

Huanillos Apr 20 - 1918

Mr. Joseph Gannett.  
Berkeley.  
Cal.

Rec'd JUN 19 1918

Referred to

Answered by

Date JUN 19 1918

My Dear Sir

of the 4<sup>th</sup> inst. - is just now recd  
I having been absent from home  
since the first - I have not yet returned  
which must be my excuse. for not  
answering your inquiry sooner -  
My friend Mr. Bruce, is correct in  
naming me as the executor of the  
Ezrigly in question - yet if there is any  
credit due a man, for destroying such  
a magnificent animal. I cannot claim  
it all. My friend J. H. Duncan, who, long  
since joined into the happy hunting  
grounds, stood beside me at the time  
if his Bearship, had not have been, so very  
inquisitive, he would never have got harmed.  
That might - the circumstances leading up to  
the capture of this bear - may be of interest.  
So in as brief a manner as possible, I will relate  
them - our head quarters were at Buck Camp  
sum 16 miles East of Huanillo near the  
south fork of the Merced River

This region was the summer grazing ground, for our horses & cattle, for a number of years, prior to the formation, of the Yosemite National Park. we built three good log houses, carcasses & fenced pastures - opened & improved trails leading into the high Sierras. On the evening of <sup>the</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1887 - in the head of a small valley about a mile below camp. I discovered a dead Cow brute which some bear, had already commenced feeding on - from the sign, I judged them to be an old she bear, & her yearling cubs - I felt sure, they were camped close by, so I scouted around a bit, to see if I might jump them up - while I was carefully working my way thru the thick brush close to a fallen tree when suddenly, there was a piece of growl, a swift rush, as the old mother bear charge straight for me, but my Rifle bursted into her open mouth killing her instantly & I heard the young bear scurrying thru the brush the next morning I discovered that there had been a monstrous beast at the carcass the past night having dragged the Cow several yards from where it first had laid. I felt certain that it must be a Grizzly



That same day I rode over to my  
friend Duncan's Camp & told him there  
was a Grizzly Bear stopping on the  
buck Camp going, if he would come  
over I felt quite sure we could bag  
him - he smiled & said why bob, your excited  
there hasn't been a Grizzly track made  
in this neck of woods, for years. but sure  
I'll go over & see what your found - but when  
he finally put a rule, on to Bruin's foot print  
10 <sup>inch</sup> wide <sup>th</sup> 13 long - he exclaimed, by heck, here  
a griz - all right - I give it up - might have  
he said, pointing to a huge granite boulder  
some 40 feet distant. will be a dandy place  
for us to shoot from - but I protested, saying,  
That bear will never come to the cow while  
we sit, on that rock, he will wind us, he wont  
show himself - further more, he is a Silver tip  
Grizzly. they are dead on the fight. we wouldnt  
stand the ghost of a show - what makes you  
think he is a Silver tip Grizzly, I said come  
with me & see. My judgment is correct a short  
distance below where the Carcas lay, Bruin had  
taken a bath in a pool of water, then used a near  
by pine tree for a drying towel. I pointed out to Jim  
several small tufts, of long black, & silver gray hair

which was sticking to the bark of the tree.  
well bob. I guess your right again; <sup>+</sup> I judge  
from the size of his spout, that these are whales; <sup>+</sup> notice  
how he has dragged that heavy Carcass around —  
well. after we had spent three nights in succession  
sitting on that granite rock — waiting for his Bear  
Ship to show up, I said, I would build a Scapald  
<sup>+</sup> Jim: if you wish to assist me, all right. if not all  
right. he replied, of course I'll help. but its foolish. <sup>+</sup> not  
labor for nothing. I bet you, well. we sawed a 5 foot  
cut off of a shake tree, near Camp. <sup>+</sup> Split out  
enough boards 2 inch thick. for the floor of scapald  
packed them on a mule down where the Carcass lay  
<sup>+</sup> before sundown. the job was done — the floor of the  
Scapald was 10 feet from the ground. firmly secured  
to a group of young fir trees. Some 60 ft. distant from  
the dead cow. <sup>+</sup> The big granite rock. being some 50 feet  
directly in front. we now returned to Camp. ate  
our supper. took a couple of blankets. <sup>+</sup> arrived  
at the Scapald, as the dusk began to settle among  
the Dumber Mountains



I immediately climbed up the pole ladders. we had prepared, while Jim remained below & sent up the guns & blankets. which I hauled up, with a rope. Jim was half way up the ladder. when I discovered that he had not sent up my Canvas Coat. in the pockets of which was my rifle cartridges. he stepped back gathered up the coat. & endeavored to throw it up but it failed to reach my hand. but it resulted in spilling the ammunition on the ground. the fact of which I was to learn later - as, Jim came peeping up on to the platform & handed me the coat, he remarked, well Baby, of all the foolish things I ever had any hand in. I think this, is the silliest I was somewhat annoyed, but made no reply - within a very short time, after we had got our position to suit us - a large gray timber wolf came sneaking up thru the low spruce in asp bushes, to get his supper. he stopped, one foot raised, & sniffed the air - I saw Jim raise his gun - I put out my hand, & whispered, dont shoot - but his rifle barked. the wolf sprang into the air & disappeared I was mad, & felt hurt, that he should have lost his head & missed that shot.

