

# NATURAL HISTORY

*The Magazine of the American Museum of Natural History*

*Bringing you the best in scientific thought and opinion in exploration, research, and the world of nature*

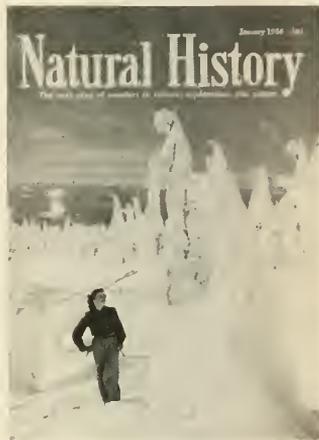
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January, 1956 Volume LXV, No. 1

Mount Hood in Winter <i>From a color transparency by Ray Atkeson</i>	Cover Design
Letters	4
Your New Books	6
Exploring the Atmosphere <i>Through what layers must our rockets—and rocketers—pass before entering the silent darkness of interstellar space?</i>	Homer E. Newell, Jr. 8
Where Did They Come From? <i>In a dry lake bed that was being used as an air field, thousands of tadpole shrimps appeared as if from nowhere</i>	Arthur S. Lockley 14
The Root that Relieves Blood Pressure <i>A plant remedy from ancient India proves a boon to sufferers from hypertension and certain mental illnesses</i>	Louis G. Nickell 16
Here Come the Umutinas! <i>Like so many red devils springing from the encircling forest, they dashed forward with bows drawn—one of the most hair-raising receptions ever accorded a white man by a group of aborigines</i>	Harald Schultz 20
Walrus Hunt <i>One of the most hazardous pursuits known is the annual walrus hunt of the Iglulik Eskimos, who give us a glimpse of what life may have been like in the Middle Stone Age</i>	Richard Harrington and Edward Weyer, Jr. 23
Everglades Boardwalk <i>The Anhinga Trail is a photographic paradise for amateur and professional alike, and you only have to walk a few steps</i>	Edwin Way Teale 33
Asphalt—Preservative of the Ages <i>The ancients put it to strange uses; modern science is finding increasingly varied applications</i>	Mildred C. Pergande 38
Sno-Mobiling Through Yellowstone <i>If you want to see our famous wonderland without crowds, visit it in winter</i>	Josef Muench 44
Haymaker of the High Spots <i>The pika's cry seems to come from nowhere, and he moves his hay with the weather</i>	Will Barker 46
My Animal Concert <i>When "The Bird Song" echoed among the vaulting redwoods, the world of nature came alive</i>	Carroll Van Court 48
An Australian "Sea Serpent" <i>The rare oarfish is the monster responsible for some of the legends</i>	Joyce Burns Glen 51
You will find NATURAL HISTORY Magazine indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature in your library	



## THE COVER THIS MONTH

Old King Boreas is usually in a generous mood when he pays his annual respects to Mt. Hood. Few places in our land receive more snow than the towering volcanic cones of the Pacific Northwest. Though midwinter temperatures are seldom severe even at timber line on Mt. Hood, a single storm can bury the forests beneath a five- or six-foot blanket of snow. Accumulations of 20 feet or more are not uncommon.

Winter sports enthusiasts by the thousand from Portland, just 60 miles away, and other cities flock to Mt. Hood's gleaming slopes. A fine highway skirting the base is kept open the year round, and a short, easy-grade spur road swings up through the forest to Timberline Lodge. Here and at Government Camp settlement on the main cross-country highway, skiers find several chair lifts, many rope tows, and a 3½ mile aerial tramway. Several three- or four-mile ski trails between Timberline and Government Camp yield excellent opportunities for nature study in the winter wonderland of Mt. Hood.

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### Editorial Introduction:

Recently when the author of this article was in New York City, we asked him to tell about the most exciting experience he had ever had during his years of exploration among the wild tribes of Brazil. A self-deprecating smile came over his face, as if to deny that adventures had any connection with his work. But we knew this could hardly be true, for at the age of 46, Harald Schultz had traveled in many little-known parts of Brazil and had pursued his studies among no fewer than seventeen different tribes. After a moment of thought, he said: "I had two experiences that stand above the others. One uneasy time was when I met the Umutinas for the first time. The other was when I left them, under rather uncomfortable circumstances."

We persuaded him that he should write down the two experiences he narrated, and the reader can judge whether his words "uneasy" and "uncomfortable" are adequate. Here is the first. The second will appear in the next issue of NATURAL HISTORY.

# here come the

# Umutinas!

Like so many red devils springing from the encircling forest, they dashed forward with bows drawn to provide one of the most hair-raising receptions ever recorded by a white man meeting a group of aborigines

By HARALD SCHULTZ

*Staff Anthropologist of the State Museum Sao Paulo, Brazil*  
*All Photographs by the author, SPJ*

### Part I:

**T**HIS happened in 1943, when little was known of the customs and beliefs of the Umutinas.

I had ridden all day on the back of a truck, traveling through the dry country of central Mato Grosso, following the tracks made by heavy ox carts with wooden wheels. The ruts were now very hard and dusty, and our truck jumped and shuddered without letup. The hot sun burned pitilessly, and we held our eyes half closed against the bright

light as we rode hour after hour.

It was flat open country with grass, bushes, sand, and stones, but on the horizon rocky mountains rose, covered with sparse vegetation.

Houses made of poles covered with clay and with thatched roofs appeared from time to time. As we came closer to a river, light forest took the place of the flatland vegetation.

We were not far from the Jahu-

★ AS THE NATIVES led the author closer to their village, the guide, shown here, blew a horn to announce their approach. He is Atukaré, who became the author's best friend. Note his necklace of jaguar teeth and his sparse beard. The Brazilians call the Umutinas the "Barbados," which means the bearded ones.



