The PALIMPSEST

The Lone Wolf

Wolves in Iowa

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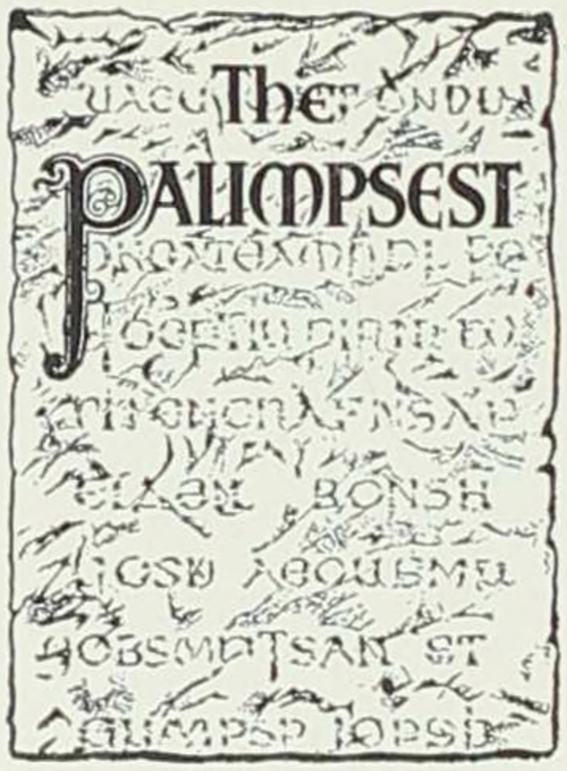

The Meaning of Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the record of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

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Illustrations

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THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

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Wolves in North America

Slinking stealthily through the underbrush, trotting warily across the prairie, lurking hungrily wherever wild game might be found, the lean, gaunt, and ravenously destructive wolf was encountered everywhere by the intrepid explorers and colonizers of North America. The dismal howl of this "shark of the plain" was heard wherever the pioneer pitched his camp or built his cabin. Hiram M. Chittenden described the wolf as the "most ignoble" inhabitant of the plains, personifying "cowardice, beggary, craftiness, deceit, mercilessness," and all the other evil qualities that constitute the term *"wolfishness."*

Most dreaded of the many species of wolves was the gray or timber wolf. Originally this fierce member of the canine family was found throughout the timbered States east of the Rockies but not in California and the area immediately adjoining. In other words the habitat of the gray wolf was from Florida to Alaska and from northern Mexico to Hudson Bay. The gray wolf was also called

the lobo, the loafer, and the buffalo wolf. The scientific name, *Canis nubilus,* was given to the big gray wolves of the interior by Dr. Thomas Say, zoölogist of the Stephen H. Long expedition of 1819-1820, while wintering at Engineers' Cantonment in present-day Nebraska a short distance above modern Council Bluffs. Indeed naturalists declare that a gray wolf of this kind was "first taken" near Council Bluffs, Iowa, by Dr. Say. After giving a detailed description of the coloring of the *Canis nubilus* which measured 4 feet 4¾ inches, Dr. Say concludes:

> The aspect of this animal is far more fierce and formidable than either the common red wolf, or the prairie wolf, and is of a more robust form. The length of the ears and tail distinguish it at once from the former, and its greatly superior size, besides the minor characters of colour, &c., separate it from the prairie wolf. As the black wolf (C. lycaon,) is described to be of a deep and uniform black colour, and his physiognomy is represented to be nearly the same as that of the common wolf, it is beyond a doubt different from this species. It has the mane of the *mexicanus.* It diffuses a strong and disagreeable odour, which scented the clothing of Messrs. Peale and Dougherty, who transported the animal several miles from where they killed it to the cantonment.

The timber wolf was usually patterned in gray, its upper parts being sprinkled with a black or dusky color. This coloring was the same in both sexes and did not vary much with the seasons. Frequently, however, there was considerable var-

iation in the color among the individual animals. Larger, heavier, and far more powerful than the coyote, the gray wolf displayed all the common characteristics of the canine. The males were larger than the females, measuring some 64 inches in length and weighing from 75 to 100 pounds. Exceptionally large timber wolves sometimes weighed as much as 150 pounds. The females, on the other hand, averaged about 56 inches in length and weighed only from 60 to 80 pounds.

The gray wolf was a carnivorous animal, feeding on deer, moose, caribou, jack rabbits, prairie dogs, and all the smaller animals and birds it could catch. When necessary it resorted to carrion and fish. The gray wolf's carnivorous habits also caused it to prey on all kinds of domestic stock — poultry, hogs, sheep, cattle, and even draft animals. So powerful was this wolf that naturalists considered the adult to be without natural enemies — none daring to attack it. Young wolves, however, were sometimes carried off by eagles.

Smaller than the gray wolf but far more numerous was the coyote or prairie wolf. At least a dozen species of this canine have been identified by naturalists. Dr. Thomas Say designated the coyotes as the *Canis latrans* because of their weird howl. "Their bark," Dr. Say records, "is much more distinctly like that of the domestic dog, than of any other animal; in fact the first two or three notes could not be distinguished from the bark of

a small terrier, but these notes are succeeded by a lengthened scream." The coyotes hunted on the plains by day; during the night they frequently ventured very near the encampment in quest of food. "They are by far the most numerous of our wolves," Dr. Say recorded, "and often unite in packs for the purpose of chasing deer, which they very frequently succeed in running down, and killing."

The coyote or prairie wolf was considerably smaller than the gray wolf, measuring only about 42 to 48 inches in length and weighing from 35 to 40 pounds. It resembled a shepherd dog in many external characteristics: its pelage was fairly long and heavy, particularly during the winter, and its tail large and bushy. The color of both sexes was very much alike and there was only a slight seasonal variation. For food the prairie wolf ate small mammals, birds, lizards, snakes, insects, fruit, and carrion. The speed and wariness of the coyote generally saved it from the large carnivores which would prey on it if they could. Young coyotes frequently became the prey of the gray wolf, the golden eagle, and the great horned owl. The prairie wolf ranged westward from Lake Michigan to the Pacific Coast and from Alberta Province to southern Mexico. It may still be found in Iowa, in northern Illinois, and in most of Wisconsin.

Wolves in Pioneer Iowa

Both the gray wolf and the coyote were encountered by the earliest explorers of Iowaland. On July 20, 1804, Captain William Clark "killed a verry large yellow Wolf" as the Lewis and Clark expedition ascended the Missouri along the western border of present-day Fremont County. Farther on, while passing along the border of what is now Monona County, Captain Clark recorded in his journal that "a *Prairie Wolf* come near the bank and Barked at us this evening, we made an attempt but could not git him, the animale Barkes like a large *ferce* Dog." Sixteen years later, while traveling through northwestern Iowa, Captain Stephen Watts Kearny saw some wolves near a "gang of about 200 *she elks*." Captain Kearny believed the prairie wolf was a "very near relation" to an animal he had previously seen which the Indian guide had called a Missouri fox. A few days later Captain Kearny jotted down that about one hundred pounds of their "jerked Beef" had spoiled and that they were "obliged to leave it for the wolves."

Travelers on the way to the Black Hawk Purchase encountered wolves everywhere. Morris Birkbeck found them "extremely numerous" in

Illinois, where they were "very destructive" to both hogs and sheep. Charles Fenno Hoffman enjoyed wolf-hunting in northern Illinois and in the vicinity of Prairie du Chien. On one occasion, while riding with a companion from Chicago toward the Iowa country in January of 1834, Hoffman engaged in a curious game that was quite common on the frontier.

According to Hoffman:

> I was contented to wrap myself as closely as possible in my buffalo robe, and join him in a game of *prairie loo*. Lest you might search vainly in Hoyle for this pastime, I must inform you that the game consists merely in betting upon the number of wild animals seen by either party toward the side of the vehicle on which he is riding, a wolf or deer counting ten, and a grouse one. The game is a hundred; and you may judge of the abundance of these animals from our getting through several games before dinner — my companion looing me with eleven wolves. Some of these fellows would stand looking at us within half gunshot, as we rode by them.

Wolves were just as numerous in the Black Hawk Purchase. Around Burlington, wolf hunts were common during Territorial days and one of Isaac Crenshaw's dogs "single-mouthed" caught and killed three of them. Utterly fearless in their quest for food when on the verge of starvation, wolves actually entered the early frontier towns only to be shot down in their tracks. In 1841 Marshal Myron Ward received one dollar for removing a dead wolf from the streets of Muscatine.

But John Plumbe, Jr., of Dubuque, took special pains to point out in his tract advertising Iowaland that prospective settlers would not be disturbed by "ravenous beasts."

> The whole country appears to be most completely freed from every thing calculated to annoy and injure man; there are no panthers, and very few wolves or foxes; there are a few prairie wolves, but they are hardly stout enough to destroy a good large sheep, let alone cattle or hogs. These animals, (wolves and foxes) will disappear as soon as the country is settled, there being no large swamps, mountains or hedges for them to take refuge in when pursued, and the country being so open, they would fall an easy prey to their pursuers.

West of the Black Hawk Purchase packs of wolves stalked the herds of deer and buffalo that roamed the prairies of Iowa. Ordinarily a deer could outrun a wolf and make its escape, but during the heavy snows of winter the deer became easy victims and large numbers of them were killed. Even during the summer the wolves, through their cunning and sagacity, often succeeded in bringing the fleet-footed deer to earth by taking turns chasing it in a circle until the frightened animal became exhausted. It was then quickly knocked down and despatched. "When a wolf has caught a deer and killed it," a traveler in the West relates, "it will not at once consume the flesh, but go to the highest hill nearby and call its comrades, by howling. When these have assembled they devour the deer together."

Even the mighty buffalo that once roamed the prairies of Iowa often succumbed to the cunning strategy of the wolf pack. Father Pierre-Jean De Smet, who spent considerable time among the Potawatomi Indians around Council Bluffs, relates in his journal how the various species of wolves would follow a buffalo herd and devour the dead or dying. When none of these was available two or three wolves would charge into a herd of buffalo, cut out one of the animals and drive it toward the spot where their companions were waiting. All would join in the chase until their exhausted quarry would stop from fatigue when the wolves would hamstring it and "devour it alive."

George Catlin has left what is probably the most graphic account of the ruthless destruction of a powerful buffalo by a pack of wolves.

