

YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES



Volume V

February 27, 1926

Number 2

THE YOSEMITE NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION ITS PURPOSES

1. To gather and disseminate information on the wild-life of the Sierras.
2. To develop and enlarge the Yosemite Museum (in co-operation with the National Park Service) and to establish subsidiary units, such as the Glacier Point lookout and branches of similar nature.
3. To promote the educational work of the Yosemite Nature Guide Service.
4. To publish (in co-operation with the U. S. National Park Service) "Yosemite Nature Notes".
5. To study living conditions, past and present, of the Indians of the Yosemite region.
6. To maintain in Yosemite Valley a library of historical, scientific, and popular interest.
7. To further scientific investigation along lines of greatest popular interest and to publish, from time to time, bulletins of non-technical nature.
8. To strictly limit the activities of the association to purposes which shall be scientific and educational, in order that the organization shall not be operated for profit.

MAY WE SEND YOU EACH ISSUE OF YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES?

Your check for \$2.00 sent to the Park Naturalist, Yosemite National Park, will help to pay the cost of its publication for one year and make you a member of the Yosemite Natural History Association for the same period.

FROM THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON OUT-DOOR RECREATION

Called by PRESIDENT COOLIDGE

"THAT THE CONFERENCE ENDORSE NATURE STUDY IN SCHOOLS AND THE EXTENSION OF THE NATURE STUDY IDEA TO EVERY AMERICAN SCHOOL AND FAMILY; THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MUSEUMS OF NATURAL HISTORY IN NATIONAL PARKS WILL INCREASE THE EDUCATIONAL RECREATIONAL VALUE OF THE PARKS".—Resolution of the Conference.



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THE STORY THE WATER MOL TOLD

By A. R. Taylor

Last night as I lay in my bed on the floor of Yosemite valley it began to rain and one tiny rain drop struck fairly on my left eyelash and clung there for a few moments, just long enough for it to tell me of its wonderful life history.

"Yes," it told me, "like you, I had a birthday once, but that was long ago. Far in the distant past when the earth was forming my parents, H₂ and O, lived in the bowels of the earth and were thrown out together from the neck of a volcano, accompanied by a terrific explosion, and it was then that I was born.

"My life is spent in working, traveling, or at rest in the ocean depths. My real name is water molecule, mol for short.

"Here I am again in this gorgeous Yosemite valley. It is one of the finest playgrounds in the world, and undoubtedly one of the finest pieces of my handiwork."

"What do you mean, your handiwork?" I asked, as I stared with amazement and a great deal of incredulity at this tiny drop of water poised so lightly on my left eyelash.

"Oh, yes, mere man, be not surprised, for that is quite true. Ages ago I was here in this Yosemite valley at a time when it looked quite different. At that time I was part of the Merced Glacier, that great ice sheet which plowed out this great gorge even below its present level. It was cold here in those times.

"After finishing my work here I traveled to the Pacific and had a long rest, extending over a period of thousands of years, in the inky abyss of this ocean. A short time ago, while traveling near the surface, I was suddenly swallowed by a great whale, and later, was thrown off by its spouting, into the air, and, suddenly changing my form, was snatched up by the sun's rays into the upper atmosphere. I was gathered in with many others like me, packed into a dense cloud,

and last night as we bumped against the mountain slope was forced, by lower temperatures, to leave the upper atmosphere and again descend to earth, so here I am.

"This, however, is a common experience in my never ending life. One time, 300,000 years ago, I had a wonderful trip through the upper atmosphere and with others of my kind floated lightly as thistle down in the form of a great snow flake, finally landing on the summit of Mt. Everest.

"Another long period of time elapsed (time means nothing to me) and I was changed again into liquid form, sank into the porous soil of the lower mountain slope, and one day while quietly drifting along I was suddenly snatched up by the root hair of an Indian cedar.

"For the next hundred years I was trapped in the heart wood, but finally after the cedar's death, and due to the decaying process, I was again liberated to roam at will.

"So many interesting experiences have come my way it would take years to relate them all. In past ages I have traveled in the blood of great terrestrial reptiles. While floating along in the crystally clear mountain streams I have been suddenly scooped up and drunk by beautiful maidens.

"But I see that you grow weary from my endless story. When next I return to the Yosemite Valley it may be that you and your kind will have gone, the age of mammals may have passed, and life in general will be returning to the lower forms which in time will also entirely disappear. Then what will be my fate I know not, and care not."

