

MARK CATHEY, Deep Creek, Swain County, North Carolina / Disc 044a, 044b, 045a, 045b

Well, the fall of nineteen and twenty-one, me and a party went to Bryson place on a bear hunt, they was twenty-nine in the party, natives from here and a bunch from Knoxville, Tennessee and some from Oakdale, Tennessee, well, the next morning, we'd turned out for the hunt, and the driver driv the west side of Deep Creek, the Easy Ridge and Pole Road with the bear hounds tied and driv out to the Burnt Spruce Gap, that's the dividing ridge between the Pole Road and Bear Creek, and they found no bear signs to turn the dogs on, and uh I placed the standers on the Bear Wallow Ridge beyond Bear Creek, and uh they turned the dogs loose to go back into camps, and we had some old trained bear hounds that turned off in the roughs, the laurel on the Bear Creek side, and picked up a cold trail and started out up to uh the Bear Creek a-trailing, opening along, and uh I hunted up some, some of the drivers and told them to let's follow on, I axed them to let's follow, go with me after the dogs and that they was after a bear, "well no" they said, "that's not a bear, hit's a wildcat, a bobcat or coons or a deer," so I pretty soon started on after the dogs, but, but this time they was out of hearing a-going out just a-back of Round Top, I went on up Bear Creek and run into Winston Hunnicutt, one of our party, and uh asked him to go on with me, he had heard the dogs go through, and he said it was a wildcat, and I prevailed with him to go on with me and he wouldn't go, but I, anyway I got on up the mountain nearly out of hearing from him and he hollered to me, he says, "you go on out to the Bear Pen Gap, and I'll come on out, or go that far with you," well, I went on and topped out and when I got out to the Bear Pen Gap, why, the dogs was a-fighting the bear right in under the top of Smoky, pretty close up to the top, and I waited there on Hunnicutt and after while he came on out and uh, he said to me well he said

"well," he says, "let's go to them," "no," I says, "we'll stay right here, Winston, till," I said, "they're not a-going let him cross this, the Smoky," so they fought around there I guess thirty or forty minutes and they turned right back down the Big Woolly Head Ridge there, the fork ridge between the two forks of the left hand fork of Deep Creek, and fought down into the flat woods at the point of the ridge and stopped, bayed and commenced to barking the tree bark, I thought they was treed and so did Hunnicutt, so he said to me, he says "you go on, and you can go faster than I can and kill it, and I'll come on in there to you," well, I went on in and when I got down in there I heard no dogs, they'd gone, so I crossed the river and clim out on the opposite side a half a mile I guess and heard no dogs, come back in to the Forks of the River, and pretty soon Hunnicutt come, then I told him I said the dogs has gone, Winston," "well," he said "they fought down the creek, the river here," "no," I said, "they haven't done that," for I said, "those bear don't fight down," I said, "they've gone up the right hand fork here," and uh "well," he said, "I'm a-going to camp."

Well, I, let's see I quit at the forks of the creek there, didn't I? yeah, and Hunnicutt said they had fought down the creek, and I told him, no, that those bear hardly ever fought down, but they always went up into the roughs, so he said he was a-going to camps, and I told him to go alone, that I was going to follow the dogs, and I clim out I guess between a quarter and half a mile up on the opposite side and uh come back in and Hunnicutt wouldn't go with me, so I went on, started on, and he hollered to me, he says, "I'll come on, you can go on and see if you can, where they're at," so I went up and took around the mountainside and went across two or three spruce ridges and heard the dogs right in on the head of the right hand fork a-barking, and hit got so rough that I fell back into the river and just took up, right up in the water and was wet all over and got up anent them, they was about three hundred yards out on the left hand side of the creek barking, and I had turned out, I got up a little ways and I heard something a-coming down through the leaves and when he come up to me it was one of our bear hounds, a black and tan hound, and he was just eat up, bloody all over, well, I hissed him, and he went back up to the tree and commenced to barking, and I went on up and was a-aiming to get around above the tree and shoot the bear's brains out as I usually do, but I got up I guess about a hundred yards below, and he commenced to snapping his teeth and roaring and uh started down, and I fired on him, and he come out, hit, I heard him thump the ground, so I, when I got up where he fell, the dogs was all standing around there a-barking, and no bear there.

