

Wealthy Africa Tribe Clings to White Magic

By E. A. JONES
KAMPALA, Uganda, Sept. 15 (AP) — The Baganda, a tribe numbering two million in Central Uganda, are perhaps the wealthiest and most progressive of Africa's native peoples.

Many of them ride around in big cars, wear Western clothing, and become lawyers, surgeons and engineers.

Despite these advances, the many or witch doctor remains a figure of tremendous influence.

Last year in the prosperous semi-urban area of Masaka two little girls, age 6 and 3, disappeared at a wedding feast. Their skeletons were found later in a swamp. The flesh had been boiled away from the bones. Hand and foot bones, often used in black magic rituals, were missing.

A farm hand admitted abducting the children and handing them over to plantation owner Firiki Faka, a 6-foot-2 practicing witch-doctor.

Spirits Talked
Faka's wife had been ill. Members of the family said she was bent double and "the spirits talked in her joints." After treating her without success, Faka called in another witchdoctor, who advised that only the darkest rites, involving the flesh of young virgins, would effect a cure.

The case against Faka fell apart when police released, for lack of evidence, some of the 24 other witchdoctors arrested in the case.

"All witnesses who had given evidence flatly denied their statements," said the European officer in charge of the investigation. "Nothing would induce a single person to testify in court. . . . The strange thing is that Faka's wife is now perfectly healthy."

Modern medical investigators might not find it strange. A case in which "spirits talked in her joints" is made to order for witch-doctors. Most of their cases involve mental and emotional disturbances that would be treated by a psychiatrist in the Western world. One of the tools of the psychiatrist's command is hypnosis, an art practiced for centuries by the mganga.

Recognize Sickness
The Baganda themselves recognize that the witchdoctors specialize in "sickness which comes from the spirit." For broken bones or specific disease, they usually go to the white man's hospital.

Black magic, usually connected with intent to do evil, is hated and feared by the Baganda. By law, its practitioners can be imprisoned or put to death. But evidence and witnesses are hard to come by.

White magic, however, is an accepted feature of Baganda life. Tribesmen consider it a link between the flesh and spirit worlds. Most families who live away from town have their "spirit houses," special huts dedicated to the ghost of illustrious ancestors. The hut must be built in one day by the woman of the family. A fire is always kept burning, and a ghost drum stands in the corner.

In times of trouble or sickness, the family gathers in the hut and the witch doctor is called in to beat the drum and invoke the gods.

Eastern Town Probes Firing Of Teacher

GLOUCESTER, Mass., Sept. 15 (AP) — Circumstances surrounding the release of a teacher hired by mail drew the attention of city officials here Friday, and two city councilmen asked for an investigation.

Warren G. McClure, 35, former California teacher who attended a summer session at the University of Oregon, was told that the job of teaching retarded children here had been filled before his arrival.

McClure was given \$1,000 expense money to cover travel costs. McClure, a Negro, had been hired after corresponding with L. Munro Grandy, superintendent of schools here. Some townspeople maintained the teacher was released because of his race, but this was denied by city officials.

Meanwhile, California Department of Education records showed McClure's teaching credentials were revoked automatically Dec. 30, 1954. The department's legal adviser, Lawrence Kearney, said the loss of credentials was mandatory because of a conviction in Los Angeles in 1949 of a penal code violation involving vagrancy.

McClure taught in Sacramento from September, 1950, to June, 1953. After he resigned, school officials in Sacramento said if McClure had not quit he would have been released anyway because he "just was not a good teacher. . . . He is not a dynamic person."

Gloucester councilman Manuel F. Lewis and John J. Burns jointly sponsored an order for an inquiry. Lewis said he wanted to determine the legality of giving \$1,000 in city funds to McClure and to find out why the teacher was hired without a personal interview.

City Manager Richard W. Mayo said of the \$1,000 expense payment: "Certainly a mistake was made in failing to get recommendations on the individual. It should be overlooked by the citizens."

