



August, 2019

Mountain Man Monthly

The Authorized Publication of the
Colorado Springs Muzzle Loaders Inc.

The Colorado Springs Muzzle Loaders, Inc. was chartered in 1969 by a group of men and women interested in their heritage and dedicated to preserving and promoting the sport of muzzle loading and buckskinning. CSML is a family oriented club that holds a broad range of functions such as camp outs, potluck dinners, and black powder shoots. CSML is affiliated with the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association and the National Rifle Association.

Views and opinions contained within articles submitted to the Mountain Man Monthly are not necessarily those of the editor or CSML. The editor reserves the right not to publish any article submitted but encourages articles on any subject regarding shooting sports and subjects related to the fur trade era.

Regular Monthly Meeting

TUESDAY, Sept. 3, 2019

7:00 p.m.

CSMLA State Shoot

Aug. 30 - Sept. 2 @ Ft. Lupton

Election Results

**Final Decision on annual shoot
at October meeting**

**Next Club Shoot - Oct. 6
at Ft. Melchert**

President

Joy Hicks

Vice President

Robert McCune

Treasurer

Gwen Blanchard

Secretary

Membership Chairman

Ted Beaupre

Range Officer

Ted Beaupre

Assistant Range Officer

Jock Harmon

Primitive Exec.

Doug "Moose Milk" Davis

Assistant Primitive Exec.

Tony "Tenderfeets" Hecker

Cannon Master

Richard "Singe" Stites

Mountain Man Monthly

Editor

Doreen Webb

UPCOMING EVENTS: CSML & Statewide

WHAT	WHERE	WHEN	INFORMATION
CSMLA State Shoot	Ft. Lupton	August 30-Sept. 2	Camp fee \$20; csmla.net
Regular Club Meeting	Am Legion #209	Sept. 3	club business and such
Muzzle Loading Hunting Season/Colorado	State wide by licence draw only	Sept. 14-22	good luck hunters! Give your success stories to Joy.
Monthly Club Shoot	Ft. Melchert	Oct. 6	pistols at noon; rifles at 1:00 pm
Regular Club Meeting	Am Legion #209	Oct. 8	Annual shoot decision/status
Annual Bird & Buffalo Shoot	Ft. Melchert Penrose, CO	Oct. 19-20	long-range shooting; potluck Saturday night; auction; & stuff
DAYLIGHT SAVINGS	TIME ENDS ON	NOVEMBER 3	SET CLOCK BACK 1 HOUR!!
Monthly Club Shoot	Ft. Melchert	November 3	pistols at noon; rifles at 1:00 pm
Regular Club Meeting	Am Legion #209	November 5	club business and such
Monthly Club Shoot	Ft. Melchert	December 1	pistols at noon; rifles at 1:00 pm
Regular Club Meeting	Am Legion #209	December 3	annual ornament exchange; finger foods and fun!
Monthly Club Shoot	Ft. Melchert	January 5, 2020	pistols at noon; rifles at 1:00 pm
Regular Club Meeting	Am Legion #209	January 7, 2020	wild game potluck & award of trophies for animals taken
Monthly Club Shoot	Ft. Melchert	February 2	pistols at noon; rifles at 1:00 pm
Regular Club Meeting & white elephant gift xchg	American Legion #209	February 4	bring finger foods and a white elephant to give away and get!!!
Monthly Club Shoot	Ft. Melchert	March 1	pistols at noon; rifles at 1:00 pm
Regular Club Meeting	Am Legion #209	March 3	who knows; come and see!!!
Daylight Savings Time	Begins Again on	March 8, 2020	set clocks ahead 1 hour!!
Monthly Club Shoot	Ft. Melchert	April 5	pistols at noon; rifles at 1:00 pm
Regular Club Meeting	Am Legion #209	April 7	club business and fun!
Monthly Club Shoot	Ft. Melchert	May 3	pistols at noon; rifles at 1:00 pm
Regular Club Meeting	Am Legion #209	May 5	monthly business meeting
Regular Club Meeting	Am Legion #209	June 2	monthly business meeting

