adequate protection of bears. The bear has its drawbacks on account of its hibernating habits, its general lack of fighting qualities. He will select the panther as his ideal of the big game animal. The forest areas of Pennsylvania could be stocked with these beasts and a five year closed season put on them to allow them to multiply. During this time these subtle brutes would be well able to care for themselves. They would feed on old and decrepid deer and elk, sickly fawns, diseased grouse and turkeys and in the summer months on myriads of bugs, grubs, ants and worms, and on roots and berries. Once the closed season expired, sport royal would begin. There could be an extra license charged for panther hunting, as the territory and number of beasts being limited, it would not be wise to have the forests overcrowded with hunters. Dr. C. Hart Merriam in his



JOHN VANATTA PHILLIPS, Chatham Run, Pa.
Mr. Phillips Was a Famous Panther Hunter
in the Old Days

intensely interesting account of the animals of the Adirondack region describes panther hunting as it was in the North Woods thirty years ago. He says: "The hunter commonly follows the panther for many days, and sometimes for weeks, before overtaking him and could never get him were it not for the fact that he remains near the spot where he kills a deer till it is eaten. When the hunter has followed a panther for days, and has, perhaps, nearly come up with him, a heavy snowstorm often sets in and obliterates all signs of the track. He is then obliged to make wide detours to ascertain in which direction the animal has gone. On these long and tiresome snowshoe tramps he is, of course, obliged to sleep, without shelter, wherever night overtakes him. The heavy walking makes it impossible for him to carry many days' rations, and when his provision gives out he must strike for some camp or settlement for a new supply. This, of course, consumes valuable time and enables the panther to get still further away. When the beast is finally killed the event is celebrated by a feast, for panther meat is not only palatable, but is really fine eating." What grand, exhilarating, ennobling sport it must have been! As practiced in the Adirondacks, so it was carried on in Pennsylvania in the old days. It is related that Lewis Dorman, a Snyder county hunter, followed a panther for nearly two months before he brought it to bay. Packs of panther dogs would soon spring up in the mountainous settlements and the breeding of these animals would give an impetus to the canine

industry in these regions. Small bull dogs are said to be best for this purpose. Old hunters declare there is nothing in the eating line that can equal a panther roast. It is said to taste like pork, only far more luscious in flavor. The meat is white like chicken but of more substance. The hams are said to be superior to those of the hog. The panther hides are valuable as rugs, bed-covers and lap-ropes. The Seneca Indians made the skin into pouches in which they stored their "great medicine." The claws were used as amulets to signify the Indians' victory over the forces of evil, panthers being supposed to have kinship to the Machtando or Evil One. Panther oil was an efficacious remedy for gall-stones and rheumatism. Hundreds of hunters, among them Col. Roosevelt, have been attracted to Routt county, Colorado, by the panther hunting, where these animals are trailed with dogs. Robert J. Collier, a New York society man, headed a party of wealthy hunters into this region in November, 1913, to hunt "Mountain Lions." Col. C. J. Jones has provided similar sport for distinguished hunters at his ranch in Arizona. Pennsylvania can have all this and more, if she will but set about to re-establish the superb sport.



JESSE HUGHES, Antes Fort, Pa.
A Famous Panther Hunter

XI. SUPERSTITIONS.

THERE has been a marked tendency with the latest crop of naturalists to belittle the entire race of *felis couguar*. Dr. Merriam, great man that he is, commenced it, and Col. Roosevelt, by his article in "Scribner's Magazine" in 1901 fired the final gun. W. H. Hudson is the only naturalist who has spoken well of the species. It is the "style" to call the panther a coward, like has been done with the African lion. Why? Because he will not attack men. The African lion is said to charge when wounded, but the panther takes his medicine and dies like a gentleman. Dr. Merriam was the first to give popularity to the statement that there is no such thing as a panther cry, that it is all indigestion, imagination, superstition on the part of the hunters. It may be possible that the Adirondack panther was a silent animal, but his relative in Pennsylvania was not. If, after the testimony of fifty hunters and old-timers whom the writer of this article has questioned on the subject are doubted, the following letter from Dr. J. T. Rothrock, founder of the Forestry Commission of Pennsylvania, and a scientist of world-wide reputation, should set the matter at rest for all time:

WEST CHESTER, PA., Jan. 5, 1914.

DEAR MR. SHOEMAKER:

"I have your very kind letter of January 2d. That panther cry—I have often asked myself how I could

describe it and failed to satisfy the inquiry, though I think I have at this very minute a somewhat clear remembrance of it. It would not be an adequate reply if I said it sounded like the wail of a child seeking something, a cry, distinct, half inquiry and half in temper. There was something human in it, though unmistakably wild, clear and piercing. And yet I do not know how to make a more satisfactory reply, except to say that the cry seemed to be in all its tones about a minute long. I heard it one evening in Treaster Valley repeated so often that I could recognize it as coming from an animal moving along the rocky slope of the mountain where no child could have been at that hour, and was told by those residents in the region, "Oh, it's the *painter's* cry." It did not seem to be unusual to them. That was about twenty years ago.

