

Melvin Gravenmier was a very heavy man, not tall as I remember, maybe 5-8 or so. He loved hunting and fishing and when several times with Jimmy Davis and me when I was teenage.

He was very accomplished with outdoor skills. On a duck hunt a couple of miles up into Little Bay from head of Taylor's Bay, north of Augusta, we weren't seeing many ducks but the weather had turned very cold and every thing was wet from recent rains. Melvin somehow found quite a bit of dry firewood and built a nice fire on top of a huge log. the log may have been some 3 foot diameter and 20 to 30 feet long, and placed the fire at waist high for us, very nice way to warm up the whole hunting party.

On another duck hunting trip, seems like a few years later, we took a big hunting party in two or three boats. Probably we entered the Cashe River at Penn's Bay south of Revels, when downstream a mile or two and pulled into flooded woods searching for an opening to set decoys. We did find a good opening with a couple of large trees down, one of those trees still had full leaves on it, and looked like a good blind for Melvin to hunt from. He wanted to stay in the boat if possible, water was knee to thigh deep on the rest of us, could be he didn't have hip boots. Whatever the reason, all but Melvin were out of boats, walking and pulling or pushing the boats to location. I recall at least Jimmy and Jerry Davis, Sonny Thompson, and maybe Bill Gravenmier in the group as we pushed Melvin and his boat under that big tree that was covered with leaves.

As we shoved, the leaves started moving, and there were several people shouting what they thought the cause was--- Coon! Bobcat! Bear! -- and Melvin, big heavy Melvin who talked fast anyway, was echoing it all. Most of us standing in the water were kind of in a circle around the tree hanging over Melvin and boat, and of course we all had our shotguns up at "Present Arms" as soon as the yelling started.. It seem like quite a while that we stood there, looking into the mass of leaves trying to see what was causing all the movement. Eventually a head popped out of the leaves, two ears erect and pointed, face of a pretty good size cat looking straight into my eyes from only 5 or 6 feet distance. At least Sonny, Jimmy, and I fired immediately into the cat's face, could have more more than the three of us shooting and some may have fired more than once, but the cat fell cleanly out of the tree and landed dead in the boat with Melvin.

It was a large bobcat, we guessed in the 30 to 40 pound range and had been living very well on ducks, feathers were in the tree and all around the area.