

Oregonian

Jennings Lodge, Oregon
July 28, 1930

To the Editor:

Under the heading of "Wild Life Lines," in your issue of July 28, some little space is devoted to Malheur lake. There is the following statement:

"President Hoover's veto of a bill passed by Congress to make possible the determination of land ownership on the shores of Malheur lake is a temporary set-back to plans for reestablishing the great Malheur marsh in Central Oregon as a federal refuge for water fowl and other migratory birds."

President Hoover's veto created no set-back to Malheur Lake as a federal refuge because Malheur lake is now, and has been a federal sanctuary for wild birds for the past twenty-two years. President Roosevelt issued a special executive proclamation creating Malheur lake reservation August 18, 1908. For many years the Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture has maintained a warden service such as its limited funds could supply.

There has never been any question from the federal standpoint about Malheur lake reservation. While the State of Oregon, through some of its officials has maintained ownership on the lake bed, the Government has been in possession since 1908. If the State of Oregon could take action against the Federal Government to regain, and should be successful in regaining the ownership of the lake bed, there would still be a big controversy between the state and the squatters and land owners on the border of the lake who claim they own the property adjoining and extending to the lake center. The great question at issue regarding Malheur lake which will take years to settle, is the adjudication of the water rights.

The Government logically claims water rights on a certain amount of water from the Blitzen and Silvies Rivers, one flowing in from the South and the other from the North.

Years ago the Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture was anxious to start a suit to determine the water rights. The land owners and certain state

officials appealed to our senators and representatives in Congress to hold up this suit. The Secretary of Agriculture yielded to these state demands.

In the Oregonian of July 19, is a dispatch from your Washington Office, to the effect that the United States Attorney-General is ready to start this suit which he wanted to start years ago.

For many years Malheur lake reservation has been one of the greatest wild fowl sanctuaries in the United States. It can, of course, be improved whenever the water rights are adjudicated. In the general state election of November 1920, a bill was initiated and presented to the voters of Oregon in an effort to settle the Malheur question. This bill provided that the State of Oregon would cede any rights that were claimed on the bed of Malheur Lake to the Federal Government. This bill should have been passed but was defeated largely by statements that this area contained good agricultural land. Anyone who is familiar with this region knows that, because of the alkali in the soil, the area will not produce crops, but is of greater value from public standpoint as a wild bird reservation.

If the State Game Commission and the sportsmen of Oregon are really interested in wild fowl sanctuaries, their attention could well be turned toward Lower Klamath lake which was a vast area of lake and swamp covering over 80,000 acres and was one of the greatest wild fowl reservations in the United States. It was also set aside by President Roosevelt as a Federal reservation, August 8, 1908. At that time the lake and swamps were alive with nesting multitudes. In the years that followed, promoters got an upper hand in this region. The lake was dried up and the swamps destroyed. The alkaline area never has produced any crops of value. Today this region of desolation is a monument to one of the greatest crimes against wild fowl ever committed in this country. Why not correct this by reflooding the area?

For some years there was a very decided sentiment in the State Game Commission to prevent the Federal Government from taking a hand in the conservation of game in Oregon. Recently there seems a decided change, which is to be commended. Federal funds, however, are limited. Each year the State Game Commission has some \$400,000 to expend in the protection and propagation

of game in Oregon. This is quite a large sum. If the Commission would set aside a certain amount each year for the purchase of swamp lands or other areas as wild fowl reservations, it would be a most important step. It could accomplish in Oregon the very thing that, for years, the Federal Government has been condemned for attempting but is now encouraged to do.

Jennings Lodge, Oregon
April 14, 1931

To the Editor:

Considerable space has been devoted to the proposed building of a big power plant on the Klamath River in southern Oregon, costing many millions of dollars and giving employment to many men. In your editorial of the issue of April 14th, you state that Oregon drove this plant out and that California welcomes it. I have wondered whether the full facts have been published in this case and whether your readers have been given a chance to weigh this matter.

I am writing from memory. Some six or seven years ago, applications were made by the power interests to build three huge dams on the Klamath River in California. Californians did not welcome this industry, because a bill was initiated and a vote was taken. By nearly two hundred thousand majority, the people decided that none of these dams could be built.

