

W: It is not like a bob white or anything like that. They are chirping, and those little ones know that they should freeze when the old ones are doing that. They were up in the tree on a low limb, and they did not fly or anything when I walked up to see what was wrong. I figured if it was a snake it would probably have gotten me at my heels. Well, I kept walking on up there, and about that time there was a terrible racket. The panther was just coming along, knocking over weeds and everything. Then he hit the open space where I could see him. I did not know what it was because he held his tail like that. I said, "My God!" I did not even think about shooting him right then, I mean, just for a split second. I probably should not have shot him to start with because all I had was #6 bird shot. I hit him in his hind quarters hard enough that it knocked him around. I did not get but one shot before he went right into the bushes. He was right at the edge of the creek shrubbery.

There were some people who lived right down the river from me, and I knew that he was going over a little ridge and right down to their place. They had dogs all up and down the river. I said, "I just going to leave and see what happens when he hits that gate." There was a gate right in front of their house by the road, and sure enough, just about the time I got through thinking about what was going to happen, those dogs just started having a fit. I never heard anymore about it, except for a friend of mine, a young guy who lived down a ways, got out and looked for tracks. He asked if I knew there was a panther around here. I said, "Yes, I just got through shooting it." He asked, "Is that what that was?" I said, "You bet your buns. That is how come all the dogs down there were barking, your dogs and everybody else's." He said, "I did not notice it. I just found his tracks. I have been seeing his tracks for a couple of days." But we did not see any tracks after that.

P: Where was this?

W: This was on the Suwannee River, near Lake City. Now it is the Suwannee Heights subdivision on the Suwannee--on the Gilchrist County side--about four or five miles south of where the Santa Fe River dumps into the Suwannee River.

P: When did this happen?

W: This is was probably in 1974 or 1975, right around in that area.

P: Okay. How about more special names. Owls? Remember the owl we heard on the river? Do you call that a hoot owl?

W: A hoot owl. You know, I was thinking the other night that I never hear a screech owl anymore. They used to be real common back when there were a lot of woods and everything,