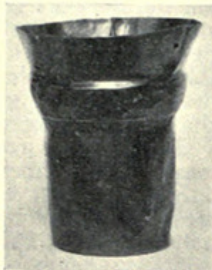


## ANCIENT PERUVIAN GOLD BEAKER

By J. ERIC THOMPSON

Assistant Curator of  
Central and South American Archaeology

In memory of the late Richard T. Crane, Jr., Benefactor and for many years Trustee of Field Museum, Mrs. Richard T. Crane has presented a very fine gold beaker to Field Museum. This weighs just under five and one-half ounces troy and is of twenty-karat gold. It is undecorated save for a narrow band in repoussé near the rim. This decoration and the beaker shape clearly indicate that the vessel was manufactured by the ancient inhabitants of Peru. A gold vessel almost a duplicate of the Crane beaker was found at Pachacamac on the Peruvian coast, but this beaker shape is typical of the highland region from Cuzco to Tiahuanaco. It is very probable that both vessels were manufactured in the latter region.



**Gold Beaker**  
From ancient Peru.  
Presented by Mrs. R.  
T. Crane.

The Crane beaker is an important addition to Field Museum's collections, for, despite excellent gold collections from Colombia and Panama, the gold work of Peru has been little represented in the Museum. Much of the enormous gold treasure of the Incas was melted down by Pizarro and his followers, while an immense quantity of gold and silver objects was hidden by the Peruvians to avoid its seizure by the Spaniards. The secret of the location of this treasure is lost. Consequently Peruvian gold ornaments are rare in all museum collections.

The Crane beaker may have been used for drinking chicha, a beverage resembling beer, but made from maize. Its original owner was undoubtedly a person of considerable importance, who probably lived some time between A.D. 1200 and 1500.

The beaker will be placed on exhibition very shortly.

## Dogs and Wolves Exhibited

All the more important species of larger dogs (exclusive of domestic varieties) and wolves of the world are included in a case just installed among the systematic mammal exhibits in Hall 15. The collection covers the main divisions of the whole family Canidae with the exception of the foxes, which are to be shown in a separate case.

Among the more interesting species shown are the northern gray wolf and the coyote of North America, the long-legged red-maned wolf and the crab-eating dog of Brazil, the spotted hunting dog, red Abyssinian wolf and two species of jackals from Africa, and the small reddish wolf called the dhole, which inhabits Asia.

## GOLD MINED BY A DUCK

An interesting example of placer gold mined by a duck at Cold Spring-on-Hudson, New York, has been presented to the Museum by Frederick Blaschke and is now exhibited with the placer gold in Frederick J. V. Skiff Hall (Hall 37). The specimen consists of particles of gravel mixed with flakes of gold. The gold occurred in a deposit of glacial gravel and was appropriated by a duck as a part of the gravel he needed to assist his digestion. The duck demonstrated more keenness of vision than of intellect

for the soft particles of gold are decidedly inefficient grinding agents for use in a bird's crop. Mr. Blaschke found the gold in the crop of the duck.

The ice of the continental glacier that covered the north of the continent during the glacial period originated in the north and traveled south. On its way, when passing over a deposit of gold ore, it sometimes picked up a few grains of gold and carried them south mixed with the clay, sand, and rock fragments with which the ice was loaded. When the ice melted and dropped its load to form the mantle of glacial drift which covers the northern United States it also dropped the gold. No worth while concentrations of gold of this origin have ever been found nor are any likely to be, but a few flakes have been found in numerous places in the moraines.

—H.W.N.

## BIRTHSTONES

The origin of the custom of designating birthstones according to the month in which a person was born has been traced back some 6,000 years. It had its beginnings in ancient beliefs in magic, according to historians. The story goes that about 4,000 B.C. the high priest of Memphis wore a breastplate made up of twelve small objects representing Egyptian hieroglyphics. Priests continued to wear similar breastplates. Later, ancient Hebrews, who had been prisoners in Egypt, made a similar breastplate for Aaron, their own high priest. It was composed of twelve large gems, on each of which was engraved the name of one of the tribes of Israel. It was handed down from one priest to the next, and as it grew older its magic powers were believed to increase. As time went on, the twelve stones, originally associated with the twelve tribes of Israel, became associated with the twelve angels of Paradise, the twelve foundations of Heaven, the twelve apostles, and finally with the twelve months of the year. From the last developed the birthstone idea. The wearing of one's birthstone originated in Poland some time during the seventeenth or eighteenth century.

Examples of the birthstones for each month of the year are on exhibition in H. N. Higinbotham Hall (Hall 31). The recognized list, according to Dr. Oliver C. Farrington, Curator of Geology, is as follows: January, garnet; February, amethyst; March, bloodstone or aquamarine; April, diamond; May, emerald; June, pearl; July, ruby; August, sardonyx or peridot; September, sapphire; October, opal; November, topaz; and December, turquoise.