(Signed)

"Cordially yours,

"J. T. ROTHROCK."

But there are real superstitions of the *painter*—as most of the early settlers called it. It was said to have a very definite spirit, which came back and haunted familiar scenes after it had met with an unnatural death. A hunter in Centreville, Snyder county, in 1864, killed a large male panther, stuffed it and mounted it on the ridge of his wood-house. One night the mate came after it, and springing on the roof, pushed the effigy into the yard. She carried it back to Jack's Mountain, where many persons averred it came to life again. In the White Mountains, not far from Troxelville, Snyder county, a panther was

killed and its hide put into an attic to cure. Strange noises were heard, and the skin mounted on a carpenter's trestle was met with in the woods at night. A noted witch doctor hit the horrid manikin with a silver bullet, after which it was never seen. Among the superstitious the Dorman panther was said to leave its case in the Natural History Museum on the top floor of the old academy building at New Berlin, on All Souls' Night and scamper about the big room after mice. It is now in the handsome new museum at Albright College, Myerstown, Lebanon county, having been taken there about 1905. Seneca Indians believed that the spirits of tyrants and unfaithful queens passed into panthers. They were hunted specifically for this and other before-mentioned reasons, having as little peace in animal form as in their human incarnations. Early German pioneers said that the panther's hide glowed like "fox-fire at night and green lights burned from the eyes." It was held to be good luck to be followed by a panther. It meant that outside forces were seeking the evil in the person followed, that it would soon be drawn away. Prof. Emmons, of Williams College, says in his Report on the Quadrupeds of Massachusetts: "The panther will not venture to attack man, yet it will follow his tracks a great distance; if it is near evening it frequently utters a scream which can be heard for miles." Some of the Scotch-Irish frontiersmen regarded the panther's wailing as fortelling a death in the family. It was the "token" or "banshee" of these sturdy souls.

XII. TENTATIVE LIST OF PANTHERS KILLED IN PENNSYLVANIA SINCE 1860.

County.	Date.	Hunter.
Clinton,	1860,	Jake Schrack
Clinton,	1860,	Mike Barner
Bradford,	1860,	Post Wilcox
aCentre,	1861,	Alex McCaleb
Snyder,	March,	1864, Jake Sampsel
Snyder,		1862, Faires Boyer
Snyder,		1862, Faires Boyer
Clinton,	December,	1863, John English
Clinton,	December,	1863, John English
xWayne,		1867, Thomas Anson
Snyder,	December 24,	1868, Lewis Dorman
Snyder,		1869, Dan Treaster
Mifflin,	February 27,	1872, John Swartzell
Lycoming,	January,	1865, George Shover
Clearfield,		1870, Seth Iredell Nelson
Clearfield,		1871, Seth Iredell Nelson
Clearfield,		1872, Seth Iredell Nelson
Clearfield,		1873, Seth Iredell Nelson
Centre,	December 30,	1871, George G. Hastings
Centre,	December 31,	1871, George G. Hastings
Snyder,	November 21,	1873, Faires Boyer
Berks,	August 4,	1874, Thomas Anson
McKean,	January 1,	1860, Jonas Eastman
Susquehanna,	December 15,	1874, Sam Odin
xCambria,		1877, Jacob Kauffman
Susquehanna,		1867, Sam Odin
xSullivan,		1873, Ben Landis
Clearfield,	December 10,	1880, Clement F. Herlacher
Clearfield,	December 23,	1880, Clement F. Herlacher
Mifflin,	January,	1882, John Swartzell

County.		Date.	Hunter.
Centre,		1886,	John Casher
Clearfield,		1891,	Seth Iredell Nelson
Clearfield,		1891,	Seth Iredell Nelson
Clearfield,		1893,	Seth Iredell Nelson
Clearfield,		1893,	Seth Iredell Nelson
Centre,		1893,	James Moore
Mifflin,	4 Cubs,	1892,	Clement F. Herlacher
Mifflin,	2 Cubs,	1893,	Clement F. Herlacher
xClearfield,		1904?	
Clearfield,		1905?	
†Clinton,	February,	1905?	Earle Monaghan

Total..... 45

a—Name of hunter unconfirmed.

x—Unconfirmed.

†—Unconfirmed newspaper report.

Note—Cameron, Elk, Potter, Jefferson, etc., probable panther counties not heard from.



XIII. ODE TO A STUFFED PANTHER.

(These lines were written upon seeing the effigy of the Dorman panther in the Natural History Museum of Albright College, Myerstown, Pa., on Nov. 6, 1912. See frontispiece.)