> But a short time since, as one of my hunting companions and myself were returning to our encampment with our horses loaded with meat, we discovered at a distance, a huge bull, encircled with a gang of white wolves; we rode up as near as we could without driving them away, and being within pistol shot, we had a remarkably good view, where I sat for a few moments and made a sketch in my note-book; after which, we rode up and gave the signal for them to disperse, which they instantly did, withdrawing themselves to the distance of fifty or sixty rods, when we found, to our great surprise, that the animal had made desperate resistance, until his eyes were entirely eaten out of his head — the grizzle of his nose was mostly gone — his tongue was half eaten off, and the skin and flesh of his

legs torn almost literally into strings. In this tattered and torn condition, the poor old veteran stood bracing up in the midst of his devourers, who had ceased hostilities for a few minutes, to enjoy a sort of parley, recovering strength and preparing to resume the attack in a few moments again. In this group, some were reclining, to gain breath, whilst others were sneaking about and licking their chops in anxiety for a renewal of the attack; and others, less lucky, had been crushed to death by the feet or the horns of the bull. I rode nearer to the pitiable object as he stood bleeding and trembling before me, and said to him, "Now is your time, old fellow, and you had better be off." Though blind and nearly destroyed, there seemed evidently to be a recognition of a friend in me, as he straightened up, and, trembling with excitement, dashed off at full speed upon the prairie, in a straight line. We turned our horses and resumed our march, and when we had advanced a mile or more, we looked back, and on our left, where we saw again the ill-fated animal surrounded by his tormentors, to whose insatiable voracity he unquestionably soon fell a victim.

Whilst the herd is together, the wolves never attack them, as they instantly gather for combined resistance, which they effectually make. But when the herds are travelling, it often happens that an aged or wounded one, lingers at a distance behind, and when fairly out of sight of the herd, is set upon by these voracious hunters, which often gather to the number of fifty or more and are sure at last to torture him to death, and use him up at a meal. The buffalo, however, is a huge and furious animal, and when his retreat is cut off, makes desperate and deadly resistance, contending to the last moment for the right of life — and oftentimes deals death by wholesale, to his canine assailants, which he is tossing into the air or stamping to death under his feet.

The howl of the wolf left an indelible impression on the Iowa pioneers. Many county historians agree with the following description left by a Madison County writer: "Music of the natural order was not wanting and every night the pioneers were lulled to rest by the screeching of panthers and the howling of wolves." Few there were whose blood did not tingle as the wail of the wolf rose out of the eerie blackness of the night to be answered directly by an echoing chorus in ever-increasing crescendo. "We went to sleep many winter nights with the wolves howling around," an early settler of Taylor County recalls. "There was plenty of wild game, such as deer and some wild turkey. I have seen Uncle Ben stand in the door and shoot deer, and quite often he would get a wild turkey."

Many Fremont County pioneers recalled that "the howling of the wolves made night hideous" for the early settlers. In Appanoose County an old-timer described the wolf packs as the "most troublesome and altogether vicious enemies" of the log cabin settlers.

These pests would not only howl around the lonely cabin all night, but were always ravenous and ready to pounce upon an unguarded calf, pig, sheep or chicken that they could get at, and the settlers were obliged to build pens against their cabins in which to keep their small stock. Chickens were frequently taken into the house to preserve them from the attacks of wolves, polecats and weasels."

The pioneers of Page County were sometimes compelled to go as far as St. Joseph, Missouri, to trade and lay in their supplies. Even if a closer trading point was frequented, the journey by ox teams sometimes took a week. On such occasions the wife and children were forced to stay alone at home, with their nearest neighbor in many instances from three to five miles off.

The anxiety on the part of the father for his wife and children during one of these voyages must indeed have been great, but nothing in comparison to that of the wife and mother, who, at the approach of nightfall, and as she heard the cry of the panther, or the howl of the wolf around the lonely and isolated cabin, gathered her cherished loved ones about her and fervently prayed that the giver of all would watch over and guard herself and family from all harm.

A pioneer of Cedar Rapids recalls the depredations of wolves in that area. In one cabin the children were placed in the narrow upper berths "as a precautionary measure against the encroachments of the numerous wolves and wild cats and other beasts of prey which often prowled about of nights in search of something to satisfy their hunger." The prairie wolves were so numerous, this same early settler asserts, that "their nightly serenades, if not so musical, were at least full of weird interest to us new denizens of the wild West. One reason why the wolves seemed to like us so well and to favor us with such frequent visits and in such great numbers, was the fact that three

of our cows died the first winter, and their carcasses furnished an attraction altogether too strong for their wolfships to resist; and it is not to be wondered at that all the music in them was brought into requisition, in their jubilant demonstrations on account of the abundant winter provisions."

These howling wolves did not always remain at a distance. Mrs. Holcomb, who came to Marshall County in 1856, had no cellar in which to store her supplies. In this "age of wolves" it was customary for Mrs. Holcomb to suspend the family supply of smoked hams and shoulders from the outside eaves of her log cabin, a practice not uncommon among the pioneers. The wolves would congregate around the Holcomb cabin at night and practice "light gymnastics there in rows, leaping up to reach the coveted plunder." Not infrequently, when the dogs ventured too far out from the cabins at night, they would be driven back by the wolves, who chased them up to the very cabin door.

Such savage onslaughts on their canine cousins were not limited to the era before the Civil War. Hungry wolves continued to attack dogs in eastern Iowa up to the opening of the twentieth century. "Wolves are said to be unusually plentiful in the northern part of the county," declared the Independence *Bulletin-Journal* of January 7, 1892. "They are reported to be remarkably bold in their

depredations, coming into the farm yards, fighting with the dogs where the latter have the courage to dispute the ground with them, and robbing the hen roosts. They are believed to have come down from Minnesota in large numbers, where lack of food forced them to emigrate. They are gaunt in appearance, and driven by hunger will do much damage in the county unless steps are taken to exterminate them."

The Reverend George R. Carroll, a pioneer of Cedar Rapids, describes a bitter fight between his old dog "Watch" and a large wolf. One day Mr. Carroll was attracted by his dog's barking some thirty rods north of the house and he quickly went out to see the cause of this outburst. "It proved to be a wolf, and both the wolf and the dog seemed quite fatigued," Carroll relates. "For once the old dog had pretty nearly found his match; still he had no disposition to give up the struggle. The wolf would snap at the dog with such terrible fierceness that he was compelled to retreat a few steps, and then, as the wolf would turn and endeavor to make good his escape, the old dog would dart after him and grab him by the hind legs, and another battle would ensue."

"As soon as he saw me," the preacher continues, "he took fresh courage, and he pounced upon the wolf and held him to the ground, and, with a club which I found near at hand, I helped the brave fellow finish the work. For my part of

the work, in which I had considerable pride, I had the skin of the wolf as my reward. The poor old dog had nothing but a few words of approval and a few friendly pats upon the head, and the *consciousness* that he had performed a good and brave act."

Not infrequently wolves came off second best in their farmyard depredations. Witness the strange manner in which a wolf was ignominiously routed from a Johnson County farm as told by the *Iowa City Press*, quoted in the Keokuk *Weekly Gate City* for November 26, 1873. For some time, it seems, wolves had been preying upon sheep, young pigs, and fowls, to the utter consternation and despair of Johnson County farmers. Suddenly one of these prowlers met his match. "The wolf entered a pasture east of Iowa City, where were sheep, colts and mules, and selecting his sheep, separated it from the flock, got it by the wool, and was worrying it, when a mule interfered and drove the mutton-eater away from the sheep."

Fearful though the wolf was of man, he nevertheless would follow and sometimes attack him if the person were unarmed and the wolves themselves were in sufficient force. In 1856 some Tama County pioneers wished to celebrate the completion of their schoolhouse near the village of Redman. When the hour for the dance arrived the pioneers found that their one-man orchestra — Fiddlin' Jim — was missing. A party was sent

out to search for him and Fiddlin' Jim was finally found, seated on the low-swaying roof of a deserted shack, his violin under his chin and his fingers flying. His audience consisted of a half dozen wolves, squatting in a circle around the shack. The searching party rushed forward with a great shout and the wolves slunk away. "Howdy boys," cried Fiddlin' Jim, climbing down from his perch, "You came in right handy. Them wolves sure meant business, and every time I quit playin', they started movin' up. But I sure got tuned up good."

On another occasion, in 1857, a party of young folks in Hamilton County drove a four horse sleigh from Saratoga to Rose Grove for a Christmas Eve dance. Near Kamrar they were set on by a pack of a hundred prairie wolves but reached Rose Grove in safety. The perils of the wintry prairie were soon forgotten in the whirls of the dance.

Pioneers going to market, particularly when they were hauling fresh meat, often attracted a pack of wolves. A Humboldt County farmer had scarcely left his home when he heard "sundry barks" from the northeast. "I soon became aware," he recalls, "that the fresh pork was attracting attention of wolves. Judging from the bark I decided they were prairie wolves and not timber wolves, so I felt little fear."

The horrors of a lonesome walk in the dead of

night amidst howling wolves were recalled many years later by a Guthrie County pioneer. As a youth he had walked ten miles one day during the winter of 1853-1854 to see his best girl. The sixteen foot cabin where he did his courting served as a kitchen, dining room, living room, and bedroom. At midnight, when it was time to go to bed or go home, the lad was given a choice of sleeping in bed with three persons, lying on a pallet in the loft, or striking out for home over the lonesome prairie road without a single house upon it. He chose to go home.

As he trudged along, the wolves howled a reveille on every hill, their "barking and snarling" sometimes making the "hair stand up on his head." Fearfully he recalled stories his parents had told about wolves in the early Ohio settlement, where people had been chased and were forced to climb a tree or get on a cabin roof. In his own case, unfortunately, there were no friendly trees or cabins. He fervently vowed, long before he reached home, that the next time he went courting, he would "keep the girl up all night," or take "any accommodations" offered him.

In 1872 a lad of eleven underwent a terrifying experience with wolves in Fayette County. It was a Thursday evening in mid-August and Milo Brockway had started on horseback to hunt his father's cows. Crossing the Turkey River into Eden Township young Brockway had ridden only

a short distance when he came upon a pack of timber wolves. Terror-stricken, he turned to flee, riding his horse madly for his home which was only eighty rods distant. Close on his heels came the wolf pack, to the number of forty (or so it seemed to the boy), howling terribly as they sped along. With commendable presence of mind, the lad rode into the middle of Turkey River where the wolves refused to follow. Quick thinking undoubtedly saved his life.

