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STORY OF THE HUNT

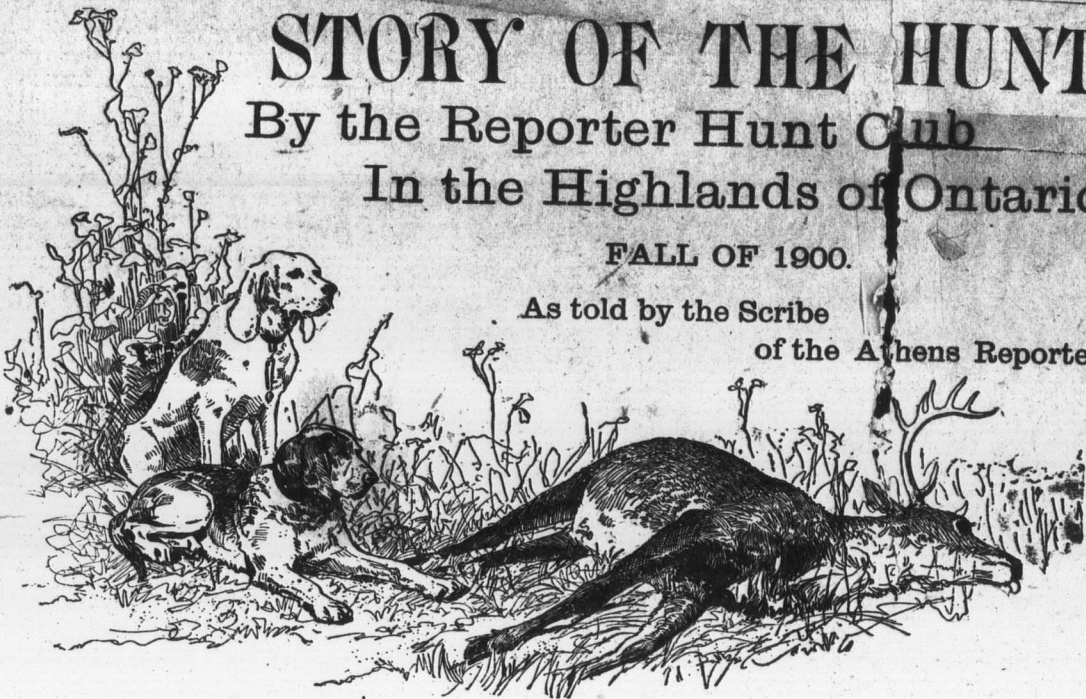
By the Reporter Hunt Club

In the Highlands of Ontario

FALL OF 1900.

As told by the Scribe

of the Athens Reporter



Another year, making the 20th season that the Scribe of the Reporter has spent in the woods in search of game and adventure, is about to be numbered with the things of the past, and in fulfillment of the promise made in the first story of the hunt last year, we start out to give the readers of the Reporter an account of the many incidents, some grave and some laughable, that transpired during the trip to the hunting grounds.

The personnel of the party differed considerably from former years from the fact that three of the best hunters as well as the genial cook were not with us this year.

Phil Halladay, an ex-president of the Club and Master of Hounds for many years, concluded almost at the last moment, that the claims of his political party were stronger than those of huntership, and he concluded to stay at home and battle for his party and country.

Marsh Ripley, who on many a former trip had acted as commissary general as well as assistant cook and butler, had been under the doctor's care for the greater part of the summer, and he did not feel that he would be doing right to ignore the doctor's warning that his health was not robust enough to endure the hardships of the chase and the work of portaging which he would have to do if he went out with the boys.

Dr. D. A. Coon was another one of the party who found it impossible to go. His large and increasing medical practice was such that he could not engage a substitute who could successfully do the work required, so he reluctantly hung his rifle on the peg over the door and decided for this year, at least, that he would deny himself the pleasure of sharing in the joys and hardships incidental to the trip.

Uncle Billy Dawson, the cook, while anxious to again cater to the appetites and whims of the boys in the matter of their diet, could not think of going out without the company of his bosom friend, Marsh, but when it came near the day of starting the buck fever caught him so strong that he sent word that he was ready and willing to go along, even though he had to sleep on the upper shelf alone and mix the batter for the "Bannocks" without his chum's help. But other arrangements had been made, and reluctantly the party had to forego the pleasure of Billy's company for this trip.

The personnel of the party composing the Hunt Club who started on the trip was as follows:

Byron W. Lovrin, Greenbush, who filled the position of Vice-president for the year, had to step into the harness and assume command, in the absence of President E. A. Geiger, whose business engagements would not allow of his starting out with the party, but who was to come on in four or five days. The president pro tem. will be known in the Story of the Hunt by the short cognomen of Byron.

J. Charles Stagg, Brockville, whose exploits on former occasions had won for him great glory and renown as a mighty hunter, was unanimously dubbed Master of Hounds, and of 9) 686-1970 (to understand that the success of the hunt largely depended on the play in putting the h

good localities for the

in on deck. He had go mit to friends at Niagara and his, but was to join the party at Orillia on the way up. He had made ample provision for his trip, however, by putting in an extra hundred rounds of cartridges and feeding up his favorite pet, 'Rollo', ready for business. Wherever there was any hard work to be done, or any novel feat to be performed, he was always on hand, and his exploits added very much to the success of the hunt.