At twilight when the shadows fit,
Within the ancient museum I sit,
Gazing through the dust-encrusted glass
(While hosts of savage memories pass,
At your effigy, ludicrously stuffed.
The fulvous color faded, the paws all puffed,
And bullet-holes in jowl and side
Tell where your life blood ebbed like some red tide;
A streak of light—the last of day—
Gleams through a window on your muzzle gray,
And lights your glassy eyes with garnet fire.
You almost stir those orbs in fretful ire
Which gape into the sunset's dying flame
Towards the wild mountains whence you came;
Revives old images which dormant lie—
Outside the wind is raising to a sigh
Like oft you voiced in the primeval wood.
In your life's pilgrimage, I'd trace it if I could
In white pine forests, tops trembling in the breeze
Like restless sable-colored seas,
Beneath, in rhododendron thickets high,
You crouched until your prey came by.
Grouse, or sickly fawn, or, even fisher-fox
You rent, and then slunk back into the rocks,
And on cold wintry nights, lit by the cloud-swept moon
Your wailing to the music of the spheres atune,
Rose to a roar which echoed over all,

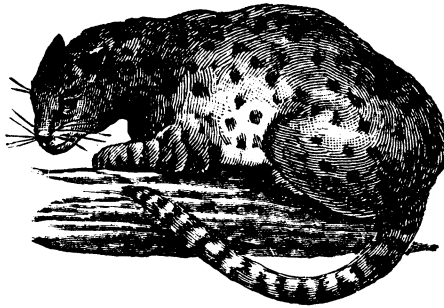
Besides which wolves' lamenting to a treble fall;
And through the snows your mate so slim draws nigh
Noiselessly, with strange love-light in her eye
You lick her coat, and stroke her with your tail,
Whispering a love-song weirdsome as the gale,
You leave her with a last long fond caress
Adown the glen you go in stealthiness,
. . . . A loud report! another! how you leap;
With a resounding thud into the snow you fall asleep.
Your blood-stained hide the hunter bears away,
The virile emblem of an ampler day.
The golden eagle picks your carcass dry,
Wild morning glories trellice on your ribs awry.
Your meaning is a deep one—while your kind live men
will rule.

There will be less of weakling, runt, or fool,
No enervation will our rugged courage sap.
We will not dawdle on plump luxury's lap,
But as your race declines, so dwindles man.
The painted cheek replaces coat of tan,
And marble halls, and beds of cloth of gold
Succeed the log-cabins of the days of old;
When the last panther falls then woe betide,
Nature's retribution cataclysm is at our side,
Our boasted civilization then will be no more,
Fresh forms must come from out the celestial store.



Felis Catus in Pennsylvania?

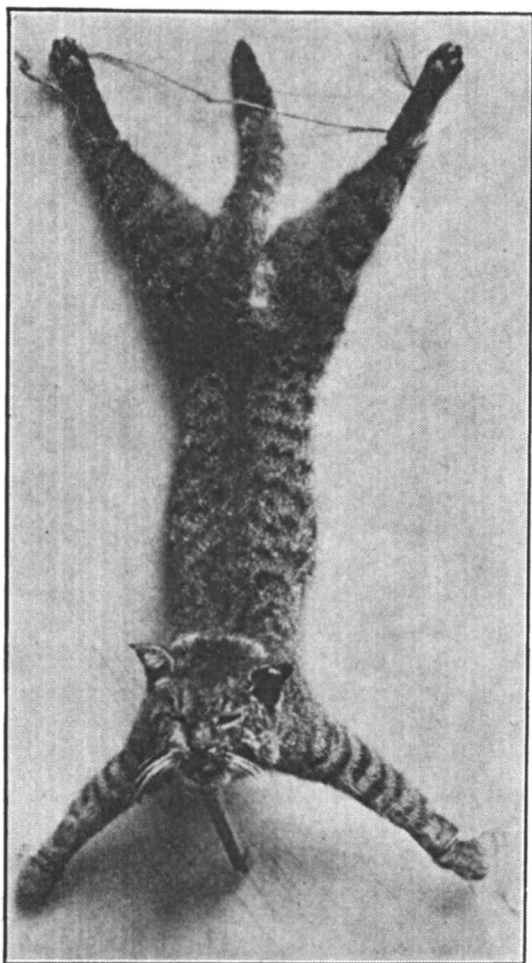
Being Reports of the Taking of a Genuine European Wild
Cat in Tincum Township, Bucks County,
January 16, 1922.



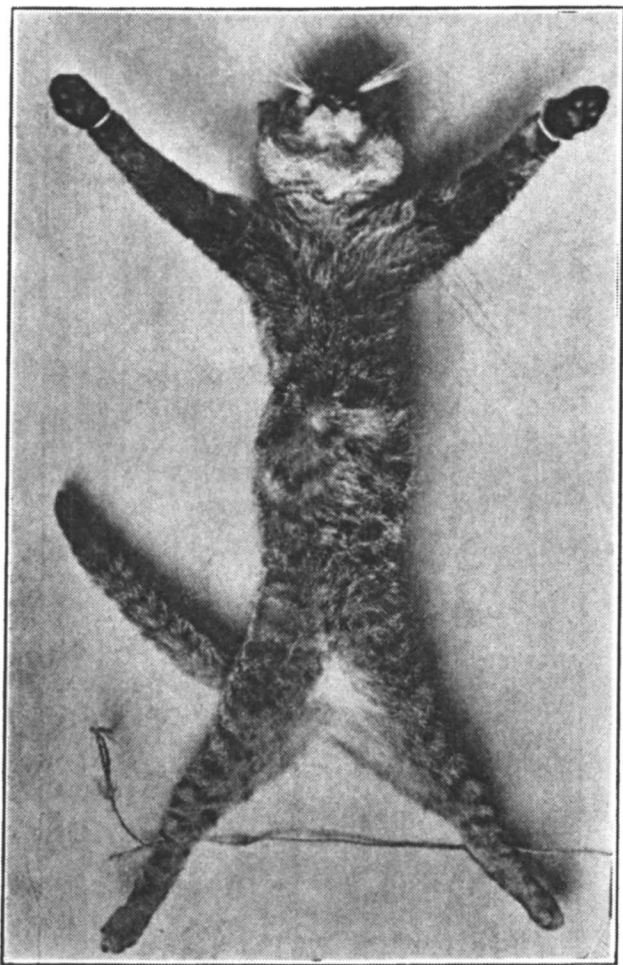
Compiled by
Henry W. Shoemaker
Author of "Pennsylvania Wild Cats", etc.