In 1876 Captain Willard Glazier was riding on horseback to Anita in Cass County when night overtook him. His horse, Paul, finally led him to a haystack. Believing he could do no better than spread his bed on the sweet hay, Captain Glazier decided to spend a supperless night at the haystack. He soon found there were others present who were also hungry. "I had scarcely settled myself," Captain Glazier relates, "when a troop of coyotes, or prairie wolves, came howling and barking in front of me. This made things uncomfortable, and I at once jumped to my feet and, revolver in hand, faced the enemy. Several were killed by my fire. The remainder, however, continued to threaten an attack. I was puzzled as to what was best to do when I was suddenly reinforced by a friendly dog, who, attracted doubtless, by the report of the pistol and the barking of the coyotes, came to my rescue, and kept the animals at bay for the remainder of the night. At

daybreak I was not sorry to bid adieu to the haystack and, neither, I believe, was Paul, who had also spent a restless night, notwithstanding the abundance of good fodder at his disposal."

Not all the pioneers were as fortunate as young Milo Brockway or Captain Willard Glazier. During the winter of 1872 Fred Nagg started on foot from Ocheyedan to purchase some supplies at Sibley in Osceola County. Mr. Nagg had to travel a dozen miles, pulling a handsled over the bleak prairie in a land that was still beyond the frontier line of settlement. On his way home he was caught in a blizzard, and becoming numbed and senseless by the cold and storm, lay down and died. A searching party found his sled and supplies about seven miles southeast of Sibley; the wolves had clawed into the food and eaten part of it. When Mr. Nagg's body was found the latter part of March it had been partially eaten away by the wolves.

The winter of 1856-1857 was one of the "most severe" experienced by the settlers in northwestern Iowa. Howling blizzards and intense cold waves, commencing in December, continued to lash the straggling communities until late the following spring. The sturdy pioneers, like the hungry Indians who perpetrated the Spirit Lake massacre, found themselves almost destitute of food and supplies before spring arrived. Two men, who made the long journey from Woodbury

County to Council Bluffs to secure supplies, have left an account of ravages of starving wolves. "Such was the depth of snow during this winter," said the pioneers, "that in some instances it was dangerous to venture far from home, in view of the hungry wolves."

One night they stayed at the home of a pioneer whose large dog had just been "set upon" by a pack of wolves. In less than five minutes the "hungry brutes" had left nothing of the faithful animal but his bones. "In another instance," the traveler related, "a negro had been out a little distance from home chopping, when he was driven into a fence corner by a pack of wolves, who left nothing of him but his bones, by the side of which was his ax and six dead wolves. These were found when the snow had partially left the soil bare."

Circular Wolf Hunts

It was with such ferocious animals that the pioneers of Iowa had to contend. The first settlers soon found that individual efforts were not enough to rid the country of these dangerous pests. Some joint action must be taken and the circular wolf hunt was the result. These circular wolf hunts were not common to Iowa alone: they had become an established custom in the States east of the Mississippi. There is probably not a county in Iowa whose citizens have not participated in a circular wolf hunt.

The first settlers who trooped into the Black Hawk Purchase during the 1830's participated in circular wolf hunts. According to Willard Barrows these wolf hunts were important social affairs that "helped to fill up the dreary days of winter" in Scott County. The pioneers in such towns as Burlington, Muscatine, and Dubuque also enjoyed these forays against the wolf.

According to a contemporary account "all the men and boys would turn out on an appointed day in a kind of circle comprising many square miles of territory, with horses and dogs, and then close up toward the center of their field of operations, gathering not only wolves, but also deer and many

smaller 'varmint.' Five, ten, or more wolves by this means would sometimes be killed in a single day. The men would be organized with as much system as a little army, every one being well posted in the meaning of every signal and the application of every rule. Guns were scarcely ever allowed to be brought on such occasions, as their use would be unavoidably dangerous. The dogs were depended upon for the final slaughter. The dogs, by the way, had all to be held in check by a cord in the hands of their keepers until the final signal was given to let them loose, when away they would all go to the center of battle, and a more exciting scene would follow than can easily be described."

Numerous illustrations of similar wolf hunts may be cited. According to Captain Hosea B. Horn, a resident of Bloomfield, the pioneers of Wyacondah Township in Davis County did more toward destroying the numerous and troublesome wolves than any other men in the county. The Wyacondah Township pioneers were generally joined by Reason Wilkinson and other Bloomfield wolf hunters, men who had removed the scalp from many a "prowling whelp." Captain Horn relates that on one occasion during the 1840's the whole neighborhood had turned out and soon "sprung up" a wolf. Hard pressed by the hounds, the wolf ran into the village and took refuge under a store.

The boys immediately surrounded the building with sticks and brick-bats, according to Captain Horn, and "by inserting a long pole under the house, his wolfship was induced to come forth, which he did amid the shower of missiles which were hurled at him from the hands of his enemies, which he managed however, to escape for a few minutes, but being hotly pursued by a fresh pack of dogs, besides men and boys, he was forced to go into quarters or yield up the ghost. Arriving at the ravine or hollow just above town, this fatigued and frightened mutton lover, dodged under an old log in order to hide himself. Unfortunately for him, however, Mr. Steele and Michael Rominger, were not far behind, and saw this attempt to escape by secreting himself, and having no fear of the wolf before their eyes, and instigated by sport generally and capturing this fellow, in particular, they seized his wolfship and slew him."

Samuel Hardesty recalled with pleasure the frequent "circle-hunts" in which he participated. Arriving in Keokuk County in 1843, Mr. Hardesty found wolves so numerous and troublesome that it was impossible to raise sheep, hogs, and even larger livestock. It was customary, according to Hardesty, for "some two or three hundred men to surround a considerable area of country and gradually close in, thus driving the wolves into a very small area, where they were slaughtered by the hundred." These circular wolf hunts generally

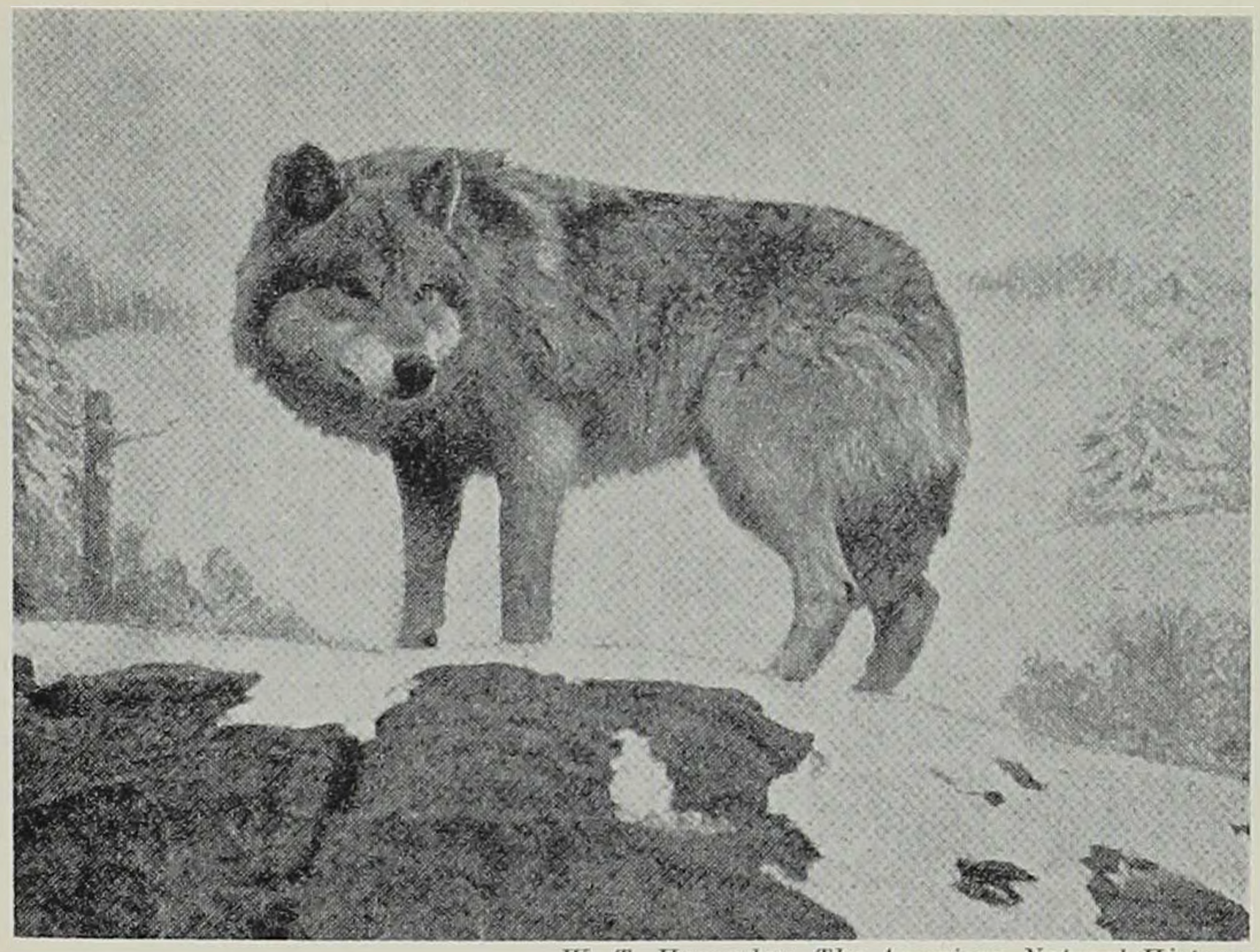
converged in the Skunk River bottom near where Mr. Hardesty later resided. This ravine-like area proved to be the "last ditch" for hundreds of these "predatory quadrupeds."

Smaller parties of men would often gather to hunt wolves. During the severe winter of 1842-1843 wolves were "unusually thick" in Iowa, many probably being driven by hunger from the Indian country into the settlements. Small parties were formed in many neighborhoods to hunt them. The mode of hunting wolves was to gather a party of twenty or thirty men on horseback and go out on the prairies with a pack of dogs. "When the snow was light," a pioneer pointed out, "the wolves would sink into it, and could not run as fast as a horse. The dogs were sent out to hunt up the wolves and the horsemen followed slowly after them till they started one, when the horsemen gave chase at the full speed of their horses, and would run over the wolf, or turn his course, and thus delay his flight till the dogs came up, and in this way they were almost sure to kill the wolf. Sometimes a wolf would get into a beaten track, when they were closely pursued, and would not leave it, and in this way they were frequently driven into the towns and killed in the public streets." The wolves had a "season of ease and plenty" when the snow became compact and a solid crust formed. Horses then broke through the crust and the wolves escaped easily. The snow

was not hard enough, however, to bear up the sharp small feet of the deer and the wolves easily overhauled and killed them.

