



American Beaver.

GENUS CASTOR.—LINN.

DENTAL FORMULA.

$$\text{Incisive } \frac{2}{2}; \quad \text{Canine } \frac{0-0}{0-0}; \quad \text{Molar } \frac{4-4}{4-4} = 20.$$

Incisors very strong. In the upper jaw their anterior surface is flat and their posterior surface angular. The molars differ slightly from each other in size, and have one internal and three external grooves. In the lower jaw the incisors present the same appearance as those of the upper; but are smaller. In the molars there are three grooves on the inner side, with one on the external.

Eyes, small; ears, short and round; five toes on each foot. On the fore-feet the toes are short and close; on the hind-feet long and palmated. Tail, large, flat and scaly. Mammæ, four, pectoral: a pouch near the root of the tail, in which an unctuous matter is secreted.

There is but one well established species known to belong to this genus.

The generic name is derived from the Latin word *Castor*, a beaver.

CASTOR FIBER.—LINN.

(VAR. AMERICANUS.)

AMERICAN BEAVER.

PLATE XLVI.

C. Arct. monace major, supra badius, infra dilutior; cauda plana, ovata, squamosa.

CHARACTERS.

Larger than the ground-hog, (Arctomys monax;) of a reddish-brown colour, with a short downy grayish fur beneath; tail, flat, scaly, and oval.

SYNONYMES.

- CASTOR FIBER, Linn., 12th ed., p. 78.
 CASTOR, Sagard Theodat, Canada, p. 767.
 BEAVER, CASTOR, Pennant, Arc. Zool., vol. i., p. 98.
 CASTOR ORDINAIRE, Desm., Mamm.
 CASTOR AMERICANUS, F. Cuvier.
 CASTOR FIBER, Lewis and Clarke's Expedition, vol. i.
 THE BEAVER, Hearne's Journal, vol. viii., p. 245.
 BEAVER, Cartwright's Journal, vol. i., p. 62.
 " Catesby, App., p. 29.
 CASTOR FIBER, Harlan, Fauna, p. 122.
 " " Godman, vol. ii., p. 21.
 " " AMERICANUS, Richardson, F. B. A., p. 105.
 " " Emmons, Mass. Reports, p. 51.
 " " Dekay, pl. 1, p. 72.

DESCRIPTION.

The shape of the body bears a considerable resemblance to that of the musk-rat; it is, however, much larger, and the head is proportionally thicker and broader. It is thick and clumsy, gradually enlarging from the head to the hips, and then is somewhat abruptly rounded off to the root of the tail.

Nose, obtuse and divided; eyes, small; ears, short, rounded, well clothed with fur, and partially concealed by the longer surrounding hairs; moustaches, not numerous, but very rigid like hogs' bristles, reaching to the ears; neck, rather short. The fur is of two kinds. The upper and longer hair is coarse, smooth, and glossy; the under coat is dense, soft and silky. Fore-feet, short and rather slender; toes, well separated and very flexible. The fore-feet are used like hands to convey food to the mouth. The fore-claws are strong, compressed, and channelled beneath. The middle toe is the longest, those on each side a little shorter, and the outer and inner ones shortest.

The hind-feet bear some resemblance to those of the goose. They are webbed beyond the roots of the nails, and have hard and callous soles. In most of the specimens we have seen, there is a double nail on the second inner toe. The palms and soles are naked. When walking, the whole heel touches the ground. The Beaver is accustomed to rest itself on its hind-feet and tail; and when in this sitting position contracts its fore-claws in the manner of the left hand figure represented in the plate. The upper surface of all the feet, with the exception of the nails, which are naked, is thickly covered with short adpressed hairs.

The tail is very broad and flat, tongue-shaped, and covered with angular scales. The root of the tail is for an inch covered with fine fur. The glandular sacs containing the castoreum, a musky unctuous substance, are situated near the anus.

COLOUR.