ALTOONA, PENNA.
Published by
Time-Tribune Co., 1922





EUROPEAN WILD CAT, KILLED IN PENNSYLVANIA, 1922
(Front view)



EUROPEAN WILD CAT KILLED IN PENNSYLVANIA
(Under view)

INTRODUCTION

FOR years the writer has heard the persistent under-current of rumors that *Felis Catus*, or some allied type of long-tailed wild cat was an early inhabitant of the Pennsylvania forests. Frankly he did not believe these stories, thinking that the animals in question were either feral house cats or young of *Felis Couguar*. The recent capture of a specimen in Tincum Township, Bucks County, its description and photographing, all make it seem as if, after all, there was a long tailed wild cat in Pennsylvania, along with the Panther (*Felis Couguar*), the Canada Lynx (*Lynx Canadensis*) and the Bob Cat (*Lynx Rufus*). As the heathcock, the Carolina Paroquet and the Moose Jay ("Camp Robber") were exterminated in Pennsylvania before they were generally included in our lists of wild life, and although the wolf has been extinct less than a third of a century, not a skin or bone remains, it is possible that the long-tailed wild cat or 'coon cat, never a plentiful animal, and of nocturnal habits was wiped out of existence without being recorded in our natural history. Appended hereto are the contemporary newspaper accounts of the capture of the wild cat, taken from the "Bucks County News" of Doylestown, Pa., which seem to be unusually clear and comprehensive, while for frontispiece appears photographs of the specimen, taken by State Game Warden Warren Fretz, of Doylestown.

It seems a great pity that this animal was not kept alive, but it is hoped that if the mate is ever taken, its life will be spared for the benefit of science and the joy of nature-lovers. In this connection it may be well to quote statements of some competent Pennsylvania sportsmen and naturalists on the subject of the coon-tailed wild cat in this State:

C. H. Shearer, Artist, of Tuckerton, Berks County, born in 1846, says: "When I was a boy the long-tailed wild cat inhabited

the range of mountains which culminates at Mount Penn, above Reading. I have caught three of them in my time in Irish Gap, say about 1857 or 1858, two by a hind foot, and one by a front foot. I always dreaded to get them in my traps as they fought so fiercely and were hard to kill. They were larger than the biggest domestic cats, their winter coat very fluffy, their faces were broad and the tails were beautifully ringed. I was never sure if they were a native wild animal, or were brought over by early Colonists from Europe, or else were tame house cats gone wild, in the third or fourth generation. I have sketched them, and remember their appearance as clearly as if it were yesterday."

Chauncey E. Logue, State wild animal trapper, of Woolrich, Clinton County, born on First Fork of Sinnemahoning Creek, in 1870, and probably the leading bob cat hunter of his generation says: "The older people where I was brought up, it was a wild region up to twenty years ago, always gave me to understand there was a fourth species of the cat family in Pennsylvania, a long-tailed wild cat. As a small boy I saw the carcasses of several that had been killed by hunters, and my recollection is clearly that they were not like house cats that took to the woods." Emmanuel Harman, hunter, of Mt. Zion, Clinton County, born in 1832, who died several years ago said: "Young panthers were sometimes found in the woods by the early settlers and because of their long tails, called 'wild cats', but there was also a true wild cat in the Pennsylvania mountains, with a long tail, clearly marked and barred; these I have seen and helped to kill several times when I was a boy." George A. Betzer, State Game Protector, of White Deer Mountain, Lycoming County, born in 1862, says: "As a boy in Snyder County, in the mountains I always heard the old hunters say that there were still a few long-tailed wild cats left, of a race fairly plentiful when the first settlers came in, but quickly killed off or driven away. Once while on a hunt I helped to kill a magnificent long-tailed wild cat; it ran up a tree and out on a

limb, and we shot it. I examined it closely, and it was anything but like a domestic cat that becomes wild. I have seen many domestic cats that took to the woods, they are great game destroyers, and I have killed them, but there are differences about the size of the head and body which allow no mistakes being made by a careful observer." It will be indeed interesting if a form of *Felis Catus* can be added to the list of our Pennsylvania fauna at this late date and it will show that science never stands still, that there are constant rewards in store for the seekers after knowledge. It is hoped that the publication of this little pamphlet will have the effect of shedding further light on the question, and that communications will come in from experienced hunters and trappers, who will by the weight of their evidence either prove or disprove this important and interesting topic. Just because natural histories, often the work of parlor or professional naturalists, who do not dare deviate from the hewn path of their equally indoor predecessors, declare that such and such an animal or bird does not exist or never existed, probably several species have been lost or confused in Pennsylvania faunal history—cases in point are the Black Moose, and the Bison, now clearly established as a part of our list of mammals within the past two hundred years.

