

March 4, 1941.

Dear Sam,

I returned a few days ago from Memphis, Tenn., where I attended the Sixth N. A. Wildlife Conference. I had to motor over and back alone as Irene had a bad cold. She is feeling alright again now. I guess you still have that article she wrote on the Spring Song of the Toad.

Am sending enclosed an article on the Peccary. Haven't been able to get a good photograph for this, but I am sure any artist can make a good illustration. I told Averill to get a picture of one.

Under separate cover am mailing you a series of eight 8 x 10 photographs taken at White Sands National Monument which we visited. Mr. Burscy of the Tourist Bureau gave me these. Think these will be suitable for the Rote section. Am sending enclosed an article for these, if you want to use it. We enjoyed a trip to Carlsbad Caverns National Park. I was offered some good photos of this but when I wrote Averill, he said you had already used some of these.

Irene and I are leaving here March 8th for southern part of this state and then are going to Arizona for another week or ten days to get some pictures. We will likely be home the later part of this month.

Have taken some pictures of one of the rarest quails here in the south and have been working on an article, which I hope we can finish before we leave and send you.

Best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Ghost Ranch - Oregon Journal - Sent March 4 - 1941

PECCARY, WILD PIG OF THE SOUTH

by

William L. and Irene Finley

Can any lovers of outdoor life get excited over a litter of pigs that ramble in the farm fields learning how to boot out a living? They may think more of the slices of bacon or the pork chops, but few know much about the origin and early history of pigs.

The nearest relatives of these lazy, fat inhabitants of many farms are the wild boars of the old world, but there are certain well marked points of difference. Another relative is the peccary or wild hog of the Southwest. His forefathers were there many millions of years ago. How interesting to find their fossil remains in the Pleistocene deposits. These were the beginnings of hog-like animals, the parent-stock from which both the peccaries and the farm hogs came. In regard to wildlife, the farmer feels that he has been a far better conservationist than the sportsman. Big game species such as antelope, elk, and buffalo were greatly reduced in numbers, but they have been restored in certain places. If they had been cared for like the early wild boars or relatives of the peccaries, what would have happened? This is a species that was taken from the wild, protected, bred and inter-bred until the hog today out-numbers all big game. How the farmers beat the sportsmen!

We have studied and pictured a variety of big game species in many regions, but never have we met a more wary and elusive subject than the peccary which we hunted through parts of Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. In the mountain region west of Tucson we were told that a reservation had been established, and after wandering through cactus belts and up rugged canyons, we suddenly caught our first glimpse of a young peccary. He was standing at the side of a little tree tossing his nose in the air to get our scent. A moment later he shuffled off in a hurry. It might have been a good shot for a rifle, but not for a camera. We have never been able to record one of these wild ones on a film.

The collared peccary or musk hog, called javelina (havaledna) by the

natives, was once abundant in parts of Texas, but now they are few in numbers. Some have been seen in the cactus patches along the sides of the Pecos and Rio Grande canyons. They like to dig roots, hunt for acorns and pecans, eat parts of the cholla cactus and different kinds of vegetation.

Along the highways in the South one may find gas stations that keep pet peccaries to attract travelers. As far as reputation is concerned, they are "tame", but don't go behind the bars. If one should enter a pen, he is likely to get a nip in the leg.

A farmer in Texas had a pair of young peccaries. Compared with the little barnyard porkers, the peccaries had longer and stiffer bristles, and hadn't any tails at all. Their appetities were like those of their domestic cousins. They loved a pan of milk, and nothing from the table was refused. They hunted and called for food all day and even let out a squeal for more at night. Like other wild children they quarreled over their food, yet their love for each other kept them inseparable night and day.

Years ago when H. E. Anthony, formerly a resident of Oregon, was in the South to get some specimens for the American Museum of Natural History in New York, his hunt for a peccary was a more exciting experience than usually falls to a naturalist. He was out with a negro resident who often followed the trails.

The jungle was very still that morning. The men were following a dim trail that had been cut through the tangled vegetation and came to a more open locality where they thought they caught the smell of <sup>a</sup> peccary. The animal has a pronounced musky odor which comes from a gland on its back. It is not unusual to smell one even some distance away. Peccaries often go in bands and they weigh about forty or fifty pounds.

