



—Photo By Dr. Banks, 1932

Mountain
GORILLAS

in the

.....
1931
to
1940
.....

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN

San Diego, California

FOREWORD

It is a pleasure to share with those who are interested in man's closest kin, the gorilla, our own experiences here in the San Diego Zoo. The friendship of these two great beasts, the chance for close and continued observation of two gorillas in natural surroundings with gorilla companionship has been given to few in such great measure.

To the readers of this little book we offer some of the most intimate of our observations.

To gorilla students and lovers everywhere we give you—Mbongo and Ngagi.

BELLE J. BENCHLEY.

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO

FOUNDED, OCTOBER 6, 1916

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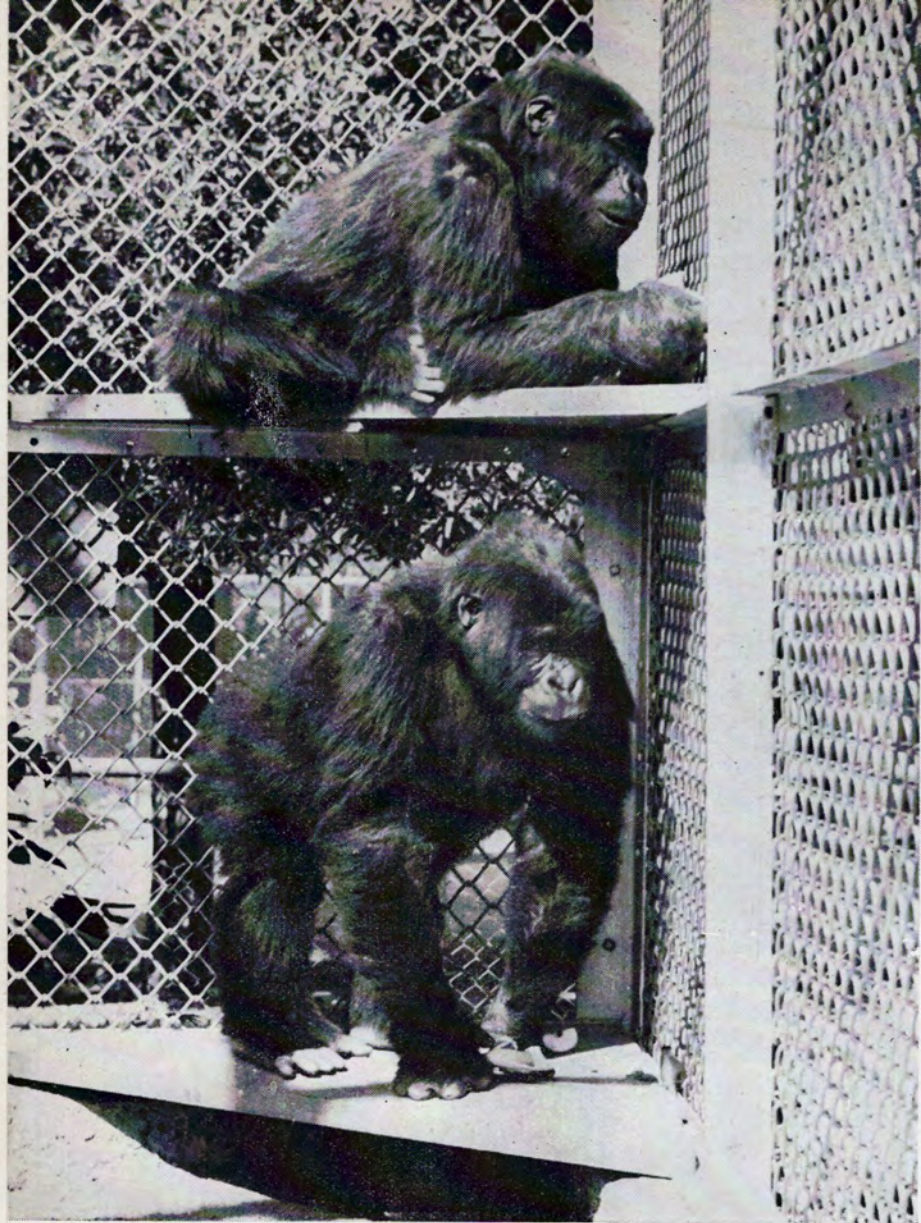
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The Purpose of the Society

1. To advance sincere and scientific study of nature.
2. To foster and stimulate interest in the conservation of wild life.
3. To maintain a permanent Zoological Exhibit in San Diego.
4. To stimulate public interest in the building and maintenance of a Zoological Hospital.
5. To provide for the delivery of lectures, exhibit of pictures and publication of literature dealing with natural history and science.
6. To operate a society for the mutual benefit of its members for non-lucrative purposes.