For CSML scheduled shoots; CALL SHOOT HOT LINE (719) 442-0150 after 9:00 a.m. on shoot day to be sure shoot is on!!!
 Schedule is subject to change at any time and is based on information available at time of publication. On-line check csmlinc.org

PAST THINGS

The August meeting was somewhat sad and yet a good meeting. We discussed the future of the CSML and our annual shoot. We also discussed the need for volunteers to take office for President, Vice President, Secretary, and Range Officer. Lots of good suggestions made and we will be pursuing some of those options.

Be sure to keep our friend Don Mariani in your thoughts and prayers. He is dealing with leukemia and bone marrow transplant so he needs all the good thoughts we can muster.

Plan now to be at both the September and October meetings so that we can discuss our future and the changes that may be taking place.



Colorado Springs Muzzle Loaders Regular Monthly Meeting August 6, 2019

There were 20 people present when President Joy Hicks called the meeting to order and we all pledged allegiance to our flag.

Gwen read the minutes she had taken at the July meeting. They were not forwarded for publication in the newsletter, so the floor was opened to questions or corrections. There being none, a motion was made and seconded to accept this report for July. Motion was unanimously approved.

Treasurer Gwen then moved into the Treasurer's report. She explained that we had some charges for overage on the copies, but those have been paid. At this time, we have approximately \$3500 remaining in the treasury. There being no questions raised, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously passed for acceptance of this report.

Membership Chairman Ted is in Pennsylvania at this time, but will be back in time for the Grainger Camp Out. As far as we know, membership remains at the same last reported level.

Primitive Grainger Camp Out: There was a

good turnout for this event. It was reported that the mildest chili was made by Doug and the hottest by Jock Harmon.....must have been a possession take place at that time. Anyway everyone there had a great time and are looking forward to the next one in August.

New Business: Joy reported that Ted is keeping his shoot a secret but advised that it will be much like Larry's old shoots were and may just be a nightmare. Joy also advised that she will make sure that there are targets appropriate for our Junior shooters. Potluck Saturday night and Sunday morning breakfast, map to Grainger's in the *Mountain Man Monthly*, shotgun (of any kind) on Sunday morning. It was also noted that this event will be the annual election of officers.

Parts are no longer available for the current copy machine. The State Muzzle Loading Association has paid for the new machine and the CSML will pay the maintenance charge for the next five years. The machine has been moved into Joy's house and training on how to use it will be conducted. The old machine will still be used until it no longer works as we have two toner cartridges for the old machine.

Elections were discussed. We have vacant the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Range Officer positions. Treasurer Gwen advised that unless these are filled, she will step down at the end of this year. Joy has been advised that Marilyn Stites will take over membership if Ted will take on the Presidency. Ted has said he would be President. We still need more volunteers for the board. Doug has also advised that he will no longer be the Primitive Executive or Primitive Range Officer. There is no other way to put it, we need volunteers willing to step up and help us keep this club going.

Discussion held on where the CSML is going or wants to go. Gwen has advised she will do a cost analysis for the Memorial Day event so that we can make a determination about its future. Lots of discussion on what to do. The CSML website will be modified to note that we accept and welcome in-line shooters so maybe we can get some new shooters to become part of our group. We talked about going down to one club shoot per month and having volunteers host each month rather than a permanent

range officer. A final decision on the annual Memorial Day Shoot will be made at the September 3 meeting. Everyone needs to think about their answer to the question "Why do I belong to this organization?" Everyone has a voice and we want to hear it.

Cost for participation in the gun shows has become prohibitive so at this time, we will no longer have a booth at the gun shows. We will investigate other avenues for advertising.

Long-time friend and supporter Don Mariani has been diagnosed with leukemia and is in the process of a bone marrow transplant. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers.

Motion made, seconded, and approved to adjourn the meeting. So done.