The reason why Californians refused the power interests these permits was that such construction would destroy a very valuable run of salmon in this stream. Inasmuch as there are other streams where power can be developed, California suggested

that power companies seek sites on other streams not inhabited by salmon. In other words, even though electrical energy is an important public necessity, the food that comes in harvesting the rivers is also a necessity. The public is rather discreet in not letting a larger industry throttle a smaller one.

Since California once drove the power interests off the Klamath River, the statement is made that now Oregon drives a power company off its part of the Klamath River and California welcomes it. As a matter of public information, it occurs to me that all the facts have not been published.

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WILLIAM L. FINLEY - A CALIFORNIAN

Visualize an old home on the edge of the town of Santa Clara in the 80's. Back of the house is a tall shake-roofed barn with swallows flitting in and out of the loft and protesting vociferously about the head of a young boy, scarcely in his teens, who is in the act of placing four mottled white and brown eggs in his mouth for safe-keeping. As he is sliding down the roof with his fragile burden, the back door of the house opens and the boy's mother comes running over to the barn with a switch in her hand. The boy makes a flying leap for a pile of straw beneath the barn eaves. His jaws crunch impulsively--disastrously. He swallows convulsively, and faces his mother with the guileless look that only youth can muster. "No ma'am, I ain't doin' nothin'."

That was William Lovell Finley's first taste of ornithology; a taste which, in spite of the age of the eggs, has led him to devote his life to the out-of-doors and to natural history; a taste which has made him one of the greatest photographers of wild-life in the world, field representative of the National Association of Audubon Societies, a member of the advisory board of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and one of the most active supporters of game preservation in America. He has even transmitted his taste to his wife, Irene Barnhart Finley, who was graduated with him in 1903 from the University of California. They are partners in the work which has resulted in amassing the largest library of natural history films in existence, consisting of some 200,000 feet of moving picture film, and some 20,000 still-life negatives, stored in a fireproof vault in their home in Jennings Lodge, Oregon.

Through his articles in the Nature Magazine, the National Geographic, the Atlantic Monthly and other national publications, Mr. Finley has become known to thousands of people who have never heard him lecture or seen his remarkable motion pictures. Three large federal wild bird reservations in Oregon stand as a record of his efforts in arousing popular interest in the conservation of our outdoor resources. These were created by special executive proclamation of President Theodore Roosevelt. For the past twenty years Mr. and Mrs. Finley have cruised the coast

line, packed and camped through all the wilder mountainous country of the west, from Alaska to Mexico. Their motion picture films constitute the greatest photographic record of American wild animal life ever made.

While in the Bay Region, Finley will give two lectures under the title "Where Rolls the Oregon." His Berkeley lecture will be given Thursday evening, April 18, at 8 p.m. in Wheeler Auditorium on the University of California campus. He will appear in San Francisco Friday evening, April 19, at 8 p.m. at the Extension Building, 540 Powell Street. Both lectures will be illustrated with several reels of new outdoor film recently taken by Finley.

FINLEY TO LEAVE ON EASTERN LECTURE TOUR

"The largest assembly of sportsmen and fish and game officials in the history of the conservation movement in Maine is expected to greet William L. Finley of Portland, Oregon, one of America's foremost naturalists and explorers when he comes here next February 13, to give an illustrated lecture," says the Portland, Maine, PRESS-HERALD of December 4, 1933.

Maine is vitally interested in building up her outdoor resources to attract tourists. Governor Louis J. Brann of Maine will preside at the above convention, which features Finley's motion pictures, and the game commissioners of practically all of the New England states will attend his lecture.

William L. Finley, Vice-president of J. P. Finley & Son, will leave soon on his twenty-first tour, which takes him through the leading cities of the East. For many seasons, he has taken motion pictures of outdoor life featuring birds, animals and scenics in every part of the Pacific Northwest. His lectures and wonderful pictures have educated many easterners in the Pacific Coast as a vacation land.

Mr. Finley opens his tour before the Chicago Congregational Club, followed by lectures at the Camp Fire Club and the Academy of Science. Among other club lectures that he will give are the Travelers' Men's Club of Hartford, Conn., Union Club and Harvard Club of New York City. He will appear at select private schools, such as the Choate School, Wallingford, Conn., Hotchkiss School, Lakeville, Conn., Pelham School near New York City, and Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, and others.

As a member of the Advisory Board of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and one of the Vice-presidents of the American Game Protective Association, Mr. Finley will take part in the annual three-day conference of the latter organization while in New York. Here the leading conservationists of the country will formulate plans for a campaign to save the disappearing water fowl.