HENRY W. SHOEMAKER,

Altoona Tribune Office, May 6, 1922.



BOB-CAT KILLED BY C. E. LOGUE

WILD CAT CAUGHT IN TINICUM TWP.

Rare Animal, Supposed to Be Nearly Extinct, Trapped by 16-Year-Old Lad

SPORTSMEN TO SEE IT HERE

A GENUINE wild cat, a species of animal that is now said to be very rare in this country, was trapped and killed on Monday, January 16, by Tunis Brady, the 16-year-old son of Joseph Brady, on the Cook premises, on the edge of the State Auxiliary game preserve in the Tinicum Swamp, this county. With the possible exception of two similar animals killed about two years ago by a son of Daniel Trouts in the same locality, this is probably the first wild cat known to be taken in Bucks county for nearly three-quarters of a century. The last wild cat shot in central Bucks county was killed on Spruce Hill, about a mile below Chalfont fifteen or twenty years before the Civil War. This capture is said to be the only authenticated taking of a wild cat anywhere in the county until the capture last Monday—but the Spruce Hill cat may have been a bob cat.

The carcass of the Nockamixon cat is now in the possession of Game Protector Warren Fretz, who will exhibit it at the annual meeting and smoker of the Bucks County Fish, Game and Forestry Association next Tuesday night, when it will no doubt be an object of great curiosity to the sportsmen.

Terrified the Neighborhood

For three years residents in the vicinity of the Auxiliary Game Preserve have known of the presence of some strange wild animal in the vicinity, which uttered "unearthly" yells at night. So terrifying were the cries of this animal that timid women in

that sparsely settled part of the county were afraid to go out of the house at night. Young Brady tracked two strange animals a few weeks ago to a den in some huge rocks near his home on the Cook place and set a trap with the idea of capturing them. Three times they sprung the traps without being caught.

Put Up a Big Fight

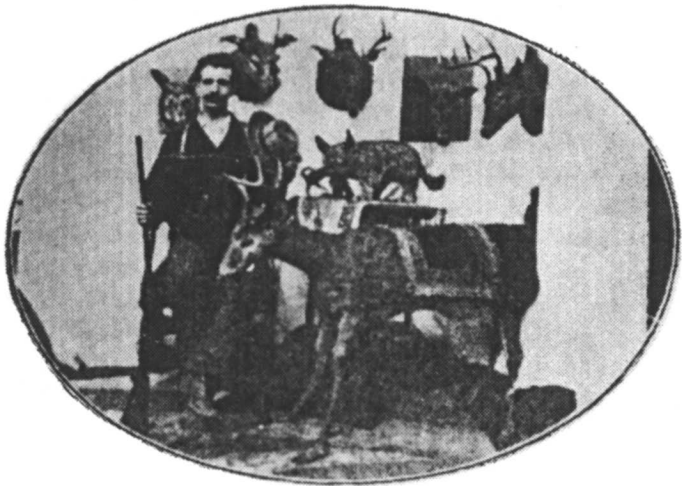
Last Monday the animals were less fortunate and one of them, the male, was securely caught with one hind foot and one front foot in the trap. When Brady went to look at the traps in the morning and found that he had captured some animal, he attempted to kill it with a club, but the animal put up such a terrific fight that the boy thought it would break the trap-chain and escape. He then procured a rifle and killed it with several shots in the head. It was the male cat, and its companion, believed to be a female, is still under the rocks.

Not a Domestic "Wild" Cat

The captured animal is not a domestic cat gone back to a wild state, but is, without much doubt a distinct species—a genuine wild cat. It is not a bob cat nor a Canada lynx, nor is it a cross between these two animals, as some people have pronounced it. It corresponds exactly with the description of the wild cat contained in Dr. J. G. Wood's "Natural History," and it occupied precisely the habitat which Dr. Wood says the wild cat frequents, "rocky and woody country, making its home in the cleft of some rocks," a place just like that in which this wild cat was captured.

The Cat's Measurements

The animal captured in Nockamixon has strong and powerful claws and teeth, and its head is large in proportion to its body. It apparently has not an ounce of surplus flesh, being sinewy and wiry, and yet it weighs eight and a half pounds. Its length from the tip of his nose to the tip of its tail is 30 inches. Its body length is 20 inches and it stands 13 inches high. Its front legs are 7 inches long and its back legs 13 inches. Its head



CLEM HERLACHER AND TROPHIES

measures 11 inches in circumference the broad way and $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches the long way. It measures 3 inches between the ears and 7 inches across the ears. Its body is 12 inches around just behind its forelegs and $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches around the centre. Its tail is scant 11 inches long, thick and inclined to be bushy, which distinguishes it from the domestic cat, which has a long tapering tail.