Respectfully submitted,
Temporary Scribe Doreen Webb

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AUGUST 4 METAL PISTOL MATCH

By: Ken West

The usual suspects met at the Carls' Jr. on Woodmen before going down to shoot gongs. The weather was as good as it gets for shooting.

The scores were:

Al Bartok	14 gongs
Jim Murray	13 gongs
Jay Rathman	10 gongs
Ken West	10 gongs

Anyone who wants to shoot pistol is invited to join us at Carls' Jr. About 9:30 on shoot days and solve all of the world's problems before going down to Penrose and shooting! If you don't have a target pistol, any of us will let you use ours.

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GRAINGER PAPER SHOOT REPORT

By: Ted "Dances with Deer" Beaupre

Well, the August shoot went well. Instead of paper targets, we put up some fun targets like suckers, clay birds, the apple tree shoot - - first the apple then the twig - -, cut te playing card in half and split the ball on the axe head, not to mention the soda straws. Oh, did I mention the long range shot? If you didn't come, you missed out on a really fun shoot.

We had 15 rifle shooters this time; 1 youth, 3 ladies, and 11 men.

Junior:

Isabell Morris 45

Ladies:

Delores Beaupre 86

Laura Morris 50

Cori Hopingardner 42

Men:

Jock Harmon 90

Tom Gabor 76

Ted Beaupre 67

Doug Davis 61

John Udovich 61

Tony Hecker 61

Craig Thomas 55

Al Bartok 25

Bruce Partner 22

Brendon Morris 21

Steve Sterner 6

The potluck went off without a hitch and lots of good food as always. We shot shotguns

on Sunday after breakfast. That too was fun to do.

I would like to thank all who helped with the setup and tear down on the range. It is always much appreciated.

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Grainger Pistol Match

by: Ken West

I don't think that the temperature got above 70 during the shooting matches and the winds were gentle. Six people shot the usual NRA 25-yard pistol targets. The scores were remarkably tight.

Ken West	91-4x
Jim Murray	91-3x
Al Bartok	89-3x
Laura Morris	88x
(Singe's daughter)	
John Udovich	88
Jay Rathman	87-2x

I think that I beat Jim in a match about 7 years ago, but I've NEVER beat Al before! A great deal of loot was passed out as shooting prizes. The food was especially good and the camaraderie was worth the trip. For a change, it did NOT rain during the afternoon!



THIS IS WHAT WE KNOW.....

By: Joy Hicks

because he hadn't done anything like that before. Marilyn Stites said if Ted would run for President, she would be willing to do membership. Gwen was willing to continue as Treasurer if two of the other offices were filled. No matter how hard I begged, no one was willing to fill the Secretary position. The tracks started rumbling, the whistle blew, and the TRAIN ran through the camp. THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE who stepped up!!!!

We then discussed the monthly shoots. The shoots have been poorly attended. We know that everyone's lives have gotten very busy and none of us are as young as we used to be. In order to hopefully generate more interest and attendance, it was decided that we would only have one club shoot a month, to be held on the first Sunday. A member can sign up to put on/host each month's shoot. That person can use whatever targets they choose. For example, if they had been to a shoot somewhere and saw something that was fun, they can incorporate that into their shoot. The host can put on a shoot like Ted did this weekend. He had poker chips, playing cards placed sideways, a tree, crossed straws, a long-distance propane tank.

Remember some of the shoots that Larry Hicks did? Taco/tomato war, a washer on a

After a great potluck dinner held at promptly 6:00 p.m., attended by 25 hardy souls, came the membership meeting to elect new officers. Ted Beaupre had said he would run for President if we could get other offices filled. John Gloyd said he was willing to run for Vice President if he had help

string, pine cones, 3 can lids on fishing line (can't remember what he called it), marshmallows, the Stinker, the Outhouse. Sometimes I would call a target something that he had dreamt up in his nightmares. I'm sure Doreen could come up with a list that Charlie had done.

