

FOLKWAYS FX 6151

DAWN CHORUS: Doves, Thrush, Cuckoo, Weaver. BUSH BIRDS: Hornbills, Doves, Barbet, Shrikes, Monkey, Warblers, Cicadas, Orioles, Bulbul, Robbin, Starling, Ibis, Trogon, Drongo.

LATE AFTERNOON UNTIL DARK: Partridge, Drongo, Bulbul, Cricket, Amphibian chorus, Toads, Frogs.

ZULU MUSIC: with guitars, jew's harp, fighting sticks, gourd-and-bow, horns, in songs, wedding chants, beer-drink, praises, dances.

SOUNDS OF A SOUTH AFRICAN HOMESTEAD

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Recorded in the Land of the Zulus by Dr. Raymond B. Cowles

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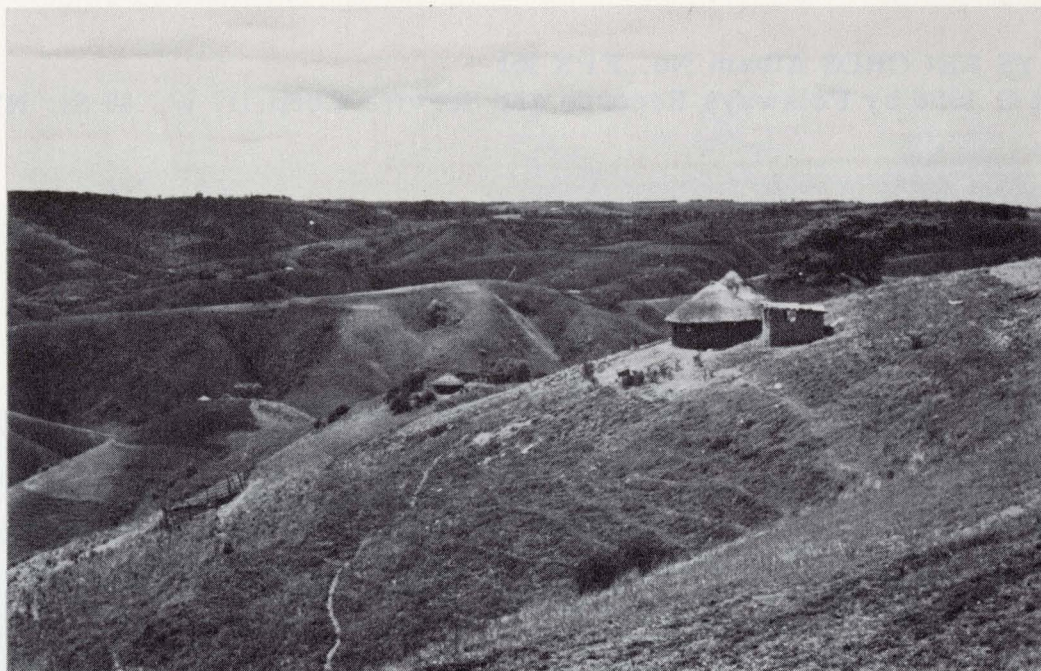
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SOUNDS OF A SOUTH AFRICAN HOMESTEAD

(In the Land of the Zulus)

Notes by Dr. Raymond B. Cowles

Throughout most of the lands assigned to Zulu and other aboriginal occupation very few of the bird songs recorded here will be heard again. It is only on some of the large white-owned farms, forest preserves and game refuges that these birds can survive. The overcrowded lands of the Negro reservations have either been cleared of all bush or soon will be bare except for the scrub thorns and weeds that recapture abandoned land. Even the birds of the open grasslands are scarcely managing to eke out a precarious existence in the "native areas," where overgrazing and spreading cultivation leave progressively less undisturbed habitats for their occupation. Only the most adaptable species will adjust to these conditions.

On the abundant lands held by the white population, both private and government owned, the ancient nonmigratory birds continue to flourish undiminished in numbers and variety, although the current practice of intensive dusting to destroy the tsetse fly in the Hluhluwe game refuge in Zululand, constitutes a threat to at least some species.

Except in the big game refuges, the major mammals have long since passed from the scene.

