

As nearly as I can judge from one pair of wrens, the period of incubation lasts eleven days, and the young in this same nest were fed for twenty-two days. When the eggs are hatched the male abandons his usual haunts, and with his mate collects insects from foggy morn to yet more foggy eve. When this brood is dismissed a second one may be reared the same season. In 1918, for example, Mr. E. C. Crompton, government agent on St. George, reported to me the discovery of a nest that was left by the young about the middle of July. During the following week the female deposited a second set of eggs.

Such in brief, is the biography of the Alaska Wren, otherwise known in native parlance as the "limmershin" or chew-of-tobacco. A veritable pigmy he is when compared with other species comprising the feathered hordes that repair to the cliffs of St. George Island; but none battles more valiantly with the elements, or labors with greater industry, or contrives with a higher degree of cunning to protect his home, than does this tiny denizen of the frozen north. "May his tribe live long and prosper".

Stanford University, California, February 6, 1920.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

By HENRY WETHERBEE HENSHAW

(Continued from page 10)

TRIP THROUGH THE NORTHWEST IN CONNECTION WITH THE TENTH CENSUS

IN THE FALL of 1880 and the spring of 1881 I made an extensive trip through the northwestern states and visited all the Indian reservations in Utah, Nevada, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and California in connection with a census of the Indian tribes, which had been put in charge of Major Powell. He saw in it much more than the opportunity to obtain an accurate enumeration of the Indians of the United States, and expected to secure important information on the present status of the tribes, their advance in civilization and education, their future needs, and much ethnologic and anthropologic data for study and publication. A large amount of miscellaneous information was in fact gathered on carefully prepared schedules, but lack of funds prevented its ultimate elaboration into published form.

AM ARRESTED AND FINED

While in Oregon an amusing incident occurred by which I fell into the clutches of the law, the first and only time in my long experience as a bird collector. Being detained in Albany, Oregon, for a few days because of a flood which interfered with the operation of the stages and railroads to the south, I employed an hour's leisure in collecting a few birds on the outskirts of the town, by no means so large then as now. Fate played me a sorry trick by leading me to collect a number of curious looking Shore Larks directly in front of the house of the constable, who proceeded to instill the fear of the law into my heart by a fine of ten dollars. As, however, the birds subsequently proved to

be the types of a new form (*Eremophila alpestris strigata*) I have always considered that I got the worth of my money.

VISIT CALIFORNIA DURING THE EIGHTIES

Several times during the eighties I visited California in pursuit of data on Indian languages, with particular reference to the making of a linguistic map of North America, which I had planned and been put in charge of, and which, with the assistance of the several members of the Bureau, was completed and published in 1885. The work on this map proved extremely interesting and occupied much of my time for two or three years.

TRIP TO COLORADO AND THE PECOS RIVER, NEW MEXICO, IN 1883

In May, 1883, I obtained leave of absence for several months on account of ill health, and spent the time till the middle of July near Colorado Springs. Here I was joined by E. W. Nelson, also in search of health, and we made a fine collection of the birds of the locality.

In June the Mountain Plover was found to be nesting in great numbers on the plains near us, and after some unsuccessful attempts at nest hunting, we hit upon an easy method of finding plovers' nests which is, perhaps, worthy of record. Like many other great discoveries, it was simple enough, consisting of driving in a buggy over the plains, then unfenced, and at long range noting with a glass the plover, as they stood upright over their eggs, their wings slightly raised, too much bewildered by the strange apparition invading their homes to put into practice their usual cunning tactics. By means of this device, in a few hours, we found all the plovers' nests we desired and, incidentally, a still greater number of nests of the Prairie Horned Lark, which inhabits the same waterless plains.

On July 18, we transferred our activities to a camp on the upper Pecos River, New Mexico, at its junction with Willow Creek, and there I remained till October 28, when I set out for Nevada and California, leaving Mr. Nelson still in camp. This mountain locality proved very interesting from the standpoint of the bird student, and the collections and observations made here formed the basis of an article by me in *The Auk* for October, 1885, and January, 1886.

MY COLLECTION OF BIRDS ACQUIRED BY THE BRITISH MUSEUM

In 1885 my entire private collection of birds and eggs was acquired by the British Museum, where it now is. Its value had been greatly enhanced by the addition of the Merriam collection, made chiefly about Locust Grove, New York, and the Nelson collection, consisting largely of a series of the Alaskan birds gathered by him while at Saint Michaels. In addition to greatly strengthening the British Museum series of North American birds, till then comparatively weak, it enabled British Ornithologists to comprehend the significance of the trinomial system as applied on this side of the water. Its value abroad, too, was greatly enhanced by the fact that many of the species were represented by strong series well illustrating geographic variation. While the collection thus became inaccessible to American ornithologists, I have always felt that its value to science was far greater abroad than it ever could have been here, where, more recently, many even larger collections have been made along similar lines.

The following quotation from Sharpe's "History of the Collections of the

Natural History Department", vol. II, 1906, will show its importance as viewed through British eyes:

"The Henshaw Collection, consisting of 13,326 specimens, [including eggs], with three types and thirty species new to the Museum.