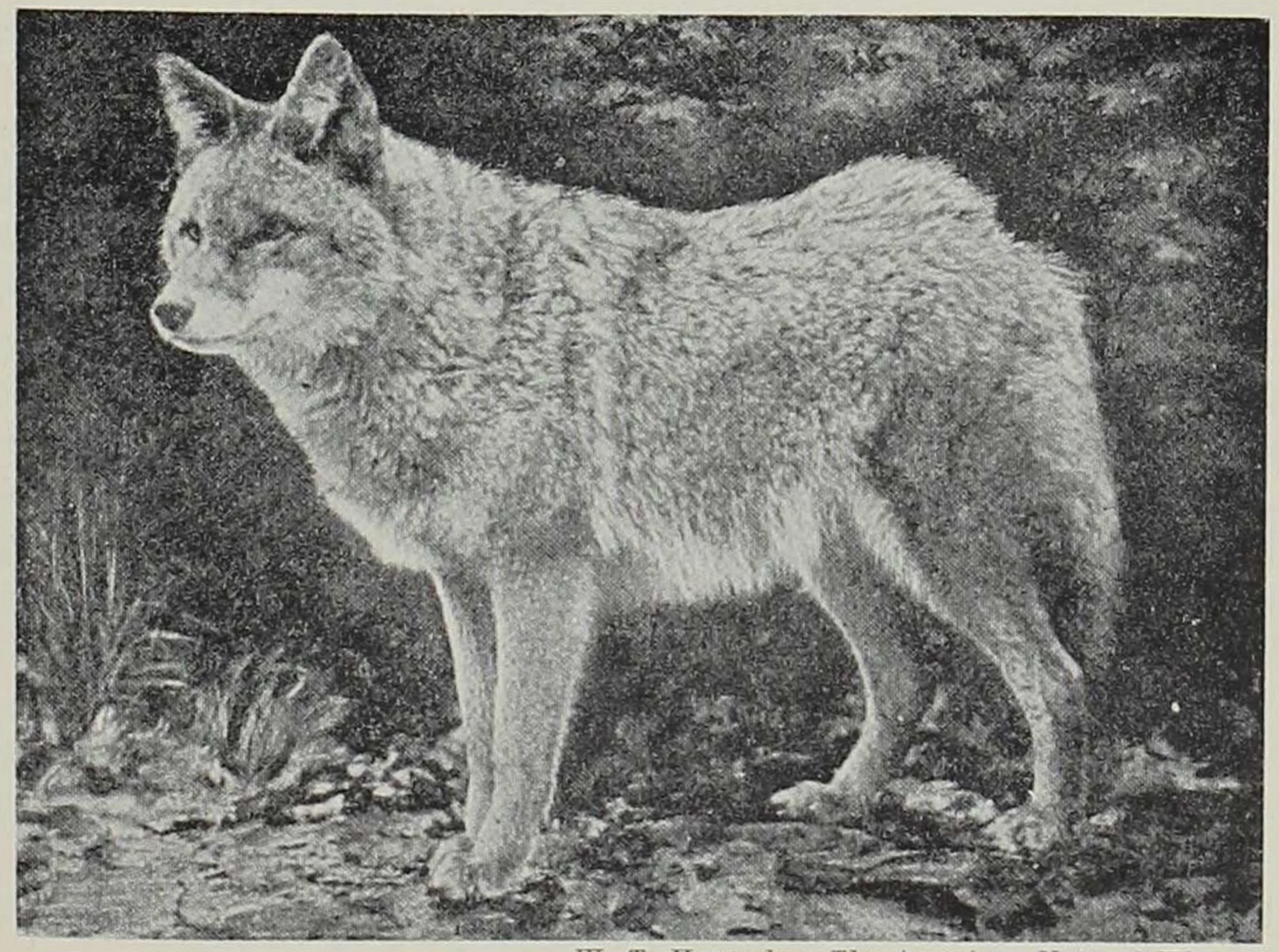
Circular wolf hunts were popular throughout the nineteenth century. In 1860 farmers in the Floyd River Valley were "much annoyed" by the depredations of wolves upon their young stock. "Calves, sheep and pigs have in many instances, been destroyed by wolves," the *Sioux City Register* asserted, "and on last Saturday week the farmers of the Valley got up a regular wolf hunt, but failed in catching any of them."

Newspapers frequently carried announcements of circular wolf hunts. Under the caption "A Wolf Hunt," the *La Porte City Progress* of December 21, 1870, carried the following statement. "We learn from a communication from Mr. J. Sutherland, that prairie wolves are to be found in considerable numbers in and near the timber below La Porte City, on the east side of the river, and that a wolf hunt has been arranged by the citizens of that vicinity, to come off on December 31st, commencing at 10 o'clock a.m. — All lovers of sport are invited to be on hand and participate in the chase." A week later the editor asserted that the wolf hunt promised to be an "interesting affair" and it was hoped that several of the "pesky critters" would be captured. When the wolf hunt took place, however, only one was captured although the hunters succeeded in wounding several.



W. T. Hornaday, The American Natural History

The Gray Wolf



W. T. Hornaday, The American Natural History

The Coyote

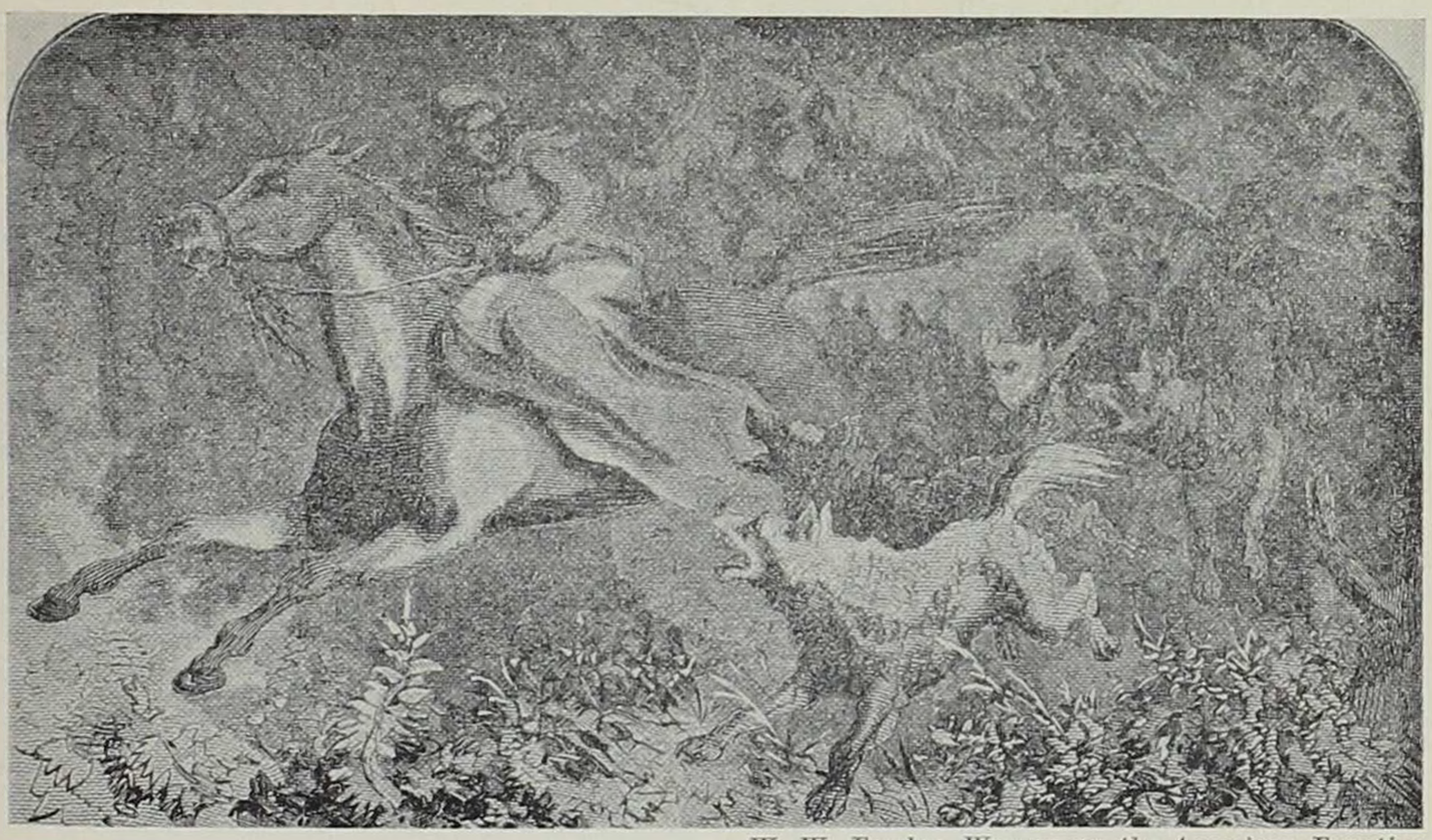
W. W. Fowler, Woman on the American Frontier

Rescuing a Husband From Wolves

One night Doctor White left home to visit Mr. Shepherd, who was ill, and some of the sick mission children. Mrs. White, while awaiting his return, suddenly heard a burst of prolonged howling from the depths of the forest through which the Doctor would have to pass on his return homeward. The howls were continued with all the eagerness which showed that the brutes were close upon their prey. She flew to the yard, and in the greatest terror, besought the two hired men to fly to her husband's rescue.

They laughed at her fears, and endeavored to reason her into composure. But the horrid din continued. Through the wild chorus she fancied she heard a human voice faintly calling for help. Unable longer to restrain her excited feelings, she snatched up a long pair of cooper's compasses—the first weapon that offered itself—and sallied out into the woods, accompanied by the men, armed with rifles. . . . in a few moments they came to a large tree, round which a pack of hungry monsters . . . were . . . jumping up and snapping their jaws at a man who was seated among the branches.

The cowardly brutes, catching sight of the party, sneaked off with howls of baffled rage, and were soon beyond hearing. The doctor descended from his retreat, quite panic-stricken at his narrow escape. He informed them that on first starting from the mission, he had picked up a club, to defend himself from the wolves, should they make their appearance; but when one of the animals came within six feet of him, and by its call, gathered others to the pursuit, his valiant resolutions vanished—he dropped his stick and plied his heels, with admirable dexterity, till the tree offered its friendly aid, when he hallooed for help with all the power of his lungs.