▲ ON THIS OCCASION, after the original meeting, Hashipá had been dancing with eyes closed, deep in the spirit of the ritual. When he heard the click of the author's camera, he suddenly raised his knife in a menacing gesture. The author took two steps backwards and forced a laugh. "I do not know what he had in mind," says Harald Schultzt. "Perhaps he was making fun, or trying to frighten me."

coára River, which flows to the upper Paraguay in the interior of Mato Grosso. Only a wide section of grassland separated us from the heavier forests of the Paraguay River, where the Umutina Indians

lived. Forty years ago, they had been a powerful and hostile tribe, feared by all. Armed only with bows and arrows and clubs, but with the knowledge of nature that belongs only to an Indian, they had

courageously defended their territory against the white invader. However, they had lost many of their numbers.

We stopped near a big house roofed with sheet metal—the settlement of a trader. His customers were diamond prospectors and ipeacac gatherers, to whom he sold the essentials for life in the jungle so far away from civilization—clothes and medicines, oil, guns, and food, even some perfumes.

° Harald Schultzt was born in Brazil, the son of Dr. Wolfgang Schultzt and the famous Brazilian singer Joaquina Rasmussen Schultzt. Interested in the natural sciences since childhood, he pursued his studies in Germany and then, after 1924, went back to Brazil. In 1942, the great General (now Marshal) Cândido Mariano

da Silva Rondon invited him to reorganize the section of the Brazilian Indian Protection Service concerned with documentary work among the Brazilian Indians, and for five years he directed this work. He has served as assistant to the eminent Brazilian anthropologist Professor Herbert Baldus and has published many papers.

"Are you not afraid to visit these wild animals of the jungle?" he asked me, certainly half joking but also half trying to scare me.

"Why should I be afraid?" I answered, shaking his hand. "I have liked the other Indians I have met. Tell me why I should not like these." I laughed, trying to hide the curiosity awakened by his question.

"Oh, I never trust them completely, you know!" said Senhor Crescencio. "I have lived here for more than 40 years—came as a little boy of about 14, worked hard, and now I am the owner of this trading post. These Indians have killed many good people."

"Yes, I know that very well, Senhor Crescencio, but the Umutinas

were pacified in 1911 by Helmano dos Santos Mascarenhas. And that is a long time ago. So why do you fear them still?"

"To be honest, Senhor Haroldo, they have never done any harm to me or to any member of my family. Many years ago they came to my house from time to time, trying to obtain presents. Only men came. Later they also brought their families, and this is always a sign of peace and trust. They needed iron tools—axes, knives, scissors—but my wife and I have never trusted them completely. In our opinion, they are animals of the forest, wild cannibals, and we don't want them."

"Why do you call them cannibals? Do you have any reason to

think that they eat human flesh?"

The trader laughed ruefully. "Senhor Haroldo, you don't know with whom you are going to deal. Years ago they ate the heads of their dead enemies. I hope they will not eat yours."

He was joking, but there was something serious behind what he said.

"How do you know this?"

"Very simple. One of my servants was taken prisoner by the Umutinas when he was a little boy. He is old now, but he often talks about what he saw. They did not kill him—he was too young—, but they killed a man they caught with him."

"Do you know the details—how it happened?"

"Oh yes, I have heard the story often, but perhaps you would rather hear it at first hand."

I nodded.

"Raimundo! Raimundo!" he called. "Come here and meet this gentleman who wants to visit the Umutinas. He says he is a friend of all Indians. Ha-ha-ha!"

An old man appeared and said, "How are you?" He looked like one who has worked hard all his life but earned very little.

"Thanks, I am very fine," I said. "And how are you?"

Senhor Raimundo nodded.

"Tell him your story," said the trader.

Raimundo sat down on the trunk of a tree and started to talk:

"When I was a very young fellow—I do not remember exactly how

▼ A STRONG YOUNG MAN and a good hunter: Katulá, Jakuepá's eldest son. Though he has his own fields, he is as yet unmarried. The Umutina men tie their hair up in this fashion and pluck their eyebrows.



old—we were out in the jungle looking for a medicinal plant that grows here in abundance. The price was high, and we all needed money. There was plenty of game, and we could stay in the jungle for a long time. We went far into the forest, never thinking of the danger of Indians or wild animals. Then one day we were suddenly surrounded by a large group of Umutinas, who must have been on a hunting trip. One of our men did not wait. He only shouted, 'The Indians!' and started shooting his rifle. He killed one of the Indians.

"I don't know whether these Indians had come to attack us or not. If so, I should think they could easily have killed us with their arrows, because they were hiding behind big trees. Anyway, after we

had killed one of them, they became furious, almost like wild animals. They jumped at us and beat us with their heavy clubs, which were made of hard black wood. Two of our group were killed on the spot, but I and the man who had shot at them were made prisoners.

"They tied us up with vines and then started talking to the man who had killed one of them. They always said the same word, repeating it over and over. We did not understand it. But suddenly the man said to me, 'Raimundo, I think I know what they are saying. Someone told me once. They are asking my name. I think they want to be our friends. Perhaps they are not going to kill us.'

"He started laughing excitedly



▲ THE ONLY YOUNG GIRL of marriageable age in the Umutina village: Jukuepá's daughter. She could not marry, because all were too closely related to her. When they proposed that the author become her husband and he laughingly asked why not, she said: "That would be no good, because you do not like the way I prepare my food."

▼ A MISCHIEVOUS YOUNG GIRL of the tribe, who kept looking into all the author's boxes until he put her in charge of guarding them from the others.