a time, there was a dead silence. Then we heard the  
three young bears, whose dam, I had killed a few  
days before. Coming down the hill, to get their supper  
in a few minutes more, we could hear them grunting  
& working away at their feast. The extreme darkness  
saved them, from a shot, from Duncan's rifle.  
& he wanted to fire at the noise they made, anyway  
but I persuaded him not to do it - an hour or more  
must have past. & I noticed Jim was getting  
drowsy - & I could still hear the young bears  
working away. Then suddenly, something seemed  
to disturb them. I could hear them grunting & sniffing  
the air - I punched Jim, & said, listen to them cubs.  
I bet you, they hear the old boss coming. & w, dont  
he replied, nothing doing, I want to sleep, 3 nights on that  
damn Rock's nuff for me. but the noise the young bears  
made, teasing them the brush. Seeking a safer locality  
seemed to dissipate Jim's drowsiness, & he remarked  
gosh, them little devils is scared sure, after  
perhaps 20 minutes of dead silence, we heard  
the breaking of dry twigs, directly in front of our  
position. & then suddenly there the gloom, by the side of  
the gray granit Rock, appeared a black shadow  
darker than the night -



seemed to be walking on the air, <sup>th</sup> advancing directly  
toward us. after passing the big white rock - the advancing  
shadow, was plainly visible. darker than the night  
gloom - <sup>th</sup> continued to advance. (he saw the white floor of  
our camp <sup>th</sup> came on straight to his doom.)

The hammer of my Rifle came back, as I heard pins  
lock click. The dark shape suddenly assumed  
an upright position, the two rifles bucked as one.  
<sup>th</sup> The great beast sank to earth, with a roar <sup>th</sup> a  
continuation of howls, which were thrown back  
by the granite walls, of the Canyon of the River  
Merced <sup>th</sup> were heard by the distant peaks of  
Mount Raymond. <sup>th</sup> were sent back to our ears  
like far distant thunder. - I felt in my coat pocket  
for shells. it was empty, Jim what did you do with  
my cartridges - gosh he says, them on the ground, I forgot to  
bring em up - well Jim, you let my gun down to me, I am  
going down - dont do it bub, wait till daylight - but I went  
down - found a few cartridges <sup>th</sup> put into the magazine  
scraped some dry pine needles together. <sup>th</sup> soon had a  
light, now Jim, come down. <sup>th</sup> we will make some torches  
<sup>th</sup> one can hold them. while the other plants a shot in his brain  
Duncan came down, <sup>th</sup> we soon prepared a good torch  
all this time, our bear was trying to get farther away

succeeded in dragging his big bulk, several <sup>yards</sup> from  
where he fell, into some gnawing <sup>old</sup> bushes - on the  
approach of the light, the bear raised himself partly  
to a sitting posture. I got him to work around in front  
as the bear turned his head to look at the torch my rifle  
barked, sending a ball under the base of his ear - he  
rattled over on his side, a few convulsive struggles  
shook his frame he raised one huge fore arm & waved  
it back & forth a few times - then it dropped, he never moved  
again, the King of the Sierras was dead. we gazed on the  
prettiest beast for some moments in silence & then  
I said, we must open him & draw the entrails I want  
to save the liver & some of the meat. when we had  
that done we went to camp & to bed, the hour 2 <sup>A.M.</sup>  
next morn - we went down to the slaughter pen. the 3  
young bears were sleeping by their dead dam. they  
scuzzed off in a hurry. after skinning. I severed the  
head & put it on a high rack, intending later to clean  
& take it below, when I should go out - I never saw it  
again, some animal a wolverine I think, got away with  
it. I searched for it the next season, but evidently  
the animal had packed the head a long ways -  
Bruin's height when first stretched was nearly 10 feet  
from nose to tail - Judged by his teeth, he was not an old bear



sold the skin, to the Artist. Thomas Hill  
as I have before stated. <sup>After</sup> sealing my  
history of the case it would seem, that I certainly  
must have had a hand, in taking that poor Bruin's life  
<sup>It</sup> might be interesting to some people, to know, that  
my first encounter with a Grizzly, was in the days of  
the old muzzle loading rifles, in 1860 - that after he  
knocked me down & sat on me, I killed him -  
I believe the brown & Black bear should be protected  
by law from wanton & ruthless destruction. but  
the Cat & wolf tribe should become extinct as  
soon as possible - My Dear Grinnell.

I trust you will be able <sup>to</sup> read my poor  
writing if I should happen to come to  
Berkeley. I should be glad to call & meet you at  
The Museum.

Most Sincerely, Yours

Re, J. Wellman