

Gertrude Snyder: Article

Brookland Daily Eagle: Tells of their voyage to the Congo, traveling with cannibals.

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AMOUNG AFRICAN CANNIBALS



Traveling by Canoe Among the Savages of the Congo Free State

At last we reached the River Ituri and following along the banks until it navigable, we came to the great Bangwa district of the Aruwimi. Here were fresh sights and more excitement. Having procured canoes, I sent my porters back, retaining only three faithful boys. Our boatmen were the notorious cannibals of the Aruwimi; very different from the Pygmies; these were fine stalwart men, many of them considerably over six feet, carrying themselves with the most aristocratic bearing imaginable.



Native Canoe men

As canoe men they could not be excelled. Each boat contained from ten to fifteen men who with their long, tapering paddles, made the heavy dug-out literally dance through the water. It was a most delightful sensation, after toilsome pain of the walking through the thicket, to be comfortably reclining while whizzed along at about eight miles an hour, for the current being strong in our favor, we often made quite that speed. One sat all day gazed along the banks of the marvelous river. Sometimes elephants sporting themselves in the shallow water near the bank would for a moment or two, be visible; forest antelope, too were often seen having their

The villages of the Bangwa were most curious, the houses consisting of tall cone shaped structures attaining a height of from fifteen to twenty feet. As we approached, the drums announced us and crowds of natives, naked cannibals, came to the river banks to watch us. Every warrior carried his knife and spear both most deadly looking weapons, and when I landed they almost surrounded me, walked round and round looking me up and down no doubt counting the possibility of a good meal.



tall cone shaped huts

Their language was strange to me, or I might have heard some extraordinary remarks; as it was, their hungry looks were quite enough to make me feel a little uncomfortable at times. I was generally able to find an interpreter, who would inquire of the people for me for a suitable place to pitch my tent, and this was most courteously given by the chief himself, generally in the middle of the village. Sometimes they would bring me quantities of food, sweet potatoes, bananas, jams, etc. and in exchange I gave them little trinkets, such as beads, whistles, knives, etc. Fifteen days paddle on the river brought us to Baseke, the chief station of the Belgians on the Congo. From hence the steamers ran to the coast, and while after waiting a few days we arrived and I procured passage. - Brookland Daily Eagle Nov. 19, 1899

evening drink. While the monkeys chattered in the trees and screamed at us as we passed.



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