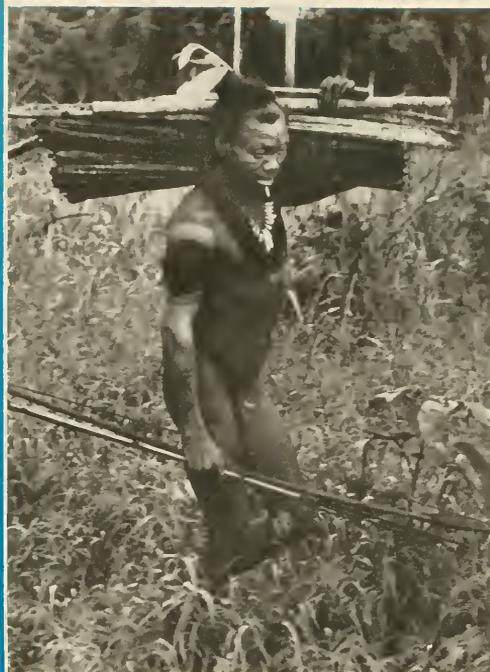


▲ THE AUTHOR and his Umutina friends. The women's skirts are woven into a continuous band, without beginning or end.



▲ AN Umutina HOUSE, showing the characteristic sloping straw wall. The men build the houses, but they belong to the women.





◀ FIRST STEP in a fish poisoning expedition: bringing the timbó vines, which contain the poison.

▼ THE VINES are beaten and then carried into the pool so their juice can be mixed with the water.



▼ SPREADING the lathery juice through the pool. The chief of the party watches to see that all his helpers do a thorough job. It may take two hours to treat every portion of the pool.



▼ SPECIAL BOWS AND ARROWS are used for shooting the drugged fish. The man will shoot all four or five arrows before collecting the fish. Each person collects for his own family. The poison only suffocates the fish and in no way affects their food value.



and then said his name, 'Felisberto,' and repeated it whenever they spoke. The Indians tried to pronounce the name and asked him over and over. Finally one of them could say 'Felisberto' more or less correctly,—the one who had caught him—, and then it happened.

"One of the other Indians had been standing behind Felisberto with a club in his hands, and the Indian who had caught him gave a signal with his eyes. The man behind Felisberto then struck him on the head so heavily that he fell to the ground dead, without sign of pain.

"After awhile they cut his head off and started a fire. They boiled the meat for about two hours. Then they started eating it, but vomiting part of it because of aversion. The man who had killed Felisberto collected the teeth from the skull and later made a necklace for his wife." Raimundo was now visibly disturbed by the memory and interrupted his story.

"But how did you escape?" I asked, "Why did they not kill you?"

"Probably because I was too young. I was only a boy. Later I learned why they killed prisoners and ate their heads. They only ate the heads of strong, dangerous, and courageous enemies. They believed that by doing so they would gain the victim's power and courage and his good qualities as a warrior. It

was a kind of an honor to the enemy killed, and again there was a special reason related to the belief of the eternal life of the soul. Names belonged to certain families or family groups. Other families could not use them. Names were as much a possession as a precious stone is among us."<sup>1</sup>

"What did they do with the other bodies—the two they had killed? Did they eat them, too?"

"No, they pushed them into hollow trunks of rotten trees. Their movements were full of haste, and they seemed to be hateful. They carried home the Indian who had been killed by Felisberto, loudly crying while they marched through the forest. They buried him in his own hut. He was the father of two small children. His wife slept upon his grave on her straw mat."

"Did they mistreat you?" I asked. "How long did you live among them?"

"They were very kind to me. Nobody ever showed any anger toward me. But I was unhappy. Their food was very strange at first, and I kept watching for a chance to go back to my parents. One day, after a couple of weeks, perhaps months, they went on a trip to catch fish by poisoning one of the lakes. All the Indians were leaving the village, so I had to go with them. But when they became busy killing fish, they seemed to forget about me. I hid behind a big tree; then I started walking quietly. Pretty soon I began running as if the devil were after my soul. I had taken careful notice of the direction I would have to go if I were ever to escape. The forest on the borders of the upper Paraguay is not very wide, you know, so I was able to get through it in two hours. Then I started across the open grassland."

The old man drew a deep breath and narrowed his eyes. "This was many, many years ago," he went on. "The war between the Indians and the white man later became

more intense, and then came the pacification. But with the pacification came also the contact with the white man, and the diseases that followed killed more Indians than bullets ever could."

"How many Umutina Indians do you think existed when you were their prisoner?"

"I am a simple man, Senhor, and I cannot be responsible for an exact number. I think there were several hundred of them in more than three or four villages. They were like ants in the one village where I lived. There seemed to be struggles among different groups. And they killed each other for reasons I could not understand."

### To the Point of Contact

Later, when our truck was ready to start again, the trader gave me friendly encouragement: "Good luck to you," he said. "I'm sure you will like the Umutina Indians. The devil is never as black as he is painted."

I thanked him, and we traveled through the flat grassland to the Paraguay River, crossing it by a shallow ford. I was thinking about the boy who had been captured by the Umutinas when we came into sight of the post of the Brazilian Indian Service called *Fraternidade Indígena*, which means "Indian Brotherhood."

There was a large square formed by the administration buildings, an Indian school and nursery, and two rows of small houses occupied by Indians—a total population of about 200.

Senhor José Ferdelis was in charge here. He greeted me and learned the purpose of my trip. "You can't visit the Umutina," he said, "without first being invited by them."

"I have come just to study them," I said.

"I will send a messenger, one of their relatives, to tell them you are here and want to meet them."

"Tell them I have many axes, knives, and other useful things for them," I suggested.

The messenger left the same day. The only thing to do now was to



<sup>1</sup> All this information was verified later by the author when he lived among the Umutinas for more than eight months. The fact about eating dead enemies is known not only from the Umutinas but from many other tribes of Brazil, as for example the Tupi of the Brazilian coast during early colonial times.