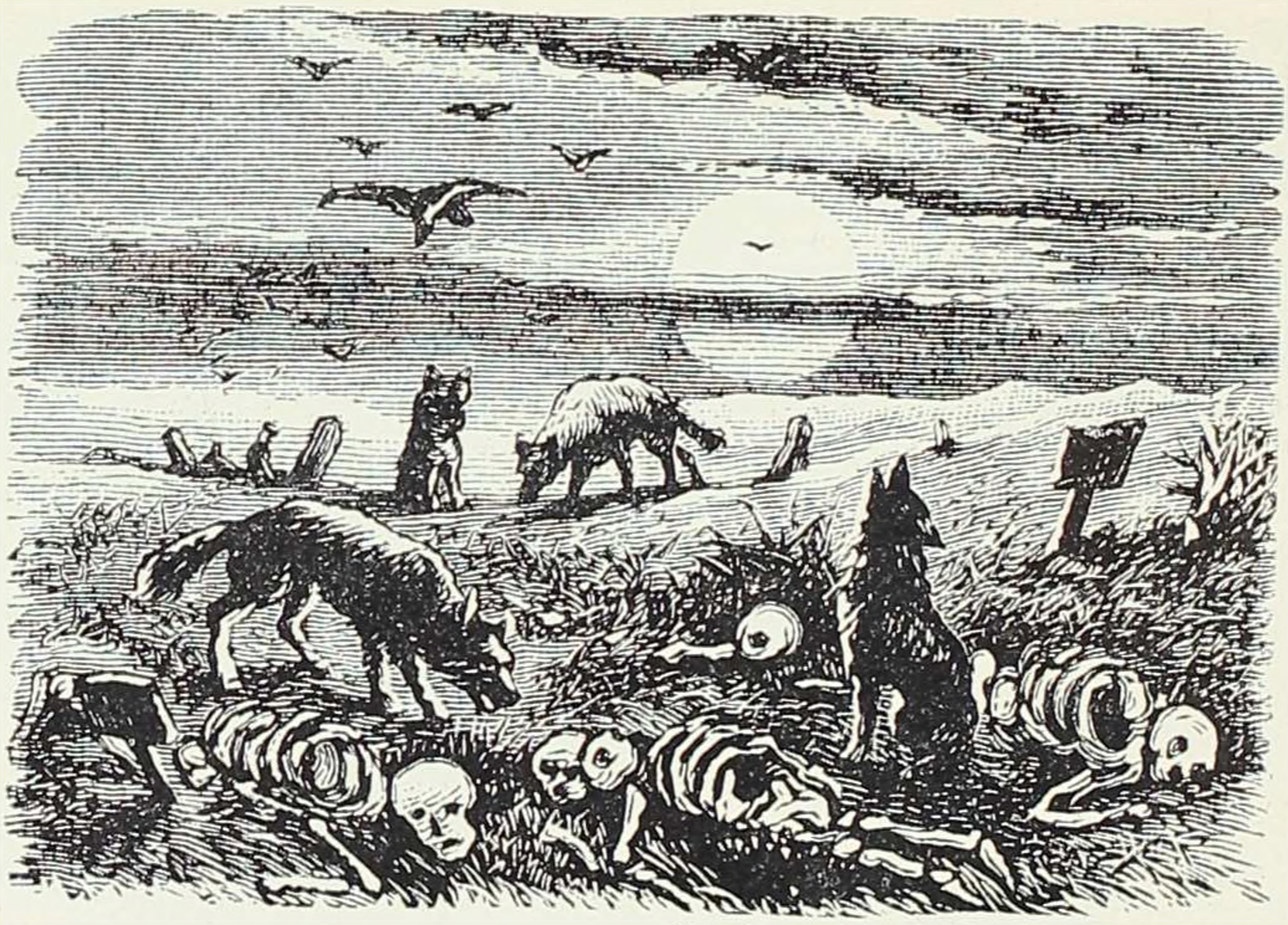
W. W. Fowler, Woman on the American Frontier

An Equestrian Feat—Escape From Wolf Pack

At this time she was herself so much wearied and in want of sleep that she would have given all she possessed to have been allowed to dismount and rest; but, unfortunately for her, those piratical quadrupeds of the plains, the wolves, advised by their carnivorous instincts that she and her exhausted horse might soon fall an easy sacrifice to their voracious appetites, followed upon her track, and came howling in great numbers about her, so that she dared not set her feet upon the ground, fearing they would devour her; and her only alternative was to continue urging the poor beast to struggle forward during the dark and gloomy hours of the long night, until at length she became so exhausted that it was only with the utmost effort of her iron will that she was enabled to preserve her balance upon the horse.

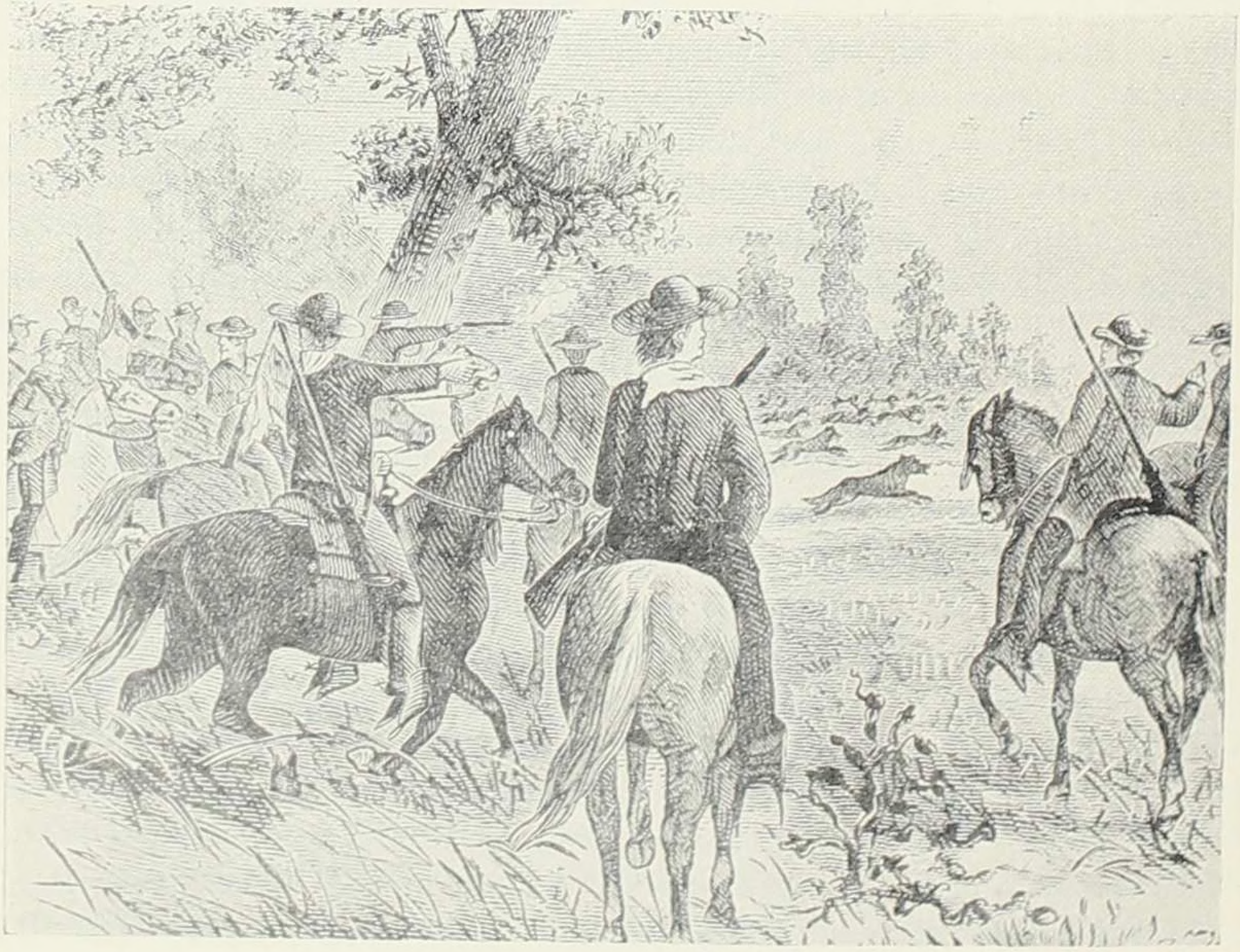
Meantime the ravenous pack of wolves, becoming more and more emboldened and impatient as the speed of her horse relaxed, approached nearer and nearer, until, with their eyes flashing fire, they snapped savagely at the heels of the terrified horse, while at the same time they kept up their hideous concert like the howling of ten thousand fiends . . .

Every element in her nature was at this fearful juncture taxed to its greatest tension, and impelled her to concentrate the force of all her remaining energies in urging and coaxing forward the wearied horse, until, finally, he was barely able to reel and stagger along at a slow walk; and when she was about to give up in despair, expecting every instant that the animal would drop down dead under her, the welcome light of day dawned in the eastern horizon, and imparted a more cheerful and encouraging influence over her, and, on looking around, to her great joy, there were no wolves in sight.



Stenhouse, The Rocky Mountain Saints

"What of the Promises?" — Skeletons Strewn Along Mormon Trail



From State Historical Society Collections

Circular Wolf Hunt in Pioneer Days

Man Versus Wolf

In addition to circular wolf hunts many pioneers went out alone in search of these wild banditti of the prairie. In 1842 a settler in the Black Hawk Purchase who signed himself "J. G." wrote a New York editor that the recent snows had enabled the pioneers to "walk into the wolves like showers in April." About twenty wolves were killed in the neighborhood, one of which lost his life in the following manner:

Early one morning last week, from the top of my corn-crib, I saw an old fellow slyly making his way through a field not far distant. I hastily bestrode a stout carriage horse, and was in so much of a hurry, that I forgot to put on the saddle. The little greyhound pups, only six months old, thought something was in the wind, so early in the morning, and followed, floundering in the snow-drifts, with a right good will, but at a rather long distance. Mr. Wolf soon found that he must make tracks from the corn-field, and lose his breakfast or his bacon. He whisked his tail, bid me good morning in haste, and broke for tall timber. I followed as fast as whipping and kicking and hallooing could make old Jack carry me over fences, through sloughs, up hills, and down snow-drifts. Wolf, finding he was to have close company, and thinking it too early in the day to be sociable, put through every corn-field, hollow, hill, and hazel patch that lay in his way, and when they were not in his way, he made way to them; but old

Jack had, in the fall, found out that a good stake and rider fence could be leaped, when green corn was within it, and with a little persuasion, soon took the fences like a trump, and the drifts and hazel thickets he cared not a scratch for. After a brisk chase of three miles, the wolf began to hang down his signal of distress, and soon surrendered in a snow-bank. A slight blow with the whip made him shut his shiners (wolves know well how to play 'possum'), and I yelled over him in triumph for a quarter of an hour. The little pups, like game fellows, came howling along through the snow as if the devil was after them, or they after the devil; they pitched right into the wolf, who soon waked up, and such a fight as they had you seldom see. As fast as he would bite one pup, he would run off and bellow like a coward, and another would take his place. By the aid of a butt-ender or two from my whip, they at last stretched him out; and, throwing him on the withers of my horse, I put for home in a very good humor with my morning's work.

