

MEMBER ADVENTURES

THE ACORN SERIES - GEORGE BIRD GRINNELL - CONSERVATIONIST, AUTHOR



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EMERITUS MEMBER
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In 1897 the third book in the B&C Acorn Series, *Trail and Campfire*, was published. It continued to feature personal adventures by Club members. Under the heading "Bear Traits" were writings by three

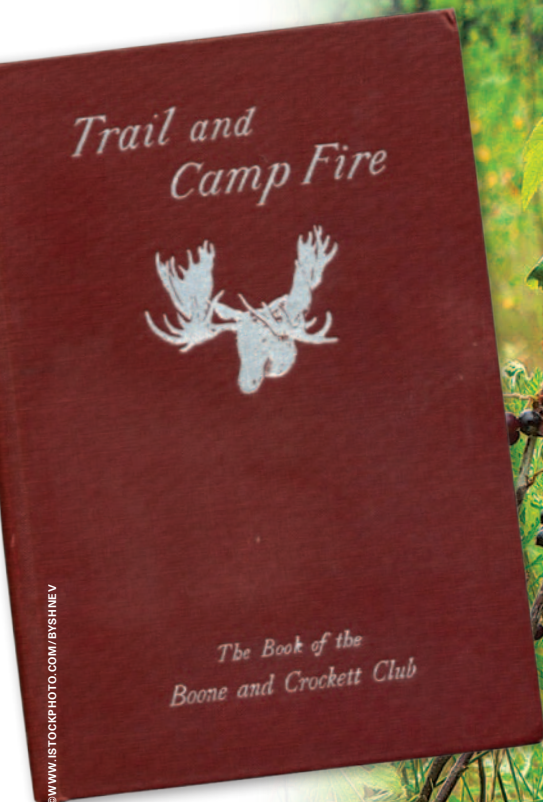
members. George Bird Grinnell was one of these authors. Grinnell has long been considered to be the "Father of American Conservation" as well as the leading authority on Indian culture. He was editor of Forest and Stream Publishing Company when he teamed up with Theodore Roosevelt in 1887 to form the Boone and Crockett Club. Here is what he wrote about "A Berry Picker."

The Member Adventures series will continue to feature highlight and excerpts from Boone and Crockett publications written by our adventurous members.

"It was on a little river flowing into the head of a British Columbia inlet that I saw my first bear—a black one. We had laboriously poled our canoe for a mile or two up the rushing river, and had landed on a gravel bar to survey the mountain sides for white goats, when around a point a little below us on the other side of the stream walked a moderate sized bear. It was August, and the ripe salmon berries hung thick on bushes which grew in the edge of the forest on the cut bank beneath which the river flowed. These berries occupied all the bear's attention, and he did not notice the men who stood in plain sight on the other side of the stream. He walked slowly along from bush to bush, raising his head and wrapping his tongue around the branches, and then stripping off berries and leaves alike by a downward pull. When he had cleared the lower branches, he stood on his hind feet, and pulling down the higher branches with his forepaws, he stripped them in the same way. All his motions were deliberate, and the way in which he gathered the food with mouth and tongue reminded me of a cow pulling apples from a low-growing tree.

I watched him with great interest until he had approached within perhaps seventy-five yards of where we stood. Then, fearing that he would smell us, I fired at the white spot in his breast, and, as the smoke lifted, had a dissolving view of his hips as they disappeared in the undergrowth. When we had pushed across the river in the canoe, we found blood on the weeds where he had vanished, and a little further in the forest came upon the bear, comfortably curled up on his side with his paws over his nose.

Once in Montana, at a much greater distance, I saw an old bear and two cubs picking huckleberries in a little mountain valley. They walked busily about from bush to bush and seemed to gather the berries one by one, though the distance was too great for me to be sure as to this. The Indians tell me that when the service berries are ripe, the bears "ride" down the taller bushes by their weight, pressing the stems down under the chest, the two forelegs being on either side of the stem. I have seen quite stout service berry trees that had evidently been borne down in precisely this way." ■



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