MBONGO (above)

Age: About 4 yrs., 6 months

Weight: 125 pounds

NGAGI (below)

Age: About 5 years

Weight: 147 pounds



Mbongo in 1933

Weight
172 pounds

belief that the Belgian government had extended the permit to capture one gorilla to include a second one. At the time we purchased them, however, Martin Johnson was not completely convinced that he had a pair, and asked us to have anyone we wished determine the sex of each of them. There seemed no authority willing to decide the sexes and so we took them, hoping that the native report was accurate.

It was not until the gorillas were in the zoo for more than three years that we were able to determine beyond a doubt that both of them were males.

Friendly and Amiable

The gorillas have been reported as being not only fierce and mean, but moody, sulky creatures, with little interest in the affairs around them, and unwilling or unable to adapt themselves to circumstances and conditions of captivity. Our two gorillas entered into the life of our zoo with less difficulty than any specimen that has come under my observance.

Neither at the time of their introduction to our collection nor since have we observed anything

in these two which would confirm the general conception of the character of gorillas. Ours have been extremely amiable, with good natured tolerance of each other and the ways of captivity. They have had fewer fights than any two of the other great apes, regardless of sex, and at such times the fight, although fierce, was soon over, and with one or two exceptions, the smaller gorilla more than held his own.

It is true, however, that at first they showed complete indifference to the animals in adjoining cages and to the visitors who stood around the cages watching them. It was not until they had been in the zoo many months that we perceived that this indifference was assumed, especially on the part of Ngagi. Mbongo very early began to show his crowd-consciousness by showing off for the benefit of visitors and openly responded to their applause. Within a day or two they obviously recognized their own keeper and from the first took the food he brought them and accepted his care as a matter of course.

They apparently took great comfort in each other and, while

Growth and Development of Mountain Gorillas in San Diego Zoo

On October the fifth, 1931, two young Mountain Gorillas arrived at the Zoological Garden of San Diego. They had been captured nearly a year before by the late Martin Johnson and his wife, Osa, in the Alum-bongo Mountains in the Kivu district of the Belgian Congo. The money for the purchase of these gorillas had been given to our zoo by two of its late benefactors, Miss Ellen Scripps and Mr. Robert P. Scripps. Prior to coming to the zoo these two gorillas had been on exhibit in the Central Park Zoo, New York, where they had been boarded by the Johnsons and actually cared for by two Swahili natives brought temporarily from Africa.

When they arrived in the San Diego zoo they were probably between four and five years old with approximately six or seven months difference in their ages. They were jet black with long thick hair encircling their round fat black faces like the hoods of a baby's woolly flannel wrap. It was impossible at that time for us to get an accurate weight of them individually but we weighed the crate, both with them in it and emptied, and found that their combined weight was two hundred and sixty-nine pounds. Later we devised a satisfactory and accurate method of weighing them. For several

years their growth was so regular that the difference in their weights stood constantly at approximately twenty-five pounds and so we decided that their weight, when they arrived, must have been about one hundred twenty-five pounds and one hundred and forty-seven pounds.

Natural Untamed Gorillas Desired

From the very beginning of their life in the zoo we planned to permit them every liberty compatible with safety and as much freedom from interference and handling as could be reasonably sustained. In other words, we wished to have these two gorillas develop as naturally as possible into normal wild gorillas, with as little influence of civilization and captivity as we could. We had an excellent chance for such an experiment for both of the gorillas were past baby age when captured, could eat any food acceptable to an adult, were old enough to have had much natural foundation in gorilla wild life. Moreover, they had been captured together from the same troupe and were thus provided with congenial gorilla companionship.

At the time of their capture the natives who had handled them reported to Martin Johnson that they were male and female and it was because of this

making the first examination of their new living quarters which every new member of our huge family always makes they frequently moved as though at a given signal close to each other and grunted, with the tone we have learned to connect with satisfaction in our long years of experience with them.

When we opened the door of their sleeping room the first evening we experienced none of the difficulties we have with many of our specimens, and all of our other apes, in getting them to enter the strange place and be shut up. First the smaller, who always took the lead, and then the larger, Ingagi, entered. They settled down on their bed of clean straw to the bountiful supper of fruit and vegetables as though they had been born in this cage and its life was routine.

Within the next few days they had displayed for us their whole galaxy of tricks, chasing, wrestling, chest beating. Their indifference to the chimpanzees in the next cage was too constant and spontaneous to be assumed. They simply did not feel any fear or concern about them, and their

indifference toward the people who watched them seemed as though they were blind and deaf.