The Scribe of the Reporter started on this trip with a stiff upper lip, ready to do and dare in any enterprise that meant hard work or skillful manoeuvring. His health had improved wonderfully since last year, and he dropped into the regular routine of camp life and took hold with a vim that was far different from last trip. His many trips to the woods had made him familiar with many little things that could be done for the convenience of the

party, and he was given free license to plan and arrange the tents and camp fixtures to his liking, thereby adding very much to the comfort and convenience of the rest of the party.

Geo. M. Beecher and Fred Barriger were two new men with the party, for the first time this year. They were both from the town of Brockville and proved the right men in the right place. Fred was a young, lusty and willing helper in all work in camp, on portage or trail, and was ever ready to keep up his end in any job undertaken by the party. As a manipulator of fishing tackle, Geo. M. could not be beaten, and as the party went up to the new location with the avowed purpose of capturing as many of the finny denizens of the deep as possible, he proved a valuable acquisition to the party.

Claude Smith, a whilom resident of Athens, gathered his belongings together and promised to cook the "tatties" and fry the fish, toast the dry bread, bake the bannocks, play the mouth organ and piccolo for the edification of the boys in the evening, and assist at lubber lifting and portaging in consideration of free expenses and the promise of a "small deer" as his share of the spoil when the hunt was over. He was an adept at the performance of all these duties as well as ever ready to tell a story to counterbalance that told by any of the party, and never failed to be ready with the interjection of "That reminds me" when some one had told a story of thrilling interest. Right loyally he did the labor intrusted to him as well as distinguished himself on several occasions in thrilling adventures, which will be told in due course.

So much for the personnel of the Club for 1900.

The party left the Union station, Brockville, on the Grand Trunk, noon train, Oct 26th, and were waved an adieu from the platform by Phil and Marsh, who could not resist the temptation to come down to the county town and see the boys safely started on their trip. In fact, it was whispered to the Scribe by Phil that he and Marsh were sorry when driving down to their station that they had not put in their Winchester's and come along, prepared to face the frowns of their political chiefs for deserting them in the hour of battle.

The Scribe, who, for upwards of 20 years, had provided a lunch for use on the train and on the road out to camp, was not unmindful of the boys' comfort on this occasion, and the "little tin box" containing a large chunk of ham, nicely browned in a surrounding dish of beans, having bread, fried cakes, a jar of apple sauce and a gallon can for coffee, was carried into the passenger coach. When Kingston was reached this can was filled with hot coffee at the restaurant, and a nice lunch partaken of when supper time arrived. At Port Hope, the main line of the Grand Trunk was left and passage taken on the branch line leading through Lindsay, Orillia and other towns to Elmsdale, where a change was again made to the line running through from Elmsdale to the hunting grounds.

After crossing the Severn river, the face of the country wore a wilder and more rugged appearance, and may be said to be the southern edge of the Muskoka district. This section, reached by the Northern and Midland divisions of the Grand Trunk Railway system, is justly termed the "Highlands of Ontario" from the fact that its elevation is from seven hundred to one thousand feet above sea level. The whole Muskoka district possesses a singular attractiveness by reason of its peculiar topography and the healthful

climatic conditions. The whole district included in the area comprising the Muskoka, Parry Sound and Nipissing districts reveals a singular commingling of land and water, and suggests the idea of some prehistoric upheaval of the great deep, resulting in an almost equal division of the surface for many hundreds of square miles into land and water. A country so diversified must present many attractions to the hunter and tourist in search of sport or magnificent scenery, and as the merits of this part of Ontario become better known, the greater will be the influx of those desiring rest or recreation. The Northern Division of the Grand Trunk Railway System affords ample opportunities at all seasons of the year for ready access to this, the best hunting and sporting ground in the world. The Muskoka district has over eight hundred lakes, varying in size from a mere pond to those twenty or thirty miles in length, and the waters teem with fish and the adjacent forests are alive with game. The sportsman is certain to meet with satisfactory results from a trip to any part of this immense district. The wildness of the scenery and the peculiar attractions afforded by a trip to this district during the camping season render a sojourn in the Muskoka district a delightful vacation trip. Another noteworthy feature of this section of Ontario is the entire freedom from any fever experienced even by the most acute sufferers from this malady, and many cases are reported where an entire cure has been effected by a short sojourn in these regions. Various reasons are given for this, but it is generally conceded that the principal reason is the balsamic odor of the surrounding forests of pine, cedar and balsam and the freedom from dampness owing to the rocky nature of the country.

With the above digression from the regular thread of our story, we resume to say that just at daylight on the morning of the 27th the party alighted from the train at the little wayside station of Powassan, about forty miles north of Burk's Falls, where they found two teams in waiting to convey them to their destination at Restoule lake, some 28 miles distant.

The social of the Anglican S. S. on Thursday evening, the entertainment of the Presbyterian S. S. on Friday evening, and the Methodist S. S. entertainment and Christmas tree on Christmas night were all very successful and enjoyable events. Special features of the latter were the presentation of a handsome fur coat to the pastor of the church, Rev. E. W. Crane, by the congregation, and the receipt by the treasurer of the S. S. of a \$20 bank note from Mr. A. E. Donovan.

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