After quite a search they couldn't hear nor see a peccary. So they followed along the trail thinking the band had struck off into the jungle where they would be difficult to follow. Toward noon they were returning along the same trail and came to the point where they had earlier smelled peccary. All of a sudden they heard something running through the dry leaves. It sounded like a big

animal headed directly toward them. Then they caught sight of a peccary speeding through the cover. He was as nimble as a rabbit, scooting through the brush with great agility. It looked as if the men had walked into a band of peccaries and they were scattering. The queer thing was that the lone one they saw paid no attention to them even though they were in plain sight on the trail. It looked as if the little speeder would pass quite close to them, so Anthony cocked his gun to be ready for him. As the peccary flashed out of the heavy growth into the trail, he shot and the animal began to gnash and snap his tusks, so the hunter rushed up to make certain of his specimen. Turning about for a moment, he saw his negro companion shivering and greatly excited. He had just looked into the face of a large jaguar. The big cat slipped out of sight into the brush before the naturalist could get a shot.

This is apparently what happened while Anthony's back was turned. The jaguar had evidently stalked the peccary and separated him from his companions. The peccary was fleeing for his life. He was more afraid of his pursuer than of the men, as the jaguar was close behind him.

"I can imagine that the temper of the big cat was not improved by seeing its intended victim fall to a man, but he apparently did not care to attack us," said Anthony. "In thinking it over afterward, I have wondered if, had he attacked, he would have lived up to the stories told of him and carried off the native first. At any rate, the native was between me and the jaguar."

As stated before, we found the peccaries limited in numbers in the three southern states. Like many other wild creatures that have been hunted by men, they are not pugnacious in nature, but disappear at sight or scent. In parts of Mexico where they are <sup>not</sup> hunted by natives, one may find these wild pigs in quite sizeable droves that are fearless and take the offensive when approached.

To analyze the action of some of these peccaries and some of the hunters that visit Mexico, one ought to size up the experience related by Mr. A. G. Requa. He had shot a wild turkey, then as the weather was pretty warm, he took off his coat and sat down on a rock to rest. In a few minutes he heard a noise and below

on the hillside some peccaries appeared. Perhaps they got the smell of the turkey. He fired and wounded one, and it began squaling. Instead of clearing out, more of the pig tribe appeared and some started up the hill. It didn't take long for such a sportsman to feel safer sitting up a tree than on a rock. He even failed to grab his coat and the turkey. Let's listen to his story.

"I had scarcely time to get up when they were around the tree, and, instead of twelve, they kept coming until there were at least two hundred. I commenced shooting and killed five with my rifle. Fortunately, I had both revolvers, and a belt full of cartridges for them; so I went at them. They were chewing the tree and climbing over each other trying to get at me. I tried to count them and found there were over two hundred left, and I had killed twenty-three.

"The peccaries showed no signs of leaving. It was noon, and very warm. They would root around, then come back to the tree; and grunt, and paw, and bite the tree; then they would cool down a little, would go a short distance away, root around a while, then come back. I was getting tired of being treed. If only the boys could hear my firing and come over.

"One o'clock came, then two. Three o'clock came, then four, and no signs of the boys. Some of the pigs would feed while others stood guard; then they would charge off. I was so tired. I took my belt off and buckled myself to the tree, so that I would not fall out. Seven o'clock! They still camped near me. Then the sun went behind the mountain; darkness came on, and I was thirsty, hungry, and tired; but worse than all, I was a prisoner. Twelve o'clock! The moon shone brightly, and I could see my sentinels scattered around. Two o'clock! Then came a signal from some of the outside ones; the rest sniffed the air, then away they all went. I unloosed the belt and got down, more dead than alive - so stiff I could hardly walk. I went first to where I left my turkey and coat. The turkey had been eaten, and my coat had been thoroughly chewed. I started for camp, where I arrived just at daybreak. Two of the boys were out on horseback hunting me."

## SKIING IN THE SOUTH!

National Parks and Monuments in many sections of the West are luring more and more of those who seek health and recreation. Eastern states, more heavily populated, have no comparative vacational attractions like the hundreds of play-grounds to the south and west and the national wonders that people love to see.

Where the snow covers the mountain sides, skiing is one of the winter attractions. But in the south, there is one stretch of 270 square miles, where the outdoor lovers also enjoy skiing, but not on snow-shoes. The White Sands ~~Nati~~ National Monument is a thirty mile stretch at the base of the San Andres Mountains in southern New Mexico. The Sands are nearly 100% pure gypsum and almost as soft and white as snow. When girls start skiing, they find a much softer place to light after a tumble down the big dunes.

During the holidays William L. and Irene Finley wintered at the Ghost Ranch, sixty-five miles northwest of Santa Fe. For the past two months they have been making wildlife studies with note-books and cameras in New Mexico and Arizona. They have visited the reservations set aside for the conservation of wild birds and mammals, the prehistoric dwellings of the Indians and the state and national parks established and managed for the pleasure of the people.

After a tour in southern New Mexico, the accompanying series of pictures were presented to the Finleys by Mr. Bursey, who is Secretary of the New Mexico State Tourist Bureau.