In compiling the materials for this recording, one of the chief objectives was the production of as nearly a representative composition of sounds as could be obtained, hence the necessity of concentrating on the music and sounds of activities around a homestead to be heard on any one of the major estates. A representative blend of African sounds, human, domestic animals, and birds, could seemingly produce the most valid sound picture available today.

To aid in visualization of the scene, the recorded bird music starts with the dawn chorus on a farmyard situated at the edge of bushlands (the term jungle is not used in South Africa). From the surrounding trees come the calls of some of the most familiar and ubiquitous birds, the Red-eyed Doves and Cape Ring Doves, the former approximately the size of our American Band-tailed Pigeons, the latter somewhat larger than our Mourning Doves. Following these, and intermingled with them, can be detected the clucking of a hen, peeping of chicks, and the faint call of a rooster. There are also the whistle-like call of an Olive Thrush, the insistent song of the Diderick Cuckoo, which parasitises the Spot-backed Weavers, followed by the twittering of a colony of these common birds whose clustered, globular nests can usually be found in a neighboring eucalyptus ("gum") tree.

The chorus varies from time to time and includes continued calling of the ever-present Cape Ring dove, the gurgling of a Laughing Dove, and other sounds.

Later in the day there comes from the edge of the bush where a fruiting wild fig attracts many species of birds, the mellow whistle of Red-winged Starlings and the nasal, sardonic laughter of the Trumpeter Hornbill. These notes are followed by a brief snatch of calls by the Crowned Hornbill, the down-scale tootling of a Tympanum Dove and the very similar song of an Emerald-spotted Dove, the latter distinguished by its more staccato terminal notes. Although they occupy very similar habitats, look somewhat alike, and have readily confused songs, the Emerald-spotted Dove is generally more scarce and in the province of Natal it is rare by comparison with the Tympanum Dove.

Other species of birds follow, some of them mingled with the barking cacophony of monkey calls followed by the Gwalagwala, the Zulu onomatopoetic name for one of the Turacos or Plantain Eaters.

During the heat of the day in the summer, for a time, all sounds are subordinated to the steady insistent din of cicadas. In these southern latitudes with reversed seasons, cicadas are called "Christmas-beetles" because they herald not only hot weather but this holiday season as well. All through the summer months almost all sound-recordings made deep in the bush or near the edge of the bush will inevitably include the clacking notes of a bush warbler, Umbucu. Unnoticed at the time, they are almost always present; therefore, in most of these recordings these clacking sounds will intrude among the specific songs that are listed.

Sometime during the early morning hours, or through a heavily overcast day, and again at dusk one is certain to hear the amazing and beautiful mimic performance of the Noisy Robin which has been given an entire sequence in these recordings. Included in this repertoire are avian songs not recorded elsewhere in this series, as well as a rapid review of the commoner birds to be heard elsewhere in the collection together with imitations of a herder-boy's typical whistled exhortations and warnings to his cattle.

The rest of the recordings include common sounds of the bush country, as well as the barking notes of the Narina Trogon, a rarely seen or heard bird, and closes with a normal succession of sounds heard in the waning light of an afternoon. These fade to the mundane chirping of crickets as darkness descends, snatches of

song by a lonely girl, frightened by her superstitious fears that attend night, other crickets and the faint sounds of the Indian Ocean surf as background. The closing sequence is comprised of the familiar rainy-weather chorus of amphibians, which, in this land of temperamental rainfall and precarious crops, is a much loved and comforting sound with which to close the day.

Nomenclature in the following list of bird songs is that found in "The Birds of South Africa" by Dr. Austin Roberts. The first number, in parenthesis, is the serial number, in a way similar to our own A.O.U. check list number, the second is that of the page opposite the color plate where the bird is illustrated. The vernacular names employed here are also those of Dr. Roberts. In the case of native names, those used by Dr. Roberts are employed except where there is a disagreement, in which case the Zulu terms with which I am familiar are used.

For the beginning student or the tourist, there is no volume as useful as this color guide, "The Birds of South Africa." It should be stated, however, that there is considerable disagreement by some ornithologists concerning the nomenclatural views and the technical validity of Roberts' system; and it might be well for the beginner interested in bird nomenclature to examine the list of synonyms given by this author and compare them with those in other works of recent date.





