

the Black Pottery Culture have been found and a number of them have been excavated.

The Black Pottery Culture (sometimes called Lung-shan after the name of its place of discovery) was developed by Neolithic farmers, who often surrounded their villages with walls of pounded earth and established them in clusters in river valleys. This culture belongs to the great plain of eastern China as shown by tiny black pots placed on the map where Black Pottery sites are known. These people had learned to use the potter's wheel and made a distinctive jet-black pottery, in addition to ordinary gray and brown wares. Usually they decorated their pottery only by incised lines. They specialized in making tools from shell, although they also made the more common stone and bone tools.

The Black Pottery Culture was closely related to the succeeding culture of the Bronze Age. Certain of the most distinctive habits of the Bronze Age Chinese were already practised in a simple form by the people who lived in the Black Pottery villages. One of these traits was building city walls of pounded earth. To make this type of wall wooden frames were put in position and earth was dumped between the frames and pounded down until it was exceedingly hard. Walls made by this method could be built quite high and sometimes endured for centuries. The wall at Ch'eng-tzu-yai can still be distinguished.

Another trait was fortune-telling. The Bronze Age Chinese predicted future events, or tried to learn the outcome of their plans by consulting their ancestors. To do so they inscribed a question on the shoulder bone of an ox or on a piece of tortoise-shell. Then they applied heat to the other side of the bone. This produced a crack upon the face. The direction in which the crack ran was believed to indicate a positive or negative answer to the query. It is due to this practice of divination, known as scapulimancy, that we know as much as we do about the Shang people at Anyang, because great piles of used oracle bones have been discovered and translated. Thus we know what the Shang people worried about, and what was foremost in their minds. The Black Pottery people also practiced scapulimancy in a primitive form. There are a number of other features that link the Black Pottery people and the Bronze Age people together.

When evidences of the Painted Pottery and Black Pottery variations of Neolithic culture have been found in the same excavated site with evidences of the Bronze Age the sequence always is: painted pottery near the bottom, black pottery next above, and bronze remains nearest the top. This proves that in those regions where the three cultures existed in sequence the Painted Pottery Culture was oldest, the Black Pottery came next, and the Bronze Age was the latest.

This chronological information is illustrated in the second exhibit by steps painted in different colors—green, aquamarine, gray, and salmon. On each step ancient pottery typical of the period is shown, with jars of the Basic Neolithic culture at the bottom, of the Painted Pottery Culture and of the Black Pottery Culture in order, and of the Bronze Age at the top.

Some of the painted pottery turned out by the Neolithic people of northwest China was decidedly handsome. Field Museum is fortunate in having recently acquired ten of these unusual jars, all presumably more than 3,500 years old, and they are exhibited in the third of the new installations. Since a spiral pattern is common on some of the best painted pottery, this motif was chosen for the layout. The jars are arranged against a large spiral of aquamarine color that was chosen to complement the orange cast of the pottery itself. Some visitors have considered the effect dramatic.

CONSERVATION BRIEFS

IV. Plants

By PAUL C. STANDLEY
CURATOR OF THE HERBARIUM

Despite gasoline rationing, thousands of people will somehow go to and tramp through the countryside of the Chicago region during the next few weeks to enjoy the perennial miracle of the procession of spring flowers. The thickets of dogwood and crabapples, the fields of buttercups, dandelions, Indian paint brushes, and mustard, and in the woods the more delicate but no less brilliant colonies of violets, wake robins, Dutchman's breeches, spring beauty, bluebells, lady's slippers, hepaticas, and bloodroot, with dozens of others, afford a display of fresh and beautiful color such as scarcely is surpassed anywhere.

Fortunate is the Chicago region to retain, in spite of its situation in one of the most intensively cultivated districts of the United States, such areas as the Cook County Forest Preserves and the Indiana State Park, where native plants still flourish in abundance. Equally fine displays may be seen in woodlands under private ownership. Especially noteworthy are the shores of Lake Michigan near Waukegan, an area unique in Illinois. The only threat to permanent preservation and increase of these features that add so much beauty to a prairie region lies in the destruction of wild flowers and decorative shrubs by thoughtless travelers in the country.

The loveliness of the early flowers is a constant temptation to lay hands upon them. Those people who appreciate natural beauty are mostly persons of good manners, and it is only through thoughtlessness that they sometimes cause great damage.

Most of the spring flowers wilt quickly

when picked, and never revive even when placed in water. Left alone they will continue to adorn the woodlands, where their beauty finds its natural and best setting. Leave the dogwood and crabapple, the hawthorn, and especially the more delicate and rare woodland plants where you may enjoy them again next year. Thus they will be able to spread by their roots or by seeds. If you must pick flowers, gather only blue violets, dandelions, mustards, etc.

Protected by an intelligent and appreciative public, our present very extensive native vegetation, whose beauty began to be appreciated only when on the verge of extinction, will undoubtedly expand itself.

Our native plants have yielded many products of importance to Man—to the aboriginal Indians, to the early settlers, and even to us of the present day. They include fruits like the crabapple and sand cherry, nuts such as beech and hickory nuts and walnuts, pot herbs or salad plants like curly dock, dandelion, and pusley. Perhaps among them there yet may be found some that will provide wartime substitutes for plant products which the country now urgently needs. A near relative of our dandelion is said to be providing the Soviet Republics with some of their sorely needed rubber. Other Illinois plants might well furnish fibers or paper material. If our native plants can supply some of these needs, the most ardent conservationist will be happy to see even our rarer plants mobilized to help defeat our enemies.

(Next issue:—*Conservation of Reptiles.*)

NEW MEMBERS

The following persons became Members of Field Museum during the period from April 1 to May 10:

Associate Members

Miss Maud F. Back, Marvin H. Coleman, Anthony S. Holub, Michael L. Layden, Justus L. Schlichting, Robert J. Speer, Herman Spertus.

Annual Members

Dr. Bernard Auerbach, Miss Mary Breckinridge, Charles Borin, Harry M. Brostoff, Robert C. Brown, Jr., Harry J. Cogswell, C. T. Collett, Dr. T. J. Coogan, Dr. Beulah Cushman, Edward Decker, Lawrence D. Dibble, David Gordon, Walter C. Green, Mrs. Emil J. Guttsell, G. C. Hass, Miss Lily Heffernan, Stuart Hertz, Mrs. Joseph Huska, Walter J. Jarratt, John B. Jarrett, S. E. Johanigman, Carl Ray Latham, Charles C. Livingston, R. R. Lusk, Frederick Mayer, Dr. Gertrude McKeever, Karl B. Miller, Ernest E. Moll, Dr. E. M. Moore, Nelson S. Moore, Dr. Marguerite Oliver, Arno H. Phillips, Louis S. Platt, Mrs. J. A. O. Preus, Edwin G. Rellihi, George J. Renaldi, Mrs. Bartlett Richards, Mrs. Oscar J. Ruh, William R. Sachse, Wallace B. Shlopach, Harry Silverman, Dr. Charles G. Spirrisson, Ray Snyder, Jan Taeyaerts, Dr. Edward C. Wach, Mrs. Marshall A. Waters, Frank D. Weber, H. J. Weber, Arthur A. Wolf.



Standley, Paul Carpenter. 1943. "Conservation Briefs IV. Plants." *Field Museum news* 14(6), 5-5.

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