▲ **BACK HOME.** the fish are sealed and cleaned. Some are boiled and eaten at once. The larger quantity are dried on a rack. Several weeks later, the dried fish will be ground and mixed with pepper and corn flour, then cooked as a paste. The author pronounced it "horrible," but the Umutinas love it.

wait. A near-by creek of clear water invited us to swim, and the day passed quickly.

Later, when we were in front of the agent's house chatting, I asked: "When do you expect the messenger to get back?"

"He will be back soon, I think," said Senhor José Ferdelis.

Just then, one of the others said, "Look at that! Smoke in the forest."

A column of smoke was rising far in the distance.

"I think it is a sign that the Umutinas are coming," said Senhor José Ferdelis.

After awhile, another smoke signal appeared, this time closer. Somewhat later, a third rose, now only about half a mile away.

I was getting excited, for I had traveled far to see these Indians and was sure they would prove to be interesting. But I was not prepared for anything so frightening as was to occur. It happened all of a sudden.

Red spots jumped out of the forest about 200 yards from where we were sitting, and the Umutinas came charging toward us. They looked like devils popping out of hell. They were painted red from head to foot — bodies, arms, and legs—, but their faces were stripes of black, yellow, and red. They carried long heavy bows and arrows. As they ran toward us, they shouted and jumped; and then they all stopped, drew their bow strings, and aimed directly at us!

Surely, I thought, they aren't going to attack us.

If a band of Indians like this all shoot at once at close range, you are practically certain to be struck. The chances are that one volley will leave you bristling like a pin cushion. I could scarcely believe my eyes; but the next moment I heard their bow strings twang!

I waited to be struck, every muscle tight. But no arrows came.

The Indians then ran backward

a short distance, stopped, and jumped to both sides. A moment later they charged again. At about 50 yards they stopped once more, drew their bow strings, and pointed the arrows at us. I could see their angry-looking faces, their exposed teeth. The strings of the bows sang again, and my heart pounded, but the arrows did not fly. How the warriors could so skillfully stop the arrows from sliding through their fingers I could not imagine.

Again they rushed forward, jumping grotesquely from side to side, and then another volley. Now they were so close I could see their arrows were tipped with metal points made from knife blades. So it went, charge after charge. Their gruesome shouts and the twanging of the bow strings filled our ears. Every minute I thought this cat-and-mouse game would end and that one of the arrows would come flying toward me.

The Indians were now trembling

all over, but I sensed that the emotion was not anger; it was excitement and fear — fear at meeting white people. Actually their performance had not been an attack but was their usual form of greeting. Instead of walking up and shaking hands, it was customary for the Umutinas to put on a full-fledged attack—all except letting the arrows go.

Then they came close and spoke in whispers, repeating the same word over and over: "*Mistkame, mistkame.*" They said it ten times and more.

"They want to know your name," said José Ferdelis. "*Mistkame* means 'Who are you? What is your name?'"

"*Mistkame* — Haroldo," I said. Each time I spoke my name, they tried to pronounce it, at first badly, then better. At last, they pronounced it "Haroodo." Now it was my turn to know the name of each of them.

The eldest was Jukuépa, his two sons Katulá and Julapáre. Jukuépa's brother-in-law was Hashipá.

They were calmer now, and I delivered to each a steel axe and a pointed knife. Jukuépa returned the gesture by presenting me with a beautiful arrow adorned with pompons of white down and with guide feathers taken from eagle wings.

### No More Axes

Later, a single Umutina burst out of the jungle—a thinner man than any of the others but very muscular—and went through the same performance, ending by asking my name just as the others had.

Now, however, there was a problem. I was out of axes and had only one pointed knife left. All of the other Indians had gotten an ax as well as a knife.

Senhor Ferdelis said: "Now you will have an enemy. He will expect an ax and you have none."

There was nothing else to do, so I handed the Indian the knife. He looked at it, then looked at the axes the other Indians were holding. Suddenly he started jumping again. He trembled throughout his body,

raised the pointed knife in his fist, and jumped toward me. Hate flashed in his nearly-closed eyes. His face, being completely covered with paint, did not reveal any other feeling. He then brought the point of the knife down to my shoulder at the soft place between the collar bone and the shoulder blade. My heart was pounding. I could see the knife trembling under the man's hand. He held the point there for what seemed like minutes.

I could not stop the impulse to move backward two steps, but he followed me. I'm sure that my face must have been pale. I tried to laugh but could not. There was a strange feeling in my spine. The Indian pressed the knife downward, and I thought surely he was going to drive it into me. Then he started whispering the same "*Mistkame, mistkame* (Who are you, who are you?)."

"I am Haroldo," I answered and kept saying it until he knew my name correctly.

Strangely enough, this Indian, Atukaré by name, later became my best friend.

Our interpreter was the same Indian who had taken the message to the Umutina village. "They have been out fishing," he said, "killing fish with the poison called timbó. There were plenty of fish, but the Indians complain that there is a lack of manioc flour and raw sugar. They want you to come with these things at once. They say they will be glad to have a guest in their village."

I promised that I would start on the morrow, explaining that manioc flour and raw sugar would have to be bought back at Barra dos Bugres.

The Indians rested a little, eating boiled beans and drinking the refreshment offered by the manager. Then they started the march back to their village, about 40 miles inside the jungle.

The next day a dugout, paddled by twelve strong arms of civilized Indians, took us upstream. Two days later we arrived at the Umutina village.

Long before our arrival, a horn was blown to announce that we were coming. The Indians in the village answered in the same way, indicating that we were welcome.

There was no ceremonial "welcome attack" this time. Two young Umutinas, their whole bodies painted red, were waiting for us.