They hardly ever do that, so I made a circle around and found where he'd went out to the left of the tree across, around across this uh rough woolly head ridge, so I called the dogs and got them in on his track, and I followed on after the sign, I went I guess two or three hundred yards and I commenced finding plenty of blood, well uh the bear and dogs crossed to the other fork of the river, and when I topped out on this Rough Ridge, I heard them barking right down in the creek, and I went on down and the bear was under an old drift uh, uh they'd been a water spout a cloud bust up there in time and run in, just a lot, awful lot of spruce and timber, and the bear was in under here and the dogs was, would venture under there and he'd run at them, I could hear him a-slashing the water and popping his teeth and I fooled there and tried to see, get a shot at him and couldn't see him and so I got up on the drift, got me a pole and got up on the drift and laid down my gun and commenced jobbing down through the drift and pretty soon I got some open spaces and I could job, I, I'd hit him with this pole, job him in the back, and he'd snort and bite the pole, well after a while, I heard a racket out to my left at the end of the drift and I looked, and he was a-go-, climbing the bank just about out of my sight, I grabbed my gun and fired on him and he undoubtedly, he had his right hind leg just about straight in back I took him a-way down the hock, and the ball lodged up in his hip.

END

MARK CATHEY, Deep Creek, Swain County, North Carolina CONT'd / Disc 046a, 046b

So I got up uh very close in a few feet to where he was under those old windfall logs and was hissing the dogs, I could hear him back under there, a-growling and snapping his teeth, and I kept a-working around, trying to get a shot at him, sight of him, to shoot him and uh all at once PRON oncet he came out and the dogs run out of the way and he took after me and uh he run me a hundred yard, right after me, and the dogs come in behind him and commenced to catching him, and he whirled and went right back into the same place a second time, couldn't get a shot at him for the dogs as he went back, so I went back in again right up uh as close to level, and uh pretty soon I seen his uh nose, well, from about the fork of his mouth out and I let drive at him and broke both of his underjaws, cut them in two, well, he come out of there and started beyond, from me and uh the dogs was after him, he was a-dragging them and uh, I couldn't get nary another shot there, so he went on out two or three hundred yards, and they stopped him that time in the open laurel kind of PRON kindly nothing, it was under nothing, and I went on out and give him a couple of more shots, and that uh finished him, well, it was uh night when I got Hunnicutt to me, after a while I heard him shoot.

... offed it, we have signals that we go by in our hunting, three shots to come to you, that means kill him, two to go to town, so I finally got Hunnicutt to me, well, I axed him to come in, and I would stay with the bear and for him to come in and bring back help to pack it out, "no," he said, "I'll stay," he said, "you can go faster than I can," "well," I lit out to uh, our camps was at Bryson place, it, well, it is nine mile from where I killed this bear to where we camped, so it was a-way in the night when I got in to camp, and uh the crowd was uneasy about me, I met a bunch of them up nearly a mile above the cabin about the fork of Deep Creek, come a-going to see about me, and uh I didn't tell them what had happened till we got in to camps, I told, they asked me what I'd been doing, and I told them that uh, well, I was with the dogs and after a while passed and I just fooled away all the evening after that and, got into camp, well, I had quite a bit of blood on me, my duck-back clothes, and they noticed the blood, and uh John Edwards said to me, he said, "man," he said, "you've killed a bear," "yes," I says, "I've killed the biggest bear that ever walked the Smoky, Johnny," I said, "he's a-laying right on the, right in under the Smoky, the head of the left hand fork of Deep Creek," I said, "I left Hunnicutt with him, well," I said "now we've got to go back, a bunch of men, to pack this bear in."