The water mol was silent, and as I opened my eyes to the light of day it was rapidly sliding away and disappeared into the porous mold of the Yosemite Valley's floor.—A. R. Taylor, student, Yosemite Field School of Natural History (with apologies to the author of a similar article appearing several years ago in magazine form.—A. R. T.).

"A WILD ANIMAL ROUND-UP"

Reviewed By C. P. RUSSELL

IT HAS just been our pleasure to read this latest book from the pen of W. T. Hornaday, great champion of conservation of American wild life, and published by Scribner's. To state that we have read the book is inadequate; through it we have lived the experiences of this vigorous naturalist and gained a new sight of American big game pictures that have passed forever from the curtain of life. We are reminded anew of the part we should play in helping to hold inviolate the great out-of-door museums which have been set aside that "the most beautiful haunts of Nature are (not) ripped open by improvements, scarified by roads and tourist camps, and everywhere infested by rushing automobiles." Unintentionally, perhaps, Mr. Hornaday has added impetus to the growing idea that national parks must not be over-developed; that their primary function is to preserve for all time the original condition of fauna and flora, and that their recreational use should be developed only in so far as these human activities do not obliterate the least of their natural treasures.

We cannot desist from opining that Mr. Hornaday is wrong in surmising that only "a certain number of old-fashioned nature-lovers will care to have these wild animal records of yesterday, and also of today, in form for the library shelf." Every true American will thank him for his vivid descriptions of that last buffalo hunt in 1886, when he headed a Smithsonian expedition in Montana that the then bisonless United States National Museum might have fitting specimens of the greatest American quadruped. How much of the true conservationist was embodied in the man in 1887 one can divine without scanning between the lines. His photograph, "Where the Millions Have Gone (1886)," showing the devastation wrought by the skin hunters, is in itself worth the price of the volume. There are many modest passages in the two chapters dealing with the buffalo hunt that attest to the writer's indefatigable zeal in collecting natural history specimens, but he who ever has prepared a bird skin or cleaned a skeleton will be quite flabbergasted with the account of skinning and skeletonizing a half wagon load of specimens, including a deer, seven sharp-tailed grouse, two geese, eleven sage grouse, nine bohemian waxwings, and a magpie in one day

with the Montana thermometer at sub-zero levels.

In his "Bad Lands of Hell Creek" Mr. Hornaday diverges from his role of collector of natural history specimens and sallies forth in 1908 to revisit the regions adjacent to the sites of his earlier buffalo camps. Ostensibly, he embarked upon a hunting trip, but his account of his experiences reveals to us the sincerity of his statement, "It is not all of hunting to kill game." Frankly, it is a delight to read of his impressions gained in that great expanse of unspoiled bad lands wilderness. So lowly a species as the white-footed mouse is brought to quite the same plane as his quarry, the mule-tail buck, in his satisfying account of field experiences.

As the reader goes with him into the Shoshone Mountains in 1889 there is unexpectedly reviewed the reluctance of early-day sportsmen to accede to hunting regulations and game wardens. A mountain sheep hunt is here described that shall thrill every hunter who has drawn a bead on lesser game. Even the present-day lover of high mountain trails who must content himself with finding in ancient cirques the bleached skulls of unclaimed kills of these noble beasts

will rejoice with Mr. Hornaday in the success of that quick shot upon which his tale centers.

Again, in the story of his trip into that lava-and-dead-volcano district of the northwestern corner of Old Mexico—"one of the jumping-off places of the genus *Ovis*"—we find that Mr. Hornaday may become quite as enthusiastic about remarkable geographic conditions as he ordinarily does about big game. And in this case it is not because of a dearth of game—the party killed six splendid mountain sheep rams!

Can you imagine a cowpuncher riding a grizzly? Mr. Hornaday did not do this stunt himself, but one of his Montana range friends did, and the chapter pertaining to this side-splitting episode and the picture accompanying it will provoke much refreshing laughter.

A chapter on our great brown bears of Alaska is very enlightening, and an article on the self-confident mountain goat stirs us mightily. It awakens our regret that the Sierras are not and never have been a part of the goat's range.