In the middle ages it was thought that each gem had a certain power over its wearer. A diamond was supposed to give courage; an amber necklace to cure a sore throat; a cat's-eye to protect from witchcraft; an amethyst to make its owner shrewd in business.

## Huge Bison Bull Shown

The unusually large and magnificent specimen of American bison bull presented to the Museum a few months ago by Colonel Wallis Huidekoper, owner of the American Ranch at Twodot, Montana, has been mounted and placed on exhibition in the collection of horned and hoofed mammals in George M. Pullman Hall (Hall 13). The specimen is from a large herd kept on Colonel Huidekoper's ranch. It weighed about 2,300 pounds when living. It was prepared for exhibition by Staff Taxidermist Julius Friesser.

## SEPTEMBER GUIDE-LECTURE TOURS

Conducted tours of exhibits, under the guidance of staff lecturers, are made every afternoon at 3 P.M., except Saturdays, Sundays, and certain holidays. Following is the schedule of subjects and dates for September:

Friday, September 1—Prehistoric Hall.

Week beginning September 4: Monday—Labor Day holiday, no tour; Tuesday—General Tour; Wednesday—Animal Groups; Thursday—General Tour; Friday—Story of Man.

Week beginning September 11: Monday—Plant Halls; Tuesday—General Tour; Wednesday—Moon, Meteorites, and Minerals; Thursday—General Tour; Friday—Pewter, Jade, and Gems.

Week beginning September 18: Monday—Marine Life; Tuesday—General Tour; Wednesday—Unusual Plants; Thursday—General Tour; Friday—Chinese Exhibits.

Week beginning September 25: Monday—Reptiles, Past and Present; Tuesday—General Tour; Wednesday—Story of Coal and Oil; Thursday—General Tour; Friday—Birds of Many Lands.

Persons wishing to participate should apply at North Entrance. Tours are free and no gratuities are to be proffered. A new schedule will appear each month in FIELD MUSEUM NEWS. Guide-lecturers' 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 Mrs. Richard T. Crane—a pre-Columbian gold beaker, Peru; from Philip M. Chancellor—49 ethnological specimens of the Yaqui tribe, Mexico; from Companhia Ford Industrial do Brasil—28 herbarium specimens and 9 wood specimens, Brazil; from Mrs. Ynes Mexia—55 herbarium specimens, Brazil; from School of Forestry, Yale University—84 herbarium specimens, Colombia and British Honduras; from Darsie A. Green—2 geodes, Oklahoma; from Paul R. Hedburn—7 fossil leaves, Illinois; from George Nelson—7 specimens native copper, Michigan; from Stewart Springer—a rare shark, Mississippi; from Professor H. W. Norris—5 shark heads, Mississippi; from Metropolitan Museum of Natural History, Nanking—22 small mammal skins with 15 skulls, China; from John H. Robinson—5 snakes and 2 lizards, Missouri; from G. C. Allen—skull and horns of white-tailed deer, Alabama; from J. J. Mooney—2 mouse skeletons, Illinois; from The Charleston Museum—7 grass pickerels, South Carolina; from John G. Shedd Aquarium—105 fish specimens, various localities; from Martin Petersen—a fish; from Dillman S. Bullock—57 frogs, 87 lizards, and 14 snakes, Chile.

## NEW MEMBERS

The following persons were elected to membership in Field Museum during the period from July 17 to August 15:

## Corresponding Members

Dr. B. P. Georges Hochreutiner

## Associate Members

Mrs. W. Woodbridge Dickinson, Mrs. Abraham Harris, Joseph J. Hornung, Herman C. Nebel.

## Annual Members

Miss Minnie Abel, Mrs. George W. Billig, James H. Buell, Mrs. Stanley Clague, Sr., Sigmund W. David, Charles C. Holter, Mrs. Pearl Ecker Hubbell, S. C. Jennings, F. W. Kaempfer, Jr., Charles S. McCoy, Granville Rice, Otto Saueremann, Mrs. Thomas G. Sexton, Harry W. Solomon, Mrs. Alfred Stern, Mrs. Abner J. Stilwell, E. A. Webber.

## Distinguished Visitors

Sir John Flett, K.B.E., of the Geological Survey of Great Britain, visited Field Museum August 9 to study the methods of the Department of Geology and of the N. W. Harris Public School Extension, for comparison with the work of the Survey's London Museum. W. Campbell-Smith of the Mineral Division of the British Museum, who is studying exhibition methods of American museums, is another distinguished visitor of the month.





1933. "Birthstones." *Field Museum news* 4(9), 4-4.

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