

# Field Museum News

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## NORTHWEST COAST INDIAN AND ESKIMO EXHIBITS AUGMENTED AND IMPROVED

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The only exhibit in the United States of archaeological material of the old Bering Sea and Punuk groups of Eskimos, who preceded the modern Eskimos in the Bering Sea region, has been placed on view in Hall 10 at Field Museum. This exhibit results from collections made by the John Borden-Field Museum Alaska-Arctic Expedition, and material received by exchange from the United States National Museum at Washington, D.C. The earliest sites known of the Punuk culture date back about 1,500 years. The culture persisted with gradual changes almost until the time of the first European contact with Eskimos.

This exhibit is the newest feature in Hall 10, devoted to the ethnology of the Indians of the Northwest Coast and of the Eskimos, which has recently been completely reinstalled. The exhibits have been rearranged, installed on light-colored screens, and equipped with revised labels embodying the latest information. Much new material has been added.

There is displayed a notable collection of Eskimo art, including many fine examples of carved bone, ivory and wood. A new feature is found among the Eskimo costumes, which are now shown on life-size models with portrait heads representing accurately physical types of various localities.

The hall contains an exhibit of Northwest Coast art, and ethnological collections representing the Tsimshian, Kwakiutl, Bella Coola, Nootka, Puget Sound, Tlingit, and

Haida tribes. The Kwakiutl collections are particularly noteworthy, including masks and other paraphernalia of the secret societies taking part in the spectacular Winter Ceremonial, the principal religious ceremony.

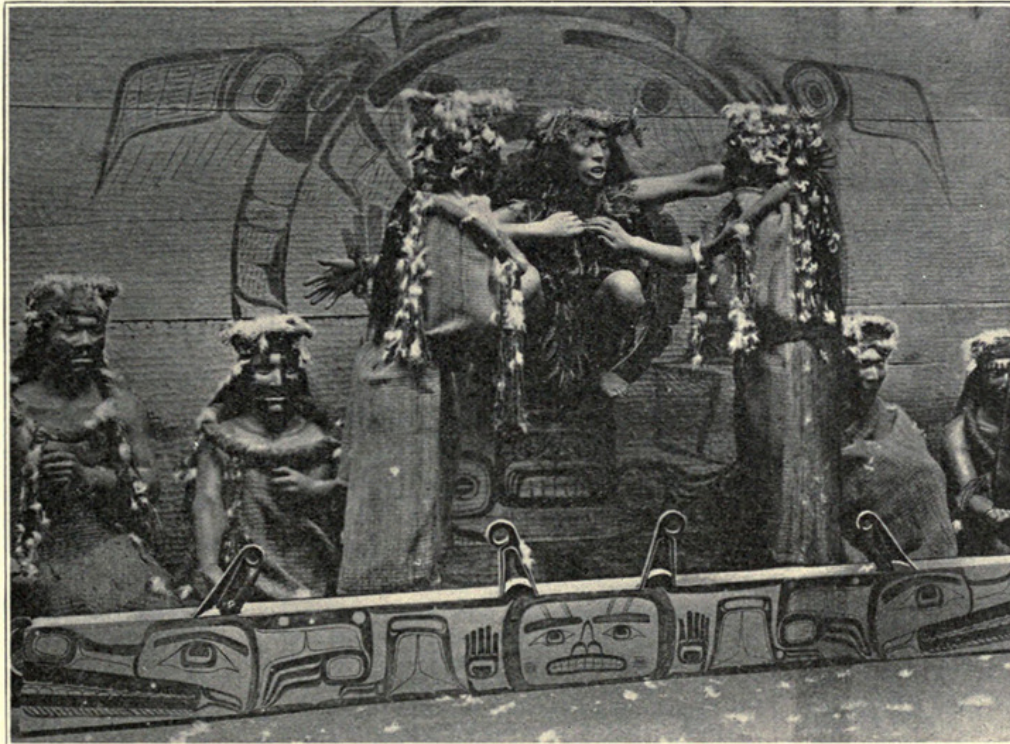
Especially striking is a life-size group representing the Hamatsa or Cannibal Dance of the Kwakiutl, shown in the accompanying illustration. The men of the Hamatsa society are under the protection of the Great Cannibal Spirit, in the belief of these people. When the time for initia-

with the face of the Cannibal Spirit or his servant, the Raven. Musicians beat on drums; suddenly, the initiate appears in the mouth of the painting decked in hemlock branches. He is supposed to be in search of a victim to devour. There are two dances, both represented at the Museum by life-size figures in adjoining cases. In the first the Hamatsa is supposed to be looking for human flesh to eat. He moves about frenziedly in a squatting position, arms outstretched, head lifted to seek a corpse, body trembling violently. His eyes

are wide open, his lips pushed forward, and he utters wild cries. In long leaps he makes the circuit of the room threatening to attack the spectators. In the second dance he appears wearing the mask of a raven. Snapping the huge bill of the bird, he impersonates the slave of the Cannibal Spirit.

The Tlingit and Haida are the best carvers on the Northwest Coast, and the collection of their art possesses high merit. Of unique interest among the Nootka collections is a "court- ing stick" consisting of a bundle of red cedar bark and white feathers attached to a staff, which was set up in front of a girl's home by her lover to convey a sort of "be my Valentine" message. There is also a "courting mask," representing a human face with a coil of rope around it,

which was worn by a young man in search of a wife. There is shown, too, a clever spinning fish-lure the Nootka invented, which was submerged deep in the water with a long pole and then released. The lure would rise to the surface with a spinning motion, and the fish would follow it. As they came into sight the Indian fishermen speared them.



Cannibal Dance of the Kwakiutl

In this life-size group in Hall 10 the Hamatsa is seen making his appearance for the dance which symbolizes the search for human flesh to devour.

tion of a new member approaches, the candidate disappears into the forest, to be with the Great Spirit and learn the songs and mystic rites of the order. At the time of the Winter Ceremonial he returns dancing, and goes to a room set apart at the house where the ritual takes place. The front of this room is painted

but the value of this one is increased many times by the fact that the plants all belong to three families with whose study Mr. Standley is particularly engaged, the great majority of them to the Rubiaceae or coffee family. The study and careful naming of the material, which required several weeks, revealed several species hitherto unknown to science, and others not represented previously in Field Museum's collections. This remarkable sending of Rubiaceae gives Field Museum a representation of the Brazilian plants of this vast family such as certainly

is not equaled at the present time in any other herbarium of the United States.

### Tibetan "Thunderbolts" Shown

Tibetan "thunderbolts" with which to invoke the wrath of heaven are on exhibition in Hall 32. These are emblems of the god Indra, made of bronze in a form symbolizing lightning strokes. With a bell in their left hand and one of these thunderbolts in their right, the Tibetan lamas call for the destruction of demons and opponents of Buddhism.

### Notable Addition to Herbarium

Field Museum recently received from Dr. F. C. Hoehne of the Biological Institute of Sao Paulo, Brazil, an extraordinary sending of Brazilian plants, which Associate Curator Paul C. Standley states is the most important and valuable single plant collection he has ever had the privilege of studying. It consists of 1,100 sheets of well prepared and labeled specimens, about two-thirds of which are for deposit in the Museum Herbarium.

A miscellaneous plant collection as large as this would be important and valuable,





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