

ARCHAEOLOGY

Venezuelan Bat God

► **BLACK WINGS** of the bat god hovered over America's ancient civilization in Venezuela.

The significant part this deity played before white men first came to the New World is revealed from study of over 2,000 artifacts, stone tools, and fragments of pottery, just received by the Smithsonian Institution from Col. Berkeley R. Lewis. The specimens were gathered while Col. Lewis was a member of a military mission in Venezuela.

The Lewis collection, which includes artifacts from sites along the Orinoco, the Venezuelan North Coast, the shores of Lake Valencia and the Andean regions of Trujillo and Lara, as well as many other sites, shows that throughout Venezuela many different aboriginal groups thrived. In much dry, uncultivated land, large amounts of pottery are found suggesting aboriginal vil-

lage sites of some size, whose people made a living by irrigation agriculture.

Dr. Clifford Evans, of the U. S. National Museum staff, indicates that one of the most important points shown is the great regional specialization of cultures, each with different traits, employing unrelated art motifs, and making pottery of different shapes. Some of the materials received in the Lewis collection are from regions heretofore unrepresented in American collections.

Compared to Peruvian archaeology, little is known about the ancient Venezuelans. Their artifacts show that they evidently were quite an energetic and artistic people with a complex society, who made contacts in every direction and who were quick to grasp new ideas, but did not develop anything like the high civilizations of the Mayas and Incas.

In spite of certain features of the pottery, such as tripod bowls and polychrome painting, showing exchange of ideas with Central America, much of these aboriginal Venezuelan culture traits are unique, the result of the local development of the aboriginal inhabitants.

A bat god seems to have played a prominent part in their lives. The figure appears, in highly stylized form, in their pottery, their stone carving, and shell work.

Science News Letter, February 16, 1952

On This Week's Cover

► **PHILLY, THE** baby Grevy's Zebra and the first of her kind to be born in the Philadelphia Zoo, is shown with her mother on the cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER. Like most hoofed animals she was walking around under her own power within just a few hours after birth.

Grevy's is the largest and most handsome species of the zebras. It was named in honor of M. Paul Jules Grevy, who served as President of France from 1879 to 1887.

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Books of the Week

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RADIO AND TELEVISION RECEIVER TROUBLESHOOTING AND REPAIR—Alfred A. Ghirardi and J. Richard Johnson—*Rinehart*, 822 p., illus., \$6.75. Giving the service technician practical troubleshooting procedures.

RANGE MANAGEMENT: Principles and Practices—Arthur W. Sampson—*Wiley*, 570 p., illus., \$7.50. Useful to stockmen and range administrators as well as to students.

REPORT ON THE PACIFIC SCIENCE ASSOCIATION—Secretariat of the Pacific Science Council—*Bernice P. Bishop Museum*, Special Publication 41, 115 p., paper, free upon request to author, care of the publisher, Honolulu 17, Hawii, by those whose field of work is in the Pacific.

A REVISION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN STAPHYLINID BEETLES OF THE SUBTRIBE GYROPHAENAE (ALEOCHARINAE, BOLITOCARINI)—Charles H. Seevers—*Chicago Natural History Museum*, 105 p., illus., paper, \$1.25.

SEPTIC TANKS—THEIR USE IN SEWAGE DISPOSAL—*Housing and Home Finance Agency*, 16 p., illus., paper, 15 cents. Some 17,000,000 persons in the United States must use septic tanks. This is a report summarizing results of a program of research to improve such systems.

THEORETICAL PETROLOGY: A Textbook on the Origin and the Evolution of Rocks—Tom F. W. Barth—*Wiley*, 387 p., illus., \$6.50. "Petrology," the author points out, "has become physico-chemistry applied to the crust of the earth."

THE TRUTH ABOUT SNAKE STORIES—Karl P. Schmidt—*Chicago Natural History Museum*, 22 p., illus., paper, 20 cents. If you believe that the milk snake steals milk from Bossie, that the hoop snake takes his tail in his mouth and rolls along or that the mother snake swallows her young for their protection, then you will want to read the truth about these yarns.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR MIGRAINE HEADACHE—Caro W. Lippman and Margaret Lippman—*Greenberg*, 150 p., \$2.50. This writing team consists of a physician and his wife who suffers from migraine.

WILD WINGS—Frank S. Stuart—*McGraw-Hill*, 222 p., \$3.50. Presenting the beauty of wild ducks on the wing in their migratory flights.

WOOD TECHNOLOGY: Constitution, Properties and Uses—Harry Donald Tiemann—*Pitman*, 3d ed., 396 p., illus., \$6.00. Of interest to all of us who use wood.

THE ZOOLOGY OF TAPEWORMS—Robert A. Wardle and James Archie McLeod—*University of Minnesota Press*, 780 p., illus., \$12.50. Describing these parasites of man, livestock, game animals, birds, and fishes. Includes a bibliography.

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SELLS FIRST STORY AT 60



"Since I am crowding threescore, my objective in taking the N.I.A. course was not to become a professional writer. However, while still taking the course, I sent an article to *St. Joseph Magazine*. It was immediately accepted. Encouraged, I wrote others. 'Our Navy' accepted them and asked for more. All thanks to N.I.A."—Albert M. Hinman, 1937 East Silver Street, Tucson, Arizona.

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