And so they fixed up to go back in to help pack out the bear, and they was eleven of them went back in and they had had supper when I got in, but they fixed the grub for breakfast, took the coffee and a lard bucket to make coffee for breakfast, and they was a doctor, Doc Carr from Oakdale, Tennessee, he was a weakly, a little delicate fellow, and uh he was in for going and I told him, I said, "Doc, you'd better stay out of there," I said, "you, it'll kill ye" I said, "you can't make it," "oh" he said, "what do you take me for, Cathey?" he said, "I'm up here to bear hunt," "well," I said, "go on, you'll learn something, you'll have some experience," so he had on a big uh, uh a heavy sweater and a Mackinaw

coat, well, about the time they was getting ready he pulled off that Mackinaw and was a-leaving, and I told, and did leave, I told him, I said, "Doc, you'd better take that Mackinaw along with you, you'll need it," it was a fairly cold night in November, so he said, "no," he said, "I don't need that," well, then they went on up the left hand fork of the creek and they was no, uh they had to hop the rocks at the fords, they's twelve or fourteen fords to cross, and Doc fell into uh, slipped on a rock up about the Deep Gap and got wet all over and like to froze to death and, and they got him, finally got him in to where the bear was and they had to, they carried a axe with them, a small axe, they had to take it to wood, to build a big fire for him and take off all their Mackinaws and duck backs and wrop him up, keep him from freezing to death, and uh so they got in [drawled PRON] the next day about one o'clock, packing the bear meat in, and I was sitting on the porch of the Bryson cabin, could see out, you could see half a mile there when the leaves was down, and I seen them coming down through the old field, and this Doc Carr was behind, he was in the rear, had a big walking stick uh, just jogging it along, and he come on up and uh the first word he said to me, "well," he says, "Cathey," he says, "if I'd a had any idea that, that this would have been the trip that it's been on me, I wouldn't never have undertook it," "well," I said, "I tried to tell you, Doc, last night, 'but,' I said, 'you wouldn't listen'," and I said, "you've had some experience now," "well," he says, "I'll listen to you the next time," and so uh that about winds up the bear hunt, that was said to be the biggest bear that had ever been killed on Smoky, old bear hunters there guessed him to stretch five hundred pound, and I believe he'd a done it.

Well, back in uh nineteen and twenty-six, the spring of nineteen twenty six I think it was, they had been, they was an old gobbler on the right hand fork of Deep Creek, and they'd been parties went after him and tried to call him up, some boys out of Bryson City down here, little Jack Franklin and the two Franklin boys, Ed and Thad, and a fellow the name of Sommers went up and tried to call him and couldn't do it and they came back out and told me about the gobbler, so I was down at Bryson uh one day a little later, Claude Williams, he was a brakesman on them southern road here, on the Murphy branch, he had a ford car, and I said to him, I said "Claude," I said, "let's go up in," well he was on the sick list, kind of laying off, and I said, "Claude, let's drive up and camp at the Sherrill Wiggins place on the George Branch and kill that old gobbler in the morning," "well," he says uh, "I don't care if I do," so we got us a little grub together, enough for supper and breakfast. and got in the ford and driv up in two miles of where we camped and walked up the George Branch to Wiggins' house and spent the night and got up the next morning a-way before day, topped out at the head of the George Branch, well uh the birds begin to whistle, and we heard the gobbler gobbling across on the far side of the right hand fork of Indian Creek, well I told Claude, I said, "Claude, it's impossible to call him out here," I said "we'll have to go around to the opposite side

(SCRATCHY, INDISTINGUISHABLE, 167-169)

We face the back ridge, where you can call him," well, Claude said, "I can't make that," "well," I said "you stay right here" I said "I can make it," so I left Williams there, and I went on around and when I got around and down the crest of the ridge, I went down I'd guess about a half a mile down from the main ridge, he'd gobbled out on top, well I sit down, I never hide in a bunch of logs, I, I get a tree that will hide my body and I set down, right, facing him, so I got my plane, and I called him a little, and he answered me, gobbled three or four times there, I, he gobbled and gobbled, and I wouldn't call no more, I called twice for him, and uh I seen that gobble I guess uh two hours anyway before I shot him, he'd come up a ways uh toward me and then he'd turn back and turn under the top, on the side hill, and finally he got up in about a hundred yards of me and stretched up, stopped right above a big mountain oak tree, my ball went into this tree and I killed him, I shot him with a twenty two high power, so it was twenty minutes till eleven when I shot the turkey, so I went on back around to where Williams was, uh different ones had tried to call him, some of the luftee fellows had told me about this gobbler a-being, a-gobbling there and uh couldn't, they couldn't call him up, and I hardly ever failed back then on calling up a turkey, it's the way you call that uh, that brings them, if you call too much, you'll never get one to ye.

