

BEEHIVES IN AFRICA

By WILFRID D. HAMBLBY
Curator of African Ethnology

The keeping of bees is a common custom among Negro tribes of Africa. Two of their types of hives are displayed in Field Museum collections. One in Hall E (Case 30-A), made by the Akikuyu, is a long cylinder of smooth brown wood decorated with burnt designs. This is a common form used in northeast Africa. Another type, of about the same size but of rougher workmanship, made from a cylinder of bark about four feet long and ten inches in diameter, is shown in Hall D (Case 7). This form is in general use throughout central and eastern Angola, among the Ovimbundu and the Vachokwe tribes. The technique is sometimes varied by binding the hive neatly with coarse grass.

Hives are individually owned, but they are not kept at the homes of the possessors. Each owner places his hives at a considerable height in the branches of trees in the forest near his home, and he is entitled to the bees that swarm in them, and to the honey deposited.

In order to collect the honey the Ovimbundu light a smoky fire at the base of the tree, and a climber ascends the trunk and lowers the hive with a rope made of bark. The hive is suspended over the smoke until the bees are driven out or suffocated, then one end of the hive is removed and the honey is extracted. Some tribes rub themselves with a vegetable juice that is supposed to give immunity from stings.

The honey may be eaten with the vegetable manioc, or it may be used in the fermentation of beer. The liquor made in this way from maize is potent, and in the words of an informant, "a man who drinks beer made with honey may sleep on the ground all next day and say nothing." In Angola, wax is made into balls and carried to the stores of European traders. Before money came into use these balls were used as currency during long caravan journeys.

STAFF NOTES

Dr. Julian A. Steyermark, Assistant Curator of the Herbarium, has been awarded a grant from the Academy of Sciences of St. Louis, through the research fund of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. This grant is to be used in connection with detailed field work and studies on the flora of Missouri, in preparation of a manual. Dr. Steyermark recently returned from his second collecting trip of the season in Missouri. In addition to collecting a thousand specimens of plants for the Museum herbarium, he brought back also a number of reptiles and fishes, and a giant centipede for the collections of the Department of Zoology. On his first trip this season he had collected another thousand plant specimens.

Mr. Rudyerd Boulton, Curator of Birds, was the principal speaker at the annual meeting of the Michigan Audubon Society held last month at the Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bloomfield Hills. He spoke on "Habits of West African Birds," basing his lecture on data assembled on his African expeditions. Mr. Boulton also made some studies at the Museum of Zoology of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor during the course of the same trip.

Miss Elizabeth McM. Hambleton has been appointed a guide-lecturer on the staff of the James Nelson and Anna Louise Raymond Foundation for Public School

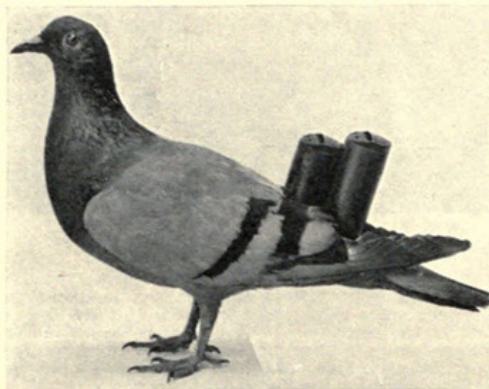
and Children's Lectures. She replaces Miss Velma D. Whipple who has resigned to accept a position as school teacher. Miss Hambleton, as Associate in Southwestern Archaeology in the Department of Anthropology, has been a volunteer worker at the Museum for several months past.

Mr. Loren P. Woods, of the Graduate School of Zoology at Northwestern University, has been given a temporary appointment for the summer months as a guide-lecturer on the Raymond Foundation staff.

THINGS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

Music from the Clouds

A pleasing conceit of the Chinese is to fasten whistles to the tails of pigeons so that a beautiful humming music floats down from the birds flying overhead. The whistles have two or more pipes, tuned in harmony, which produce a vibrant chord as the pigeons whirl in the sky. Sitting in a garden or



Musical Pigeon

Long before radio filled the ether, the Chinese enjoyed music from the air by attaching melodious whistles to the tails of hundreds of pigeons in the manner illustrated by the above specimen which is on exhibition in Hall 32 of the Museum.

riding through the streets of Peiping one hears these aerial concerts mingled with the calls and sounds of street vendors.

A collection of pigeon whistles made from reeds and small gourds, with from two to eight pipes, is on exhibition in Hall 32, Case 45, together with a mounted pigeon outfitted with a simple whistle. Pigeon fanciers in America might find enjoyment in adopting this quaint custom, of which a more detailed account, by the late Dr. Berthold Laufer, appeared in FIELD MUSEUM NEWS, September, 1934. —C.M.W.