Thirty Inches High at Five Years

At the time of their arrival there was no evidence of the large crest which characterizes the Mountain Gorilla, but even at that age there were many white hairs mingled with the black on their temples, thighs and saddles. The hair was very thick and of even length over the entire body, with somewhat greater length on the arms, and thighs. When squatting on their heels with their knees sharply bent their height was not quite thirty inches and their backs were even then very broad, being nearly twenty inches across the shoulders. I was, however, most impressed by the broad hands and short fingers, and the solid feet with their heavy insteps and short human-sized toes. In this particular trait lay their greatest contrast to the other anthropoid apes, and their greatest resemblance to human beings.

When they walked erect—as they do, by the way—less and

Ngagi in 1934
Crest now beginning
to develop
Weight
205 pounds





F. Masters, 1934
Ngagi and Mbongo wrestle a bit.

less frequently with maturity and great weight, they held their arms either beside their bodies, or clasped their hands behind their backs. This, too, was in direct contrast to the balancing motions characteristic of the chimpanzee and the orang-utan or even the little gibbon whose natural posture in walking is erect. Their feet were flat on the ground and instead of the shuffling walk of the other two large apes they stepped forward with each foot in turn with a very human stride. Although the great toe is quite opposed to the rest of the foot, still the foot is not essentially built for grasping, and I have never seen them carry an article or hold food in their feet as all other anthropoid apes do.

They can grasp a rope or stout branch between the great toes and the ones next to them with sufficient strength to balance and support themselves but not cling with much tenacity.

Ground Dwellers

From the very beginning these two apes showed clearly that they were ground dwelling animals. They possessed none of the agility and grace associated with tree dwellers or habitual climbers, and we built their cage with the thought in mind of providing seats, pools and activities suitable to ground dwelling creatures. When they climbed up the side of their cage they clung awkwardly to the wire, and it was many months before they seemed to feel any ease off the ground.

From the time they arrived they sat in an erect posture, knees bent and feet flat on the floor, the most human position assumed by any primate. We built corner shelves a foot or more off the floor upon which they might sit and provided low logs for them to sit upon. They chased each other around such obstructions by the hour, running very fast for such heavy clumsy looking creatures. They wrestled with each other in a very human fashion and among the child-like games they played was a sort of patty-cake in the course of which they patted each other's hands or feet.

Their concern for each other and obvious mutual attachment was in great contrast to their indifference toward those of us who cared for them. Frequently they sat touching their hands or feet together in a way which was

plainly not casual. If one seemed in trouble or ill the other always exerted every effort to stimulate him to activity and to make some contribution to a better frame of mind. Even yet, after eight years in a cage together, their love for each other is often shown by a gentle touch, or the laying of one great hand on the other's shoulder in a manner which is at once a gesture of affection and confidence.

Development Closely Watched

As soon as a satisfactory way was found to weigh the gorillas we made it a habit to weigh them every three or four months. Our object was to mark their growth and to prevent too rapid gain in weight without a corresponding growth in height and breadth. If they seemed inactive we cut down on fat building foods in order to keep them active and vigorous.

When the two gorillas had been here five months, or in March, 1932, we discovered that Mbongo, as we called the smaller one, had lost one of his lower incisor teeth. I happened to see the gap in the lower row of big white teeth, one morning when

making an offering of grapes. He was by this time very willing to have me touch his lips, and permitted me to push the lower lip down with the tip of my finger. He was very conscious of the gap and just as a child would do, kept feeling it with the tip of his big red tongue. Within a few days the second tooth disappeared, probably swallowed with a bite of carrot, and soon two broad crinkled edged teeth appeared through the red gums. Although Ngagi was much more suspicious and unfriendly than Mbongo we finally were able to discover through seeing him yawn that he had lost the two incisor teeth in the center of his mouth on both the upper and lower jaw and that the second teeth were already well grown.

At this time we decided that Mbongo was probably about five years old and Ngagi at least six months older. This would make the smaller gorilla now thirteen and the older one nearly fourteen years old.

During the year 1935 and '36, the first real evidences of the gray saddles began to be noticeable to the people outside the cages, although the sprinkling

Ngagi in Swing
1936





Mbongo in a
thoughtful
mood

of white hairs throughout this region of the black coats had been steadily increasing. During the past three years the white strip on Ngagi has become increasingly and plainly white, due to white tips on all of the hairs in this region. Actually much of this hair is white at the roots and tips with a narrow black band in the middle. White hair is also greatly in evidence in other parts of the body, especially when the hair is roughed up or matted. The thighs and hips of Mbongo are much more gray than those of Ngagi, but the white saddle is still far from conspicuous in the younger gorilla.

