

behavioral sciences

ANTHROPOLOGY

Stone Age tribe rediscovered

A Stone Age tribe, apparently the most primitive Indian culture left in the New World, has been rediscovered after 30 years of lost contact.

The Wama people, who probably number no more than 60 or 70 members, are now located in a remote corner of Surinam, just north of Brazil. They were originally found in 1937 by a Dutch expedition, but the nomadic, elusive tribe subsequently disappeared.

Ivan L. Schoen from the West Indies Mission in Surinam, hearing of a chance encounter with five very primitive Indians, was able to find a tribe of 28 people and stay one night in their camp. In the January issue of *NATURAL HISTORY*, Schoen describes the Wama as true Stone Age people, without agriculture, whose tools are mostly crude stone axes. They also use bows and arrows, tipped in curare. The young Wama man who greeted Schoen's expedition was short, heavily muscled, with skin almost white and incredibly dirty, reports Schoen. Women wore only aprons of seeds.

SOCIOLOGY

Black parents not committed to bussing

Black parents in Boston care less about school integration than about quality education and are not committed to Boston's bussing program, reports a joint Harvard-Boston University study.

"If the black people in Roxbury gain a measure of control over their schools, many of them will probably remove their children from nearly all-white schools outside of Roxbury, since few of them have ever believed that black children had to attend schools with white children in order to learn," according to Dr. James E. Teele of Harvard and Dr. Clara Mayo of Boston University. The city now has a bussing program called Operation Exodus.

The authors note that many black parents who helped initiate the integration program are now actively working to gain a voice over school administration in their own community. This may be a reaction to prejudice in the white schools or frustration over the quality of neighborhood schools. In any case, the survey team warns that any whites interested in integration will have to work to reduce acts of prejudice, reported by about 20 percent of the black children in white schools.

DRUG USE

New pot for research

The National Institute of Mental Health will develop its own supply of marijuana and the active synthesized chemical for use in research, now stymied by lack of resources.

Investigators have had to get their pot from confiscated supplies at the Bureau of Narcotics. This is not only difficult; often the drug is low quality. Good research on the effects of marijuana requires a supply of high quality material with known amounts of the active chemical, THC.

In announcing the NIMH plan, director Stanley F.

Yolles said that the lack of a standardized product is a "primary reason for the relative lack of real knowledge about the long-term psychological and physical effects of marijuana usage."

PSYCHIATRY

Out of place in court

Psychiatrists have no business in a courtroom. They don't know what insanity is, and neither do lawyers, says the well-known psychiatrist, Dr. Karl Menninger.

"The minister, the rabbi or the town philosopher know as much about right and wrong as we do. Why not ask them?" Dr. Menninger commented in an interview with *ROCHE REPORT*, a newsletter issued by Roche Laboratories.

But once the offender is convicted, a psychiatrist can very well make recommendations on how he should be handled so that both society and offender benefit. "Putting the ordinary offender in jail does not change him for the better—if anything, it changes him for the worse," says Dr. Menninger. The psychiatrist believes that penalties serve a good purpose, when used for some deliberate end and not for vengeance. A shop-lifter, for instance, could be placed under parole, given training or therapy and made to pay back the cost of court fees, plus stolen items. Sent to jail, the larcenist sits around thinking of ways to get away the next time.

In his comments, Dr. Menninger reflects a growing concern over the misuse of psychiatry in courts where psychiatrists are asked to pass judgments on a man's degree of guilt. Many feel this trend will damage both psychiatry and the judicial process.

PSYCHOLOGY

Bystanders act better alone

Lucky is the man caught in an emergency with only one witness present. He will probably be helped. But five or more witnesses are likely to stand around, unmoved, unsure and unhelpful.

Dr. John M. Darley, Princeton University psychologist, and Dr. Bibb Latané, of Ohio State, have reached a grim equation after a three-year's investigation into the way people respond to emergencies: As the number of witnesses increases, their readiness to respond to a cry for help dramatically decreases.

The research was sparked by the 1964 Kitty Genovese murder in New York, which took place before 38 passive observers.

Simulating the Genovese incident in a laboratory, the psychologists discovered that 81 percent of their subjects gave help when they thought they were alone with the supposed victim. But in groups of five, only 31 percent reacted. In several different emergency situations, it was the same: people in a crowd readily pass the buck of responsibility. Even with only two witnesses the chance that a victim will be helped is reduced markedly.

"A crowd can thus force inaction on its members, by implying, through its passivity and apparent indifference, that an event is not an emergency," the authors conclude.