SIDE I, Band 1

DAWN CHORUS

- (314) 130 Red-eyed Turtle Dove, Streptopelia semitorquata, irobe.
- (316) 130 Cape Turtle Dove, Afropelia capicola, ijuba
- (553) 228 Cape Thrush, Afrocichla olivacea, umunswe, hens and chicks heard in background.
- (352) 142 Diederick Cuckoo, Lampromorpha cuprea (Bronze cuckoo) the polysyllabic whistled notes, with calls of the Cape Turtle Dove and
- (317) 130 Laughing Dove, Stigmatopelia senegalensis, n'givelecececi
- (797) 342 Spotted-backed Weaver Hyphantornis spilonotus, u hpokohpoko, a faint but continuous twittering of a colony of these social birds.

SIDE I, Band 2

BUSH BIRDS

- (422) 168 Trumpeter Hornbill, Bycanistes bucinator, ikunata with whistled calls of the Red-winged Starlings..
- (427) 168 Crowned Hornbill, Protococcus suahelicus, umkolwane faintly heard calls superimposed on soft, melancholy notes of
- (319) 130 Tambourine Dove, Tympanistria tympanistria, isibelu
- (321) 130 Emerald-spotted Dove, Turtor chalcospilos, isivu
- (431) 178 Black-collared Barbet, Lybius torquatus, isimakele
- (436) 178 Red-browed Tinker Barbet, Pogoniulus pusillas, isibangalanga
- (766) 328 Olive Sunbird Haagneri olivacea, nwingwi
- (721) 304 Gorgeous Bush Shrike, Calophoneus quadricolor, ivovoni
- Vervet Monkey, Cercopithecus pygerethrus, nkau, the faint cacophony of barking sounds
- (336) 70 Knysna Lourie (Plantain-eater) Turacus corythaix, gwalagwala, the harsh rendition of the Zulu name.
- (350) 142 Emerald Cuckoo, Chrysococcyx intermedius, umtwanana ungendi. The native name is onomatopoeic and means "little child don't marry."
- (709) 304 Bou-bou Shrike, Laniarius ferrugineus, uboboni, this is a dual call, the first three notes are produced by one of a pair of birds, the last two notes by its mate.
- (627) 266 Bleating Bush Warbler, Camaroptera olivacea, umbuzana, i.e., "little goat, or kid," from its goat-like bleating. In the background in this and most other bush-habitat recordings are the clacking notes attributed by the Zulus to:
- (622) 260 Apalis or Bar-throated Warbler, Apalis thoracica, as none was collected when making recordings, the identity is not certain.

SIDE I, Band 3

Cicadas. There are two sections, the first record being toned down in volume because of "blast" effect, the second at normal recording volume provides a more realistic rendering of the noise.

- (521) 214 Black-headed Oriole, Oriolus monachus, umqoqongo. In Zulu the q's are simply hopping sounds produced by the tongue and are not renderable in our language.

- (545) 228 Layard's Bulbul, Loiderosa (Pycnonotus) tricolor, ipotwe, and by the English more commonly known as "Toppie."
- (578) 244 Noisy Robin, Cossypha dichroa, ugaga. The following recording was made at dusk, and all of the calls listed below are those made by one mimic although they have been listed by species. Throughout the performance the only genuine robin notes seem to be the up-and-down churring sounds and some miscellaneous whistles.
- (715) 304 Red-wing Shrike, Orthotricha senegala, umqupane. Chrysococcyx intermedius, Emerald cuckoo, its own churring calls. Brief snatch of Glossy Starling, its own calls. Red-winged starling, with imitation of calls of several birds as they prepare to fly. Black-headed Oriole, its own calls. Repeat of the Starling's calls. Whistling of the herder boy. Faintly, in background are the calls of the Rain Coucal, "ufookwe" Centropus burchellii ((357) 142), Green White eye, Zosterops virens mehlwana ((328) 778), joint scolding notes. Repeat of Red-winged Shrike. Warning and other calls of Black-headed Oriole. Herder boy's whistling.