Gorillas Have Good Constitution

Although gorillas have apparently a well deserved reputation of being difficult to keep alive and well in captivity, it now appears that they are not the delicate creatures they have been considered. And when they arrive at a zoo in good condition the chances for their living are excellent. Perhaps no gorilla ever reached this continent in so perfect a condition as these two. This was, of course, due to the excellent care received from Martin and Osa Johnson during the early months of their captivity and their successful efforts to keep the two youngsters

in a happy and normal frame of mind. They were also probably the oldest gorillas that had ever been captured and brought out of the jungle and were thus sturdier because of the natural foundation of wild life.

After years of observation we are thoroughly convinced that the greatest threat to their existence is the danger of contagion and the recent steps taken in other zoos to keep gorillas isolated by glass during the months they must remain indoors is no doubt the reason for the better records for exhibiting apes which now prevails in several of the eastern zoos.

Our first worry about the physical condition of either of the apes was caused by finding Mbongo very drooping one morning. He held his eyes shut as though the light were painful. He did not care to eat and kept resting his head on the palms of his great hands. We did not compel him to go outside, but Ngagi plainly was urging him to move around. We gave him a mild dose of milk of magnesia in his milk and apparently this little attention was all that was required. But

from that time on we have watched him and at certain periods we use a mineral oil in his food which seems to fulfill all requirements. We discussed this matter of what we were prone to call Mbongo's headaches with the Johnsons and found that they had seen these same signs several times during his ten months with them. They also told us that he had at one time shed nearly all of his hair, which they had attributed to some sort of malnutrition or skin infection. We were glad to be prepared for this for twice he has lost most of his coat, in fact, Mbongo never has been so perfectly coated as Ngagi. There has never appeared to be any cause for this shedding, no skin lesions, nor physical defects have been apparent. One year, when he began to shed, we took out the sand on the floor as a sanitation measure, and to our amazement both gorillas became thin and lost their hair until they were almost unrecognizable. Upon restoration of the sand they very quickly became again the long clean shiny coated individuals to which we were accustomed. These long thick coats of hair are always

Ngagi rests in this position





Mbongo tips scale at
602 pounds in
1940

the first thing that students or scientists familiar with thin coated gorillas in most other zoos speak about.

First Illness a Severe Cold

In spite of the care we have taken to prevent contagion the gorillas have had severe colds twice. The first ones came on with surprising suddenness. Standing one day in the vicinity of the cage I was startled to hear a deep cough from Ngagi. I stayed until I heard him cough again, thinking that I might have been mistaken. He was lying on the shelf in the sun, and as it was the time of day when he usually was inactive I had not been worried by his sleepy actions. I consulted the keeper but he had seen nothing to indicate the gorilla might be suffering from cold. We called the doctor who came hurriedly to the cage and listened with us to the hoarse and regular cough which seemed to come from the very deepest part of the chest.

We decided to put both gorillas on a very light diet, giving them liquids, chiefly orange and grapefruit juices and to alkalize them as much as possible. A large dose of milk of magnesia was also administered. In the morning both gorillas were really ill; Mbongo being much the sicker of the two. His face was swollen, there was a heavy discharge from the nostrils, and his temperature was undoubtedly high. Doctor Schroeder, their own keeper, and I spent most of our time around the cage, and the two apes were completely quarantined so that the colds could not be spread throughout the anthropoid group. In spite of our care, however, they did spread like fire, as the damage was already done, and every one of the big fellows were soon seriously ill. The gorillas seemed completely conquered by the colds. They appeared to have no instinct for helping themselves but lay holding their hands toward us with a look of

scared and piteous appeal. Fortunately they respond quickly to proper treatment and we were able to use vapor treatments to relieve their difficulties in breathing. Within a few days the serious affair was over. It was our first lesson in the complete dependence they seemed to feel upon us in their illness. Since that initial experience we have watched any employess with a cold and not even the truck driver is allowed to approach any food or equipment intended for the great apes if he has the least indication of cold. The food for the apes is stored in an isolated room instead of with the food for the other primates. At the least indication of cold, treatment for common cold is begun.

Mbongo Injures Foot

In June, 1938, Mbongo suffered an injury to his right foot which we feared from the first was serious. Even yet we have never been able to determine exactly how it happened although at first from his extreme anger and fear of Ngagi we thought they must have been fighting. The right foot had been crushed, possibly by a sharp edge of the heavy log, across the metatarsal arch and the toes were curled under his foot from injury to the extensor tendons and crushing of tissues and bloodvessels. It was badly engorged. We all agreed that the danger of catching him up and placing him in a squeeze cage was greater than delay would be. We also felt that rest and quiet would be the best treatment and so for a few days we permitted

