

“Cat”

A Cat Thumbs Her Nose!

Written by Norman N. Jones Jr.

One of the permanent staff members of our crew at Dickinson Park was “Cat”, a handsome large black cat with white feet and vest, who patrolled the perimeter of the Cook Cabin. She did a masterful job of keeping the place free of mice, pack rats and the other rodents that abounded, and she held court on the sunny front porch with all who had a moment to spare. Although she was not allowed to enter the cook cabin she kept close watch around the exterior and often got a goody from us from the kitchen to augment her wild diet. In return she awarded us her fullest affection, hopping into our laps whenever we sat on the porch, purring like a distant buzzsaw and “helping” us read our newspapers from home. She also often left rather gruesome reminders of her night’s hunting on the front mat to greet us as we came up in the dark to start early breakfast. “Cat” had no natural enemies there since “Rusty”, the Allen’s wonderful half border collie and half coyote, was a pal. She led a most contented life.

This idyllic scene was rudely upset one morning by the arrival of not one but two large and unfriendly dogs; a fine big black Labrador and a nervous aggressive Doberman. This was completely against Allen Bros. normal routine as “Dudes” were asked not to bring dogs along on wilderness trips because they often “spooked” the horses and were a general nuisance. However this party of three men and two women were good customers so the dogs were tolerated. Poor “Cat”, however, was quickly chased up on the Cook House porch roof. She had to spend the night and the next morning there until the party left, loudly bemoaning her fate with plaintive meows to remind us of her predicament and her ongoing hunger.

After the party and the dogs left, a rather subdued and cautious feline returned to ground level and once again settled into her normal routine.

In due course the party of five “Dudes” and two dogs were returned from the mountains by Allen Bros. wranglers at the end of their wilderness trip. We just happened to be on the front porch to watch them come in; “Cat” was with us, warily noting the return of the dogs. It was immediately apparent that they were two vastly different hounds than those who had departed so jauntily the week earlier. The “Lab” struggled toward the Cook Cabin, found a little shade under a big pine, and dropped into the dust, bone weary and completely worn out. The Doberman was in far worse condition; she had taken a terrible fall while chasing a marmot in the boulder field, had broken a couple of teeth, bloodied her mouth and strained a number of muscles. She was in such a state that her mistress actually had to help her from a sitting position to lie down.

Mary Ad and I watched this performance with some quiet amusement, particularly in view of the rules against taking dogs into the mountains. But our friend “Cat” had also observed the limping arrivals. She sized up the situation at once, realized there was absolutely no need for retreat but rather the opportunity to show her contempt for her tormentors of a few days ago. She hopped down from my lap, strolled the porch slowly and luxuriously, and then curled up contentedly in the largest patch of afternoon sun.

Can a cat thumb her nose?