### A Ghostly Village

It was already dark, and it was raining lightly. The houses were not very far from the shore, looking like mounds of straw in the dark. Dogs were yelping, children crying in fear. The women came close to see the strange visitor. Many tamed birds of the forest were ambling around the clearing, and two tall black-headed storks were standing near the fire, like two human beings trying to get warm.

"Why so many pet animals?" I asked.

The answer did not come easily, but in time they told me:

"Some of them already contain the souls of dead Umutinas, others are waiting to get them. All of us choose the animal we will live in after death."

The spooky storks, the gloom and rain, everything oppressed me. I was tired, and my mosquito net was dripping wet. "This is a bad place," I said to myself. "But it's not a time to complain."

Jukuépa was hospitable. He gave me a place to hang my hammock between fires that were burning on the floor in one of the huts. He offered me a present of welcome—a very finely made club of heavy black palmwood, similar to a sword. Hundreds of fish were smoking on drying racks, and he offered me some for dinner.

This was the beginning of my long sojourn among these interesting Indians. That night, trying to sleep in my hammock, I kept thinking of that hair-raising greeting and hoping they would not show me a real fight. ★ ★ ★

Next month, Harald Schultz will tell how he was almost killed among the Umutinas and of the strange part played by Atukaré, the Indian who got only a knife.

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February, 1956 Volume LXV, No. 2

Big-Hatted Chamula .....	Cover Design	
<i>From a color transparency by Nelson S. Knaggs</i>		
Your New Books .....		61
Diatoms Serve Modern Man .....	Jennie E. Harris	64
<i>Few household products have not been helped by the varied and beautiful plants known as diatoms.</i>		
Possum Without Pass-port .....	Jack Dermid	72
<i>This miniature marsupial got past the guards by hiding in a bunch of bananas, family and all.</i>		
Almost Murdered — Here Come the Umutinas Part II .....	Harald Schultz	76
<i>An anthropologist tells how he was suddenly attacked while living alone among the Umutinas, deep in the Brazilian wilderness.</i>		
Ceylon — Isle of Gems .....	Lee Boltin	84
<i>From the mining of the gems in river bed and open mine to the barter that takes place under a handkerchief, Ceylon's gem industry partakes of the lore and legend of the fabulous East.</i>		
Tree Ferns .....	Henricks Hodge	88
<i>If your vacation trip takes you to one of the places where whole forests of them can be seen, you will get a good idea of what the world looked like when coal was being formed.</i>		
Giant Snake Hunt .....	Rolf Blomberg	92
<i>Some lively encounters with anacondas that help to clear up our ideas of how dangerous they are and how big they get</i>		
The Glacial Concept is Born .....	Richard J. Hartesveldt	98
<i>Proof of the Ice Age now stares us in the face, but many wild guesses frayed scientific nerves before the truth came out</i>		
The Jump in the Jumping Bean .....	Ross E. Hutehins	102
<i>These natural curiosities from Mexico entertain young and old, but few realize that their secret is one of nature's tricks for beating the heat</i>		
Dame Nature, Sculptress in Ice .....	George Forrest	107
Letters .....		108

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## THE COVER THIS MONTH

This Indian is a Chamula of Mexico's southernmost state, Chiapas. The unusual shoes he wears are the same as are known to have been used more than 1000 years ago by the Mayas. Similar styles can be seen on many of the figures carved on Maya stones dating from the Late Classic Period (about the seventh to the ninth century.)

The Chamulas have preserved much of their cultural vigor despite European influence during recent centuries and are one of the most colorful groups of Middle America. There are approximately 26,000 of them, living scattered among the forested mountains of Chiapas. Though the state of Chiapas includes some of the ancient Mayan lands, it actually faces the Pacific Ocean rather than the Atlantic. Its highest mountain, Cerro Zontehuitz, is about 9,400 feet high. In area, it is slightly larger than West Virginia, and as many as 200,000 Indians may live within its borders.

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▲ Umutina men, dressed for the first dance in a cycle of eighteen rituals. They are holding flutes so sacred that they must be kept hidden except when in use. This ceremony was photographed by Harald Schultz for the first and last time. The tribe has already been exterminated by civilization.

*Editorial Foreword:*

Readers will recall in the last issue of *NATURAL HISTORY* the article entitled, "Here Come the Umutinas," by Harald Schultz, an anthropologist who has worked among many tribes in Brazil. He is the leading authority on the culture and customs of the Umutinas.

Harald Schultz had lived a total of eight months with the Umutinas when the astonishing events described in this article took place. He will carry the scars for the rest of his life, but the experience never dampened his curiosity about the Indians; and it is a tribute to Mr. Schultz's understanding nature that he is able to analyze so tolerantly the psychological elements back of this attack by an Indian whom he had always considered friendly and trustworthy. Viewed objectively, it is a reminder that danger can come when least expected to those who tread the jungle trails in pursuit of knowledge about the little-known tribes of the wilderness.

After a recent visit to the United States, Harald Schultz returned to the Amazon for further anthropological studies. Here is his account of the time when he was "Almost Murdered."

**here  
come  
the  
Umutinas!**

**part II**

# *Almost Murdered*

An anthropologist tells how he was suddenly attacked while living alone among the Umutinas, deep in the Brazilian wilderness

By HARALD SCHULTZ

*Staff Anthropologist of the State Museum, Sao Paulo, Brazil  
Photographs by the author, SVA.*

**T**HREE months of hardship led up to this incident, hardship not only for me as a white man living among the Umutinas but for the Indians themselves. It was 1945, and an epidemic of whooping cough and dysentery was raging. Food had run short, and the land was

charred by the worst fires in many years.

When I first met the Umutinas, scarcely anything was known of their life. I had collected notes on some of their important rituals and had reached a point where it seemed possible to witness and record their

most sacred ceremonies, which had to do with honoring the spirits of the dead.