Incisors, on their outer surface, orange; moustaches, black; eyes, light-brown. The soft under down is light grayish-brown. The upper fur on the back is of a shining chesnut colour; on the under surface, and around the mouth and throat, a shade lighter. Nails, brown; webs between the toes, and tail, grayish-brown. We have seen an occasional variety. Some are black; and we examined several skins that were nearly white.

DIMENSIONS.

Male, represented in the plate.—Rather a small specimen.

From nose to root of tail,	-	-	-	-	-	23 inches.
Tail,	-	-	-	-	-	10 do.
From heel to end of middle claw,	-	-	-	-	-	5½ do.
Greatest breadth of tail,	-	-	-	-	-	3¼ do.
Thickness of tail,	-	-	-	-	-	7⁄8 do.

Weight, 11¼ lbs.

HABITS.

The sagacity and instinct of the Beaver have from time immemorial been the subject of admiration and wonder. The early writers on both continents have represented it as a rational, intelligent, and moral being, requiring but the faculty of speech to raise it almost to an equality, in some respects, with our own species. There is in the composition of every man, whatever may be his pride in his philosophy, a proneness in a greater or less degree to superstition, or at least credulity. The world is at best but slow to be enlightened, and the trammels thrown around us by the tales of the nursery are not easily shaken off. Such travellers into the northern parts of Sweden, Russia, Norway, and Lapland, as OLAUS MAGNUS, JEAN MARIUS, RZACZYNSKY, LEEMS, &c., whose extravagant and imaginary notions were recorded by the credulous GESNER, who wrote marvellous accounts of the habits of the Beavers in Northern Europe, seem to have worked on the imaginations and confused the intellects of the early explorers of our Northern regions—LA HONTAN, CHARLEVOIX, THEODAT, ELLIS, BELTRAMI, and CARTWRIGHT. These last, excited the enthusiasm of BUFFON, whose romantic stories have so fastened themselves on

the mind of childhood, and have been so generally made a part of our education, that we now are almost led to regret that three-fourths of the old accounts of this extraordinary animal are fabulous; and that with the exception of its very peculiar mode of constructing its domicile, the Beaver is, in point of intelligence and cunning, greatly exceeded by the fox, and is but a few grades higher in the scale of sagacity than the common musk-rat.

The following account was noted down by us as related by a trapper named PREVOST, who had been in the service of the American Fur Company for upwards of twenty years, in the region adjoining the spurs of the Rocky Mountains, and who was the "Patroon" that conveyed us down the Missouri river in the summer and autumn of 1843. As it confirms the statements of HEARNE, RICHARDSON, and other close observers of the habits of the Beaver, we trust that although it may present little that is novel, it will from its truth be acceptable and interesting to our readers. Mr. PREVOST states in substance as follows.

Beavers prefer small clear-water rivers, and creeks, and likewise resort to large springs. They, however, at times, frequent great rivers and lakes. The trappers believe that they can have notice of the approach of winter weather, and of its probable severity, by observing the preparations made by the Beavers to meet its rigours; as these animals always cut their wood in good season, and if this be done early, winter is at hand.

The Beaver dams, where the animal is at all abundant, are built across the streams to their very head waters. Usually these dams are formed of mud, mosses, small stones, and branches of trees cut about three feet in length and from seven to twelve inches round. The bark of the trees in all cases being taken off for winter provender, before the sticks are carried away to make up the dam. The largest tree cut by the Beaver, seen by PREVOST, measured eighteen inches in diameter; but so large a trunk is very rarely cut down by this animal. In the instance just mentioned, the branches only were used, the trunk not having been appropriated to the repairs of the dam or aught else by the Beavers.