SIDE I, Band 4

- (84) 30 Glossy Ibis, Hagedashia h. hagedash, nkankane. Tympanum Dove, repeat. Emerald Cuckoo, repeat, with song of the bulbul
- (551) 228 Sombre Bulbul, Andropandus importunus, iwili, and more commonly in English "Willi". Mingled with both of the above songs can be heard a very high-pitched, almost wirey note, the song of:
- (790) 336 Forest Weaver, Symplectes bicolor ishayugumbu, i.e., "play the piano." This name must have developed after the advent of the European piano since these high notes bear no resemblance to the native "ugumbu."
- (393) 136 Narina Trogon, Apaloderma narina, umjenengu. The dove-like voices with barking cadence are those normally heard off in the distance. During this recording six of these most beautiful birds gathered close by and their voices overlap at times. The notes of the Tympanum Dove are included again.
- (517) 214 Fork-tailed Drongo, Buchanga adsimilis, ntengu. Tympanum dove notes are repeated. Trogons continued, several calling close by. Emerald

Cuckoo alternating with Sombre Bulbul and faint high notes of the Forest Weaver. Trogons calling actively again.

- (343) 142 Red-chested Cuckoo, Notococcyx solitarius, Chal-um-beu or tshay-um-kono, the Zulu names seem to be used as alternatives and mean "plant the seed," (these birds start calling at the time of normal rains and planting of the gardens) or "strike the biceps," and both are of course onomatopoetic renderings of the song.

Late Afternoon Until Dark

SIDE I, Band 5

- (178) 70 Redwing Partridge (A Francolin) Scleroptila levailanti itendele. (Identification by a Zulu) Fork-tailed Drongo, an almost inevitable interruption of other songs in the late afternoon or evening. Layard's Bulbul, or "Toppie," a late afternoon scolder. Unidentified species of cricket, calling after dark. Girl singing to keep up her courage after dark. Unidentified crickets with particularly somnolent song. (Faint sounds of Indian Ocean surf as background.)

Amphibian chorus. Toads, frogs, members of the genus Hyperolius, and, faintly, Pyxicephalus.

Concluding with night chorus of frog Pyxicephalus (not personally identified) that is one of early songsters that welcome the rains.





A second objective was the procurement of samples of the contemporary state of the Zulu African music, their use of modern instruments, and modern, i.e., European music, and such samples of traditional music and singing as could be obtained.

Genuinely native musical instruments are disappearing rapidly and are being replaced by the guitar, accordion, concertina, mouth organ, and jew's harp, approximately in that order of preference.

The native whistle, or flute, the ugemfe, a hollow native reed with four holes burned into it, almost completely has been replaced by what we would call a "referee's whistle," far less musical but much easier to play. Only the little Zulu herder-boy tending cattle still uses the ugemfe, and he does so less frequently than formerly.

The ugumbo, a gourd or a resonator of sounds produced by tapping a taut string or wire stretched on a bow, is rarely heard today, although only four decades ago it was quite common. It is also a curious fact that formerly it was considered to be an exclusively male instrument, but over the intervening years it has been adopted, actually saved, by the women. In 1953 only three players of this instrument could be discovered; all were young women; and all of them were using resonators approximately half the size of the early men's instrument,

possibly a conscious, or unconscious, effort to simulate the higher tones of the feminine voice. In order to play the instrument, an expanse of bare skin is needed in order not to muffle the resonance of the gourd. Modulation of the tones is effected by very slight movements of the open end of the gourd back and forth, close to the bare chest. Clothing silences the resonance.

Inquiry as to why there had been a shift from men to women artists on the ugumbo elicited only embarrassment or, in the case of girls, an unrestrained giggle, but no explanation. Two factors may be involved: one, the increasing tendency of men to wear shirts or coats whereas the back-country women still wear a blanket or cloth draped so as to leave a shoulder or breast bare and thus available for use while playing the instrument; and the other may be the reluctance of men who have worked in cities (and this is now the majority of them) to seem unsophisticated, backward, and unaccomplished in modern ways. Also, it is only the men who can afford to buy a guitar or who have the opportunity to do so.

A vivid commentary on the rapid abandonment of this instrument has recently (1955) appeared in the South African press where it has been stated that a man assigned the task of finding a player and making a tape recording of the ugumbo, spent from 1953 to 1955 in locating a single instrument and player. Since three artists were seen in six months of 1953, it can

only be assumed that this searcher for a recording did not consider women as genuine ugumbo players. A city African, unaware of the recent trend, might readily insist on finding a male player.

