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GIANT SPREADING LIVE OAK SHOWN IN NEW MURAL

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For the purpose of providing a series of murals to supplement the exhibits of plant life, Field Museum's former Staff Artist, the late Charles A. Corwin, in 1935 made several large size paintings of trees.

Work on this unfinished project recently has been taken up by Mr. Corwin's successor, the present Staff Artist, Mr. Arthur G. Rueckert. As a result two new paintings were added last month to the series in this hall. One of these represents a group of tree ferns in Java, the other a live oak tree. The latter, as illustrated on this page, represents, with a certain amount of artist's license as to its surroundings, a tree growing near Bartow in western Florida, as it appeared some years ago.

This is the well-known live oak or evergreen oak of the south Atlantic and Gulf states extending westward through Texas and northeastern Mexico. Sometimes only a shrub in poor soil near salt water, it appears to reach its largest size on rich ground in the south Atlantic states. An example in *Garden and Forest*, figured from the neighborhood of Charleston, South Carolina, has a stem measuring twenty-three feet in circumference at its most constricted part, and a crown, past its prime and draped with Spanish moss, but spreading with a radius of fifty feet. Trees almost or quite as large are doubtless found in the Gulf states, e.g. in Louisiana. Surpassing all other oaks in grandeur and solidity, the live oak is widely appreciated wherever it grows and is often planted for its ornamental value, but it is also an important timber tree, esteemed for its excellent, hard and tough, brown wood,

well-known for hundreds of years as particularly suitable for shipbuilding. Sargent in his *Silva of North America* quotes official documents of the time of the war against Barbary pirates relating to acts of Congress by which large tracts of live oak in the southern states, e.g. on St. John's River in Florida, and in Texas, were reserved or acquired for the exclusive use of the U. S. Navy for the construction of men-o'-war.



MURAL OF LIVE OAK

A painting by Staff Artist Arthur G. Rueckert, recently added to the Hall of Plant Life (Martin A. and Carrie Ryerson Hall). This spectacular tree is of an evergreen species well-known in the south Atlantic and Gulf states. The mural is based upon an actual specimen grown in western Florida.

Among the four hundred and fifty or more species of oak which have been described there are many that resemble the live oak in character of foliage and fruit. One of these is the cork oak of western Mediterranean countries. Among the seventy-five species and hybrids of oaks recognized in the United States there are various other evergreen species some of which are also known as live oaks. They are confined, however, to the Pacific Coast states and are distinguished as California live oak, highland live oak, canyon live oak, etc. Some of these are also massive and beautiful trees but certainly none of them are very likely to be confused with the live oak of the southeastern and Gulf states.

RARE COSTUMES OF ABORIGINES IN WAR-MENACED YUNNAN

By C. MARTIN WILBUR
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In the months since the conquest of Burma, a Japanese army has been poised to strike at China from the rear—to strike as soon as the rainy season was over and the trails and roads in Yunnan province were passable again. The rains have now

ceased and there are five months of fine weather ahead in that backdoor province into which the Japanese are trying to lunge from bases in Indo-China, Thailand, and Burma. But Yunnan is tough country for any invading army.

It is extremely mountainous, with an average elevation of 6,000 feet. The western half is deeply trenched from north to south by the Salween, the Mekong, and several other major rivers. Its southern borders are a tropical jungle-land. Except for the famous Burma Road, which the Japanese now stride, and the narrow-gauge railway running north from Indo-China, most communication lines are only narrow trails paved with cobblestones. But no region is impenetrable. The Chinese will have to defend the province bitterly, because on the south it guards China's new heart in the province of Szechwan.

Many peoples besides the Chinese and their formal allies have an interest in the defense of Yunnan. The province has been called an "Anthropological Museum" because it is the center of an area inhabited by some eighteen million non-Chinese aborigines. Most Americans have never heard the names of these peoples, and know nothing of their habits and culture.

STATUS LIKE THAT OF U. S. INDIANS

The status in China of such aboriginal groups as the Nosu, Moso, Miao, Yao,



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