In constructing the dams, the sticks, mud and moss are matted and interlaced together in the firmest and most compact manner; so much so that even men cannot destroy them without a great deal of labour. The mud and moss at the bottom are rooted up with the animal's snout, somewhat in the manner hogs work in the earth, and clay and grasses are stuffed and plastered in between the sticks, roots, and branches, in so workmanlike a way as to render the structure quite water-tight. The dams are sometimes seven or eight feet high, and are from ten to twelve

feet wide at the bottom, but are built up with the sides inclining towards each other, so as to form a narrow surface on the top. They are occasionally as much as three hundred yards in length, and often extend beyond the bed of the stream in a circular form, so as to overflow all the timber near the margin, which the Beavers cut down for food during winter, heap together in large quantities, and so fasten to the shore under the surface of the water, that even a strong current cannot tear it away; although they generally place it in such a position that the current does not pass over it. These piles or heaps of wood are placed in front of the lodges, and when the animal wishes to feed he proceeds to them, takes a piece of wood, and drags it to one of the small holes near the principal entrance running above the water, although beneath the surface of the ground. Here the bark is devoured at leisure, and the wood is afterwards thrust out, or used in repairing the dam. These small galleries are more or less abundant according to the number of animals in the lodges. The larger lodges are, in the interior, about seven feet in diameter, and between two and three feet high, resembling a great oven. They are placed near the edge of the water, although actually built on or in the ground. In front, the Beavers scratch away the mud to secure a depth of water that will enable them to sink their wood deep enough to prevent its being impacted in the ice when the dam is frozen over, and also to allow them always free egress from their lodges, so that they may go to the dam and repair it if necessary. The top of the lodge is formed by placing branches of trees matted with mud, grasses, moss, &c., together, until the whole fabric measures on the outside from twelve to twenty feet in diameter, and is six or eight feet high, the size depending on the number of inhabitants. The outward coating is entirely of mud or earth, and smoothed off as if plastered with a trowel. As Beavers, however, never work in the day-time, no person we believe has yet seen how they perform their task, or give this hard-finish to their houses. This species does not use its fore-feet in swimming, but for carrying burthens: this can be observed by watching the young ones, which suffer their fore-feet to drag by the side of the body, using only the hind-feet to propel themselves through the water. Before diving, the Beaver gives a smart slap with its tail on the water, making a noise that may be heard a considerable distance, but in swimming, the tail is not seen to work, the animal being entirely submerged except the nose and part of the head; it swims fast and well, but with nothing like the speed of the otter, (*Lutra Canadensis*.)

The Beavers cut a broad ditch all around their lodge, so deep that it cannot freeze to the bottom, and into this ditch they make the holes

already spoken of, through which they go in and out and bring their food. The beds of these singular animals are separated slightly from each other, and are placed around the wall, or circumference of the interior of the lodge; they are formed merely of a few grasses, or the tender bark of trees; the space in the centre of the lodge being left unoccupied. The Beavers usually go to the dam every evening to see if repairs are needed, and to deposite their ordure in the water near the dam, or at least at some distance from their lodge.

They rarely travel by land, unless their dams have been carried away by the ice, and even then they take the beds of the rivers or streams for their roadway. In cutting down trees they are not always so fortunate as to have them fall into the water, or even towards it, as the trunks of trees cut down by these animals are observed lying in various positions; although as most trees on the margin of a stream or river lean somewhat towards the water, or have their largest branches extended over it, many of those cut down by the Beavers naturally fall in that direction.

It is a curious fact, says our trapper, that among the Beavers there are some that are lazy and will not work at all, either to assist in building lodges or dams, or to cut down wood for their winter stock. The industrious ones beat these idle fellows, and drive them away; sometimes cutting off a part of their tail, and otherwise injuring them. These "Paresseux" are more easily caught in traps than the others, and the trapper rarely misses one of them. They only dig a hole from the water running obliquely towards the surface of the ground twenty-five or thirty feet, from which they emerge when hungry, to obtain food, returning to the same hole with the wood they procure, to eat the bark.

