

THE FINLEYS ARRIVE IN ALASKA



The Girl Scout Leaders' Association

Presents

WILLIAM L. FINLEY

In his new motion picture lecture

"Wild Animal Outposts"

A tale of thrilling adventures illustrated with remarkable photographs taken on the

Bering Sea Expedition of the American
Nature Association

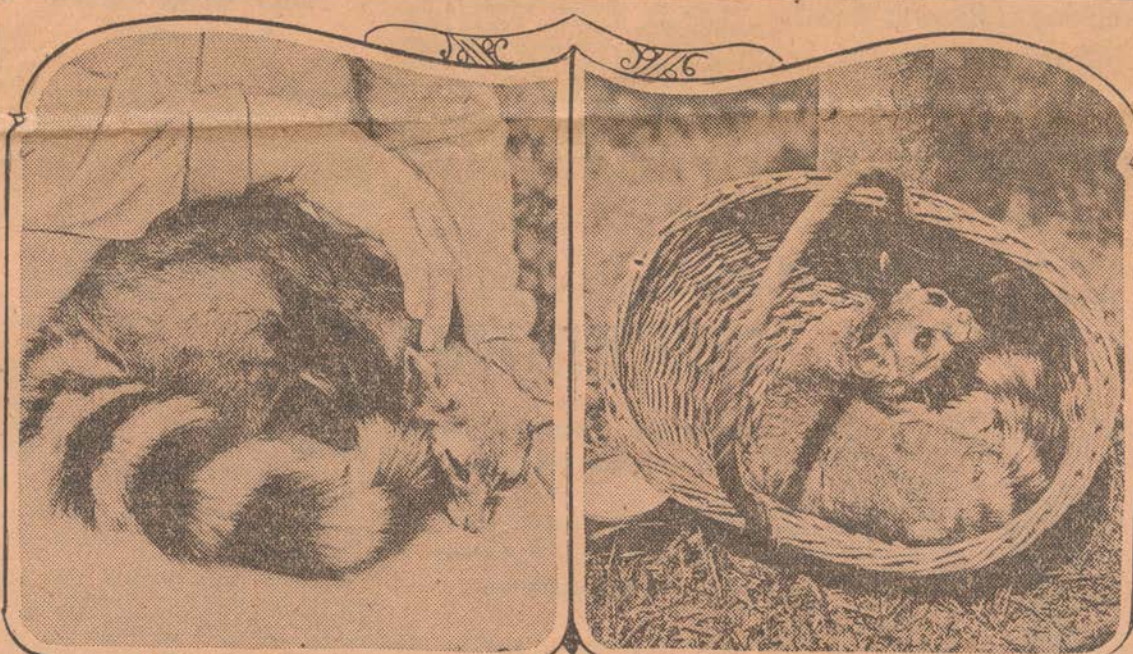
Municipal Auditorium, Friday, November 5th, 8 p.m.

Adults 50c

Children 25c

SPECIMEN OF RARE ANIMAL WITH FOX'S FACE AND RACCOON'S TAIL DISCOVERED IN MARKET

Cat, Like One in Ben Hur Lampman Anecdote Which Destroyed Troublesome Pack Rat in Cabin of Old Miner and Hermit on Rogue River, Found Here; Friendly Beast Called Cacomixtle.



Woods Cat Has Beautiful Tail. "Caco" Came to Portland in a Basket

BY WILLIAM L. AND IRENE FINLEY.

CROWDED in a small basket in a public market, for sale along with the big gunny sacks of potatoes and head lettuce and the boxes of peas, a little animal looked up with round, frightened eyes. It was a tiny creature, tawny in color, with a pointed, fox-like face. But its crown of glory was a tail ringed around in black and white, like that of a raccoon. This fluffy plume lay curled above its back and big eyes, the only shield from the shuffling feet and noisy voices. On the handle of the basket was a sign asking people to guess what it was.

If some taxidermist had taken the characteristics of a cat, raccoon, fox and squirrel and fashioned them into an animal and given it life, he could not have made a more perplexing paradox, for no one passing could puzzle out a name for it. This was not surprising, for many naturalists have scratched their heads and systematists have stubbed their toes trying to untangle its mysterious ancestry.

A man had stopped and was looking down. The big eyes in the basket caught his glance and widened with fear at being observed. As Ben Hur Lampman, the writer, peered at the shy creature, so strangely out of place in the noisy mart, his mind flew back to the days when he lived along the Rogue river, in southern Oregon. Here it was that his old friend, miner and hermit of upper Silver creek—none other than the well-known Cap Bivens—had stirred him with a story of a little woods cat that came to live in his cabin.

Beloved Pipe Stolen.

