

myriad kinds of peculiar plants. Here Wur-dack and I stayed, assisted by Sabas, while the other four Indians returned to help carry the remainder of the 70 pieces of cargo that were gradually being brought up. Finally, three weeks after having left Urimán, all the cargo arrived. The elevation at this point was 6,300 feet. Temperature went down to a low of 47 degrees at night and reached a high of 75 degrees in the shade during the day (47 degrees is the very lowest temperature ever recorded from the summits of any of the mountains of the "lost world"). We found ourselves surrounded by weird rock-formations and bluffs on all sides towering to still higher portions of the summit that reached an altitude of 7,500 feet. We kept eight of the Indians as regular workers until the end of the trip, sending back the twelve others who had assisted in bringing the cargo up the mountain.

From then on our collecting began in earnest. Trails were made in many directions to reach various parts of the extensive mountain-mass that is about 50 miles long and 40 miles wide. We explored as many sections as possible, sometimes remaining fully four days away from our main camp. We found uncharted waterfalls and unmapped rivers and their tributaries, and we took compass readings. We found ourselves adding significant geographical details to our data about this mountain as we explored different sections each day. New plants were discovered along every new trail traversed.

There were long stretches of open swampy savanna alternating with dry rocky slopes full of peculiar sandstone and quartz formations. There were numerous rifts and narrow chasms in the rocks that descended perpendicularly for a hundred feet or more. These often forced us into long detours. Some, however, were narrow enough to jump across. Sphagnum bogs with peculiar plants often lined parts of the river valley that seemed to wind endlessly across the summit. We reached edges of the escarpment of portions of the mountain that broke off into mile-high chasms and canyons of great length and magnitude. In such deeply eroded sections of Chimantá-tepuí, the scenery was truly of the most spectacular type, and we could see how the various lobes of the great mountain stretched out from here for miles and miles of unexplored fantastic areal surface.

Wherever we traveled on the summit of the main-central portion of Chimantá-tepuí, we could see miles and miles of meanderings of the Tirica River and its tributaries as they flowed over swampy savannas or through rocky openings to distant parts of the giant mountain. This was the most unusual feature of Chimantá-tepuí—that the main section of its summit should be well-watered by a good-sized stream, the

Tirica River. This, indeed, was a real discovery, as previous maps of the mountain failed to reveal any stream running over the summit. Although some streams have been found on the summits of a few of the other mountains of the "lost world" section of Venezuela, Chimantá-tepuí is the first on which such an extensive river-system has been found traversing the summit. This has provided all sorts of habitats for swamp and aquatic plants and animals. Water-striders, water beetles, and many other kinds of aquatic insects were noted and collected.

The cool valleys with rivers occurring on the summit, ascending to 7,500 feet, were the habitats also for a number of Andean species of groundpine (*Lycopodium*), of a type found in the high mountains of Ecuador, Peru, and Colombia, and other Andean genera such as St. John's wort (*Hypericum*), cherry (*Prunus*), *Weinmannia*, holly (*Ilex*), various members of the heath family including huckleberry (*Vaccinium*), *Baccharis*, *Viburnum*, sedges such as *Carex*, an Andean tree (*Laplacea*) of the *Camellia* family, *Cestrum*, *Aegiphila*, and many others. This vast assemblage of plants of the cooler temperate climate was intermingled with other genera of plants known only from the mountains of the "lost world" area.

#### ANIMAL SPECIMENS COLLECTED

Although we climbed and hiked many miles each day, bringing back marvelous specimens, we realized that only the surface aspects of this remarkable summit could be touched within the time at our disposal. We could remain only until March 2, and then would have to start down the long trail again. During the six weeks on the summit, we collected 1,500 different species of plants, totaling about 10,000 duplicate specimens. Photographs were taken of various plants and details of scenery to add to the geographic knowledge of the mountain. Remarkable zoological discoveries also were made during these six weeks. A small catfish was found in the river near our summit campsite at 6,300 feet, and specimens were collected for the Museum. This is the first record of any fish ever taken from the summit of any of the mountains of the "lost world." Other interesting collections made on the summit were lizards, frogs, snakes of several kinds, including a distinct species of poisonous fer-de-lance (*mapanare*), snails, termites, various other insects, spiders, centipedes, millipedes, earthworms, a species of grebe, a coati mundi, and a white-eared opossum. The two mammals are the largest fur-bearers found on the summit. Bats were seen in flight, but we were unable to snare any in our bat net. Several small birds were collected, two of them new to the Museum's collection.

Although there were numerous rainy days, the weather was in our favor during most

of the trip, expediting travel and collecting. Altogether, about two weeks were required on the return trip from the time our cargo left the summit of the mountain until we all reached Urimán on March 17. Here everything was packed for the trip by plane back to Ciudad Bolívar, where a truck carried the expedition's collections to Puerto de La Cruz. On March 25 the *S. S. Las Piedras* sailed with the treasures of Chimantá-tepuí aboard, arriving in Philadelphia on March 30. Half of the botanical specimens will be deposited with New York Botanical Garden and half with Chicago Natural History Museum. Many new species were found. A joint botanical report by the two institutions will be published eventually, encompassing the results obtained by this expedition and by those conducted separately by us in 1953.

#### Director's Annual Report Ready for Members

All Members of the Museum will soon receive their copies of the Annual Report for 1954 of the Director to the Board of Trustees, which has just been published by Chicago Natural History Museum Press. It is a volume of 146 pages and contains 24 illustrations. All phases of the Museum's activities are covered by Colonel Clifford C. Gregg, Director — expeditions, research, accessions, new exhibits, building maintenance, etc.

#### Mammals of the Sea

An especially attractive array of sea mammals, with painted backgrounds and built-up scenes representing their habitats, is to be seen in Hall N. One group shows Pacific walruses on an arctic ice-floe lighted by the midnight sun. Equally impressive are the elephant seals, largest of all seals, on the beach of Guadalupe Island and the giant northern sea-lions of the coast of Washington. Other mammals are Pacific seals (smallest of earless seals), northern fur seals in the Pribilof Islands, the narwhal, and a pair of Florida sea cows. A representation of the snow and ice of the Antarctic provides the setting for specimens of Weddell's seal collected by the Second Byrd Antarctic Expedition.

Devotees of the current do-it-yourself trends in making furniture and other useful household articles in home workshops will find the exhibits in Charles F. Millsbaugh Hall (North American Woods) and the Hall of Foreign Woods (Halls 26 and 27) of special interest. Here they may study the characteristics of different woods in order to select those most suitable to a particular purpose or design.





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