An interesting phenomenon is observable in the changing popularity of European instruments in the African order of preference. Forty years ago the jew's harp was widely used by the Zulu men, but they were beginning to learn to play the mouth organ. Twenty years or so later the concertina was the most popular instrument and only those who played one could be considered up to date. Following this shift, the piano keyboard accordion became popular whereas at the present time the guitar seems to be the most popular instrument. Even the poverty-stricken small boys with ambition to be instrumentalists, construct unmusical but satisfyingly noisy guitars out of empty boxes or even empty gasoline tins with slits cut into the tops.

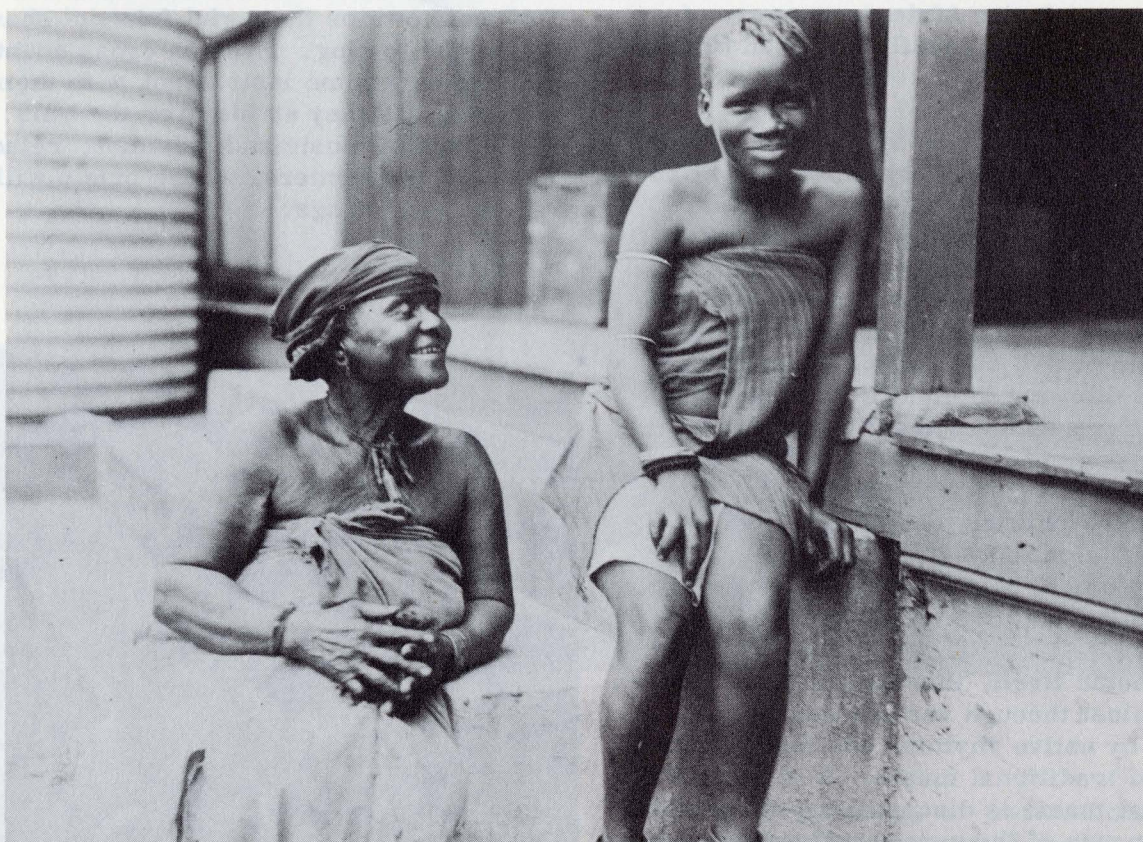
As to the music itself, this ranges from modern jazz of the latest through various degrees of adulteration by native rhythms and tones, back to unadulterated traditional music. It is notable that the traditional music is disappearing along with the disappearance of the purely native instruments, and it will be only a few more decades until most of their music will be a blend of the two. In the process we may expect to get interesting new combinations of these two types of music.