Shoots like this will bring a lot of variety and will not make it so one person has to do all the work. If the person chooses to use paper targets, we will make sure that they are available. The same goes with primitive targets. How about a combination? The months of November (Jack Durbin) and April (Richard Stites with the help of his family) have already been spoken for. What month would you like to host the shoot? Let me know as soon as you can.

Then the discussion turned to Memorial Day shoot. Can we physically and financially afford to put it on? Several members expressed the feeling that they would like to have more camp outs or something like that where we could enjoy ourselves and it is not so much work. We decided that we would make a final decision at the October meeting. We want and need your input. This is a very hard decision to make but the time is now. Things to be considered:

- * It costs as much to put on a shoot for 100 people as 365 (our old average), but we do not have the revenue generated by those people shooting matches. In 2018, we barely had 100 registered shooters.
- * Do we have the workers to man all the ranges? How about Registration and Scoring?
- * Setting up and tearing down takes a huge toll on the bodies of those of us who are involved.
- * How long will we have Florence Mountain Park? If we don't have the park, we would have to pay for any place that we would find; cha-ching.

I love this club and the members in it. You have been with me through the good times and the bad. I appreciate the way you have always supported me and held me up when I needed it. Thank you! I am not your President now but I am still here for you.

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**BLACK POWDER
WRITING
The State of the Art
By: Sam Fadala (June, 1980)**

DIFFERENT experts will have different opinions concerning how all of this black powder business got started, or should we say, re-started? Some say it was in the 1950s, when business-minded individuals saw profit in making reproduction old-time guns. Others feel that it was more the responsibility of the media, which, after watching a primitive "buck skinner" type event at Friendship, wrote about it, and the fires of interest were rekindled from embers that had been smouldering for years.

It really doesn't matter how we got back into black powder. **Foxfire 5** which, obviously is the number five edition of the Foxfire books series, spends considerable time with an interview type presentation of old-time gun-makers. The self-evident truth soon shines through that black powder gun building never did die out. It receded, but it did not perish. However, all of the backwoods gun making and

individual shouts of joy for the black powder sport would have but little impetus without the “power of the press.” We should look at a few figures. Some of the major gun magazines may only have a subscription list 40,000 to 50,000 strong, but that’s not readership. Readership is multiplied by the number of times each issue is read, including the barbershop trade and all the individual members of a family who flip through the pages of the magazine.

The numbers can be pretty impressive. Therefore, never underestimate the power of the press, even from magazines which may not seem to have **Reader’s Digest** type circulation. And the point is made, because whether we like it or not, although the black powder upsurge and current rate of interest and devotion was indeed NOT started by magazines, it has been the magazines (and books) which have increased the numbers of shooters in the sport.

Is this good? Or is this bad? Again, the big question arises, how did black powder get started in the gun/outdoor magazines. Pretty obviously, it got started because there was a market for it. I find myself, as a full-time outdoor/gun writer, in a very frustrating position. I believe in a free press and I believe in free enterprise. And yet, both of these things cost me a part of my living each and every month. But I’d rather have it that way than live with a closed press and a stagnant closed system of business. I am not straying from the issue or the question, but I am trying to prepare the reader for it.

Under the system of free press and free enterprise, the new market of writing about old time guns presented itself, and everyone who could make a thin dime from punching of his typewriter keys got into the act. There was nothing wrong with this, as I suggest. However, there was also no way, without censorship, to control what was being printed. The final watchdog of a magazine for example, is the editor. But we could not expect him to reject black powder work for he was not a black powder shooter.

Some good stuff was printed, and some bad stuff was printed. Some good stuff is still being printed, and some bad stuff is still being printed. In the final analysis, I feel, the system will work. The writers who are penning the thoughtless verbiage will be finally discovered, and the watchdog at the top, the editor, will quit paying him American bucks for writing the stuff until the man (or woman, I suppose)

does his homework.