Cap was a kindly man, in love with all out-of-doors. At the time a pack rat that he called Willie was wont to slip in furtively along the rafters in the solitude each night before the old hermit passed into the land of Nod. Mornings Cap would find, with considerable dismay, that Willie had made away with this or that small utensil or cherished doo-dad. Cap, however, still continued to be a believer in pack rats, even though Willie took his watch and then returned for the key. Next his long-tailed friend filched a final fragment of "yaller soap," and in the wee, small hours toward dawn the slippery guest was intercepted as he attempted his greatest coup, the abstraction of Cap's spectacles.

The warm heart of his host was near wrath by this time. Came morning. Cap, shuffling about the cabin, distinctly remembered that he had left his best pipe on the pine table. He moved his hand tremblingly over the greasy surface, hoping for the familiar contact. In fear he adjusted his spectacles and peered closely. The pipe was gone! There was an oath on his lips that night, for he felt his confidence had never been so shamelessly betrayed by any living creature.

As the shadows from the fire danced high and red against rafter and log, Cap heard the rattling of papers in a corner and saw a critter, larger than Willie, with nose twitching and whiskers vibrating. Great-granddad of wood rats, he thought. But as he peered again it was not the long, slender tail of Willie, with a whisk of hair at the end, but a big bush of black and white as striking as the plume of a peacock. Cap held his breath and strained his eyes.

Then, as the flames died and the embers glowed, he heard a scuffle and a squeak, and he reckoned rightly that Willie and the new visitor had come to blows. No more did the wood rat and the white-footed or deer mice make depredations upon Cap's meager supply of provisions.

Warden Refuses Beast.

Each evening he laid out a nice strip of deer meat for his visitor, and—would you believe it?—the new arrival soon took it from his hand! After the evening meal he curled up by Cap's bedside and purred just like a domestic tabby, the sweetest music that ever percolated through that old cabin. That is why he called his new friend "Percolator." Believe it or not, you could not buy that woods cat for a bag full of yellow dust—no, sir!

In the narrow confines of the little basket, subjected to the gaze of many people and frozen into fear by the eye of a too-curious one, Ben saw this little gnome of the woods, with ears small and erect, eyes bright, looking up from behind a tail of wonderful proportions. It must be the same rare little animal of Cap's story. Such a curiosity might well be gathered in for scientific purposes. Ben called upon the state of Oregon.

State Game Warden Averill responded with keen interest, but by no stretch of imagination could the puzzling little fur bearer be considered game; nor could the state be so lavish with its funds as to spend \$25 for the tawny animal with the palpitating whiskers. Knowing of our interest in wild animals, Averill paid the bill and delivered the little prisoner to our friends, the Van Scoys, to keep until our return from New York. This is how we fell heir to Cacomixtle—Caco for short—curled up in her market basket, and here began her abode in our garage, where a sack of chicken feed was always alluring to mice.

As I stood looking at the weasel-like, watchful face, I thought what a story could be written about Cacomixtle. One would have to begin far back in Tertiary times on the trail of life when there was an assemblage of little animals with bear-like or dog-like characteristics that might be called "coon-bears" or "weasel-bears."

At an earlier stage in the history of this race of little animals, their progenitors were very much alike, for Cacomixtle is very suggestive of relationships. In fact, mammalogists

have not really known what to call this little \$25 mystery to which we fell heir. Some have called him an American civet cat, but he is not really a civet, nor is he in fact a cat.

In some places in the south he is called a cat squirrel, and in others a mountain cat. One may find reference to him in the natural history records as *bassarid* or *bassarisk*. One well-known naturalist dubbed him *raccoon-fox*, which fits him fairly well because his tail is like that of a raccoon with alternating stripes of black and white; but in size it is long and bushy like that of a fox. His eyes and nose also are fox-like. His ears are not so large, but are erect and cat-like. But of all the names of this little puzzle, he is best known as *ring-tailed cat*.

Long before this little animal was discovered by anyone with a natural history bent, when the ancient Aztecs cleared places for their homes in Mexico, he came to live about the houses. Here he was called *Cacomixtle*, which means *rush-cat* or *bush-cat*. And he has survived long after these same stone houses and adobes have fallen to ruin. Since then he has become a hunter of lonely places and old buildings, ranging sparingly throughout the southwestern part of the United States and Mexico to southern Oregon. One sometimes may find little cat-like tracks in the dust and about the crannies and crevices of cliffs, where *Cacomixtle* hunts mice and other small game.

Whipping Cream Liked.

Cacomixtle may not be an aristocratic name, and no blue ribbons have been bestowed upon him. Indeed, few favors have ever fallen to the lot of those animals that emit musk, and surely the little sprite that had come to live with us had a perfume of his own. Some naturalists claim that *Cacomixtle* is no relation to those members of the weasel family that have a strong, musky odor. He did not leave a trail as emphatic as that of a skunk, but surely it was a light reminder of a mink or weasel.