In reading of America's caribou, we followed Mr. Hornaday's entreaty to "open the windows of our mind" and learn of the threatened decimation by Indian and Eskimo tribes, now equipped with deadly rifles. We were also caused to wonder at the fact that although all of our ten caribou species evolved from descendants of the Asiatic reindeer that crossed the one-time Bering bridge, yet in Europe and Asia no such evolution took place and only the present species of reindeer is found.

The following is quoted from the chapter on moose: "To my primitive mind a full grown bull moose with his antlers on is just as odd and wonderful as any prehistoric monster that ever came down the pike from the past. * * * Go the world all over, if you like, and you will find nowhere a land animal so outlandish in form, so odd, or so

out of drawing' as the moose. The giraffe is not in it beside him." Hornaday pays tribute to Donald Hough, whose activity in putting Minnesota's moose situation before the Legislature resulted in stopping all moose killing in that state.

Our greatest wild animal rarity, the musk ox, comes in for well deserved prominent mention. In addition to learning a great deal of the animal's habits and former distribution, we are rather bumped into wakefulness by the declaration "that today not more than 100 musk-oxen remain alive in the mainland of North America." Speaking of losing American species—how come no commotion has followed this creature's passing?

The comments on the retreat of the Grizzly Bear include the following: "The brown California Grizzly, however—somewhat larger than the Silver Tip—now is believed to be quite extinct, and I make this statement in the hope that a number of California watchdogs of the honor of the Golden State will make haste to prove that their woods are full of them." "Yosemite" is Indian for Great Grizzly Bear. Yosemite National Park used to be headquarters for the grizzly tribe of the state, if we may judge from old reports of early day hunters, but park boundaries and a protective administration came too late. Not even bleached bones of the animals can be found for the Yosemite Museum.

Mountain Lions will benefit in no way from the remarks and statistics they have drawn from Mr. Hornaday. But even this chapter does not close without an appeal for some conservation of wild life. We were pleased to note the explanation of how bears are often blamed for kills made by lions.

Museum workers and the public alike enjoys good museum exhibits will be grateful for the resume of the history of American taxidermy included in the volume. "Masterpieces of Wild Animal Photography" is easily one of the most interesting chapters. Anyone will be delighted to read of how his favorite published animal picture was made. "Masking a Zoological Park" gives us a story from the inside. The author has stated in no uncertain terms that animals in confinement do not suffer as some of us have feared.

It is our wish that more propaganda for wild life protection may appear in such entertaining form as Mr. Hornaday is capable of producing.



"Let the interest be keen and new views will open up; new trees will grow; new birds will fly; new fish will swim, and then will our gallery be filled with new and glorious pictures of things worth seeing."

Announcement Second Season (1926)

Yosemite School of Field Natural History

By H. C. BRYANT

A SUMMER school for the training of naturalists, nature guides and teachers of natural history, where emphasis is placed on the study of living things in their natural environment.

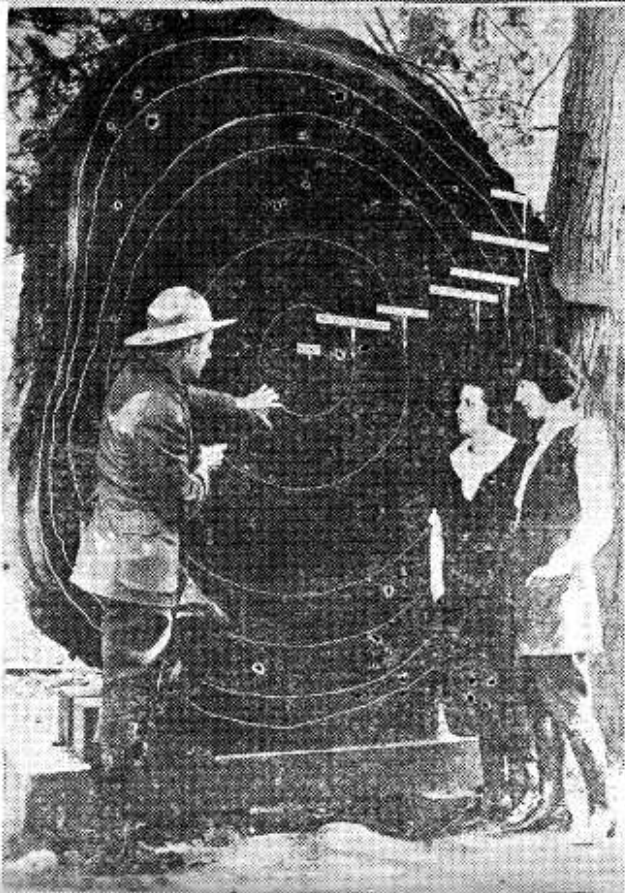
The establishment of the Yosemite School of Field Natural History resulted from a demand for a training in field studies and a desire on the part of the National Park Service and the California Fish and Game Commission to establish a training school for nature guides, teachers of natural history and Boy Scout and Camp Fire Girl leaders looking toward better knowledge of wild life and its conservation. This school seemed a natural outgrowth from the now well-established Yosemite Nature Guide Service, a service which finds difficulty in securing trained naturalists for its program.

