

THE WOOD RAT . . .



WOOD RAT

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Tourists in the comfortable "wilds" of the Western United States are frequently annoyed by the activities of "pack rats" that run actively in and out of cabin windows storing things that may or may not have value to humans and frequently could have no possible value to the pack rats.

Members of the genus Neotoma range practically from coast-to-coast in North America, being found from Pennsylvania to California represented by one species or another. In the East they are called "Cave rats" or "Wood rats"; in the West, almost universally, "Pack rats." They seem to develop habits suitable to the environment. In the Western mountains they build nests of trash among the rocks. In deserts their nests may reach a bushel in volume. Where bur-

rows are easily found among the ledges their nests may be much less elaborate. In California the species there represented may live in live oak trees.

These rats differ from the common Norway rats most conspicuously by having hairy tails instead of the relative hairless tail found in the better known animal. Pack rats' tails are not scaly as are those of Norway rats.

Pack rats are probably not promiscuous in their breeding habits as are the Norway rats and many related animals. The unusual life story is something like this. January and February are the breeding months of most importance. The young, 2 to 4 in number, are born from February through May. The young open their eyes when 17 days old and are weaned by the mother when 3 weeks old. In spite of the weaning the young may stay with the mother for some time. The father is not allowed to stay with his family while the young are immature or at least in the family group. The mother makes a remarkably good parent.

Including the tail, the average pack rat may be fifteen and one-half inches long. The tail may be six and one-half inches of the total length. The weight may be one-half pound and the fur is

ABOUT YOUR PROPERTY TAX WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT TAXES?

(Part II)
YOU CAN HELP YOUR COUNTY ASSESSOR . . .

The assessor must be adequately staffed with technical and clerical help. Appraising is serious business. Good mature judgment is not acquired cheaply. Do what you can to assure the assessor that he is adequately staffed.

The assessor needs continuous assistance from the public. Market value, like the purchasing power for any goods, is partially determined by the actions of each citizen of the community. Certain of your citizens make observations of these changes and are able to recognize changes in value. Do what you can to assure that the assessor is adequately informed.

The assessor is dependent upon many citizens for honest reporting of personal property. Each taxpayer owes it to himself to properly report all taxable value requested. At the same time he should see to it that others are

rather heavy for a rat. The ears are relatively large. The animal is reddish brown above and white or nearly so beneath. The Eastern, southern and some of the western species have tails that are less bushy than some of the best known pack rats.

Pack rats are edible and may thus provide food for lost persons since they are easily caught.

The National Wildlife Federation through these notes in your newspaper, through the stamp series and through its other activities, attempts to help you understand the environment in which you may be living. Here in our wood rats or pack rats we have animals that are relatively common but not too well known. Their flesh and their stored food supplies may some time mean the difference between life and death to you. Get to know them better.

—E. Laurence Palmer

Too many people mistake spectacular effort for success.

also accurately reporting their property.

Each citizen should have an active and healthy inquisitiveness about assessment matters. Such issues as utility ratio, the methods used in appraisal of real property, the standards for setting relative value between classes, are questions which ought to be discussed in every active community. Each citizen owes it to himself to become interested in the affairs of the several offices of his county.

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT TAXING DISTRICT BUDGETS

Freedom in local government is good both for the community and for the individual. If, however, this "good" is to flourish and to grow, each citizen has a dual responsibility. First, he must maintain an ever awakened and vigilant interest in all of these local affairs. Second, he must exert a spirited interest in any acts and proposals that may affect the general welfare of his local taxing districts. Local government is not self operating. To the contrary, its very lifeblood is dependent upon your participation, your considered judgement, and your cooperative action.

Thus the taxpayer must assume his rightful place in the workings of local government if it is to function properly. The equalization accomplished through reappraisal and the help provided through appeal procedure for individual assessments all help defend equity in taxation. However, this is not enough. In addition, the taxpayer must interest himself in the affairs of and in the conducting of business in the local taxing district. Property taxes originate for the most part from the local scene. They can best be controlled there. Here are some suggestions for study of taxing district affairs:

Every citizen should know something about the taxing districts in which he finds himself located. Where are the district

offices located? Who are the district officers? For what purpose was the district organized? What changes in the district is proposed for the coming years?

Every citizen should inform himself about the costs of doing business in each taxing district. How much does it take to educate the children? What portion of this bill is paid for by the State of Oregon? What portion from the property tax? What are the other sources of revenue? How many children will be educating next year? Five years hence?

Each citizen should examine the extent of service afforded by the several taxing districts. Could we do it cheaper without this service? Is the service too elaborate? Is the service geared to greatly benefit the few at a fixed cost to the many?

Each citizen should exercise his right to determine the extent of budget through voting. Vote at elections which are called to determine bonds or special levies, and carefully select the directors who are to govern your taxing district.

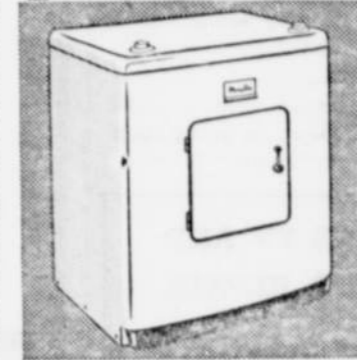
Make certain that you know just what is going on in your taxing district. Are these elections properly advertised? Is the board acting on behalf of the citizens? Is the taxing district living within its covenant to the people?

Each citizen should participate with groups that study taxation problems. Many organizations sponsor programs and speakers who discuss this subject.

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