him to live a normal life although the foot was swelling and becoming more useless each day. Finally, as the result of a second clash between the two gorillas, we decided to keep him shut up in the sleeping cage. Early in July sloughing of tissues between the toes, at the end of the second and fifth toes and along the outside of the foot indicated gangrenous condition of the foot. Finally we decided to use the squeeze cage that had been provided so it was installed in the cage; the foot was anaesthetized and X-rayed. The condition of the foot was very much as Doctor Conti had expected it to be—the entire wound he therefore curetted; the third joints of the toes which had sloughed off were removed and the cavities packed with urea crystals. The doctors agreed that the gorilla himself had taken excellent care of all parts of the abcessed foot which he could reach. From that date the gorilla began to improve although all too slowly for our peace of mind. Mbongo seemed little upset by having been held and worked on, and accepted tomatoes and oranges as soon as he was released. People familiar with great apes know all of the difficulties of keeping them properly bandaged and in this case it was quite impossible. When after another month Mbongo was once more released from his long seclusion, we felt that we should be very grateful that we still had two gorillas even though one of them had a crippled foot which will cause him to walk with an awkward gait the rest of his life.

Temporary Separation

Immediately following Mbongo's serious injury we decided that we must be prepared to separate the two gorillas, as Ingagi was becoming increasingly dominant and showing signs of sexual maturity which might lead to fighting. Therefore, a strong partition was built dividing the cage for in Mbongo's handicapped position we could not risk trouble. As soon as Mbongo was released we put him into the smaller section of the cage, and for the first time separated them completely at night. The smaller gorilla seemed to glory in his security and actually taunted Ngagi through the fence. But to our surprise the larger gorilla seemed disconsolate at the loss of his cage mate; he suffered loss of appetite, refused to go into his house at night and, finally, to comfort him, we moved Mbongo back into the adjoining sleeping room, where the big fellows could see and touch each other through the bars and sleep close together. Ngagi immediately moved his own bed of hay to the corner of the room nearest that opening and has always remained there.

Mbongo regained the weight he had lost rapidly and we could see no effect upon his buoyant nature from his injury and long seclusion.

Ngagi Injures Himself

Last November, following a most exciting day when Ngagi had appeared to feel that the full responsibility of entertaining Osa Johnson rested upon him alone and consequently had

done much climbing around, we noticed that he moved his legs with difficulty, appearing to have sustained a strain or bruise in the vicinity of his hips or lower back. We watched him carefully but could find no outward indication of injury except his evident stiffness and pain in moving. The gorilla undoubtedly has no ability to stand pain and so at the slightest twinge Ngagi would cease all effort to move. Consequently, he became very stiff from just sitting in one position. Our only recourse was to supply heat, plenty of deep bedding and keep him quiet and happy. As we had done with Mbongo during his illness, we took turns spending time around him so he would not become too sad and lonesome and, like Mbongo, his response to our attention was very childlike. Actually, he became very much spoiled because of our anxiety. But unlike Mbongo, he did lose much of his mental stability in spite of our efforts. Finally we turned him out forcibly and put the two gorillas together once more so that the exuberant Mbongo might coax his big friend into normal activity. Ngagi, during the few weeks of his illness, lost nearly one hundred pounds in weight, and his appetite, even after we compelled him to stay out in the sunshine with Mbongo, was very poor. Finally we resorted to vitamin tablets which he took very well and immediately he began to show improvement. In February when we weighed him he had already begun to gain weight quite rapidly. He weighed four hundred and sixty-eight pounds

as against five hundred and one six months before. Mbongo had profited by Ngagi's lack of appetite and gobbled up all the left-over food, and so, for the first time, he had surpassed the big fellow, weighing five hundred and seventeen pounds—top mark for the two in our zoo at that date.

Temperament Unchanged

As Ngagi was showing such a rapid gain in weight and Mbongo becoming so unbelievably fat we decided to weigh them April 23 before the three month period had transpired to get them back on to their quarterly weighing schedule. When Ngagi came out and sat down on the scales we were pleased but not too surprised to find that he had made a gain of fifty-seven pounds in

a little over two months and tipped the scales at five hundred and twenty-five pounds. When I looked at Mbongo in his sleeping room before he was weighed I made up my mind that he weighed at least twenty-five pounds more than Ngagi but when he actually weighed five hundred and ninety-two I could not believe the scales were right and so we coaxed him off, and Moore, their keeper, got on and we found that they were perfectly balanced and accurate.

The growth of these two gorillas has been very regular and somewhat uneventful. They have been answering many questions which have never been answered concerning gorillas. So far as we can see their mental condition has remained very much what it was when they first arrived. They

Ngagi in 1940 . . .
showing crest and
heavy growth of
hair on arms





Ngagi never objects to
being weighed. Tips
scales at 539
pounds

are very different from each other and always have been quite opposite in their response to human beings. Mbongo is friendly, comical and apt to be a little tricky. He has, from time to time, tried to catch the fingers of some of the people around him, especially strangers, between his body and the wire. He is much more buoyant and light-hearted and at the same time more easily depressed than Ngagi. The few months' difference in their ages at the time of capture must have left their mark, but that alone cannot account for the great difference between them. We can easily imagine that Ngagi would now be the leader of his own band if he had remained in the wild. We doubt very much if Mbongo would ever have become a real leader. Ngagi has always seemed to feel a sense of responsibility which has made him watch over and control the younger one and even during his illness he was the dominant one of the two. Mbongo is always ready to give

up rather than argue his point but when actually forced to fight he is the fiercer and more clever fighter of the two, out-witting Ngagi in every way.