R. W. Williamson, who settled in Warren County at an early date, was very fond of hunting. Once he captured three raccoons in a single night, on another occasion he bagged eight deer in four days. One morning, in 1856, Williamson and his brother got word that a "noted prairie wolf" was in the neighborhood. This wild despoiler of live-stock was scarcely afraid of any dog but Williamson had an immense greyhound which could capture any coyote. The prairie wolf was quickly found, the fleet greyhound "soon overtook him and ran violently against him, knocking him down and keeping him so until the other dogs came up

and got hold of him." The wolf promptly played possum and when Mr. Williamson arrived on the scene he thought it was dead.

Jubilant over the capture, Mr. Williamson determined to tie the coyote behind the saddle on his mule and carry him home. He had hardly had an opportunity to complete his preparations for this work before his attention was attracted by the greyhound who was making "twenty feet at the jump" away from the hunters. Glancing up to see if his wolf was safe, Williamson found the supposed dead coyote speeding away quite a distance down the road. He had "quite a chase" before he succeeded in catching the wolf again, and he congratulated himself that he had thus been prevented from tying the vicious brute on his mule. "Since that time," Williamson concludes, "when I capture a wolf I am sure to ascertain that it is dead before I take any risks with it. I captured eight more wolves that winter, which was that of 1856, and none ever fooled me again."

Dogs were virtually a necessity for most wolf hunts. Only a few dogs possessed both the fleetness and courage to cope with their savage cousins. The pioneers often attempted to capture wolves with a "common cur" but found that they were "wholly unreliable" for such work. "So long as the wolf would run," our pioneer huntsmen found, "the cur would follow; but the wolf, being apparently acquainted with the character of

his pursuer, would either turn and place himself in a combative attitude, or else act upon the principle that 'discretion is the better part of valor' and throw himself upon his back, in token of surrender. This strategic performance would make instant peace between these two scions of the same house; and, not infrequently, dogs and wolves have been seen playing together like puppies. But the hound was never known to recognize a flag of truce; his baying seemed to signify 'no quarter,' or at least so the terrified wolf understood it."

Trapping a wolf was virtually impossible: they were far too cunning to be fooled in this fashion. Even as early as 1820 Dr. Say expressed astonishment at the extraordinary intelligence of the prairie wolves. One of the members of the Long expedition constructed and tried various kinds of traps but to no avail. A "live trap" of the shallow box variety and a large cage with a small entrance on the top both failed in their purpose. Many wolves put in an appearance but none would "bite" at the tempting bait.

In the case of the "steel trap" Dr. Say records that the trap was "profusely baited, and the whole, with the exception of the bait, was carefully concealed beneath the fallen leaves. This was also unsuccessful. Tracks of the anticipated victims were next day observed to be impressed in numbers on the earth near the spot, but still the trap, with its seductive charge, remained un-

touched. The bait was then removed from the trap, and suspended over it from the branch of a tree; several pieces of meat were also suspended in a similar manner, from trees in the vicinity; the following morning the bait over the trap alone remained. Supposing that their exquisite sense of smell warned them of the position of the trap, it was removed, and again covered with leaves, and the baits being disposed as before, the leaves to a considerable distance around were burned, and the trap remained perfectly concealed by ashes; still the bait over the trap was avoided."

David Scott, a pioneer of Appanoose County, on one occasion succeeded in trapping a cub wolf, which he promised his boys to tame. He chained the cub carefully but the next morning both wolf and chain were gone. The animal was captured two years later with the chain still fastened to him and as "bright as a dollar." In 1844, A. Covey, a Keokuk County pioneer, invented a wolf trap which was said to be "quite successful" in its way. Covey was reputed to have captured sixteen wolves in it that February. The trap was exhibited at an old settlers' reunion during the 1870's.

Government Bounties

From an early date the various States and Territories offered bounties for wolf scalps as well as for the skins of other destructive wild animals. These bounties varied greatly, apparently depending upon the number of wolves that infested an area and the ability of the community to pay. When Estwick Evans made his "Pedestrious Tour" in western New York during the winter and spring of 1818, he found wolves so destructive that some counties offered bounties as high as ninety dollars for each wolf destroyed.

As the frontier line moved westward the pioneers carried with them their customs and traditions. Thus we find that county officials — from commissioners and supervisors to judges and treasurers — were faced with the problem of wolf bounties. Considerable latitude was allowed the county officers in the payment of bounties. Since modern officials have been known to refuse to pay a bounty, it is not surprising that the poorer pioneer communities often found themselves without the funds necessary to pay the bounty on wolf scalps.

During Territorial days the county commissioners doled out wolf bounties sparingly from

their all too slender purses. On April 1, 1841, the Johnson County commissioners allowed John S. Holler four dollars for the four wolf scalps he had taken. Herman W. Shaft presented two wolf scalps and John Aslein brought in three more. In the ensuing months Nathaniel McClure, George Fry, George Wein, and Joseph Stover all received wolf bounties. During the following January, eight men put in claims for twenty-nine wolf scalps: Jacob Stover had taken nine wolves while Pleasant Harris had killed six.

The drain on the resources of some of these sparsely settled counties was extremely heavy. Despite the fact that wolf scalps brought only fifty cents in Mahaska County, records of ten or more dollars in bounty payments are found at each meeting of the commissioners. The Mahaska County treasury was so depleted that on July 7, 1845, the county commissioners stopped paying wolf bounties.

Bounties continued to be paid by counties after Iowa achieved Statehood. When the Jefferson County commissioners met in January of 1847, they were confronted with a large number of wolf hunters. The first day was devoted almost entirely to the examination of wolf scalps and the subsequent payment of premiums to those who had killed wolves. Fully two pages of the old journal were devoted to orders, of which the following are typical:

"1170. *Ordered,* That the Treasurer pay H. C. Ross $1 for one prairie-wolf sculp, as per certificate on file.

"1174. *Ordered,* That the Treasurer pay W. L. Hamilton, assignee of Joseph Scott, $3 for three prairie-wolf sculps, as per certificate on file."

Despite the fact that the winter of 1846-1847 was not considered a very good "wolf-sculping" season, the commissioners ordered $45 paid in bounties.

During the first decade of statehood, losses to sheep growers were so serious that action was demanded of the General Assembly. On December 12, 1856, Josiah B. Grinnell introduced a bill to "protect the wool growers from the destruction of wolves." The measure was read a first and second time and then referred to the Committee on Agriculture.

When the bill was returned to the Senate five days later, Jarius E. Neal of Marion County offered the following amendment:

> That any wolf or other voracious beast which shall feloniously, maliciously and unlawfully, attack with intent to kill, or do great bodily injury to any sheep, ass, or other domestic animal shall on being duly convicted thereof, be declared an enemy to our Republican institutions, and an outlaw, and it shall be lawful for the person aggrieved by such attack, to pursue and kill such beast wherever it shall be found, and if such beast unlawfully resist, the injured party may notify the Governor, who shall thereupon call out the militia of the State to resist said vora-

cious beast, and if the militia of the State should be overcome in such battle, then the Governor is authorized to make a requisition upon the President of the United States, for troops.

This amendment was speedily rejected by the Senate. Although the bill met strong opposition in the upper house, it was finally passed. It died in the lower house, however, when a motion to lay the measure on the table was carried and the bill was not taken up during the remainder of the session. The proposed bill of 1856 declared:

> Every person or agent for another, making application for a bounty, shall be required to appear before a Justice of the Peace in the township where such wolf or wolf's whelp was caught and killed, and produce the scalp of said wolf or wolf's whelp, including the ears of said animal or animals, and state, on oath, the time when, and place where, said wolf or wolf's whelp was caught and killed whereupon, the Justice of the Peace, being satisfied with the claimant's legal right to a bounty, shall disfigure the scalp or scalps so produced, by cutting off the ears of said scalp or scalps, and give such claimant a certificate, directed to the county Judge, for the amount due, and the county Judge shall give an order upon the county Treasurer for said amount, as provided for in section one of this act, which amount shall be paid to said claimant out of the funds of the county treasury.

Meanwhile, the ravages of coyotes and timber wolves continued unabated. Prior to 1858 the "multiplicity of Wolves" in Louisa County effectually prevented the importation of sheep. After that date the obstacle was virtually removed, but

the western counties still continued to suffer heavy losses in livestock. Accordingly, on February 2, 1858, Joseph Grimes of Delaware County introduced a bill in the House of Representatives of the Seventh General Assembly for "an act allowing a Bounty upon the scalps of certain Animals." Thomas Drummond of Benton County promptly offered an amendment that the act should not be construed "to apply to any President or Director of any Nebraska Bank found temporarily within the State." After this facetious thrust had been beaten down the bill was referred to the Committee on Agriculture. On February 24th it was read a third time and passed by a vote of 51 to 12. A few amendments by the Senate were concurred in and the measure was approved by Governor Ralph P. Lowe on March 15, 1858.

The first state law requiring the payment of bounties on wolves provided that the county judge was to allow $1.50 on the scalp of each prairie wolf, lynx, or wild cat, and $3.00 for the "large species of Wolves known as the Timber Wolf." Any person claiming a bounty was to produce the scalp before the county judge or justice of the peace of the county wherein such "wolf, Lynx, or Wild-cat" was killed within ten days after it had been taken. The officers were to "so deface the scalp" that it could not be used a second time. Usually this was done by removing the ears and allowing the claimant to keep the skin. No per-

son was to receive his bounty payment from the county treasurer until he had "sworn or affirmed" that he was legally entitled to the bounty. The following quaint legal formula from Mills County illustrates the working of the law:

This day personally appeared Adam Campbell and made oath before Zachariah Buckingham, a justice of the peace for Lyons township, in Mills county, State of Iowa, and produced the scelp of a wild cat, and also the scelp of a woolf that he cild, the wild cat and woolf in the bounds of Mills county, and in the limitation of ten days he is entitled to one dollar and fifty cents for each scelp out of the county treserry.