[DEMONSTRATING TURKEY CALLING]

that is calling, the way I call up a gobbler, turkey gobbler, a wild gobbler, call him with my mouth.

MARK CATHEY, Deep Creek, Swain County, North Carolina / Disc 101a

Now I don't know, I think this would have occurred in uh nineteen and twenty-eight, let's see.

Now let me see, you wanted me to commence with the story

Are we ready now? well, well, in the summer of nineteen and twenty-eight there came a fellow down here from New York City and wanted to go a-fishing, and uh he hunted me up or they came down to me and he was putting up at the Freyemont [?] inn, hunted me up in town here and we went down, well, first he uh rigged up to make the trip, he went to the hardware and bought him a duck's back suit and Bowie knife and a fly rod, and we went down to Forneys Creek and uh commenced fishing, well I give the fellow a chance ahead of me to catch some trout, and he fished, well it was in the evening, I got in ahead of him, and I wanted to bring out a few trout, well so pretty soon he hollered at me, he'd hooked a little trout back behind and he had run, reeled him up, his nose right up into the tip tied [?] of the rod and hollered to me and asked me, he says "oh,

Mister Cathey," he says, "what shall I do with him now," "well," I said, "tie him in the pole and stob him," and about that time the fish dropped off into the water, so uh that's about all of the story, anyway I caught a nice bunch of trout that evening to bring out with us.

MARK CATHEY, Deep Creek, Swain County, North Carolina, 1939, A Bear Hunt in Deep Creek, a Retelling of the Story on Discs 044 and 045

Ready for the story? well, in nineteen and twenty-one, they was a party of us went to the Bryson cabin on a bear hunt, and they was twenty-nine of us, natives from here and a bunch from Tennessee, Knoxville, and Oakdale, Tennessee, and one fellow from Bulls Gap, Tennessee, John Edwards, J. H. Edwards, so we started out the next morning for the bear drive, that I went, I always, they put it on me to place the standers, so our drivers driv that Easy Ridge and Pole Road, that's on the west side of Deep Creek, and the standers stood on the Bear Wallow Ridge beyond Bear Creek, well the drivers driv to, out to the Burnt Spruce Gap, that is the ridge between Pole Road and Bear Creek and they found no bear signs to cut, turn the bear hounds a-loose on, so they just turned them all loose as they usually did to go back into camps, and we had some four or five real bear hounds that turned off on the Bear Creek side in the laurel and picked up a cold trail, well I stayed on my stand till they was practically out of hearing, a-listening at them, then I went to rounding up some men to go on with me after the dogs, and I found six or eight stand, standers that I had left, and uh I said to them, I said "let's go on after them dogs," they was a, the dogs then was a-going on in to the head of the left hand fork of Deep Creek into the slicks, so they said, "no, why they's no use to follow them dogs, that's a bobcat, a coon, or a deer they're after," well, I said to them, I said "now, I've got some dogs in there that won't run nothing much but a bear," and I said "that's undoubtedly a bear," "no," they said, "no, we're going for camps," so I left them and went on after the dogs and I happened to run onto a, a fellow a mile up the creek up in the woods, I didn't know that he was there, he was one of the party, our party, but I didn't know where he'd got to, so I said to him, I said, "let's go on after the dogs," "why," he says "I heared them go through here" he said, "that's a wildcat," and I told him, I said "no" I said, "It's a, that's a bear they're after," so I started on up through the jungles and got up two or three hundred yards above him and he hollered to me, he says, "well" he says, "you go on to Bear Pen Gap," and he said, "I'll come on up there as quick as I can and see what's a-going on," well, I went and on and topped out in Bear Pen Gap, that's at the far winter range at the back of Round Top, well, when I topped out the, the, the hounds was a-fighting right in under, well to the right of the Clingmans Dome, they was in three hundred yards of the top of Smoky fighting, and I stood there and Hunnicutt finally come on up, the fellow, and I said to him, I says, "listen at that pack of hounds," I said "does that sound like a wildcat to you," "well," he says, "that's, they're a-fighting a bear," "yes, sir," I said, "they're fighting a bear," well, he said, "let's go to them," "no," I said "we'll stand right here," said, "they're not a-going to let him cross the Smoky," I said "he'll turn back down directly," well they

fought up and down and around there for I guess for thirty or forty minutes and finally they turned right back down the Big Woolly Head Ridge between the two forks of the left hand fork of Deep Creek, just, just held their ground there and they fought right down into the foot of the, foot of the ridge into the flat laurel and commenced barking and I thought it was treed, well, I told, I says, "they've bushed him, Winston" I said, "I'll go on and see."