There are very few people that Ngagi even tolerates, and he shows plainly his resentment of photographers, or too close observance, especially when he is eating. He frowns and glares at strangers and none ever mistake the meaning of his looks. At times, when I am with him alone, he will frown and pull down his heavy brows, but at the same time his lips will twitch in his efforts to repress a pleasant look. Usually that means he wants a little coaxing or scolding and it is not unusual for him to turn around and lie down with his head close to the bars and his big arms crossed on his breast after such a demonstration, indicating he would like to have me scratch his big symmetrical crest.

Neither of the gorillas shows any interest either in their own or each other's sex development.

In this particular they are very different from the chimpanzees and average monkey. They have shown some interest in a female chimpanzee and her baby, and in the female gibbon at the time of her baby's birth, also. Yet even when such interest is evident there has never been anything of a sex display or activity unless the exaggerated strut and hunching of the massive shoulders as he strides about might be Ngagi's way of attracting the female in the next cage.

Ngagi has had huge well developed tusks in place of his canine teeth for the past three years since we figured his age at eleven years. Mbongo has been much slower in cutting his second teeth than Ngagi and the two upper tusks are still small and immature. Since he has never been quite so robust and missed by several months the same amount of development and life in the wild there may have been some food deficiency at a critical time which we could not detect.

Feeding Not a Problem

Their food remains practically the same, not only in kind but in amount as when they first came. They have nothing but fresh uncooked fruit and vegetables, with grains and seeds at times and from time to time a treat of stale crusty bread. They have a block of cattle salt which they consume by wetting their fingers, rubbing it on the salt and licking it off. They eat about thirty-five pounds of food a day. It consists of about ten pounds of citrus fruit, and a like amount of bananas, which they

prefer quite green; the balance is divided between carrots, potatoes, celery, corn, lettuce, apples, watermelon and other seasonable fruit and vegetables. They have milk and eggs several times a week except in summer when it is omitted entirely. Their food is coarse but crisp and fresh. They eat practically everything but the skin of their oranges and grapefruit. After eating the gorillas lean forward on their elbows and, using the hollow cup of their broad palms for a container, often bring the food they have just consumed up and masticate it over and over in a way very like the chewing of the cud by the ungulates. Much of the time the food is brought up into their mouths without being completely expelled but at times they have even expelled it entirely upon a clean floor or shelf and eaten it again with great relish. As this seems to be a custom it has ceased to worry us or be repulsive to us. It may be one of the more logical explanations of the noonday or temporary nests that people report as seeing in gorilla country. As their food in the wild is much of it leaf and stocks and unripe fruit which is eaten as they move forward along the trails it may be that the rest periods at noon are intended for the better mastication of food. When they eat fruit containing small seed it is at this regurgitating interval that they expell as many of the seeds as they desire.

Exact Measurement Difficult

It is possible to measure their size only as they permit it against the side of the cage.



Mbongo poses for a
closeup

Mbongo took hold of a foot ruler the other day and there was less than an inch of the ruler extending on either side of his enormous hand. Counting the two inch meshes of the cage as he leaned beside me Ngagi's head measured twelve meshes or twenty-four inches from his crest to his chin, and when either of them sit erect on the shelf the crest reaches a point almost midway between the second and third steel beams on the side of the cage which would make them nearly four and one-half feet in sitting height or about six feet one inch tall when they stand erect, on their short bent legs. Moore, their beloved keeper, is about six feet one inch tall. When he stands outside the cage either gorilla can reach anything he holds high in his hand without any stretching whatever.

Ngagi is broad of shoulder and very trim and slender of waist and hips. He is quite sway backed when he walks, especially when he is strutting for an

audience or feeling particularly well and aggressive. He has a much more virile and shapely body and more intelligent face than Mbongo. His abdomen is comparatively flat and he never looks fat any place. His face is large and rather lean, his crest is high and perfectly shaped. The back of his neck and shoulders gives you a feeling of massive muscles rather than humpy fat. The muscles from his shoulders are plainly visible in two great triangular bulges of symmetrical and firm fiber down to his waist.

