

MEDICINE

Eating "for Two"

► **EXPECTANT MOTHERS** should be under the care of a doctor from the time they first suspect they are going to have a baby. The diet they follow should be prescribed for each by the doctor who has examined the woman and knows her particular needs.

Probably the doctor will tell the expectant mother that her diet should contain plenty of good protein, such as meat, eggs, milk, cheese, poultry and fish. The need for enough protein to help her carry her baby to term has been widely recognized.

Part of this protein, it is believed, is needed to build hormones, that is, gland chemicals, essential for carrying and delivering a healthy baby. In recent studies reported in *Nutrition Reviews* (May), it was found that, among rats on diets with reduced protein content, 30% failed to produce normal offspring and 17% of the young were born dead.

The possibility that these resulted from

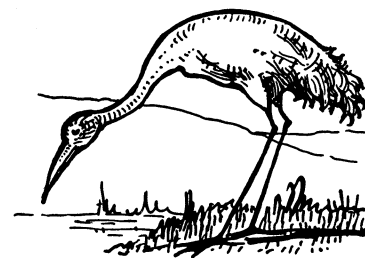
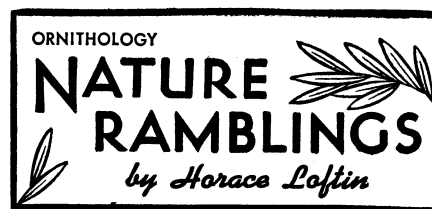
failure of the rats to produce the normal pregnancy hormones prompted studies in which hormones and vitamins were given.

Protein-free diets were given with twice the amount of vitamin supplement that had been added to the diets of the previous experiment. Injection of the hormones estrone or progesterone, separately, increased the number of successful pregnancies.

The average number of live offspring per rat was only six, however, in comparison to a normal of eight or nine, although giving both estrone and progesterone maintained live offspring in 100% of the animals and the number of living young per rat was nearly normal.

This apparent failure in production of essential hormones when diets are inadequate in protein has been observed by numerous investigators, strengthening the basis for recommendation of adequate supplies of protein during pregnancy.

Science News Letter, August 13, 1955



The Whooping Crane

► **THE BREEDING GROUND** of the world's last flock of whooping cranes has at last been found. And nature lovers are delighted that the cranes have chosen one of the world's wildest, most inaccessible areas to make their last stand for survival.

The whoopers' summer quarters, discovered May 18, lie in the northeast corner of the world's largest national park, Wood Buffalo Park, in Canada's Northwest Territory. Their nests are in a country of numberless lakes, ponds and rivers north of the 16th parallel, in the same latitude as the Yukon.

The chances of hunters and other persons disturbing the whoopers in their breeding ground is practically non-existent, so remote is the area. Even the Canadian government naturalists who went to study the giant birds had to make three tries by canoe, airplane and helicopter before they could break through to the cranes.

At present, there are known to be 21 adult whooping cranes, four nestlings, and —when last seen—one unhatched egg.

The whoopers, the tallest birds in North America, will begin the southward flight to their winter quarters on the Texas coast late in September. The annual migration will be over by early November.

The migration route of the last of the whooping crane flock is well known. From their summer wilderness hideaway, they cross over the farmlands of Saskatchewan and down across the Dakotas, the sandbars of Nebraska's Platte River, the fields of Kansas and on through Oklahoma to Texas.

These giant birds are at their greatest peril when they are making the migration, for they are exposed to their greatest enemy —the hunter. Lovers of nature along the whooping cranes' migratory route should learn to identify this handsome bird and tell their hunting friends about it. Perhaps their words may keep a trigger from being squeezed—and thereby save a whooping crane.

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Find "Stale" Material

► **LESS THAN 20 miles** from Las Vegas, where a comedian was fired from his high-salaried engagement because his patter was "not fresh," archaeologists have restudied campfires and toasted bones of extinct animals that have not been "fresh" for more than 20,000 years.

Radiocarbon dating showed the ash-beds of this earliest American are more than 23,800 years old.

The ancient campfire was originally discovered by Fenley Hunter of the American Museum of Natural History in 1933, but for many years the ash sample lay mislaid and all but forgotten in a Southwest Museum storage room. It was only recently given its radiocarbon date.

Now a party from the Southwest Museum, led by M. R. Harrington, has returned to re-study the site and look for

further evidence of how the earliest known American lived. Of particular interest, they found a fire-pit where a camel had been cooked and eaten. His bones, split and broken, some burned, were found mixed with charcoal of a man-made fire.

One of the party, Miss Ruth D. Simpson, assistant curator of the museum, found a large part of the disarticulated skeleton of a mammoth, an extinct elephant, including one great tusk more than seven feet long. About 20 inches from the skull on the same level was a small charcoal bed indicating a contemporary fire, probably of human origin.

Commonest of all the meats on the early American cookfire was that of the large American camel. Not used as much were the long-horned bison, a deer, two species of American horse and the mammoth. All these animals are characteristic of the Pleistocene period, or Ice Age, and all have long been extinct.

It is not known how our first ancestor killed these huge beasts for his food, but study of the bones showed that the animals were generally very young or aged when they were killed. Some crude chipped stone choppers or hand-axes and scrapers were found and one sharp obsidian flake.

Science News Letter, August 13, 1955

More than 100 kinds of *mosquitoes* are found in the United States.

A "moving *sidewalk*" that can go around corners and carry passengers in two directions has been developed.

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