Yes, indeed, there was plenty of erroneous stuff splashed onto the printed page. And if you think I am ducking the issue personally, and that I am going to sit by with an innocent look on my face, you are quite wrong. I was right in there with the other boys hacking it out in good faith, I might add. And this needs to be understood by all. In good faith. That is an important statement.

Think about this. When Researcher Number One draws his conclusion, and when that conclusion is presented to the public as if coming from an EXPERT, we have to live with it for a long time. Why? Because we all work, write and even live based upon the findings of those who came before us. We all do. Did you question your doctor when he said your tonsils had to come out? Oh, you were too young, you say. Well, you wouldn’t have anyway. Your parents didn’t. An expert had spoken. Out came the tonsils, and I’ll bet you had little to say when the dentist decided to yank that tooth.

We have to operate this way. And this is the way the black powder writer operated, **in good faith**, back in the ‘50s and 60s and even now. But when the initial data was wrong, it got repeated, and repeated, and repeated. The ancient Greeks went on for centuries using misinformation because Masters at their distant past decided upon that information and wrote it down for posterity. We’ve done plenty of the same thing, and no, I am not blaming the old timer, the 19th century ballastician or gun builder.

In fact, there is no real blame to be placed anywhere, and even if there were, it would do nothing for the state of the art as it exists today to run around wasting time trying to find out whose fault it is that we still have the mistaken notions on the part of some that a round ball won’t kill a deer or that you get a good load by putting the ball in your hand and covering it with powder.

But back to the beginning, for only a moment. We were fascinated! We were, if you will pardon the statement, in love. Black powder was back, and the public, not the old timer in the backwoods shop or his customer, but the public at large could buy a can of powder at the local gun shop and a firearm to use the powder in.

And the writer, both part-timer and pro, got into the act. Again, I'm not pointing to the other guy. I mean me, too. And we did what was logical to do. We researched, just as every doctor does, as every dentist does, as every geologist does. Just imagine what the world of knowledge would be if we all had to start from scratch every time we wanted to learn something. When a writer of the day uncovered a fiction from the past, he printed it, and other writers took it up and printed it again, and again. I read, for example, that a perfectly balanced load would be the same weight of powder charge as the ball weighed, which I now feel is wrong.

I did not, by the way, invent this idea. It was written long before I was born, and then re-established in print by a current writer and then I latched onto the notion. That's research. And it is how we learn, but it is not, unfortunately, always correct. Today, those of us who care about black powder and who also write about it, are going to study the good old books, all right, for they are filled with superior and useful and even vital information, but we are also going to have to carefully evaluate what we have researched. And we are going to have to be very sure that we do not pass on data which is, essentially, unwarranted and undeserved of repetition.

And that's going to be hard. Researching and testing are had to do right. There is, to quote a good friend of mine, REEearch and research. The first, with all the E's in it, means hashing out what's been done before and writing it all over again. This is what most college research papers are. The student goes out, finds what has been said on the subject, and paraphrases it in his own paper, with proper credits of course. The latter word, research, is looking onto the data already presented and then carefully sorting out the wheat from the chaff.

Free enterprise is going to allow anyone to present his data through the media, especially the printed media. All we can pray is that this someone has been true to his cause, of searching out and presenting good, sound data, rather than someone who simply wants to see his name in print or make a buck. Major Charles Askins, Sr., in a book called **Shotguns by Keith**, by Elmer Keith, Stackpole, said "We have a great many pseudo-authorities today, fellows who write on Sunday and sell insurance during the week." He was not, trust me, dealing a blow against freedom

of speech or free enterprise.

The Major was talking to the reader. He was saying BEWARE! Just because a person has gotten it in print, does not make the data correct. And the Major was also calling for an "expert" to be an expert. Those of us who write for a living, surely are a little disturbed when John Q. Public sells a manuscript that would have helped to feed our families, for we do not write to see our names in print or for glory. When your name has been in print in several hundred articles, the thrill is long since gone. We write because it is our business, our livelihood. And we should be forced, if that's what it takes, to be certain of our statements.