For the first three weeks of this difficult period, I was thankful to have a voluntary helper, a brave young Brazilian named Otto Ernesto Mohn. After that, I was alone,



▲ WITH THEIR ENTIRE BODIES painted black and with white pompons adorning their faces, the men danced hour after hour in this deeply religious ceremony having to do with life and death. The women remained in the houses throughout but answered the songs of the men.



▲ THESE STICK-BUNDLES are symbols or fetishes representing the wild pig. The dancers, who wear masks and other regalia so as to impersonate spirits, are given gifts of food prepared by the women. They give formal thanks.

► BEST INFORMED of the Umutina story-tellers and sister of the Indian who attacked the author: Matarepatá. She wears her hair short in the Umutina fashion for women. The rings in her ears are carved from palm nut and embellished with bright feathers. Her necklace is of seeds and monkey teeth.



and the nearest Indian post was 50 miles away.

All the lands up-river had been destroyed by fire. It had rushed through the forest on the river banks, burning bark, branches, and leaves. Lakes were so dry that almost no fish remained in them. There was no game in the jungle. The fire had burned a great part of the lands cultivated by the Indians, and the rest had been eaten by uncountable grasshoppers. Disease, death, and destruction stalked the land.

The Indians blamed it on the white man.

"*Uáse pikína!* The bad white men have put fire into nature," said old Jukuépa, trembling. "It has burnt our forest, our crops, even our houses." (During an absence of several days on a fishing trip, the people had lost their big houses by fire and were now forced to live in little huts.) Jukuépa raised his arms angrily and shook them: "Our children are ill. They will all die!"

The smoke made it difficult to breathe while lying in my hammock under a mosquito net, and our fight against the whooping cough was

not always victorious. All unvaccinated children died. The disease took the form of bronchial pneumonia among the adults and killed Jukuépa's mother-in-law, among others. Fortunately, the Umutinas still trusted me enough not to blame me for the deaths.

With the coming of the rains, orchids blossomed on the dry trees like pink drops of blood, and soon the whole forest turned green again. The corn grew, game came back, fish swam to the headwaters, and the disease started to decline. But of the 23 Umutinas I had originally known, only 15 now remained.

We were all exhausted by the fight, but I still wanted to witness the death cult rituals.

### The Ceremonial Ground

One day, all the men disappeared. "Where are your husbands?" I asked the women.

"They are hunting in the forest," they tried to convince me. They did not want me to be here during these ceremonies.

Finally, Atukaré's wife laughed and said, "No, it's a lie. They are preparing the dancing square for the

*Aloe* rituals hidden in the forest."

We followed the foot tracks and found the men working hard, cutting trees and clearing the land.

"Look, everybody," I said. "I have a good surprise. I have saved a box full of brown loaf sugar to sweeten your beverages during the dances. It is yours if you will let me stay."

Old Jukuépa talked with the others. Presently he said: "It is agreed, but we shall have to build a house for you here close to our dancing square."

They started at once, and my straw hut was ready next day. This was about a mile from their village, and I often walked back through the jungle to have a meal with Kupo and his wife.

The first sign that Kupo was feeling aggrieved came when I was walking toward the hut one evening. He had always been friendly and had helped me much in understanding the Umutina rituals. But this time I overheard him talking excitedly with his elder sister.

"*Uáse pikína, uáse pikína!*" he was saying. "I hate all white men. They have killed everybody and they are



▲ THE AUTHOR photographed some of these ceremonies before he was attacked, but he returned to the tribe afterwards to photograph others. These rituals are dedicated to the souls of the ancestors, particularly those who had died during the year. Each dancer personifies one or more of his dead relatives, and the masks and dances keep changing.



▲ THE CHIEF adorns the dancers for the death cult ceremonies and has to provide the expensive red dye, nruçú. The dancers have to pay him the following year with part of the fish and game they secure.



▲ A DANCE dedicated to the spirit that gives good fishing, Jurma, who was once a powerful chief. The dancers hide their faces with their own hair. Old men without much of it wear special hair masks.



➤ A DANCER in the Bakuré with the woman who was the nearest relative to the deceased. The little child joins his mother, afraid of staying at home alone when there is so much noise and spooky activity.



▲ ONE of the few nighttime dances. Each man holds a long stem of a palm leaf, split at the upper end so he can rattle it. The dancers sing in high-pitched voices, gossiping about everyone's life. Even the author came in for criticism because he was always bothering them with his cameras and seemed never to understand the real beauty of the enactment.

responsible for all our sadness."

I went up to him and said in a friendly way, "What is wrong, Kupo?"

He looked at me, and his face showed hatred. He then told me how, many years ago, his father and uncle had gone out fishing with the bow and arrow. While they were walking along the banks of the Paraguay River, some white men had come up the river carrying machinery for dredging gold. The white men had shot both his uncle and his father. Bullet holes in their bodies later proved this.

A few days after this conversation, things got worse. Kupo came into my hut and sat down without a word. He remained uncommunicative, and when a little later his wife came, I saw that they did not talk to each other. I decided that there must have been a family dispute, and I didn't want to become involved. But after a couple of days,

there was still no peace in Kupo's home.

Heavy rains came. The river was full and muddy, and we had no fish. The drowned forest allowed no hunting, and we had no meat for several days.

### The Misunderstanding

The fourth day brought bright sunshine. Feeling hungry, I walked over to Kupo's house. Only his wife was there, with the two children.

"Where is your husband?" I asked.

"He is not here," she answered, turning her face to the ground. "He has gone — abandoned me. He said that I could stay in my relatives' house with my little daughter and that you should take his son with you to educate him among civilized people."

I now know that Kupo's wife was really joking, at least in part. But I made the mistake of siding against

Kupo in the presence of the children. "But where is my three-barreled gun?" I said.