Its Peculiar Markings

Its markings are precisely those Dr. Wood describes for the wild cat—the fur being a sandy gray, with some yellow or buffy color, the buff color being particularly noticeable on the body under the hind legs. A dark line extends from the shoulders along the spine to the end of the tail. It has black “tiger” markings on the body, legs and tail. The black stripes extend entirely around the body and hind legs. On the front legs the black bands run into black patches on the under side.

The top of the head is black, and the face grey, marked with regular black lines. The “whiskers” or “feelers” are white, stiff and bristly and rather abundant. The chin and neck are lighter gray than the rest of the body and also buffy, with a median transverse double half-moon brown line. The throat has a conspicuous white spot.

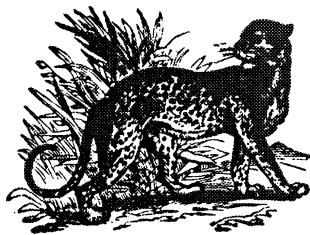
The tail is of the prevailing gray color, ringed with bands of black, and has a long black tip, the whole resembling a raccoon’s tail. The dark markings on the animal are not uniform in intensity, but they contrast with the grey with sufficient strength to make it a very striking-looking beast.

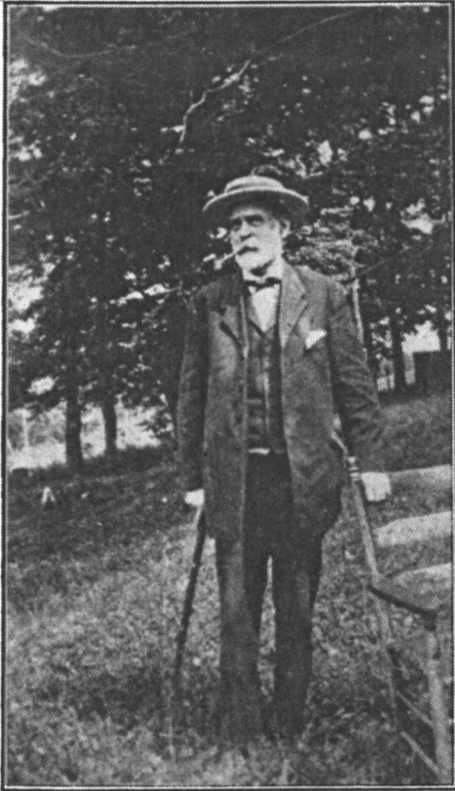
Distribution of the Wild Cat

The wild cat, though little known here, is widely spread, being found not only in this country, but in the British Isles, Continental Europe, Northern Asia and Nepal, though it is not as common anywhere now as it once was. It has been claimed that it is a native of Ireland, though this is disputed. It is sometimes called the British tiger, though it now is seldom found in England.

It has been claimed that the domestic cat originated from the wild cat, but this theory has been rejected by most scientific investigators. Domestic cats sometimes revert to wild life, but no matter how many generations they continue wild, there are still certain distinctions between the wild domestic cat and the wild cat. Some naturalists claim that our race of domestic cats originated from the Egyptian cat, which more nearly resembles the domestic cat than the wild cat, but, while this theory is highly probable, it has never been satisfactorily proven.

The capture of the Nockamixon wild cat is likely to cause a stir in scientific circles, because of the rarity of the incident. It is believed that there are several more of his breed in the same territory. In fact the animal is now so little known that some recently published natural histories do not even mention it—*Bucks County News*, January 20, 1922.





JOHN C. FRENCH

TINICUM WILD CAT DISCUSSION

Capture of European Species Raises Question of Its American Nativity

GREAT INTEREST IN "FIND"

THE publication of the story yesterday in the Bucks County Daily News of the capture of an European wild cat in the Tinicum swamp by Tunis Brady, a sixteen-year-old resident on one of the tracts included in the Bucks County Fish, Game and Forestry Association's Auxiliary Preserve, created great interest locally and among naturalists generally. It is also likely to raise a controversy as to whether or not the European wild cat is a native of this country. Dr. Wood, the author of the British work on natural history, quoted in yesterday's story, mentions this animal as being found in "this country," but he clearly means England and not America.

Should Be Investigated

Instead of becoming a matter of controversy, the question as to whether the European wild cat is indigenous to America ought to be a matter for serious and careful investigation. Present-day American writers on natural history do not mention the European wild cat as a member of the native fauna. While admitting that the animal captured in Tinicum may be the European wild cat (*Felis catus*), they say it is probably an escape from a menagerie and does not belong to this country's fauna.

There are others, however, who believe that the *Felis catus* is an American animal; that in the early settlement of this country it was somewhat common, but, as it does not stand persisting hunting, had become practically extinct over a large area of the country. These claimants say that it has escaped notice in recent years because it so closely resembles the "tiger" type of domestic

cat, and that hunters who have killed them in modern days have never brought them to the attention of naturalists because they thought them domestic cats, and thus they have escaped the attention of naturalists.