AIM

To train students to study and interpret living nature so that they may lead others to similar profit and enjoyment, and thus make an educational contribution to the conservation of natural resources.

HISTORY

The full quota of twenty students was admitted for the first session, and several applications that came in late were necessarily refused. Both instructors and students were pleased with the outcome of the venture. Students unanimously spoke of the work as being the most useful and profitable they had ever taken. The instructors were convinced that the emphasis on field studies developed enthusiasm and constituted a needed supplementary training. All of the students of last season have made good use of their training during the succeeding year, and may well find places as nature guides in summer camps this coming season. A new undertaking last year, this educational project assumes this coming summer the position of an established training school.



(Right) LEARNING THE LIFE HISTORY OF THE B.C. TREE. STUDENTS LEAD PARTIES AFIELD.

LOCATION

With easy accessibility to its extensive fauna and flora, typical of five life zones, and its unique geology, Yosemite National Park constitutes an ideal location for a school of field natural history. A fine new museum building furnishes a splendid lecture room, library and other facilities. The recreational features are so apparent as to need no description.

TERM

Regular instruction June 21 to July 31; high mountain field trip August 1 to 7, 1926.

TEACHING STAFF

The director of the school, Harold C. Bryant, B. S., M. S., Ph. D., economic ornithologist, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, and in charge of education, publicity and research, California Fish and Game Commission, will be assisted by Ansel F. Hall, B. S., chief park naturalist, National Park Service; Carl P. Russell, A. B., M. A., park naturalist, Yosemite National Park; Mrs. Enid Michael, Yosemite park botanist and nature guide; M. B. Nichols, Ph. B., nature guide, and several other Yosemite National Park trained nature guides.

COURSE OF STUDY**Lectures and Laboratory**

1. Geology and physical geography of the Sierra Nevada.
2. Plant and animal distribution. Life zones.
3. Botany.—(a) Common trees and shrubs. (b) Forestry. (c) Flowering plants. (d) Algae and fungi. (e) Ferns and mosses.
4. Zoology.—(a) Invertebrates, insects, mollusks. (b) Common vertebrates: (1) Fishes. (2) Amphibians. (3) Reptiles. (4) Birds. (5) Mammals.
5. Conservation of natural resources.

Field Study

1. Field trips and study of the fauna and flora of the valley floor at 8 a. m.—12 m. daily.
2. All day field trips each Saturday to the rim of the valley.
3. Special collecting trips for rarer forms.
4. A special problem including field work chosen by the student, with weekly reports of progress.

EXAMINATIONS AND GRADES

Emphasis will be placed on intensive field work and each student will be expected to know and identify all the more common Yosemite trees, shrubs, wild flowers, insects, fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. Grading will be apportioned as follows:

- (a) Field observation and identification, 60 per cent.
- (b) Teaching ability, 20 per cent.
- (c) Notebooks, 10 per cent.
- (d) Preparation of scientific specimens, 5 per cent.
- (e) Familiarity with literature, 5 per cent.

CREDIT

Although the work is of university grade, yet for the present, no university credit is offered. A certificate showing that the work has been satisfactorily completed will be issued.

REGISTRATION AND MATRICULATION

The number of students in the 1926 session will be limited to twenty. Students will be accepted on the basis of date of written application after fulfilling educational requirements which are: **Two years of college work or the equivalent.** Several applications have already been received for the 1926 season.