Those of writing about black powder in the late 50s and 60s were fooled into thinking that the state of the art was sound and smooth. It was not. It still isn't. We did research and rightfully so, but the data was not sound in all cases. The computer technologist has a saying about running programs and the worth of those programs - - "garbage in, garbage out." That's the way research works. False premise, false conclusion, except by lucky accident.

And by the way, I know of no full time writer who isn't thrilled to see that insurance man in print when that insurance man has something to say worth listening to. That's the beauty of free enterprise. If writing were another kind of business, the knowledgeable insurance man would not even have the chance to get his work in print. I cannot, for example, come into your job next week and take it over, with your pay, for a week. Your union wouldn't let me nor would your boss. But you can come into mine, and that's the way it should be, because mine is a public job, information. It is a job we can all take part in, provided we do the homework first.

The present state of the art of black powder writing - - it's getting better. And it's going to get better yet. Especially if they force us, the writers, whether full time writers or part time writers, to do better, to be accurate. But when that reader sits back with a closed mind and does not question what he looks at, he is a part of the bad side of the writing picture. His silence, when he knows something wrong has been printed, condones that mistake.

But there is a right and a wrong way to approach the question of erroneous black powder

writing. Don't send a letter saying "The bum who said the round ball was no good ought to be shot in the knee cap with one." That will only cause a fight and two-way communication will be impossible. It takes some manners and it takes positive criticism. If you, the reader, have data which you feel disproves the writer's conclusions, send it. Tell him. Communicate. Then you, the reader, will be responsible for upgrading the present state of the art in black powder writing. For the man who said that round ball won't kill anything, the proper response would be something like, "Dear Mr. Smith, having killed four elephants and three charging saber tooth tigers with round ball, I find your statement that round balls won't kill game disturbing to me. I had witnesses with me, and here is what happened on the seven kills of mine with round ball."

Then you have **taught** the writer something. And when the writer learns more, the black powder condition is bettered for all of us. But be careful. Sometimes what you think you see isn't what you really saw. Researchers have found that out years ago and given it a name - - the extraneous variable, that grim little pain in the pen hiding out and really causing what you thought something else was causing.

A friend of mine tried to convince me that, in spite of all the laws of physics and general science, the faster a round ball went, the less it penetrated. We set out to discover the truth, both of us trying to keep an open mind. On a clay bank and a specific bullet testing box of my own invention, the higher velocity ball, as science would dictate, penetrated more in every case. I had found the same to be true on elk, bison, mule deer, antelope, javelina, and other game. He, my friend, had not.

He had found that his higher speed projectiles, round balls, penetrated less than his modestly delivered balls. Then we got to testing the balls themselves. Mine were far purer in lad than his. My ammunition was the round ball swaged by Speer. His were homemade. He cleaned the lad, with a fluxing process (which essentially is also a combining process, of course) and he still must have had more antimony and tin or other impurities than my factory fodder.

The pure lead balls, since lad is so very cohesive of nature, were holding together, even at

higher impact speeds, and of course, were penetrating well. Fragmentation was causing the balls at higher speeds to discourage the shooter in the penetration department, just as high speed bullets of modern style which separated core and jacket do not penetrate well as compared with bullets which hold core and jacket in a single unit.

However, the laws of science were not turned backwards just because we were dealing with black powder. And so the state of black powder writing continues, and an important art is, for much of our future credibility rests on where this writing goes, what direction it takes, and a powerful press an either make us or break us. It's up to all of us to see that the former takes place, that the press furthers the sport, makes it safe for everyone and more enjoyable through better understanding. But only the facts, ma'am, please, only the facts.