Given under my hand this the twenty-eighth day of November, 1859. Zachariah Buckingham, *Justice of the peace.*

The effect of this law was soon felt in many of the western counties. Farmers in Wayne County sent in a glowing report of their sheep herding activities in 1863. "In former years," the report declares, "sheep could not be raised here on account of the great number of wolves, which would destroy them nearly as fast as they could be brought; but now they have been killed or driven away, so that very few remain, and as the wolves have decreased, the sheep have increased."

Although clearly effective the bounty provided by the act of 1858 was apparently considered too high, for in 1860 the Eighth General Assembly fixed a flat rate of one dollar on the scalps of the wolf, the lynx, the swift, and the wild cat. Many

hunters and trappers believed this bounty of 1860 was entirely too low. In 1863 a committee consisting of D. B. Herriman, H. B. Hoyt, and E. R. Miller presented a resolution to the board of supervisors of Fayette County asking that an "extra bounty" of one dollar be allowed for each wolf scalp if it could be done legally.

The committee believed such action would be of "vital interest" to the State as well as to Fayette County, which was "infested" with these "most hateful" representatives of the canine race. "At the hour of midnight, when the senses of the shepherd are locked in deep sleep," the committee pointed out, "the wolf rushes from the bog and glen upon those neighboring sheepfolds, committing dreadful havoc upon those meek and lowly animals, as well as upon the junior members of the swinish multitude." The committee fortified its petition by the following cogent argument:

> The wolf, the enemy of sheep,
> Prowls about when we're asleep,
> And, despite of faithful dogs,
> They kill our sheep and junior hogs;
> Which robs us of our wool and bacon
> By one of the imps of old Satan.
> Hence I pray this Board, in session,
> To pass an order to meet the question,
> And by a unanimous vote,
> Make his scalp a county note.

Despite this poetical outburst, and despite the committee's sworn promise to drag the last wolf

from his hiding place, the resolution was lost when put to a vote by the commissioners.

The General Assembly of the State of Iowa continued to legislate on bounties after the Civil War. When Dr. J. A. Allen visited Iowa in 1867 he found the coyote "quite numerous" although in some sections it had been nearly extirpated. The laws of Iowa from 1873 to 1892 continued to provide a one dollar bounty for "each scalp of a wolf, lynx, swift, or wild-cat."

The tendency of wolves and coyotes to increase or decrease in numbers according to the amount of bounty paid appears natural. Other facts, of course, have played a part in the story. According to Frank C. Pellett: "From that time [1867] on until 1890, coyotes steadily decreased in numbers, until, apparently, they were all but exterminated. The survivors were extremely cunning, and an adult was seldom presented for bounty. During the last few years, a marked change is taking place. The country is now thickly settled and there seems little shelter for such large animals as Wolves, yet the coyotes are increasing in numbers."

A contributing factor in the decrease in numbers of wolves and coyotes during the waning years of the nineteenth century was the five dollar bounty given in 1892 for the skin of an adult wolf and two dollars for that of a wolf cub. This five dollar bounty came about largely

through the efforts of the State Sheep-Breeders and Wool-Growers Association which had gone on record demanding a "liberal State bounty for wolf scalps, with a view to the speedy extermination of wolves in Iowa."

The attitude of the organization was perhaps most ably expressed by A. J. Blakely of Grinnell, a prominent breeder of Merinos. In the words of Mr. Blakely:

> The wolf, not merely figuratively, is at the door of many an Iowa farmer, but the real wolves, large wolves, prowl over the Iowa farms in increasing numbers, seeking what they may devour. No census like that of their cousins, the dogs, has ever been made. Like the flea, when you put your hand on them they are not there. But their name is legion. Much of the best sheep lands of the State, the bluffy, bushy portions along the streams and adjacent to timber belts, can not be pastured with sheep. . . . Sheep can't live there now on account of the wolves. Pigs can't be raised there on account of the wolves, and chickens and turkeys must every night roost very high, as though Thanksgiving day were to follow. Really it is a stain, a foul stigma, on the civilization and the enterprise of the people of Iowa that these wolves remain and are frequently seen crossing the best cultivated farms, and even near the best towns in our State.
>
> What is the remedy, do you ask? Wipe out all trifling and unequal bounties and induce the legislature to provide a State bounty of $20 for the scalps of the old wolves and $5 for the young ones. The boys will then arm themselves with the best rifles of long range, will watch and hunt for the game, and speedily exterminate the lupine race.

Small wonder that with such intense arguments and activity, the wolf bounty should be raised from one dollar to five dollars. This act of 1892 was introduced by Senator B. R. Vale of Van Buren County. It also allowed a one dollar bounty on the lynx and the wild cat. The law further provided that any person "who shall demand a bounty on any of the above mentioned animals killed or taken in another state or county, or on a domesticated animal, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than one hundred nor less than fifty dollars."

Some amazing and unlooked for developments resulted from the increase in the wolf bounty. Witness the charges of *The Iowa Homestead* — a farm journal printed in Des Moines which employed the trenchant editorial pen of "Uncle Henry" Wallace.

There are a lot of farmers scattered up and down the prairie streams who are engaged in wolf farming. There is less cash outlay and more clear income in wolf farming than any other kind of farming we are acquainted with. The ranchman feeds his stock on the Government lands free of charge, the wolf farmer allows the wolf free range among his neighbor's sheep, chickens and pigs. He harvests his crop each spring in the shape of a litter of cubs whose scalps he takes with the greatest regularity to the county seat and draws the bounty. If the adjoining county pays more bounty than the one he is in, it is no difficult matter to take them across the county line and kill them

so as to make them citizens of that county, duly taken as provided by law. Under these conditions wolves are increasing in Iowa, and we do not doubt, in other prairie States where similar inducements are held out to wolf farming.

With a five-dollar bounty on its scalp the wolf should have been virtually exterminated in Iowa by the turn of the century. Unfortunately this was not the case. Maybe wolf farming *was* a contributing factor! At any rate an increasing number of coyotes were observed in western Iowa. The lean, gaunt timber wolf seemed on the increase in eastern Iowa, too. Their ravages became so great in 1913 the bounty was raised to the unprecedented figure of $20 on mature wolves and $4 on the wolf cubs. And still their depredations continued.

During the spring of 1914 packs of timber wolves were attacking sheep in Lee and Henry counties. "The wool marauders don't run in large bands, seldom more than four or five to the pack, yet hardly a day passes but what they take their toll of the flocks," the *Keokuk Gate City* declared. Ed Lee, a wool-grower who pastured sheep in both Lee and Henry counties, was one of the heaviest sufferers. "We've got to do something about it," Lee urged. "The sheep business has held up wonderfully in the last two years, but if the wolves keep on getting into our flocks like they have lately, why, I don't see how we can

stand up under the loss. The trouble is, the wolves have been breeding thicker and thicker every year. The sheep growers kill one once in a while, but it don't seem to have much effect. The dogs keep the wolves on the run, yet they very seldom run them down, the result is that the packs are driven away from the vicinity of one flock to that of another flock. Then the killing begins all over again."

It was one thing to report wolves decimating flocks of sheep in the country; it was quite another to chronicle them prowling the streets of populous cities. Early in February of 1915 a citizen of Keokuk saw a large gray wolf "making tracks" across a vacant lot on Fifth Street between Bank and Timea streets. It was believed the animal had been chased across the Mississippi from Illinois where many wolves were said to be running at large. Later that morning the wolf attempted to raid a chicken coop near Tenth and Exchange streets but was scared off by some people when the chickens commenced making a disturbance. According to the *Keokuk Gate City*: "The wolf was followed in his flight by a squad of boys and men armed with whatever weapons were close at hand. The wolf darted down South Tenth Street when driven away from his breakfast of chicken. The animal is said to be as big as a good sized dog, and is evidently trying to make its way into the timber on the outskirts of town." There was

general rejoicing when the wolf was killed in West Keokuk that very noon. The wolf bounty in Lee County was then twenty dollars.

Wolves were still being killed in the more westerly counties also. In 1920, on his farm in Clarke County, Archie Neal discovered a large timber wolf skulking through the tall grass near where he was gathering corn. Calling his large bull dog Mr. Neal precipitated what was described as one of the "most vicious fights" ever witnessed in Iowa. Snarling and snapping viciously at each other, the infuriated animals whirled round and round until the bull dog got his "favorite hind-leg hold" on his adversary. Meanwhile, the wolf slashed the bull dog's tough hide with every snap of his sharp teeth. The outcome of the battle was still in doubt when farmer Neal ended it with a well directed blow at the wolf's head.

The twenty-dollar wolf bounty lasted only six years — from 1913 to 1919. During this period, however, the State spent almost one hundred and fifty thousand dollars on wolf scalps — $29,718 in 1915 alone. In a single year (1914) Harrison County paid $2,294, Monona County $1,994, and Woodbury County $1,452 on wolf scalps. During this same period upwards of a half million dollars were expended for damage done to live-stock and poultry by dogs and wolves. Illustrative of such damage are the following figures for 1914 from Union County.

For 97 sheep and lambs killed or injured .	$467.20
For 3 horses injured	137.25
For 6 heifers and calves killed	158.25
For 15 hogs and pigs killed	98.61
For 43 ducks killed	21.42
For 4 goats killed	10.80
For 10 geese killed	9.00
For 2 turkeys killed	6.66
Total warrants issued during the year 1914	$909.19

Such heavy expenditures resulted in considerable opposition in the state legislature and in 1919 the bounty was reduced to ten dollars for mature wolves. The bounty for a wolf cub remained unchanged — standing at four dollars. Even at this reduced figure the bounty expenditures were very large, amounting to slightly over one hundred and fifty thousand dollars in the thirteen years from 1920 to 1932 inclusive. During 1924 fully $18,-109.75 was paid by Iowa counties on wolf bounties — the largest for the period.

Since 1933 there has been an appreciable falling off in the total amount of money expended for wolf scalps in Iowa. In that year the bounty was reduced to five dollars, wolf cubs commanding only two dollars. The General Assembly considered the bill of such "immediate importance" that it provided that the act should go into "full force and effect after its passage and publication" in the *Red Oak Express and the Glenwood Opinion*.