Mbongo is round and paunchy with an enormously fat abdomen and his crest wobbles over the top of his head as he walks like the excessively fat humps of some camels. His back is broad with no shaping at the waist, his upper arms are tremendous and while they are firm to touch nothing about him gives you the impression of latent strength that you associate with his cage mate. His head and face are fat,

his eyes small and the hump across his shoulders and up the back of his head is a lumpy padding of excess fat stored there. His food is always of the coarsest sort for we have tried to give him the excessive amount of roughage we felt he required. He is always hungry, finishing up his food to the last banana skin. His lame foot also has made him less active than he used to be so he has gained easily. It is noticeable that with age both gorillas play much less often; failing to chase each other around the cage as they did when younger. They climb at times, and swing from their ropes but not with the old freedom and pleasure. When it comes to swinging casually around with nearly six hundred pounds to support, there is obviously more work than pleasure attached.

Growth Normal

If the growth of these two gorillas is typical and we can see no reason to believe it is not, then we have undoubtedly established a record of normal growth. In ten years their gain has been varied only slightly by accident

and sickness. Our weighing schedule has been intended to prevent too rapid gain in weight because of a small cage or no incentive to play. We cannot believe it would be natural for adult gorillas to frisk about as gorilla children do. We have been glad that with maturity they have not shown the change in their dispositions that has been evident in many cases. In one particular our gorilla history has been entirely different than any other captive gorilla. This is in complete absence of any attempt on our part to handle or train them. In every case any familiarity between them and the keeper or others has been the result of their own advances and desire. From time to time they establish some intimate connection between themselves and a rare person of their own choice which they permit with none else. They dislike to adjust themselves to every new keeper and resent any changes in their habits and environment. We, therefore, try to have only one or two persons work about their cages or care for them.

Personally the gorillas are

Mbongo likes to rest
in this position





Courtesy of Paramount

Showing the
great size of
Mbongo's hand

*The mesh in
the wire is
2-in. square

naturally clean. Neither of them ever performs any of the repulsive tricks that are common to chimpanzees. They indulge, however, in scarcely any grooming of themselves or each other. On the rare intervals when they do such things it is very casual and immediately stopped if any one approaches. As they become older there is less of the chest beating than formerly. Early in the morning before they are up they beat their chests or stamp around on the floor of their sleeping quarters. But the chest beating as well as the hammering upon the doors and walls of their cage which as children they did so frequently is fast becoming one of the memories of their youth. At one time this common

challenge to play, this expression of happy contentment, sounded every few minutes during the day. Now there seems no need for any challenge in the even tenor of their days.

Maturity Reached

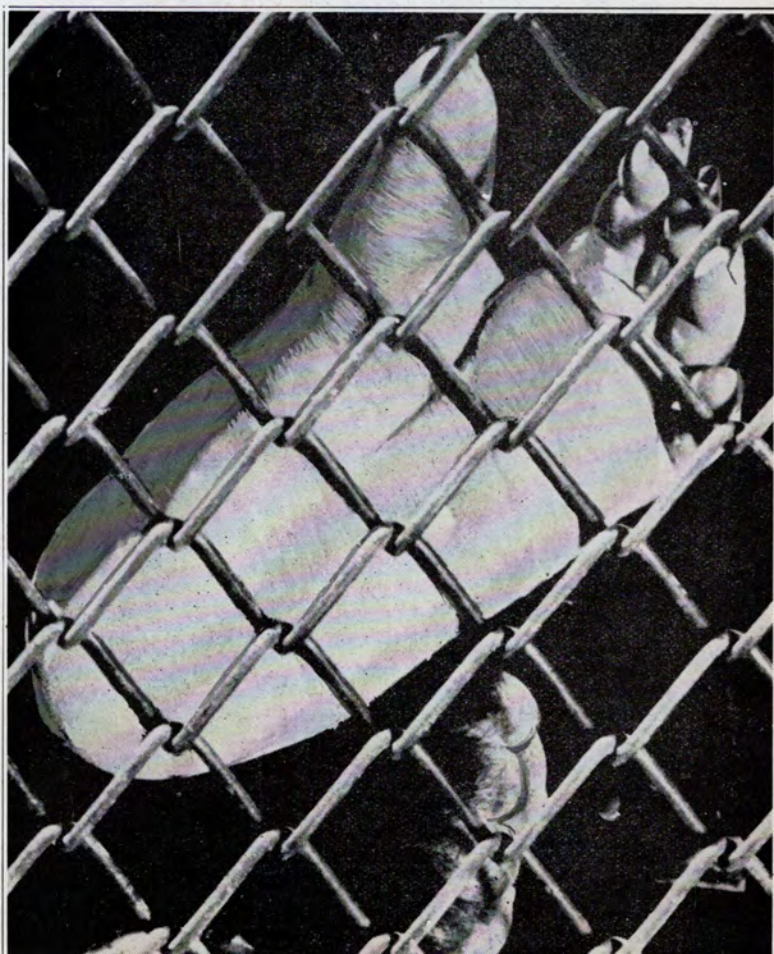
But even in their maturity they hold the attention of the crowds of zoo visitors that surround their cage longer than any other individual or species in the zoo. It is not alone their size and rarity, it is not due in the slightest degree to the circus exploitation of Gargantua for it has been going on for ten years. It is something innate in the gorillas themselves. Their friendly response to me and to their keeper always amazes and pleases