Among the forces for conservation of the traditional music and costumes is the exceedingly interesting Zulu-type Christianity initiated by a native known as Shembe, and now spreading widely. A student of musical evolution might do well to record the religious and secular music emanating from this group as well as to record the developing music of the metropolitan musician with his multiplying dance orchestras and emulation of American jazz. One composition of this type, "Skokiaan" has been very popular in the United States.

In none of the following recordings were the artists chosen for skill and none was in the slightest sense "professional". These are the musical and other productions such as one will hear anywhere, in the so-called Reserves, on the farm lands, or along country roadways or the city streets. The Zulu seems to find his emotional outlets almost entirely in singing and dancing. In the city the African houseboys, dressed in uniforms of short cotton pants and short sleeved jackets, carry their musical instruments on shopping tours and play and sing while dodging automobiles, streetcars, (trams), rickshaws and other vehicles, or as they dodge

among the crowds of pedestrians. At night they sit along the curbs, roadsides, or at the doors of their own or their girl friends' shanties and continue to sing. Even on cross country travel they carry some instrument with them and play, or sing, as they stride over the hills. It is this type of music and musician, rather than special performers, whose music will be found in the recordings.





ZULU MUSIC:

SIDE 2, Band 1: Curbstone musicians playing a Zulu-ized version of what seems to be "Red River Valley." -- Umzinto, Natal.

SIDE 2, Band 2: European type music as rendered by the same group. -- Umzinto, Natal.

SIDE 2, Band 3: "Wenza umuntu". A completely native ditty except for the modern note of a guitar background. -- Umzinto, Natal.

SIDE 2, Band 4: Guitar Solo. This is the typical use of the instrument and is exactly as will be heard along the countryside or in the city. The player was just recovering from a "jag" on intsangu, otherwise known as Cannabis, hemp, dagga, marijuana, reefer etc. -- Inchanga, Natal.

SIDE 2, Band 5: Wedding Music. These recordings were obtained at a big wedding party, that of a rich Zulu who could afford two wives. The first wife was busily engaged in dressing wife number two, tending the distribution of beer and food and otherwise making herself useful.

SIDE 2, Band 6: Traditional Songs. Traditional plus guitar accompaniment. -- Umzumbe, Natal.

SIDE 2, Band 7: Jew's Harp. Traditional rhythms and intonation. One of the very interesting shifts in beat will be noted in part of this music. -- Umpampinyoni Valley, Natal.

SIDE 2, Band 8: Wedding Dance of the Men. Thudding feet of the dancers stamping out a rhythm as old as the Zulu people can be heard as a deeper note, together with the clacking sounds of their fighting sticks*, women singing, and the extraordinary ululation of the women giving vent to overwhelming excitement. These shrill yodels are characteristic of certain types of music in many parts of Africa. -- Umzumbe, Natal.

* Editors Note: These "fighting sticks" are substitutes for the short Zulu spears.

SIDE 2, Band 8: Wedding Chanting. Continuation of the above celebration. The whistles are modern substitutes for the ancient "ugemfe" reed whistle. -- Umzumbe, Natal.

SIDE 2, Band 9: Beer-drink. These recordings were made at a social gathering almost entirely composed of men. A few old women were wandering about the periphery of the gathering, screeching and "yodeling," but they were obviously not a part of the proceedings. The scene was that of a smoke-filled hut, the roof-thatch blackened by many years of hearth fires---there are never any chimneys---redolent with pungent wood smoke and the aroma of sweating bodies mingled with the sour-sweet smell of native beer, "utshwala." All of the sequences were obtained within sight of Hlutunkungu Mountain where rain clouds gather before a storm, and hence the name which means "pluck the clouds" i. e. as one plucks a fowl.

SIDE 2, Band 10: Traditional recitatives of past glories. Traditional - description of ancient battles. Other songs of war. Tribal praises and glorification of chief.