They never form dams, and are sometimes to the number of five or seven together; all are males. It is not at all improbable, that these unfortunate fellows have, as is the case with the males of many species of animals, been engaged in fighting with others of their sex, and after having been conquered and driven away from the lodge, have become idlers from a kind of necessity. The working Beavers, on the contrary, associate, males, females, and young together.

Beavers are caught and found in good order at all seasons of the year in the Rocky Mountains; for in those regions the atmosphere is never warm enough to injure the fur; in the low-lands, however, the trappers rarely begin to capture them before the first of September, and they relinquish the pursuit about the last of May. This is understood to be along the Missouri, and the (so called) Spanish country.

CARTWRIGHT, (vol. i., p. 62,) found a Beaver that weighed forty-five pounds; and we were assured that they have been caught weighing

sixty-one pounds before being cleaned. The only portions of their flesh that are considered fine eating, are the sides of the belly, the rump, the tail, and the liver. The tail, so much spoken of by travellers and by various authors, as being very delicious eating, we did not think equalled their descriptions. It has nearly the taste of beef marrow, but is rather oily, and cannot be partaken of unless in a very moderate quantity, except by one whose stomach is strong enough to digest the most greasy substances.

Beavers become very fat at the approach of autumn ; but during winter they fall off in flesh, so that they are generally quite poor by spring, when they feed upon the bark of roots, and the roots of various aquatic plants, some of which are at that season white, tender, and juicy. During winter, when the ice is thick and strong, the trappers hunt the Beaver in the following manner : A hole is cut in the ice as near as possible to the aperture leading to the dwelling of the animal, the situation of which is first ascertained ; a green stick is placed firmly in front of it, and a smaller stick on each side, about a foot from the stick of green wood ; the bottom is then patted or beaten smooth and even, and a strong stake is set into the ground to hold the chain of the trap, which is placed within a few inches of the stick of green wood, well baited, and the Beaver, attracted either by the fresh bark or the bait, is almost always caught. Although when captured in this manner, the animal struggles, diving and swimming about in its efforts to escape, it never cuts off a foot in order to obtain its liberty ; probably because it is drowned before it has had time to think of this method of saving itself from the hunter. When trapping under other circumstances, the trap is placed within five or six inches of the shore, and about the same distance below the surface of the water, secured and baited as usual. If caught, the Beavers now and then cut off the foot by which they are held, in order to make their escape.

A singular habit of the Beaver was mentioned to us by the trapper, PREVOST, of which we do not recollect having before heard. He said that when two Beaver lodges are in the vicinity of each other, the animals proceed from one of them at night to a certain spot, deposit their castoreum, and then return to their lodge. The Beavers in the other lodge, scenting this, repair to the same spot, cover it over with earth, and then make a similar deposit on the top. This operation is repeated by each party alternately, until quite a mound is raised, sometimes to the height of four or five feet.

The strong musky substance contained in the glands of the Beaver, is called castoreum ; by trappers, bark-stone ; with this the traps are baited.

A small stick, four or five inches long, is chewed at one end, and that part dipped in the castoreum, which is generally kept in a small horn. The stick is then placed with the anointed end above water, and the other end downwards. The Beaver can smell the castoreum at least one hundred yards, makes towards it at once, and is generally caught.

Where Beavers have not been disturbed or hunted, and are abundant, they rise nearly half out of water at the first smell of the castoreum, and become so excited that they are heard to cry aloud, and breathe hard to catch the odour as it floats on the air. A good trapper used to catch about eighty Beavers in the autumn, sixty or seventy in the spring, and upwards of three hundred in the summer, in the mountains; taking occasionally as many as five hundred in one year. Sixty or seventy Beaver skins are required to make a pack weighing one hundred pounds; which when sent to a good market, is worth, even now, from three to four hundred dollars.

The Indians occasionally destroy Beaver-dams in order to capture these animals, and have good dogs to aid them in this purpose. The Mountain Indians, however, are not trappers.