the crowds. They galvanize into action at the sound of my car or my voice speaking their names. People are thrilled by the interest and attachment they show for me personally. This attachment is due partly perhaps to the fact that I alone of all their intimates have remained in close touch through all the years while keepers have been changed at times. There is undoubtedly a queer fascination about these creatures which I am at a loss to explain.

It is quite impossible to convey by words or pictures, even movies, any real conception of the appearance of these two gorillas, either of their size or the

latent power they possess. I feel completely inadequate and so, long ago, stopped trying to describe or compare them with anything I knew. When I am away from them I even wonder if these two are or look like I think they do. But when I see them again, even each succeeding day, I never cease to be as greatly amazed as I was that first day nearly nine years ago, when two black woolly children, shy, restrained but apparently unafraid, they stalked, one behind the other, out of their travelling crate into the space and sunshine of their future home.

Foot of
Ngagi
against the
2-in. mesh
of cage



N G A G I

APRIL 28 to MAY 5, 1940

	Sun	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Oranges	lbs. 3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Grapefruit	lbs. 2	2	1½			2	2	2
Bananas	lbs. 6½*	10**	9**	10**	10***	10½**	11**	8**
Carrots	lbs. 3½*	6*	4¼*	2½*	2½**	3½*	3½*	3½*
Sw. Potatoes	lbs. 1	1		1	1	1	1*	1
Apples	lbs. 4½*	6*	4½*	5**	5*	5*	3½*	4*
Pears	lbs. 3*	4*	4*	3*	3*	3½*	1	2*
Tomatoes	lbs. 1	1½	1½	1		1½	1	2
Celery	lbs. 2	2½	2	3½	4		2	
Lettuce	lbs. 3	3	2½	3	3	3	2	2½
Bread	lbs. ½	½	½	½		½	½	½
Cherries	lbs.				¾		1	
Green Corn	lbs.						3	
Total	lbs. 30	39½	33	33½	33¼	34½	35½	29½
Milk	qts. 2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Eggs	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1
16 quarts of milk—32 pounds.				Food for 8 days—286¼ lbs				
				Food and milk—318¼ lbs				

*—Fed Twice Daily

**—Divided into 3 Meals

Menus for eight days weighed out accurately. Stars indicate that the amount is divided into two or three meals as explained below. Milk is always a separate meal.

M B O N G O

APRIL 28 to MAY 5, 1940

		Sun	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Oranges	lbs.	3	3	3	4	4	3	4	4
Grapefruit	lbs.	2	2	1½	2	2	2	2	2
Bananas	lbs.	4*	7**	7**	8**	8**	7**	9½**	8*
Carrots	lbs.	2*	4½*	4½*	2½*	2½*	3½*	2½*	3½*
Sw. Potatoes	lbs.	1	1*		1	1	1	1	1
Apples	lbs.	3½*	6*	4½*	5*	5*	5*	3½*	4*
Pears	lbs.	3*	4*	4*	3*	3*	3½*	2*	2*
Tomatoes	lbs.	1	1½	1½	1		1½	1	2
Celery	lbs.	2	1½	2	3½*	3	2	1½	
Lettuce	lbs.	2	2	2½	2	2	2	2	2½
Bread	lbs.		½	½	½		½	½	½
Cherries	lbs.					¾		1	
Green Corn	lbs.							3	
Total	lbs.	23½	33	31	32½	31¼	31	34½	29½
Milk	qts.	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Eggs					1	1	1	1	1

16 quarts of milk—32 pounds

Food for 8 days—264¼ lbs

Food and milk—296¼ lbs.

**—Three Feedings per Day

—one Feeding per Day

*—Two Feedings per Day



Mbongo
weighs in
at 270 pounds
in 1936

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Because of their great size we decided to weigh the gorillas with photographers and press representatives present. And so on Wednesday, May 8th, about two weeks after the recorded weights, we placed the scales ready for the weighing. Delays kept the gorillas inside longer than usual and we had a great time getting the playful Mbongo

to settle down to business. He tipped the scales at 602 pounds and Ingagi had made a like gain reaching 539. These weights were accurate and indisputable. They are done as the pictures indicate with platform scales and the gorillas are so accustomed to the apparatus that they sit patiently and quietly, permitting accurate balance.