"Kupo took it, and he will never come back," she answered.

The loss of my hunting gun was serious, and I started thinking about how I could live here alone, entirely dependent on the Indians for food. I grew angry:

"If Kupo, your husband, has abandoned you, he is a very bad man," I said, "a runaway and no friend of mine any more. He is a low thief for having taken my gun."

Both the children were listening. Atiaká now smiled and said: "It was only a joke. My husband is out hunting and will be back soon."

Then shots were heard, and some of the Indians in the village said: "Kupo must have killed game. There were three shots."

About midday, they told me that Kupo had killed two monkeys and a big deer. The monkeys were already boiling, I was told, in a clay pot at his sister's house.

"Go at once," said Kupo's younger sister, "Go, my brother killed a deer for you. Now you will have plenty of meat for many days."

I had now forgotten about the lie Kupo's wife had told. I never thought that the children might tell him the names I had called him.

I found Kupo beside the small kitchen hut near his house. It consisted only of four poles covered with a straw roof. He was kneeling, skinning an animal with my big jungle knife, and he paid no attention to me. I sat down on a tree trunk near the fire.

"What kind of an animal is that, Kupo?" I asked. "Is it a deer?"

He didn't answer. I repeated the question. Still no answer. Now I saw his face. He was angry. I hesitated, then shouted:

"Now, Kupo, what does all this mean? Take off that ugly, angry face. This is childish."

I knew almost at once I had made a mistake and had spoken too severely. Sickness had left me tired and weak from the work of many months. I had forgotten that the best way to gain the respect of In-

dians is to be calm under all circumstances. And Kupo's children had told him that I had called him a liar, a thief, and a deserter.

Kupo moved toward me like a wildcat. He lifted the big jungle knife over his head and brought it down in a heavy stroke over my left shoulder. The blade cut deeply through all the muscles, stopping only at the shoulder blade. Blood poured out over me at once, running down my naked body. I was wearing only shorts and sandals.

"Kupo!" I cried, "what are you doing? Stop this." I jumped from my seat, trying to escape his second attempt.

There was only one way open, and I started running backward out of the kitchen, followed by Kupo with the knife. I had no weapon. I had left my Mauser rifle on the wall of his house. Further, Kupo was strong and well trained. Behind his house was a new field, recently seeded with rice, and heavy tree trunks lay

around. I jumped over these but after a few jumps stumbled and fell to the ground on my back. Kupo arrived almost at the same instant and lifted his right hand high. He then swung the knife against my uncovered body.

I drew my legs back to protect my stomach and when he was close enough, pushed him with all my might. Later I found that he had cut me a little above the stomach, but at the moment I did not notice it.

Kupo's hands were slippery with blood and he lost the knife. It fell four or five feet from us, and we both tried to get it at once. I got it and rose to my feet, completely covered with blood.

Besides being too weak to use the knife effectively, I lacked the will to hurt Kupo, for he had always been my friend and he had two children who needed him.

He only jumped a little aside when he saw the knife and then began running to his house. He took

my Mauser Precision Rifle from the wall and aimed it at me.

"Kupo, stop, we are friends!" I called.

But he did not stop. I had only time to jump behind the trunk of a cut tree before Kupo aimed and pulled the trigger. The first bullet hit my left arm, which I could not hide. I felt the shock, and the bullet broke one of the bones. My left hand and part of the arm hung down without any movement.

Kupo was again loading. He was only about fifteen feet away when I heard the cartridge explode and felt the shock in my chest near the heart. There was only a drop of blood, but then my chest started to swell from the blood inside the channel made by the bullet.

There were five cartridges in the magazine of the rifle. Kupo lost the third shot, and while he was reloading, I ran toward a high cornfield. He could have killed me easily this time, but he missed.

▼ THESE FIGURES wearing enormous "masks" are accompanied by women, while the chief follows, singing and rattling. The two black-headed storks are believed to harbor the spirits of dead relatives. They take part in the ritual in their own way.





▲ A YOUNG Umutina girl, Hodoto, at left. At right: JOAQUIM, the son of the Indian who attacked the author.

I started walking inside the cornfield. It was high enough to hide me completely. I went about 200 yards. All this had been such a shock that I could scarcely believe it had happened.

### Fifty Miles to Nearest Aid

It was midday and frightfully hot. I was very thirsty, and my left arm, hanging backwards, hampered me badly. I entered some thorny bushes, which gave no protection. The blood was still flowing from me, and I was now completely red. The wound on my shoulder was deeper than my open hand and twice as long. I sat down on a termite nest. The chest wound was beginning to be bad. Twice the blood came from my mouth, and then it stopped. Blood-thirsty ants climbed up my legs and started biting me with their pinners.

Suddenly the silence of the midday jungle was broken by the sound of crunching leaves and the chirping of birds. Someone was approaching. I could only think it was Kupo, returning to finish me off, but I was too tired to try to escape. I lay low. The footsteps stopped, and about 30 feet away I saw an Indian, his body painted completely red with urucú. It was not Kupo. It was Yarepá. He stared at me and gave a surprised, "Ough!" Then he went back into the forest.

I started to run again. I lost my jungle knife and hat but did not care. I did not know why Kupo had tried to kill me or whether all the Umutinas were against me.

In my present condition, it would take four or five days of steady walking to get to the Indian Service Post. I felt sure I would die before I could get there. I was still losing blood.

I lay down in a small square formed by four fallen trees, which seemed to provide a kind of fortress. But actually there was no protection.

A little later I again heard birds chirping and footsteps approaching. It was Yarepá's brother-in-law, who was also brother-in-law to my new enemy Kupo. He was carrying a big knife.