But the lean, rough-coated canines were by no means exterminated. On December 29, 1935, thousands of Iowans read a dispatch from Winnipeg, Canada, stating that ravenous packs of lean and hungry wolves from the far northern Canadian wastes were stalking their way into Manitoba in search of food. Undoubtedly many Iowans breathed a sigh of relief that mighty Minnesota lay between them and the wolf packs of Manitoba. Scarcely a month later farmers in southeastern Palo Alto County reported killing several foxes and wolves during the sub-zero weather. Early in February, 1936, Ervin Eddy trapped a large male wolf near Creston. The prime pelt was said to measure six feet from muzzle to tail tip. That same month a cafe owner at Garner, Iowa, was followed home by three howling wolves. It was thought that the hungry animals had entered the town in search of food.

In maintaining this unequal struggle against man the wolf has amply demonstrated his keen sagacity and innate craft against almost overwhelming natural odds. For the twenty years ending 1937 one-third of the ninety-nine counties (35) had paid bounties each year while exactly two-thirds of the counties had paid sixteen or more times out of a possible twenty years. An average of seventy-two counties have paid bounties each year during the 1930's.

The payment of wolf bounties by individual

counties during the twenty years from 1918 to 1937 reveals some interesting facts. If we omit Hardin, Keokuk, Lucas, and Osceola counties, for which only incomplete returns are available, we find the total bounties for the twenty year period ranging from $238.25 in Wapello County to $14,555 in Monona County. The largest number of wolves are taken along the Missouri River. The lower Des Moines and Skunk River counties contain the fewest wolves. Van Buren County is an exception to this statement, paying $1,018 in wolf bounties during the same twenty years. Each of the Mississippi River counties above Des Moines County had paid over one thousand dollars in wolf bounties during this period, ranging from $1,025 in Clinton County to $5,928.50 in Allamakee County. Seven out of eight counties in the double tier of northern counties between Winneshiek and Kossuth had paid less than one thousand dollars in wolf bounties during the twenty years prior to 1938.

According to these figures hunters on the Missouri River slope invariably found wolf-hunting particularly good. Nine out of ten leading wolf counties in Iowa were located in this area. Monona County had spent $14,555 on bounties during the period from 1918 to 1937, inclusive. Woodbury County had spent $13,371.30 and Harrison County $12,411.50 in this same period. The next seven counties in the order of wolf bounty pay-

ments were: Pottawattamie, $9,378; Plymouth, $6,096; Fremont, $6,038; Allamakee, $5,928.50; Mills, $5,319; Crawford, $5,059; and Guthrie, $4,879. Only Allamakee in northeastern Iowa lies outside the Missouri River slope, although Guthrie County lies on the watershed between the two systems. With the exception of Mills and Fremont, all of these counties paid bounties every year between 1918 and 1937. The yearly average of Monona County between 1918 and 1937 was $727.75 while Guthrie County averaged only $243.95 during the same period.

If the cost of the bounty system appears large it must be remembered that the destruction of livestock by wolves and dogs is very great — fully $3,554,724.13 being expended in payment of damages to farmers in the twenty-seven years between 1909 and 1937 inclusive. During the same period a total of $5,787,508.04 was received in Iowa from the dog tax, the funds of which were used to pay the damages to domestic animals.

More than a century ago an American artist, George Catlin, foretold the heavy losses in livestock which future generations must suffer. Catlin decried the wanton destruction of the buffalo: almost 200,000 buffalo robes were annually jerked from these "useful animals," leaving the carcasses to be devoured by the wolves. After pointing out that the buffalo was a vital necessity to the Indian, Catlin wondered who would "resist the ravages

of 300,000 starving savages; and in their trains, 1,500,000 wolves, whom direst necessity will have driven from their desolate and gameless plains, to seek for the means of subsistence along our exposed frontier?"

Catlin believed that the problem was destined to become an extremely acute one within ten years, or before Iowa achieved Statehood. The Indian was taken care of by the reservation system but the wolves were still present in Iowa a hundred years later. Moreover, the coyote is now expanding eastward into land which had never been its habitat. The losses to domestic animals in Iowa and adjoining states is still a serious problem.

The thrill and excitement of the circular wolf hunt is known to present-day Iowans. On November 19, 1939, eighty Remsen sportsmen from town and rural territory gathered at the office of Homan & Daldrup for their first wolf and coyote hunt of the season. These wolf hunters started out on Sunday morning at 10:30 and returned in mid-afternoon with their trophies — two large gray wolves that would have "thrown terror into the heart of many a pedestrian had he encountered them alone and unarmed."

In pioneer Iowa the circular wolf hunt was a vital necessity for the protection of livestock. In 1939 the sturdy Plymouth County sportsmen made a genuine social event of their wolf

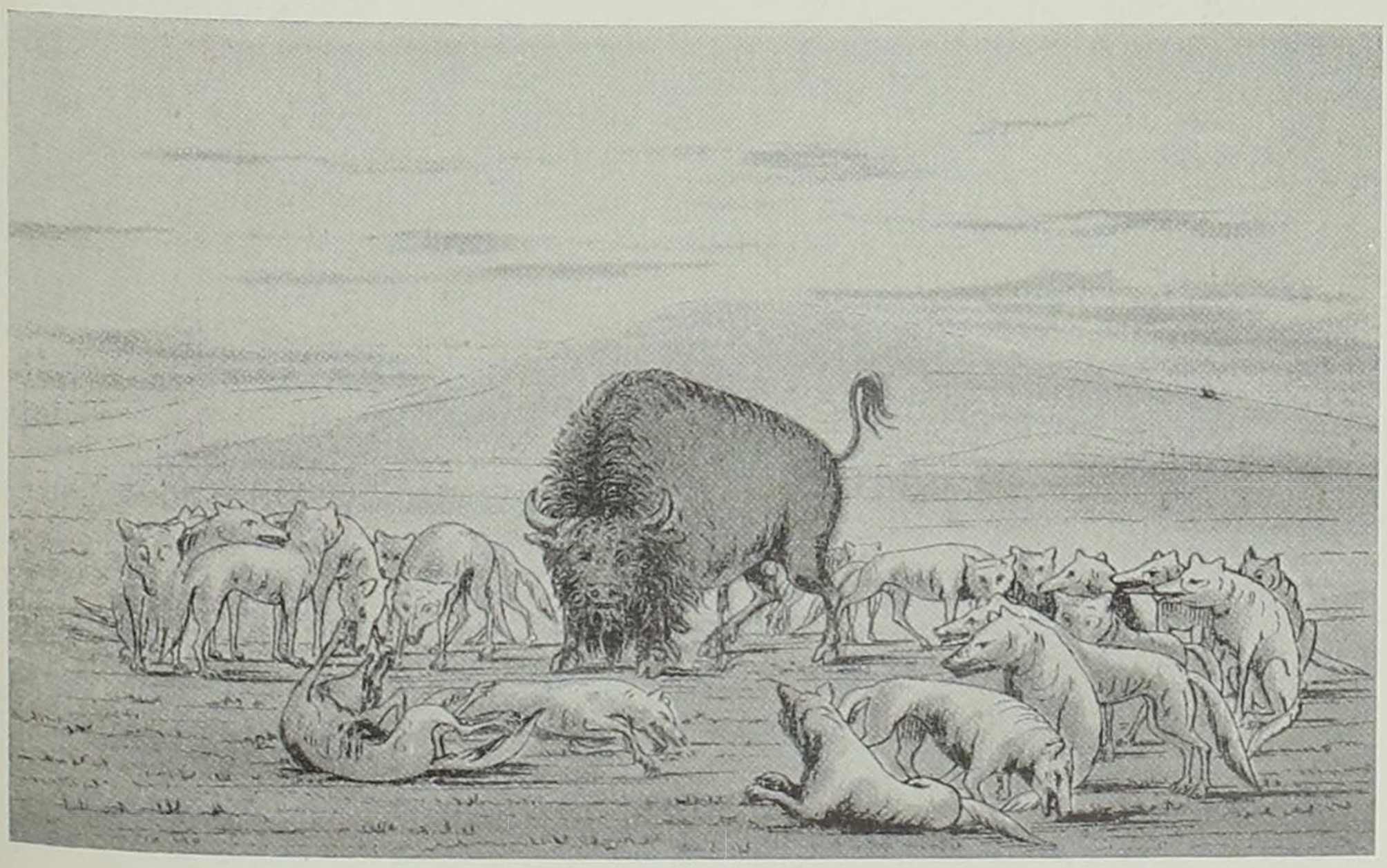
hunts. "The hunters," declared the *Remsen Bell-Enterprise* of November 22, 1939, "will collect the customary bounty from the county and sell the pelts, retaining the money as usual until the end of the season after which the total in the treasury will go toward expenses of a party or parties, depending on the extent of the proceeds."

Since hundreds of wolves and coyotes are still being bagged each year in Iowa it is likely that the circular wolf hunt will continue to be a colorful spectacle for many years to come. In 1958, for example, wolf scalps still brought ten dollars and cub scalps four dollars. Monona County remained the favorite home for his wolfship, fully $2,072 being paid in wolf bounties in 1958. Pottawattamie County actually paid out more than Monona but unfortunately it lumped its $3,644.75 for "coyotes, gophers, foxes, etc." Plymouth doled out $194 for "coyotes" while Madison County in central Iowa expended $192 in wolf bounties. Despite the wiliest schemes of man the grey, gaunt, and ferocious wolf still roamed the wilder, more isolated portions of Iowa in 1960.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

From George Catlin's *North American Indians*

We discovered at a distance, a huge bull, encircled with a gang of white wolves; we rode up as near as we could without driving them away, and being within pistol shot, we had a remarkably good view, where I sat for a few moments and made a sketch in my note-book. . . . the animal had made desperate resistance, until his eyes were entirely eaten out of his head — the grizzle of his nose was mostly gone — his tongue was half eaten off, and the skin and flesh of his legs torn almost literally into strings. In this tattered and torn condition, the poor old veteran stood bracing up in the midst of his devourers, who had ceased hostilities for a few minutes, to enjoy a sort of parley, recovering strength and preparing to resume the attack in a few moments again. In this group, some were reclining, to gain breath, whilst others were sneaking about and licking their chops in anxiety for a renewal of the attack; and others, less lucky, had been crushed to death by the feet or the horns of the bull.



THE DISMAL HOWL—ALONE IN THE WILDERNESS