"This fine collection was purchased and given to the British Museum by Dr. Godman.

"Many American ornithologists have told me that they are glad that we have the Henshaw Collection in England, and the advantage to students of Ornithology has been simply incalculable. Before this time there could not be said to be *any* collection of North American birds worthy of the name in England, but since Dr. Godman acquired the Henshaw Collection we have been able to comprehend and appreciate the work of our American colleagues in a manner before impossible, and the advantage to the writers of the 'Catalogue of Birds' cannot be over-estimated.

"An act of courtesy on the part of the authorities of the United States National Museum deserves grateful recognition. Professor Ridgway was permitted to devote his time to the identification of the specimens with Mr. Henshaw, so that the collection when it arrived was found to be not only completely and neatly labelled, but the names attached to the species represented the most recent conclusions of American naturalists. These determinations have proved to be of immense advantage to English ornithologists."

THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

The American Ornithologists' Union was founded in 1883, when I was absent in the far west, and I had nothing to do with its formative period. On my return I learned of my appointment on one of its important committees, which was charged with the preparation of a Code of Nomenclature and Check-List of North American Birds. I continued a member of the committee for several years, or until I left for the Hawaiian Islands in 1893. After numerous meetings and much research and discussion the results obtained by the Committee were embodied in the A. O. U. Code of Nomenclature and Check-List of North American Birds, of which three editions, with many changes and emendations, have been published to date. The issuance of the code was timely, and it has undoubtedly exerted great influence in nomenclatural matters not only in this but in other countries.

Though I have been a member of numerous scientific societies, I have taken little active part in any, except perhaps the Anthropological Society of Washington for a few years; and this failure has been due less to a lack of interest than to an innate dislike to public appearance and to the delivery of papers, never wholly overcome.

I served on the Council of the A. O. U. from 1883 to 1891, and as Vice-President from 1891 to 1894 and from 1911-18. I also served on a special committee to revise the Code in 1907-1908. At the beginning of 1919 I resigned from the Vice-Presidency and from the list of Fellows and at my request was placed on the list of Retired Fellows, which was formed, as I think wisely, for the purpose of making room for the younger and more active men of the Union.

VISIT TO LOCUST GROVE, NEW YORK

In August of 1885 I spent a week or more with Hart Merriam at his father's home in Locust Grove, New York. The house was beautifully located upon

a forested hill, and commanded a fine view of the distant Adirondack Mountains, with the fastnesses of which Merriam became acquainted as a boy, and which later inspired his "Mammals of the Adirondacks", one of the most notable books of its kind ever published in this country. The location of Merriam's home and character of the surroundings were well calculated to stimulate and gratify a love of nature, and to afford unlimited opportunities to the naturalist.

ACQUAINTANCE WITH FLORENCE MERRIAM

Florence Merriam, now Mrs. Vernon Bailey, though she had begun her college course, was then at home; but her footsteps were not yet fully set in the path which later was to bring her fame and make her so widely known as a successful author of bird literature. She was familiar with the local species about her home and ever ready to act as guide to the haunt of any desired bird, but, although much interested in her brother's collections, her personal predilections were for the study of the living bird over the stuffed specimen, and she was ever alert to urge the advantages of this method of study as against the less humane use of the shot-gun. Though a late, I am a sincere, convert to her creed, so far as my personal practice goes, and for a number of years I have found it impossible to kill birds, or, indeed, to take the life of any living creature. I believe that sentiments akin to these are rather common among naturalists and even sportsmen who are no longer young. As the end approaches, one is better able to appreciate the value and significance of life, of whatsoever form, and to desire to cherish rather than destroy it.

VISIT DR. FISHER AT SING SING, NEW YORK

On our way back to Washington, Dr. Merriam and I stopped for a day or two at Sing Sing to visit Dr. A. K. Fisher, where began another enduring friendship. Dr. Fisher was then engaged in making his fine collection of local birds.

The division of ornithology of the Agricultural Department had been created July 1st of that year (1885), under the charge of Dr. Merriam with Dr. Fisher as assistant, and in the following November the work was transferred to Washington when both men became permanent residents of the city. For many years Dr. Fisher and I in our spare time collected birds in and around the District of Columbia.

TAKE UP THE STUDY OF ROADSIDE BOTANY

One can hardly study birds, even in a casual way, without desiring to know something of the surroundings amid which they are found, and the bird lover is pretty sure, sooner or later, to become something of a botanist. In the late seventies in Washington, being possessed of a good driving and riding horse, I took up the study of roadside botany with much enthusiasm, and soon acquired a speaking knowledge with all the trees and shrubs of the District and adjoining country. Later I made collections of ferns, asters, and golden rods, and became reasonably familiar with these difficult groups. Study of the two last-named families took me several times to the Cambridge Herbarium where I found Dr. Asa Gray wonderfully kind and helpful.

While I was not unfamiliar with Gray's Manual, I found that the readiest means of acquiring botanical lore, as well as the pleasantest, was to take with me on my drives a skilled botanist. Professor Lester F. Ward was then preparing the first edition of his "Guide to the Flora of Washington and Vicinity",

which was published in 1881 as Bulletin No. 22 of the National Museum, and many were the drives and tramps we took together in search of data for the forthcoming list of plants.