Sometimes the Indians of the Prairies break open Beaver lodges in the summer-time, as, during winter, they are usually frozen hard. The Beaver is becoming very scarce in the Rocky Mountains, so much so, that if a trapper now secures one hundred in the winter and spring hunt, he is considered fortunate.

Formerly, when the fur was high in price, and the animals abundant, the trading companies were wont to send as many as thirty or forty men, each with from six to twelve traps and two good horses: when arrived at a favourable spot to begin their work, these men erected a camp, and each one sought alone for his game, the skins of which he brought to camp, where a certain number of men always remained to stretch and dry them.

The trappers subsist principally upon the animals they kill, having a rifle and a pair of pistols with them. After a successful hunt, on meeting each other at the camp, they have a "frolic" as they term it.

Some old and wary Beavers are so cunning, that on finding the bait they cover it over, as if it were on the ground, with sticks, &c., deposit their own castoreum on the top, and manage to remove the trap. This is often the case when the Beaver has been hunted previously. In places where they have remained undisturbed, but few escape the experienced trapper. The trappers are not very unfrequently killed by the Indians, and their occupation is one involving toil and hazard. They rarely gain a competence for their old age, to say nothing of a fortune, and in fact

all the articles they are of necessity obliged to purchase in the "Indian country," cost them large sums, as their price is greatly increased by the necessary charges for transportation to the remote regions of the West.

When at Fort Union, we saw a trapper who had just returned from an unfortunate expedition to the mountains; his two horses had been stolen, and he lost his gun and rifle in coming down the river in a slender canoe, and was obliged to make for the shore, dig a hole wherein to deposit the few furs he had left, and travel several hundred miles on foot with only berries and roots for his food. He was quite naked when he reached the Fort.

The Beaver which we brought from Boston to New-York was fed principally on potatoes and apples, which he contrived to peel as if assisted with a knife, although his lower incisors were his only substitute for that useful implement. While at this occupation the animal was seated on his rump, in the manner of a ground-hog, marmot, or squirrel, and looked like a very large wood-chuck, using his fore-feet, as squirrels and marmots are wont to do.

This Beaver was supplied every day with a large basin filled with water, and every morning his ordure was found to have been deposited therein. He generally slept on a good bed of straw in his cage, but one night having been taken out and placed at the back of the yard in a place where we thought he would be secure, we found next morning to our surprise that he had gnawed a large hole through a stout pine door which separated him from that part of the yard nearest the house, and had wandered about until he fell into the space excavated and walled up outside the kitchen window. Here he was quite entrapped, and having no other chance of escape from this pit, into which he had unluckily fallen, he gnawed away at the window-sill and the sash, on which his teeth took such effect that on an examination of the premises we found that a carpenter and several dollars' worth of work were needed, to repair damages. When turned loose in the yard in the day-time he would at times slap his tail twice or thrice on the brick pavement, after which he elevated this member from the ground, and walked about in an extremely awkward manner. He fell ill soon after we had received him, and when killed, was examined by Dr. JAMES TRUDEAU, who found that he would shortly have died of an organic disease.

It is stated by some authors that the Beaver feeds on fish. We doubt whether he possesses this habit, as we on several occasions placed fish before those we saw in captivity, and although they were not very

choice in their food, and devoured any kind of vegetable, and even bread, they in every case suffered fish to remain untouched in their cages.

The food of this species, in a state of nature, consists of the bark of several kinds of trees and shrubs, and of bulbous and other roots. It is particularly fond of the bark of the birch, (*Betula*;) the cotton-wood, (*Populus*;) and of several species of willow, (*Salix*;) it feeds also with avidity on the roots of some aquatic plants, especially on those of the *Nuphair luteum*. In summer, when it sometimes wanders to a distance from the water, it eats berries, leaves, and various kinds of herbage.