HOUSING

It is hoped that students will, on account of sociability and other advantages, prefer to camp in a section reserved for students of the school. A tent for two with house-keeping equipment pro rated costs \$7 per week up. Groceries and meat are to be had at practically city prices. Hotel or American plan camp accommodations are near a hand for those who do not care to camp. Free camp grounds are available for those who have their own equipment. **If you plan to camp in the reserved section you should bring your own bedding. Send it by parcel post care of Yosemite Museum preceding your arrival.**

CLOTHING

Outing clothes are in order at all times and places.

TUITION AND FEES

The school being a contribution to nature education by the National Park Service with the aid of the California Fish and Game Commission, no tuition or fees will be charged. Expense is thus limited to sundry materials such as notebooks and collecting apparatus and to transportation, food, housing and clothing.

OPPORTUNITIES

The plan is to make the work supplement the lower division university courses in botany and zoology with the opportunity for field work, bringing first-hand acquaintance with various living forms. Familiarity with living plants and animals, the lack of which many feel so keenly, will be stressed. Op-

portunity for practice in teaching, leading parties afield, in presentation of nature lore at the campfire, and in writing nature notes will be given every student.

For further information apply to

PARK NATURALIST,
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK,
YOSEMITE, CALIF.

"Knowledge never learned of schools,
Of the wild bee's morning chase,
Of the wild flower's time and place,
Flight of fowl and habitude,
Of the tenants of the wood;
How the tortoise bears his shell,
How the woodchuck digs his cell
And the ground mole sinks his well;
How the robin feeds her young,
How the oriole's nest is hung."

—Whittier.

A NEW LION AND THE MOUSE

The mice in Camp 19 held a convention at our tent one night last week and made such a racket dancing around in the wee sma' hours that we decided to set a trap next evening. We did, and two came, smelled, nibbled and died in a couple hours. Then came a third about 11 o'clock, but it smelled, nibbled, and struggled—with one foot in the grave! And what a fight it did put up! We had a long wire attached to the end of the trap, and that plucky little mouse bounced and swished around in a valiant effort to shake off the trap, the wire banging against the water bucket with such noisy rhythm that it sounded more like

a charivari than a funeral.

Suddenly I heard a movement that could be attributed to no tiny mouse, and looking out I beheld the most gorgeous spotted skunk, plummy tall erect, dodging the wire and trying to get at the mouse. There followed quite a skirmish in which the skunk, being unencumbered and having much the advantage of size, though lacking the agility and "pep" displayed by the mouse, was an easy victor. Eventually he sauntered off in the most dignified, master-of-fact, and unconcerned fashion, bearing with him the spoils—mouse, trap and trailing wire.—Ethel McMurchie.

YOSEMITE NATURE NOTES

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The articles published in "Yosemite Nature Notes" are not copyrighted. It is intended that these articles shall be freely used by the press and by all periodicals that believe in the value of National Parks. When material from this publication is used due credit should be given.

Communications should be addressed to C.P. Russell, Park Naturalist, Yosemite National Park.

NATURE GUIDE ACTIVITIES

1. Museum exhibits and information service.
2. Branch Museums.
 - a. Glacier Point Lookout.
 - b. Tuolumne Meadows, Sierra Club Lodge.
3. Museum Library.
4. Field School of Natural History.
5. Nature Guide Field Trips.
 - a. 2 hour trips, 4 times daily.
 - b. Full day trips to "rim" once a week.
 - c. Six day trips to back country, weekly.
 - d. Saddle trips, daily.
 - e. Motor bus valley tour, daily.
 - f. Special trips, Boy Scouts, etc., on request.
6. Lectures.
 - a. Museum geology talks, twice daily.
 - b. Museum campfire talks, weekly.
 - c. Camp Curry and Yosemite Lodge Lectures, 4 times weekly.
7. Publications,
 - a. Yosemite Nature Notes, weekly in summer, monthly in winter.
 - b. Special bulletins.

WHAT YOSEMITE'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM PURPORTS TO DO

1. It seeks to stimulate use of the recreational resources of Yosemite National Park through the encouragement of a knowledge of natural history.
2. It teaches natura' history but it does not overlook the fact that "to be nature-minded is more important than to be nature-wise".
3. It reaches beyond Yosemite and beyond the National Park Service in its accomplishments, for popular education in natural history affords a foundation to the intelligent administration of all natural resources.
4. It assists the park visitor in appreciating the wonders preserved for him in Yosemite and in appreciating the value of all out-door recreation. It makes him "want to know" and prepares him to more fully enjoy his park possessions.



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Dan Anderson