MEET DR. COOPER IN CALIFORNIA

Dr. Merriam and I chancing to meet in San Francisco in September, 1888, we called upon Dr. J. G. Cooper, then practising medicine in Haywards, Alameda County. We found him still hale and hearty, and, although he had long ceased to busy himself actively in the study of birds, he still retained much interest in the subject, and gave us many interesting details of his work done in former years.

BECOME EDITOR OF THE AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST

The Anthropological Society of Washington was organized February 17, 1879, and in 1888 began to publish as its organ "The American Anthropologist" under the supervision of an editorial Committee of which I was one. In July, 1889, I became editor of the quarterly, and so remained till July, 1893. The journal has had a very prosperous career, has increased greatly in size, and has exercised a wide and important influence within its domain.

E. LORQUIN AND FERDINAND GRUBER

It may be of interest to some of the present generation to recall the names of two men, long identified with San Francisco, who, although not professed ornithologists, were well known as contributors of specimens to the science. Mr. E. Lorquin kept a bird store and taxidermist's place near Market Street, and on my visits to the city I used to call at his place and examine his stock with a view to detecting any rarities that might have fallen into his hands.

Ferdinand Gruber also kept a taxidermist's place down town, and had charge of the Woodward Zoological Gardens, which, with its live birds and mammals, formed an interesting place to visit, and was a not unworthy forerunner of the present day "Zoo" of which, indeed, it formed the basis. A small admission fee was charged, and it was very well patronized. Though not possessed of very exact or extensive ornithological knowledge, Mr. Gruber was enthusiastic on the subject of birds, and ready to impart any information he was possessed of. I remember he gave me a very fine skin of the Baird's Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pelagicus respiciens*), which up to that time I had not seen alive, but which subsequently I found to be common among the Santa Barbara Islands, and also along the coast. He died August 2, 1907, and at the time of his death was Curator of the Golden Gate Park Museum.

MEET MR. D. S. BRYANT AND WALTER BRYANT

Early in my visits to San Francisco, the exact year I cannot recall, I met Mr. D. S. Bryant, then a commission merchant of the city. He had made an excellent collection of mounted birds, and when, on his cordial invitation, I went to his house to see them I met his son, Walter E. Bryant, then a school boy, who already had begun to collect birds and birds' eggs, and to display the tastes which led him to become a naturalist. Later we did some collecting together at a place, near Oakland, called Stege's, and we also arranged an exchange of bird skins. The acquaintance with the family thus begun was continued for many years or until death claimed both father and son.

CALIFORNIA BIRD LIFE IN THE EIGHTIES

Though I did very little collecting during my visits to California in the

eighties, I never ceased to take a deep interest in its bird life, and in 1885 contributed to the *Auk* a short paper on the gulls of the California coast based on the observations made in November and December, 1884, chiefly in the vicinity of San Diego and San Buenaventura. Among the species collected were a number of *Larus brachyrhynchus*, then for the first time reported from California.

The west coast in those days was simply a paradise for water birds. Not only did the off-shore islands teem with gulls, terns, cormorants, pelicans, guillemots, auks, and oyster-catchers, most of which nested on them, but the shores in winter and during the migrations fairly swarmed with various species of shore birds. These were rarely or never disturbed by sportsmen, who found sufficient sport in the abundant larger game, as ducks, geese and brant. When, for instance, I first visited San Diego in the fall of 1880 its bay was fairly alive with water birds, especially brown pelicans, gulls, terns, and black brant. The latter were so numerous and so tame that they could be killed with what, to an eastern sportsman, would have seemed ridiculous ease. In the nineties, however, I found things had changed greatly, and the bay was almost barren of bird life.

Having once become somewhat familiar with the west coast from Washington to Lower California and become acquainted with its deep forests, its alluring mountain fastnesses, and its beautiful valleys, it became the Mecca of my aspirations, and I looked forward to the time when I should be able to devote some years of my life to a study of its varied ornithology and to the publication of one or more volumes on it. But in 1891 ill health, which continued for several more years, dispelled these dreams along with some others. This, however, I regret the less, as California has been exceptionally fortunate in the number and character of the men, many sprung from its own soil, who have taken up the work I dreamed of, and are carrying it on with marked zeal and ability. In their hands I am content to leave it, though not without an occasional regretful glance backward.

SPEND THE YEARS 1891-1892 IN CALIFORNIA

In 1891, as the result of an attack of grippe, my health gave way completely, and for a time I was unable to do work of any kind. I spent the years 1892, 1893 and 1894 in California, being chiefly engaged, when able to work at all, in the collection of Indian linguistic material for the Bureau of Ethnology. In 1892 I spent several months at Witch Creek, San Diego County, part of the time under the hospitable roof of Frank Stephens, the well known collector of birds and mammals. Here I collected several hundred birds, many plants for the National Herbarium, and a good many snakes and lizards, including the type of *Xantusia henshawi*, a pretty little nocturnal lizard. But in 1893 I was compelled to ask for an indefinite leave of absence.

(To be continued)