So I went on to where the dogs was a-barking and they was gone when I got down into this particular place, I couldn't hear nothing of them, so I crossed that, the river and clim out on the east side of that river and clim out I guess a half a mile and couldn't hear nothing, and I was supposed to wait on this fellow at the forks of the creek where we heard the dogs a-barking when I left him, so I come back into forks of the creek and pretty soon this fellow came on down, and I told him, he says, "where's the dogs" I said "well, they're not here," I said "they're gone,:" and he says "well," he says, "they fought down the creek," "no," I said, "they don't very often do that," I says, "those bear always fights up into the roughs," I said, "they'd went up the right hand fork here," well, he quit me there, said he was a-going to camp, and I talked pretty rough to him and told him to go, that I was a-going to stay with the dogs, so I started out up the right hand fork and this fellow, I got two or three hundred yards away and he hollered to me, "well," he said, "I'll come on in hearing if you get up with them," he said, "I can't keep up with you," well, I went up I guess a half a mile up the face of the mountain and it got so rough, I turned across and, and went into the creek, but anyway before I left the mountain face I heard the dogs a-barking right in at the head of the right-hand fork of, the left-hand fork of Deep Creek, so I just turned, pulled right off and took the creek, just waded it, was wet all over, and ice froze on my toes, it was in November, so I got on up into where I could hear, well, I w-, I guess in three hundred yards of the dogs, they was out on the left hand side of the creek about three hundred yards and they was treed that time with a big hemlock, a broken-topped hemlock, well, I was a-crawling up through the down laurel and they, I heard something a-coming down, passing along through the laurel and it was one of our bear hounds, a black and tan hound, well, he came up to me and he was tored all to pieces, eat up by the bear, uh and I patted him and mushed him and hissed him and he went right on back and commenced barking up the tree, well, I got on up in, I was aiming to get around above the tree to shoot the bear, but I got in sight of him and he started down and turned around on the limb and I, I shot I guess a hundred yards at him, had to shoot him anywhere I could, I'd aimed to shoot him in the head, so I shot him right through the shoulders, well, I went on up to under the tree and there all was the hounds was a-standing there and no bear there, well, I begin to wonder what had happened, I knew that I had a good bead on him when I fired, and I hardly ever missed, to this day never have, and the bear was gone, and the dogs was just a-standing around there barking, well, of course, they was all whipped, just about whipped, I commenced hissing and I couldn't get them to go, and then I commenced searching and pretty soon I found where the bear had went out through the laurel and dog hobble in the direction of the other fork of the creek across the Woolly Head Ridge,

well I called the dogs out and put them on the track and they picked up pretty well and pretty, I went on and pretty soon I begin to find plenty of blood in the bushes.