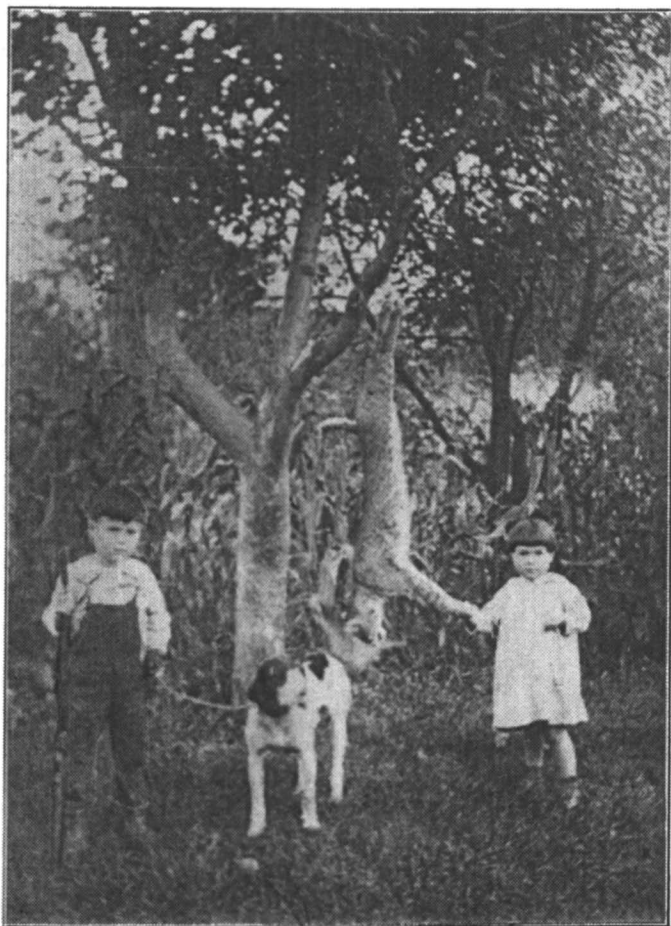
Naturalists May Have Overlooked It

Dr. Henry C. Mercer, of Doylestown, who saw the animal killed in Tinicum, not only says that the specimen is an European wild cat, but is inclined to the opinion that the animals are indigenous to this country. He cites a quotation from Oliver Goldsmith's "History of Animated Nature," in which Goldsmith states that Columbus was shown one of these wild cats by a hunter who killed it on this side of the Atlantic.

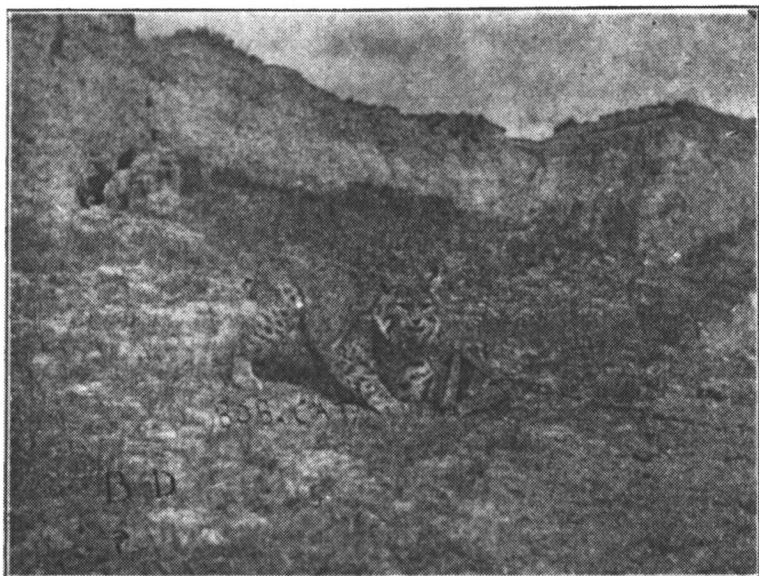
Well Established in Tinicum

It may be difficult to prove now that this animal is native to America. There is not much doubt, however, that it has become thoroughly established in the Tinicum Swamp. Residents in the vicinity have known of the existence of strange animals there for several years. Two similar animals were killed in that territory between two and three years ago, while the one trapped this week had a mate which is still in hiding in the rocky fastnesses of the swamp region.

The specimen captured on January 16 is still in the possession of Game Protector Fretz, who has called the attention of Dr. Woodruff, a noted naturalist of this State, to the capture. The animal will be exhibited at the annual meeting and smoker of the Bucks County Fish, Game and Forestry Association in the Sixth Regiment Armory next Tuesday night, after which it will be placed in the hands of a taxidermist for mounting.—Bucks County News, January 21, 1922.



