



In the spring of 1900—William L. Finley (back to camera) and Herman T. Bohlman (left) on their way to a rendezvous with the germ of wild life conservation in Oregon.

Saving Our Wildlife

By Ed F. AVERILL

WANTON destruction of sea birds by gunners in the name of "sport" resulted in the birth of wildlife conservation in Oregon. It happened in the spring of 1900—almost 40 years ago. Two young Portlanders started the movement and during the ensuing years their interest has never flagged.

William L. Finley and Herman T. Bohlman had become interested in bird photography and the scientific study of birds. They had been on many trips together before the spring of 1900 when they pedaled their way on bicycles out to the Dayton farm of a friend, Ellis F. Hadley. Here they were joined by another friend, Ross Nicholas, and the four of them, on a farm wagon loaded with hay and provisions, started for Netarts bay.

Establishing headquarters at "Happy Camp," they began their work of collecting bird skins and eggs. "Happy Camp" today is a modern beach resort. At that time it had been recently deserted by its builders but served admirably the purpose of the young naturalists.

"On the Sunday following our arrival," says Mr. Bohlman, "we were surprised to hear a bombardment of gunfire out to sea. Upon investigating we discovered tugs loaded with men circling about Three-Arch rocks with the men shooting birds as they flew off. This continued throughout the entire day. The next morning the beach for a distance of several miles was lined with the bodies of the dead birds. No attempt had been made by the shooters to retrieve any of them and we were told it was the regular custom of men to charter tugs on Tillamook bay and go out to the rocks to shoot the birds just for the sport of the thing."

Shocked at this indiscriminate

slaughter, Finley and Bohlman there and then resolved to do something about it. On their return to Portland they were unable to obtain much encouragement, so they decided to take the matter direct to the president of the United States. Plans were therefore made to return to the coast and to spend two weeks with the birds on the rocks in order to secure a series of pictures that would convince the nation's chief executive it was a matter worthy his consideration.

They started making plans and another spring of the year found them again at "Happy Camp." A small dory had been rented from the storekeeper at Netarts and transported overland to the beach. Then ensued a wait of two weeks for weather that would permit them to launch their heavily loaded boat.

Finally the day arrived when the two men in their small craft with a barrel of water, provisions for two weeks, a tent, block-and-tackle, hammers, crowbars, cameras, a gross of 5 by 7 plates and dark room equipment succeeded in getting out through the breakers. More experienced mariners would probably have given up the trip as a foolhardy adventure, for when they had rowed out to the rocks they found their troubles had only begun.

There was no place to land. The waves would come up against the side of the rock on which they had elected to live, hang for a moment and then drop away for a distance of eight or 10 feet. If in landing, the bow of the boat should catch on the side of the rock the stern would drop into the sea and all would be lost. Finally with Bohlman at the oars, Finley landed on the rock through the expedient of going up to the rock with the wave and then jumping out while the

boat was rowed away before the drop began.

Two weeks were spent on the rock, literally living with the thousands of birds dwelling there and that came in still greater numbers to spend the night. Bohlman was then the photographer, while Finley took the notes and prepared the data. Weeks later when the pictures and the notes were presented to President Theodore Roosevelt by Finley, the president immediately set aside Three-Arch rocks as a federal bird refuge and wildlife conservation in Oregon was born.

Later the same two men rode over the mountain from Ashland to Keno on a freight wagon and explored the bird life of Lower Klamath lake. Another set of pictures was secured and President Roosevelt issued another proclamation setting aside Lower Klamath lake as a bird sanctuary.

Still later, in Bohlman's White Steamer, the first automobile to traverse the Eastern Oregon country, the two men, by now really fired with the enthusiasm characteristic of naturalists, landed in Burns. Here they were greeted by Dr. Eugene Hibbard, the pioneer conservationist of the Eastern Oregon country, who rendered valuable assistance.

Malheur Lake Study Results in Action

Though Malheur lake was a much larger body of water than it is today and though it seemed to these young men from "west of the mountains" to be a veritable paradise for birds, they learned from Dr. Hibbard and others of the great destruction caused by plume hunters. The snowy egrets had been practically exterminated and grebes were being killed by the thousands for their beautiful white breasts used in decorating women's hats. When a drop in the market made shipment of the skins unprofitable great piles of them were burned.

Armed with these facts and with additional pictures, Finley again called on President Theodore Roosevelt, again a presidential decree was issued and Malheur lake became a federal bird reserve.

A cycle of dry years, combined with the diversion of water from the Blitzen and Silvies rivers for irrigation almost undid the good work and made a mockery of the words "Malheur Bird Reserve." Then came the election of another Roosevelt and the appointment of "Ding" Darling as the chief of the biological survey. There followed the purchase of the famous P ranch together with the Blitzen valley. Appropriations



Above—William J. ('Bill') Smith, president of the Oregon Wildlife Federation.