Fear had taken possession of Caco before we met him. Undoubtedly he had been raised by someone who had little understanding or love for wild pets, or he had been captured when

nearly grown and could not lose his mortal terror of a human being. He loved to be stroked and petted. But at times when he purred the loudest, he must have dozed off to the land of dreams where sudden memories came to him of big animals that sought his life. Then his sharp teeth slashed when least expected.

But at dinner time he was always amiable, with a many-sided appetite, like a raccoon. Fresh meat, eggs, milk, bread and fruit made up his menu. A tiny bit of sweetened whipped cream pleased him and he lapped it from a finger with his dainty tongue. This bill-of-fare, of course, does not take into consideration the mice that came too near his basket in the corner, for Caco was lord of the garage. One day a strange dog ran in the door. Up the side of the wall went the little ring-tail into a niche at the end of the rafters under the roof. From then on this was his favorite bed and lookout.

Few Specimens Found.

The cloak of night has concealed *Cacomixtle* so much that notwithstanding all the scientific explorations and investigations, few field naturalists have seen him. Some have trapped him and studied his hide and bones, but this has brought out few of his home habits and characteristics. In the warm southwestern deserts where the cactus and mesquite and chaparral form dense thickets, the ringtail finds in these such shelter that he is able to range far from the rock cliffs that in most parts of his habitat offer him strongholds.

In these environments he finds abundant rats and mice different from those of the cliffs, but doubtless of equal toothsome. In these places some hollow at the base of a thorny bush must form the retreat where the mother brings forth her three or four babies. How interesting would be a baby ring-tail! One of these curled up in a coat pocket and gentled day by day would be more alluring than a domestic kitten. In such a manner one might gain many facts that are unknown at the present time. This would be the way for the lucky naturalist to write the life story of *Cacomixtle*.

- ① The Miner's Nausea.
- ② Ring-tail, the Raccoon Cat.
- ③ What is a Cacomistle?

This sounds like the clever
riddle - "What is a hen?" - And
about as clear. Taking a good
look at the animal only deepens
the mystery. ^{alright, not a hen, but} yes, he's an animal,
^{or} in other words, a mammal. ~~But~~
~~now~~ we can find his name in the
orthodox directory. But even when
we find his picture and read
about him, shall we really know
him? No, to know him, one
must see him at home, look
into his clear, searching eyes, see
the flash of his ringed-tail

THE PET DEALER

A National Monthly Magazine

PUBLISHED BY

THE PET DEALER PUBLISHING CO.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN LIPPOLD, EDITOR

ROOM 1426 NUMBER 15 PARK ROW, NEW YORK, N. Y.

June 1st, 1927.

Mr. William L. Finley,
Jennings Lodge, Oregon.

Dear Sir:-

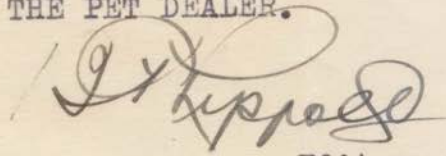
As you will note by the copy of the paper which we sent to you the PET DEALER is a new publication and is feeling its way. So far we have paid very little for any of the matter which we have used as we have had almost as much stuff submitted as we could take care of.

We realize however, that the class of story which you could write would be very desirable and we might be willing to pay for such an article.

The amount of money which we would pay would depend entirely upon the character submitted. So if you would care to submit something for our approval, we will report on it very promptly and tell you what we can afford to pay for it.

Very truly yours,

THE PET DEALER.



Editor.

BFL:GMT

Finley

GRANTS PASS, OR
SPOKESMAN

JAN 1 1927

RARE FUR ANIMALS CAUGHT ALIVE

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A pair of ringtailed cats, a species of fur bearing animals akin to the mink and peculiar to Oregon, California and Texas, were captured near Rogue River recently and are now on display at the H. W. Johnson fur store on "H" street. These small animals were at one time plentiful in Oregon but they are rapidly becoming extinct and at only rare intervals can one be caught alive.

The two which Mr. Johnson has are rapidly becoming tame and in a short time he hopes to be able to allow them to run at large through his store. The ringtailed cats are expert mousers and except for their love for eggs and chickens they could become a very useful domestic pet.

The ringtailed cat is said to inhabit the dense fur timbered areas where it subsists on small rodents and birds.

The ink fountain stood alone for a few minutes.

Usually it was the center of a chummy group. Hour in and hour through the sunny or the misty days, out, hurrying or loitering feet led to its brink. It was ~~always~~ cheerful when moving feet and merry faces clustered around.

They came trooping from that sea of life beyond the ^{white} stone arch yonder, where, along with sweet things, venders sell volumes of learning with other things that go with them. Myriad and ^{were} mixed ~~are~~ the ones that came under that portal, all bare-headed and bobbed, some tall and firm in tread, others ^{frail things} in gusty groups blown ^{fluttering flowers} blowing like willow-the-wisps out into the paved fountain court flecked with the sun that dropped gently through the trees.