BOB CAT RECENTLY KILLED IN SNYDER COUNTY



TRAPPED BOB CAT

TINICUM CAT TRUE WILD CAT

**Species Not So Near Extinct as Many Naturalists
Think**

ITS HABITS ARE NOCTURNAL

By Miss Elizabeth C. Cox, of Holicong

I HAVE been very much interested in the Wild Cat, caught in the Tinicum swamp. I went to see it and was much surprised to read that the sportsmen generally pronounced it a "domestic cat."

Species Not Nearly Extinct

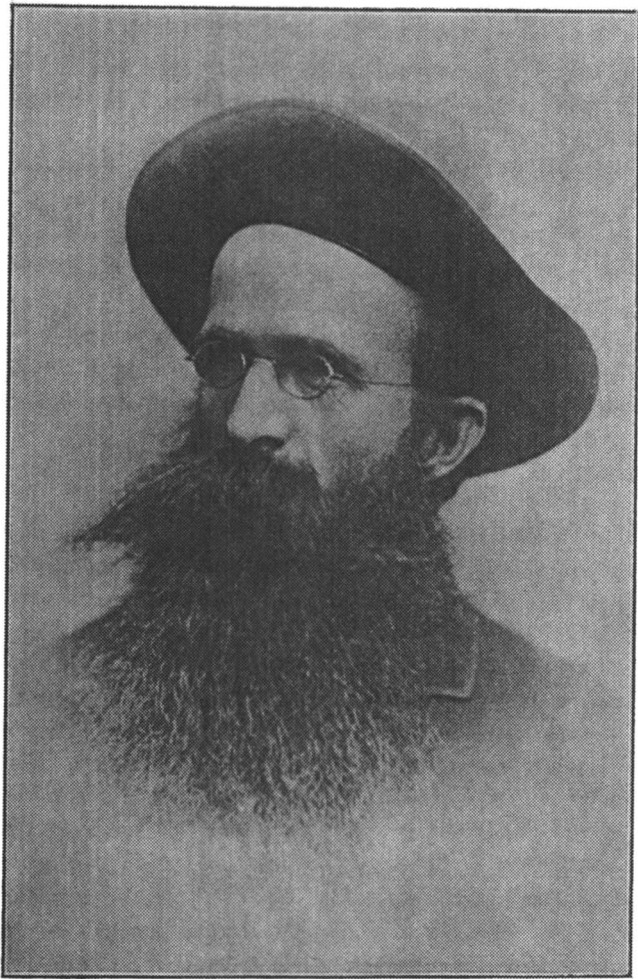
Instances that have come to my knowledge lead me to believe that it is a wild cat, and that the species is not so nearly extinct as is suggested. Years ago I read a book, entitled "Early Settlers in Canada." It was a very old book, the story of an English family who settled in central Canada, while that country was a trackless wilderness. One night one of the boys of the family shot an animal in a tree near the house. When they examined it, they think it a domestic cat, but an old man, a hunter and trapper, who has spent practically all his life in the forest, tells them that it is a wild cat, that while it is smaller than either the Canadian lynx or the more common bobcat, it is much more fierce than either of them and cannot be tamed, and the reason they have not encountered it before is because it is entirely nocturnal in its habits. The description of the animal, in the book, as I remember it tallies perfectly with the specimen in Mr. Fretz's possession.

One in the Philadelphia Zoo

One time at the Philadelphia Zoo they had in a small cage an animal ticketed "Indian Devil." When I first saw it it was



JAKE HAMERSLEY, Cat Hunter



C. H. SHEARER, READING, PA.

curled up asleep, and looked like a large house cat, but when aroused it jumped against the bars of the cage hissing and spitting, with ears laid close to its head, bit at the bars and seemed in a perfect frenzy to attack us.

Some time afterwards, when visiting the zoo, I asked an old man, who was working about the garden, if he remembered the "Indian Devil."

"Oh yes," he said; "it was one of them wild cats out of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It soon died. You can't keep 'em in captivity. Why, that beast just spent every night while it lived buttin' its head agin the bars tryin' to git out. It eat enough, but it just killed itself tryin' to git away."

As I remember the cat at the zoo it was not quite as distinctly striped as Mr. Fretz's cat, and was, perhaps, a little larger, but it had the same large round head, flat ears and short ringed tail.

Found in Fayette County

A lady whose home was at one time on the summit of Chestnut Ridge, a spur of the Allegheny Mountains, in Fayette county, Pennsylvania, tells me that these long-tailed wild cats are by no means uncommon there; that often in driving at night they would see a wild cat cross the road in front of the car, taking his time and staring at the lights as he went. She says she never knew them to attack anyone, but that when they drove in a carriage they always carried a pistol as a protection against wildcats, and that they were always warned that if they had meat in the carriage and encountered a wild cat to throw the meat to it and get away as fast as possible.

(Miss Cox's contribution to the Wild Cat question is very interesting and valuable. Miss Cox is one of the most careful investigators and most conscientious naturalists in Bucks county, and her opinion and the facts she relates should have much weight. It is to be hoped that other naturalists will make similar inquiries.—EDITOR.)—Bucks County News, January, 1922.

Printed in the United States
78621LV00001B/376-408