And so I begin to find lots of blood, and the dogs had started on and left me and I had followed by the blood the trail of the bear on to the top of the, the big fork ridge between the two forks of the left hand fork of Deep Creek, and when I topped out I heard them a-barking down on, right on the, the river, so I went on down, and the bear was under a drift, they had came a water spout in time and drifted in a whole lot of, well a big lot of timber, spruce and hemlock and stuff, and the bear was in under this drift, and the dogs was, was a-barking around the drift and I went down and the bear commenced to hissing and I couldn't get in under there, I could hear the bear in the water under the logs a-splashing the water, and I'd hiss the dogs and pretty soon they buoyed up kind of and would go in and I could hear the bear run them and snap his teeth, but they wouldn't, they wouldn't go in and catch him, so I fooled there, it was a-getting late in the evening then, so I got me a pole and got up on this drift, laid down my gun, and commenced to punching down through where the drift was hollow, open spaces all through the top of it, commenced to punching down through there with a pole and pretty soon I got it opened up and I gouged him with a pole down, and he'd bite the pole, just snap it and roar, well, I kept on and the drift was open at the, to my left, so pretty soon I heard a racket here, and I whirled and looked and the bear was uh, was coming out finally to the sloping bank there, he was just going over the bank when I got sight of him, I grabbed my gun and fired on him, had to do it quick and undoubtedly, well he had to have his right hind leg pretty straight, I hit him right down in the hock there, pretty low down in the hind leg and the ball lodged up in his hip, so the dogs took after him and he went on out I judge about a quarter, got in under some old windfall logs that had rooted up, well, I went on out there and hit was so rough, with down laurel that I couldn't see without getting right up in striking distance, so I crawled, the dogs was a-barking and I could hear him back under there a-snapping and roaring and I crawled on up right up to him, trying to get a sight of him to shoot him again, and he made a lunge out of there of course, he came out at the dogs but they just fanned out the way and he took after me and he run me I guess a hundred yards, a-nipping at me, I looked back occasionally, not very often, I didn't have time, so the dogs come in behind, commenced to catching him, and he fought them off and drug part of them back and run right back into the same place the second time, so I went right on in back to him ----- right at him, well pretty soon I seen, well just his nose and about the fork of his mouth down, and I, I took sight of him, I was shooting a thirty thirty, and I broke both of his underjaws, just snapped them in two, well he came out of there and went from me and dragging the dogs and he went on out, I guess two hundred yards and they stopped him in the laurel xx come out and give him a couple of shots, and that finished him, and so I had to wade, it was just about dark when I left the spot where I killed the bear, and this fellow Hunnicutt come to me, well, I wanted him to come into camp and give word and he wouldn't do it, so I lit out to the Bryson place, which figured nine mile, and then haul it out and ...

The bear was -----, so they was eleven men went back in that night and packed the bear out the next day, they stayed about

So I left Hunnicutt with the bear and went on into camp, it was after dark, considerably after dark when I got into camp, well I met a bunch of the men out, up the road from the Bryson cabin all a-hunting for me to meet me, uneasy about me, didn't know what had happened, well, they was a fellow Edwards, John Edwards from Bulls Gap, Tennessee, along, me and John hunted together quite a lot, had, and John asked me, he says, "what in the, what have you been a-doing?" "well," I said, "I've been a-following them dogs after that old bobcat, John, all evening," "well," he says, "I've always figured that you was kind of crazy and" he says, "I know you are now," he says, "I told you that was a wildcat," well, I'd got a considerable lot of blood on my duck's back clothes, and when we got into the cabin to the light, why he'd noticed the blood on me, and he said to me, he says, "you've killed a bear," "well," I said, "yes, I've killed the, the biggest bear that ever walked the Smoky Mountains, Johnny," I said, "he, I left Hunnicutt with him at the head of the left hand fork of Deep Creek," so they fixed up, they was eleven men went back in to where the bear was, they, they had a fellow Sam Hunnicutt in the party and that was well acquainted with the Smokies, he, well in fact he knew just exactly where this drift was at, and I told him to tell him where he could take the men back in, so he led them back in and they camped with the bear and packed it out the next day, well, they was a doctor along, Doc Carr from oakdale, Tennessee, and I, he was a little weakly delicate fellow, I tried to keep him from going in the party, and he said "why," he says "I'm a-going," he says "I come up here to bear hunt," he says, "I'm a-going, I want to see that bear," "well," I said, "go ahead, doc, you'll learn something," so he went on and he give out on them, fell in the creek and got wet all over and give out on them before they got in to the bear and they had to carry him about, car-, pack him the last, about the last two miles, and they got in, back in the next day with the bear about one o'clock, and old, this doctor come with a big walking stick, a-packing no bear meat, well, the first words he said to me, I was sitting on the porch at the Bryson cabin, when he come up into the yard, "well," he says, "Cathey," he says, "I'll take you at your word the next time, why," he said, "I had no idea of being into such a tight, in a fix like I have had," "well," I says, "I tried to tell you, Doc, and you wouldn't listen to me," and so that is, that winds up the bear story.