The young are born in the months of April and May; those produced in the latter month are the most valuable, as they grow rapidly and become strong and large, not being checked in their growth, which is often the case with those that are born earlier in the season. Some females have been taken in July, with young, but such an event is of rare occurrence. The eyes of the young Beaver are open at birth. The dam at times brings forth as many as seven at a litter, but from two to five is the more usual number. The young remain with the mother for at least a year, and not unfrequently two years, and when they are in a place of security, where an abundance of food is to be procured, ten or twelve Beavers dwell together.

About a month after their birth, the young first follow the mother, and accompany her in the water; they continue to suckle some time longer, although if caught at that tender age, they can be raised without any difficulty, by feeding them with tender branches of willows and other trees. Many Beavers from one to two months old are caught in traps set for old ones. The gravid female keeps aloof from the male until after the young have begun to follow her about. She resides in a separate lodge till the month of August, when the whole family once more dwell together.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

According to RICHARDSON the Beaver exists on the banks of the Mackensie, which is the largest river that discharges itself into the Polar Sea: he speaks of its occurring as high as $67\frac{1}{2}$ or 68° north latitude, and states that its range from east to west extends from one side of the continent to the other. It is found in Labrador, Newfoundland, and Canada, and also in some parts of Maine and Massachusetts. There can be no doubt that the Beaver formerly existed in every portion of the United States. CATESBY noticed it as found in Carolina, and the local names of Beaver Creek, Beaver Dam, &c., now existing, are evidences that the animal was once known to occupy the places designated by these com-

pounds of its name. We have, indeed, examined several localities, some of which are not seventy miles from Charleston, where we were assured the remains of old Beaver dams existed thirty-five years ago. BARTRAM, in his visit to Florida in 1778, (Travels, p. 281,) speaks of it as at that time existing in Georgia and East Florida. It has since then become a scarce species in all the Atlantic States, and in some of them has been entirely extirpated. It, however, may still be found in several of the less cultivated portions of many of our States. Dr. DEKAY was informed that in 1815 a party of St. Regis Indians obtained three hundred Beavers in a few weeks, in St. Lawrence county, N. Y. In 1827 we were shown several Beaver-houses in the north-western part of New-York, where, although we did not see the animals, we observed signs of their recent labours. DEKAY supposes, (N. Y. Fauna, p. 78,) that the Beaver does not at present exist south of certain localities in the state of New-York. This is an error. Only two years ago we received a foot of one, the animal having been caught not twenty miles from Ashville in North Carolina. We saw in 1839 several Beaver-lodges a few miles west of Peter's Mountain in Virginia, on the head waters of the Tennessee River, and observed a Beaver swimming across the stream. There is a locality within twenty miles of Milledgeville, Georgia, where Beavers are still found. Our friend, Major LOGAN, residing in Dallas county, Alabama, informed us that they exist on his plantation, and that within the last few years a storekeeper in the immediate vicinity purchased twenty or thirty skins annually, from persons residing in his neighbourhood.

We were invited to visit this portion of Alabama to study the habits of the Beaver, and to obtain specimens. Some years ago we shot one near Henderson, Kentucky, in Canoe Creek; it was regarded as a curiosity, and probably none have been seen in that section of the country since. We have heard that the Beaver was formerly found near New-Orleans, but we never saw one in Louisiana. This species exists on the Arkansas River, in the streams running from the Rocky Mountains, and along their whole range on both sides; we have traced it as far as the northern boundaries of Mexico, and it is no doubt found much farther south along the mountain range. Thus it appears that the Beaver once existed on the whole continent of North America, north of the Tropic of Cancer, and may still occur, although in greatly diminished numbers, in many localities in the wild and uncultivated portions of our country; we are nevertheless under the impression, that in the Southern States the Beaver was seldom found in those ranges of country where the musk-rat does not exist; hence we think it could never have been abundant in the alluvial lands of Carolina and Georgia, as the localities

where its dams formerly existed are on pure running streams, and not on the sluggish rivers near the sea-coast.

