

THE GRIZZLY BEAR

(Give credit to William Rush, U. S. Biological Survey, for photographs)

In an early day when the Indians ranged the mountainous areas of the West, the highest token of courage was a necklace of grizzly claws. The grizzly bear held the undisputed title as the fiercest and most dangerous of all wild animals. The color of the coat ranged from brown to nearly black. The ends of the hairs were lighter giving a grizzled or silver-tipped appearance from which the animal acquired its name.

A grizzly bear is easily distinguished from a black or brown bear because he stands higher in the shoulders. He walks with his head up. A black bear is highest in the middle of the back, lower at the shoulders and round on the hind quarters. In walking, he usually carries his head low. He is expert in climbing trees while a grizzly does not climb at all.

During the early days, the grizzly was bold and paid little attention to the Indians. He had no fear of their primitive weapons. But in the days of the Gold Rush when the white men began flocking into the mountain valleys and wilderness areas, they were armed with guns and the grizzly soon became wise for his own self-preservation. To some extent, shyness took the place of boldness and he lumbered away for safety at the slightest alarm. When wounded, this big carnivorous animal has always been a dangerous foe. Getting too near a mother bear with cubs is like playing with dynamite. Because a hunter was occasionally mauled or killed, there developed an eternal enmity which came to one conclusion, the final extermination of the grizzly in California. The same thing happened in Oregon and Washington.

The present stronghold of the grizzly in the United States is within the boundaries of Yellowstone National Park where no hunting is permitted. Here he lives with the freedom of the days of '49. He ranges through the forests but has learned to visit the garbage piles where waste food is thrown out

from the hotels. Here it is always more dangerous than it was in the early Indian days for a man to invade the range where the grizzlies feed and live. Sometimes a cranky old grizzly will maul or kill a man who is thoughtless or careless. And for this reason, the rangers of the Yellowstone are compelled to kill some of the old grizzlies that grow savage and become too dangerous.

In the literature of the pioneers were many stories of the grizzly bear. One of the best known books was "The Adventures of James Capen Adams," grizzly bear hunter of California. This was first published in 1860 and republished in 1911. Adams' explorations led him north from California through the Klamath country, past the wilderness of the Cascades and Blue Mountains and into the southern part of the state of Washington. Here he tells of killing an old grizzly with two cubs and capturing one of them which he named Lady Washington and kept and trained as a pet.

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