Below—Stanley G. Jewett, Oregon trained, in charge of federal game reservations in the West.

were made for the building of dikes and the removal of diversion dams.

Water was again turned into the lakes. Abandoned haystacks surrounded by water made ideal nesting sites for Canada geese, ducks and myriads of other waterfowl. The birds are coming back and the Malheur bird refuge is now the No. 1 project of its kind in the United States.

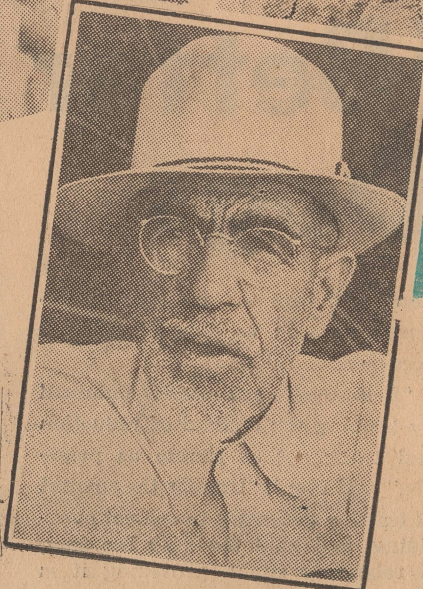
In the later stages of its existence—its restoration—Stanley G. Jewett has played an important part. A naturalist from early boyhood and thoroughly sold on the value of Oregon's wildlife, he brought to the work of the biological survey a knowledge of birds and mammals, men and conditions, that made his services invaluable. So well did he do the job assigned to him in connection with the restoration and enlargement of the Malheur project that he has now been placed in charge of all federal game reservations in the West. From the Rockies on the east to the Pacific on the west and from the Canadian boundary on the north to the Mexican border on the south, his territory extends.

Finley and Bohlman arrived in Eastern Oregon too late to save the mountain sheep. A small band of the "big horns" are reportedly still in the high Wallows, but they have been crowded back into such a restricted barren range that their continued existence seems extremely doubtful. So fragmentary is the data regarding them it would not be surprising to hear most any day that—like the passenger pigeons—they are entirely gone; gone forever.

The antelope, on the other hand, have been saved. Through the efforts of Finley, who has now been made a "doctor" by his alma mater, the University of California, the Hart Mountain Antelope reserve was established a few years ago and the future of this animal in Oregon is assured. So rapid has been the comeback that last year an open season was provided for hunting. With proper regulation it will prob-



Herman T. Bohlman, left, and William L. Finley on an early-day wild life conservation outing.



Above—Dr. Eugene Hibbard, pioneer conservationist in Eastern Oregon; former member of the state game commission.

Below—W. E. Eliot, naturalist, author, lecturer and consistent friend of wild life conservation.

They considered the establishment of refuges and the limitation of hunting privileges as an invasion of personal rights. Gradually there has come a change in the public thinking. Not the least important influence in that direction has been the work of the Audubon society under the leadership of W. E. Eliot. Naturalist, author and lecturer, he has continued to bring home to the people of Oregon that wildlife has other values besides being merely something to shoot at. Every movement for the conservation of our out-of-doors has had the active support of Eliot and the Audubon society during all the years he has resided in this state. He and Mrs. Eliot are now domiciled in the midst of the wild birds in the Pittock sanctuary.

Interested Groups Organize Federation

Finally, in February, 1936, the Portland Junior Chamber of Commerce in response to the plea of President Roosevelt and "Ding" Darling joined with other junior chambers throughout the nation in calling a state-wide meeting of all interested in the conservation of wildlife. Invitations were extended to groups of sportsmen, Izaak Walton league chapters, Audubon societies, garden clubs, women's clubs, luncheon clubs, chambers of commerce, American Legion posts, Boy and Girl Scout organizations, the Camp Fire Girls, the grange, farmers union, the forest service, biological survey and every other group directly or indirectly interested in out-of-door resources.

The meeting held in the Multnomah hotel was presided over by Worth W. Caldwell, then president of the junior chamber. It resulted in the formation of the Oregon Wildlife Federation. Affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation it has become an important influence in educating the public to the value of our wildlife and recreational advantages, in smoothing out differences between stockmen, business men and sportsmen and in providing co-operation for the state game commission, the biological survey and the forest service. Under the leadership of William J. Smith, now serving as president for the second consecutive year, the federation is furnishing the tie binding together all the various groups into a single working unit.



John Scharff, superintendent at Malheur bird refuge, outlines plans in hand for the refuge.



Gene F. Branson, in charge of the Hart Mountain antelope refuge, addresses a group of 'Antlers' at an annual meeting.