GENERAL REMARKS.

It is doubted by some authors whether the American Beaver is identical with the Beaver which exists in the north of Europe ; F. CUVIER, KUHL, and others, described it under the names of *C. Americanus*, *C. Canadensis*, &c. From the amphibious habits of this animal, and its northern range on both continents, strong arguments in favour of the identity of the American and European species might be maintained, even without adopting the theory of the former connexion of the two adjacent continents. We carefully compared many specimens (American and European) in the museums of Europe, and did not perceive any difference between them, except that the American specimens were a very little larger than the European. We saw a living Beaver in Denmark that had been obtained in the north of Sweden ; in its general appearance and actions it did not differ from those we have seen in confinement in America. It has been argued, however, that the European animal differs in its habits from the American, and that along the banks of the Weser, the Rhone, and the Danube, the Beavers are not gregarious, and that they burrow in the banks like the musk-rat. But change of habit may be the result of altered circumstances, and is not in itself sufficient to constitute a species. Our wild pigeon (*Columba migratoria*) formerly bred in communities in the Northern States ; we once saw one of their breeding places near Lake Champlain, where there were more than a hundred nests on a single tree. They still breed in that portion of the country, but the persecutions of man have compelled them to adopt a different habit, and two nests are now seldom found on a tree.

The banks of the European rivers, (on which the Beaver still remains although scarcely more than a straggler can be found along them now,) have been cultivated to the water's edge, and necessity, not choice, has driven the remnant of the Beaver tribe to the change of habit we have referred to. But if the accounts of travellers in the north of Europe are to be relied on, the habits of the Beaver are in the uncultivated portions of that country precisely similar to those exhibited by the animal in Canada. We consider the account of these animals given us by HEARNE, (p. 234,) as very accurate. He speaks of their peculiarly constructed huts, their living in communities, and their general habits. In the account of Swedish Lapland, by Professor LEEMS, published in Danish and Latin, Copenhagen, 1767, we have the following notice of the European species ; (we quote from the English translation in PINKER-

ton's Voyages, vol. i., p. 419.) "The Beaver is instinctively led to build his house near the banks of lakes and rivers. He saws with his teeth birch trees, with which the building is constructed; with his teeth he drags the wood along to the place destined for building his habitation; in this manner one piece of timber is carried after another, where they choose. At the lake or river where their house is to be built, they lay birch stocks or trunks, covered with their bark, in the bottom itself, and forming a foundation, they complete the rest of the building, with so much art and ingenuity as to excite the admiration of the beholders. The house itself is of a round and arched figure, equalling in its circumference the ordinary hut of a Laplander. In this house the floor is for a bed, covered with branches of trees, not in the very bottom, but a little above, near the edge of a river or lake; so that between the foundation and flooring on which the dwelling is supported, there is formed as it were a cell, filled with water, in which the stalks of the birch tree are put up; on the bark of this, the Beaver family who inhabit this mansion feed. If there are more families under one roof, besides the laid flooring, another resembling the former is built a little above, which you may not improperly name a second story in the building. The roof of the dwelling consists of branches very closely compacted, and projects out far over the water. You have now, reader, a house consisting and laid out in a cellar, a flooring, a hypocaust, a ceiling, and a roof, raised by a brute animal, altogether destitute of reason, and also of the builder's art, with no less ingenuity than commodiousness."

It should be observed that LEEMS, who was a missionary in that country, gave this statement as related to him by the Laplanders who reside in the vicinity of the Beavers, and not from his own personal observations. This account, though mixed up with some extravagancies and the usual vulgar errors, (which we have omitted,) certainly proves that the habits of the Beaver in the northern part of Europe are precisely similar to those of that animal on the northern continent of America.



Audubon, John James and Bachman, John. 1851. "Castor Filler ivar Americanus), American Beaver, [Pl. XLVI]." *The quadrupeds of North America* 1, 347–359. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.322387>.

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