SIDE 2, Band 11: Ugumbo Player. The gourd-and-bow is played by tapping the taut wire with a light stick, and the changes of tonal quality are a result of moving the opening of the gourd some fractions of an inch towards or away from

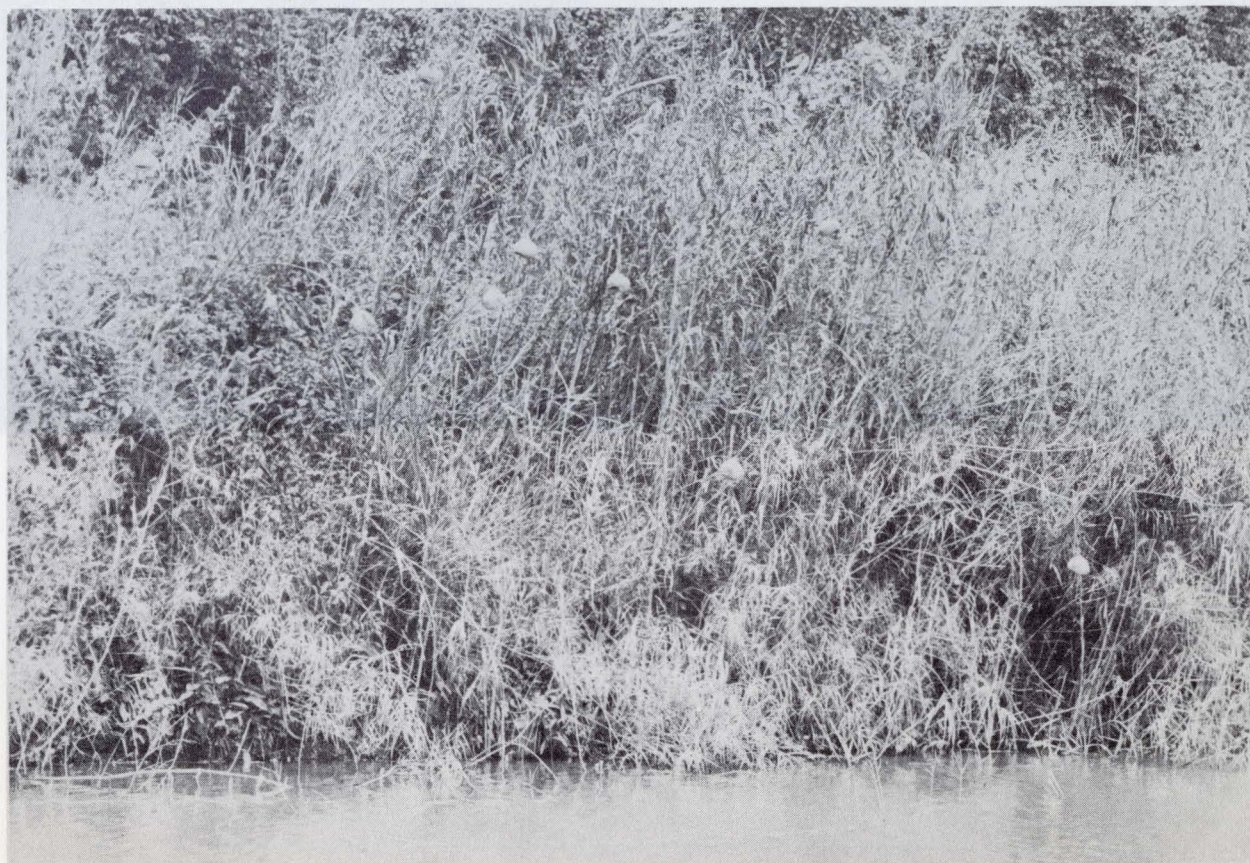
an expanse of bare chest skin. This is one of the ancient musical instruments of the Zulus. -- Umpampinyoni Valley, Natal.

SIDE 2, Band 12: Horn Blowing. The use of cow horns to announce a gathering of the people goes back many years, and today it is employed in heralding meetings including religious affairs in the back country.. -- Umzumbe, Natal.

SIDE 2, Band 13: Ox Wagon. Although the ox wagon is an old introduction by the white man, the native oxen are essential to its use. This was the vehicle, more than any other form of transport, which opened up the southern half of the African continent. The South African tribal peoples owned no wheeled vehicles but by hitching, inspanning, a number of oxen to a sled made of a forked tree trunk, they could haul small loads.

The ox wagon is passing, giving way to modern forms of transport with which its slowness cannot compete. However, for all of the old timers of Africa it will always hold a strong place of affection and its passing will be viewed with a keen sense of loss.

Calls to the oxen, rumbling and grinding of the iron shod wheels, and as a finale, the loud pop of the long ox whip will be heard.





All Photographs by Raymond B. Cowles
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