SOLITUDE

By: Charlie Richie

What's the worst thing that could happen to me, I silently thought? Maybe fire and brimstone will rain down on me from the Heavens. Perhaps the lady of the house will suddenly get fed up with me, and kick my carcass out the door. Hell fire, things had been going bad for me all winter, I thought, and how it couldn't get much sorrier. Hadn't pelt prices gone to pot, and trapping wasn't worth messing with anymore, especially for a man trying to feed a family. Hunting season was also a dismal failure, and most of the time was spent looking at empty mountains and dark canyons. Even my favorite magazine had indicated that they may not use my material as much in the future. Damn! How much worse could it get?

I feel the fingers reach out for my hunting bag in almost automatic response. I slip the weather worn bag over my shoulder and reach for the long Hatfield rifle on the wall, gently talking to it in tones that indicate it understands my words. As I caress the rifle, an urge takes me over that is powerful and overwhelming, and a plan is suddenly put into effect. In fact, this is the one plan that might save my twisted

and tortured mind. Somehow the Whelen Lean-To finds its way onto my pack frame, and if by magic, extra clothes are folded, put into a bag, and also lashed to the frame. I slip my boots off, and on goes a pair of battered old moccasins. The big sombrero on the wall is dusted off, and once again feels comfortable on my head. My belt with the skinning knife that Cascade George Mason custom-made for me is strapped on, and one of Art Ressel's tomahawks is slipped into the belt. It vaguely occurs to me that I'm headed for the door, and try as I might, nothing can stop me from walking right out the door and into the tangled pineywoods. I remember thinking to myself - - "what the hell are you doing, fellow"? But it was too late, because I was already moving silently along a forest path.

At first I blindly stumbled along, my brain not comprehending or even caring where it was that I was headed. Then ever so slowly the old trails and traces began to seem familiar and friendly. I thought to myself, that these are really the only friends I have in this world! They never let me down, and somehow, there is always a place for me in their confines. Now I knew where I was headed.

The little lake where I had caught raccoons all winter was peaceful and quiet. The last of the ducks, those who hadn't left for the North country, were hardly disturbed by my presence. As I set up the Whelen, I remember thinking to myself that I might be here for some time. It would take some time to get my mind straightened out.

Night came on slowly and peacefully, and the sounds of birds going to roost was a welcome sound. The small fire in front of the lean-to warmed and comforted me, and looking into it was enough to ease my mind. This night I would do without food, because at this moment in time the thought of food wasn't even appealing to me. I would try to sort out my troubles one by one during the next few hours before sleep came.

Somehow the magic of solitude has ways of putting things back into perspective for me. It was no different this time. I reasoned that there was nothing I could do about putting fur prices back where they belonged, that was the job of the folks in the fur industry and all the fretting I would do probably wouldn't help. It also occurred to me that hunting was a gift from the Great Spirit, and that I had been

lucky in other years, maybe it was my turn to experience the lean year. After all, the great one has a plan for everything. Even the friendship of cohorts and editors seemed somehow a fall back into place, perhaps I was reading deeds into words that had never been spoken. But I reasoned anyway, that if my work wasn't needed, and by that I mean the ramblings I call writing, that I would make the best of it. I didn't know how, but somewhere there would be a place for me, and friendly people would once again like what I had to say. Things would work out.

The trees and the water spoke just as sure as if they had voices, telling me not to worry about money and other things. I remembered a letter that I recently got from a reader telling me that I wrote from the heart, and my name should be True Heart. I also recalled another comforting letter from a reader telling me that I sometimes dealt too much with mysticism, but that he like me anyway. Why heck, I had friends, who needs anything else. I lay there thinking and sorting the issues out, and suddenly my world looked brighter. Now sleep would come, and I drifted off into the first restful sleep I had had in days.

The next day was bright and cheerful, the thoughts of last night were gone, and everything looked fresh and inviting again. My camp stayed on the banks of the little lake for another day, and during this time I came to the conclusion that this place would forever more be my place of thought. Whenever the world got too heavy on my shoulders, I would retreat to this place and let the trees, wind, and water talk to me. Now I would go hunting, there was a great hunger inside me.....