"Are you also angry with me, Mitoponcpa? (*Amé amokukwá iní?*)" I asked him. He said nothing but stepped nearer. When he saw me, he started weeping, tears falling to the ground. He tried to lift me to my feet, raising me as carefully as any nurse could have done. He got my right arm around his neck and urged me to walk. I took about two steps and then did not see or feel anything more. The world had disappeared.

I next felt light burning my eyes and I was hearing something. The thought actually crossed my mind that I was now dead. Then reality

came back to me like an explosion — all the sadness of my situation and a feeling of complete loneliness.

Two women were coming through the jungle; now they were cutting some wood. Yarepá and his brother-in-law were carrying a straw mat and a long pole. They opened the mat and laid me on it. I remember noticing that it was a very old and dirty mat. But they tied me securely inside it with a vine and lifted me on the pole. Their steps were unsteady, but they walked carefully, and when they laid me down and opened the mat, I found myself in their house.

I was given some watermelon, which helped to quench my terrible thirst. And then I asked Yarepá's brother-in-law to please get my medicine trunk. It was heavy, and half an hour passed before he brought it in. The Indians had to help me open the trunk. When I tried to sterilize the glass syringe for an anti-tetanus injection, I broke the glass where the needle is fastened.

Kupo's wife came in. She had seen her husband's attempt to kill me, but she was carrying a vessel of warm water and salt, and she began to wash my wounds.

"Kupo has asked me to tell you that he will soon come to finish his job," she said.

"Why did your husband do all this to me?" I asked. "Have I not always been nice to all of you? Have I not helped you during the sickness and saved two of your children?"

"Yes, Senhor Haroldo, you were good to us. But you spoke badly about Kupo when I joked that he had abandoned me, and my children told him."

### Self-Preservation

I searched in my trunk for a valuable present, and said: "Please take this gift to your husband and tell him to leave me alone. I have never done anything bad to him. Tell him I have a child even as you have, who needs its father." She left me with this message, and my fear of death returned. But anger now took the place of my first feeling not to hurt my attacker, and I was now ready to defend my life. *continued on page 106*



▲ THE TWO WOMEN who fed Dr. Schultz when he was knifed and shot: Hwarepatá and Matarepatá, with little Joaquim. He, too, wears the feather earrings characteristic of the tribe.

▼ INDOORS is almost outdoors in the land of the Umutinas. There are no partitions in the house. Each family occupies the space represented by the fire, work space, and matting on which they sleep.



The news about the attack interrupted the rituals. All the Indians came to the hut where I was lying and showed me serious faces. The strongest reaction came from Atukaré. This was the Indian who, as described in the earlier article, had pointed his knife down on my shoulder when I gave him only a knife and no ax at the ceremony of greeting. Now he vowed that he would shoot Kupo with his bow!

"Oh, no, Atukaré," I said. "That would make no sense. Please go to my house and bring me my hammock and my gun."

I was feeling so badly that I was

sure I should die unless help could be procured from the Indian agency, *Fraternidade Indígena*. "Look what Kupo has done to me," I said to Jukuepá. "Do you think I am going to die?"

Jukuepá nodded his head and grunted something incomprehensible. Then he said: "Yes, you will die, Haroldo." But he would not leave at night for the Post. These Indians were afraid to travel by night because of poisonous snakes.

I was still losing some blood and was afraid that time should go too fast. But they would only say, "Not today, tomorrow."

When they tied my hammock up in the house, I tried to climb into it, but the world disappeared and I knew absolutely nothing more.

### Would Kupo Return?

I awakened when it was dark and was still lying on the straw mat. They had made a pillow of bark. The Indians were gone. Two fires were burning on the ground.

When I moved a little, Mitoponepa jumped from his bed and said: "May I help you? What do you need?"

With his assistance I was able to get into my hammock, but I could not sleep. I kept thinking of Kupo's promise to return and kill me. Each little noise scared me. Whenever a cricket walked on the straw roof or a lizard fell to the ground, I would think: "Now, this must be Kupo."

But Kupo did not come, and in the early morning his wife was again the Good Samaritan, anointing my wounds with medicinal herbs.

"Where are the ones I told to go for help?" I asked.

She answered: "Atukaré and Julaparé started to the Indian Post yesterday while you were dead." (The Umutinas have the same word for illness and death. If they want to imply that there is no hope, that the person is really dead or already buried, they add the word *motó*, meaning earth and signifying "dead and already buried.") They used this

form in referring to me, because they considered me quite dead. Indeed, the two messengers used the same word in reporting the situation to the Indian Post, and the agent sent a wire to Rio de Janeiro announcing that I had been assassinated by the Umutinas.)

Help came quickly. My good friend José Ferdelis, the agent of the Indian Service, led a group of more than a dozen civilized Indians, well armed with guns, jungle knives, and other weapons. They had expected a hostile reception.

They started carrying me out the same day they arrived. A long pole had been cut, and my hammock was tied to it. Two men carried this on their shoulders, relaying when they became tired. I expected to suffer considerably during the trip, but the others carefully cut all the branches that might hurt me, and nothing bad happened. We had to cross 50 miles of jungle, swamp, and open savannah, but I was not even scratched by a thorn.

All in all, it was a most unpleasant experience, except for the kindness of the Indians who took care of me. People say that I must have the spirit of a cat to have lived through this. It was a close call. As for Kupo, he is still living at the Indian Post on the Upper Paraguay River, with his wife and children. He was the unfortunate example of a marginal Indian — one who had entered that difficult realm half-way between the world of the white man and the world of the Indian. In addition to having lost his father and uncle at the hands of the white man, he had early in life been banished from his tribe for having married his cousin, which is taboo among the Umutinas. He had had a little taste of civilization and had grown to resent its destructive effect on the native culture. He was resentful toward the white man's bullets and diseases, and he took it out on me. I think I can understand how he felt. And if I had not lost my temper, I might never have been "almost murdered."



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