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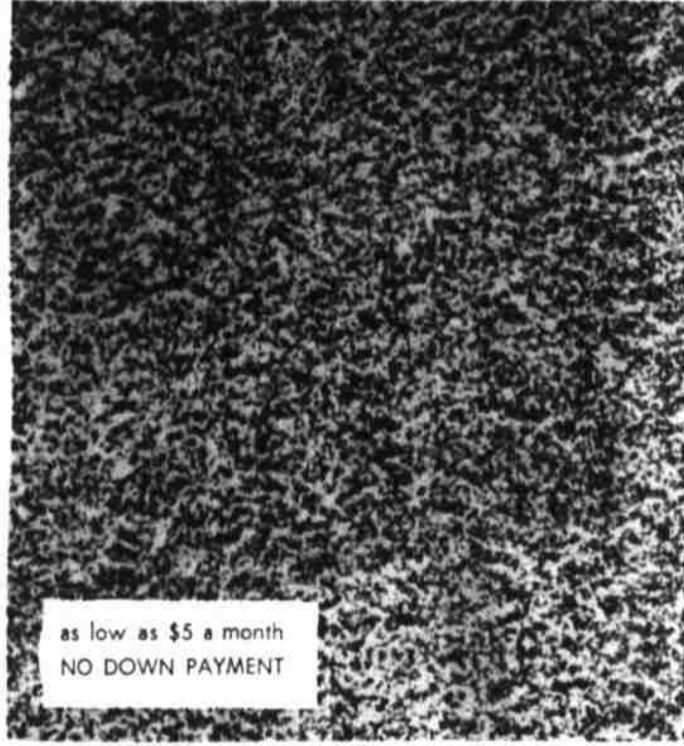
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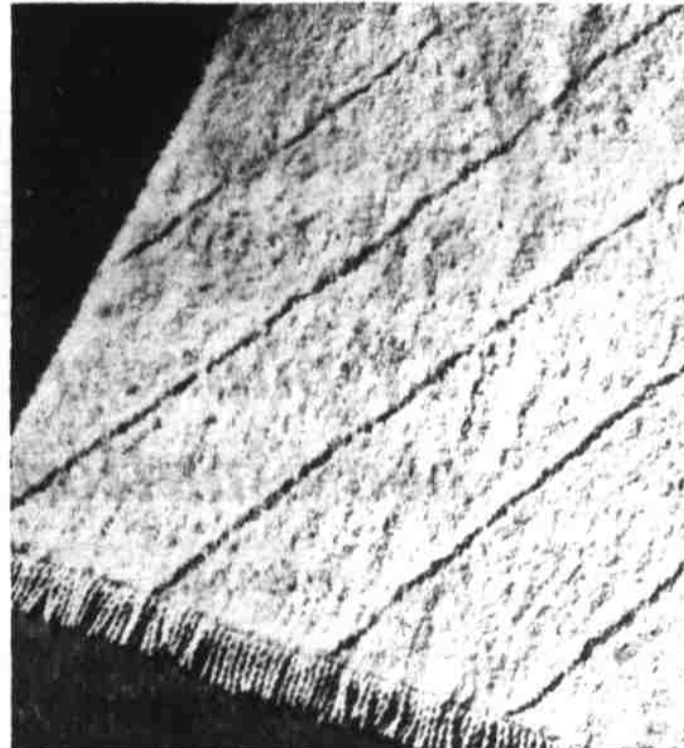
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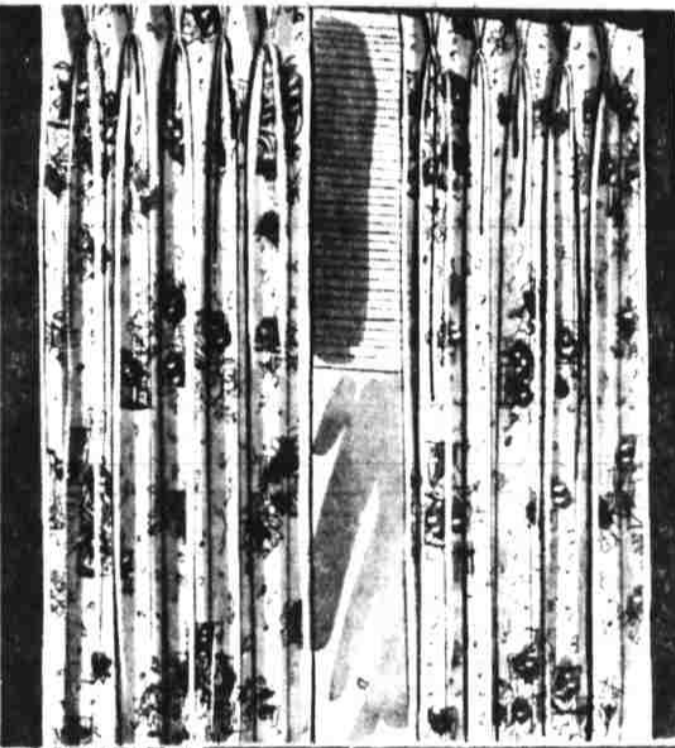
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