Wheel Chairs For Museum Visitors

For the benefit of persons either temporarily or permanently disabled, Field Museum has provided a number of wheel chairs which are available for a small fee. Visitors planning to use them must furnish their own attendants.

YOU SHOULD READ—

The Life Story of the Fish, by Brian Curtis.

"So far superior to any other book on fishes that I have seen in many years that it is difficult to avoid being too enthusiastic about it," says Mr. Alfred C. Weed, Curator of Fishes at Field Museum.

This is one of the many outstanding books on sale at the new FIELD MUSEUM BOOK SHOP. \$3.

GUIDE-LECTURE TOURS

During July and August conducted tours of the exhibits, under the guidance of staff lecturers, will be given on a special schedule, as follows:

Mondays: 11 A.M., Plant Life Exhibits; 3 P.M. General Tour of Exhibition Halls.

Tuesdays: 11 A.M., Halls of Primitive and Civilized Peoples; 3 P.M., General Tour of Exhibition Halls.

Wednesdays: 11 A.M., Animal Groups; 3 P.M., General Tour of Exhibition Halls.

Thursdays: 11 A.M. and 3 P.M., General Tours of Exhibition Halls.

Fridays: 11 A.M., Minerals and Prehistoric Life; 3 P.M., General Tour of Exhibition Halls.

There are no tours given on Saturdays or Sundays, or on July Fourth.

Persons wishing to participate in the tours should apply at the North Entrance. The tours are free, and no gratuities are to be proffered. Guide-lecturer's services for special tours by parties of ten or more are available free of charge by arrangement with the Director a week in advance.

Gifts to the Museum

Following is a list of some of the principal gifts received during the last month:

From Henry Field—a large sarcophagus, a carved marble bath, a marble basin with stand, 2 marble capitals, and 4 bird skins, Italy and Iraq; from John T. McCutcheon—a Peruvian jar and a porcupine fish; from Mrs. Edna Horn Mandel—2 ceramic statues of Yama, the god of death, China; from Mrs. Arthur Meeker—a necklace of two strands, made up of coral and silver coins, Guatemala; from Miss Helen R. Gilbert—a piece of painted cloth, Bali; from Jardim Botânico de Bello Horizonte—208 herbarium specimens, Brazil; from Museo Nacional—59 specimens of mosses, Costa Rica; from Rev. Brother Elias—75 herbarium specimens, Colombia; from Howard Scott Gentry—36 herbarium specimens, Mexico; from Irving W. Knobloch—50 herbarium specimens, Mexico; from Mrs. Keith Griswold—9 specimens graphic granite, North Carolina; from Hugh S. Spence—3 specimens asterism in phlogopite, Canada; from F. C. Cleveland—a specimen calymene niagarensis, Chicago area; from Fred E. Gray—a fossil cephalopod, Chicago area; from Chicago Zoological Society—7 mammals and 3 birds; from Dr. Julian A. Steyermark—8 snakes, lizards, and turtles, Missouri; from Colorado Museum of Natural History—2 downy golden eagles, Colorado; from C. M. Barber—7 snakes, turtles, and lizards, and 17 lizard eggs, Arkansas; from Dr. Harold Nelson—21 bats, Egypt; from H. B. Conover—10 duck skins, Chile; from David Gustafson, from Antonio Serrano, and from the Ryerson Estate—valuable books for the Library.

NEW MEMBERS

The following persons were elected to membership in Field Museum during the period from May 16 to June 15:

Contributors

Mrs. Edith Almy Adams*

Life Members

Charles A. McCulloch

Associate Members

Mrs. Louis Eckstein, Mrs. William Dodge Horne, Jr., Arthur W. Nelson, William Wager.

Annual Members

Henry W. Balfanz, Mrs. Henry G. Barkhausen, Mrs. Louise T. Biggio, Mrs. J. R. Cardwell, Harold E. Cuttle, Guy G. Fox, J. T. Gillick, Dr. Henry E. Irish, Melville Keim, Mrs. William H. Lyon, Charles B. Nolte, Miss Myrtle Schulz, Dr. Leslie W. Schwab, Roger A. Simonson, F. W. Sundlof, Mrs. Charles Ware, Ira E. Westbrook, Miss Velma D. Whipple.

*Deceased

Distinguished Visitors

Among recent distinguished visitors received at Field Museum are Dr. C. G. Seligman, retired professor of ethnology of the University of London, and Mrs. (B. Z.) Seligman who has collaborated with her husband on his many researches and scientific publications; Dr. Hannah Rydh, archaeologist of Upsala University, Sweden, and Miss Anna Rothmann, of the Albany Museum in Grahamstown, South Africa.



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