

The Largest Gorilla Ever Exhibited The Worlds Most Terrifying Living Creature!

To better acquaint you our readers and builders of this Gargantua Cage model with its occupant, your LCW editor thought some background on Gargantua would be of interest to you. The following story is excerpts from the "Strange Story of Gargantua" by J. Bryan 1111 (1940).

Few people of the millions who have seen Gargantua dispute these claims, but actually he is not the largest gorilla ever exhibited, not yet, anyhow. Of the ten now in captivity, several are larger. They are also older. Gorillas have approximately the same life-cycle as primitive man; they are adolescent at twelve, senile at forty. Gargantua is only about ten years old but he is big for his age. His chest is already six feet around. His neck and biceps are as sturdy as a fireplug. His fingers are like crowbars, and he has a reach of nine feet. In his whole huge body, only his ears and toes are human size.

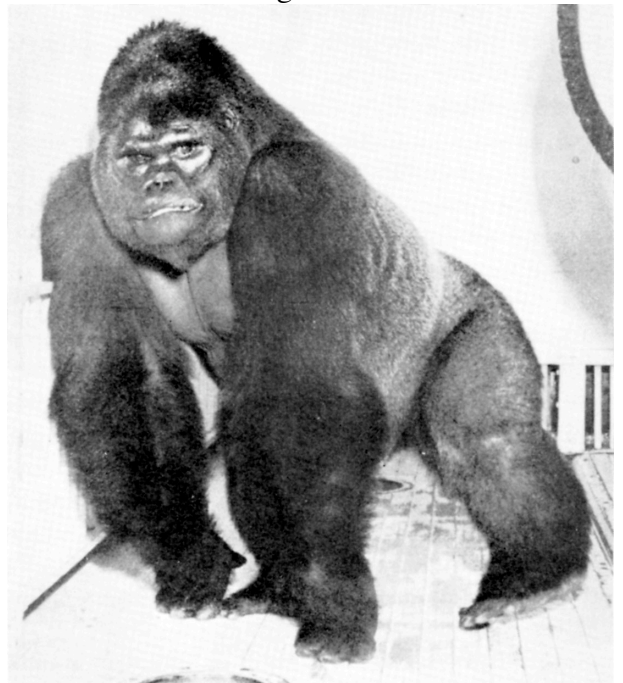
When he is mature, he may stand half a foot taller than his present five feet six and weight 150 pounds more than his present 450. What his strength will be then, no one can conjecture. Last summer he was given a rope anchored by fifteen burly men. He snatched them up to his cage with one hand.

Gargantua's intelligence suggests the fancy that he is a renegade lieutenant of Tarzan's, cashiered for conduct unbecoming an officer. Richard Kroener, superintendent of his five keepers, has fed him daily for seven years, cleaned his cage and doctored him. If it were in Gargantua's nature to have affection for anyone, that person would be Kroener. Recently Kroener let himself be coaxed into a game of tug-of-war, taking the corner of the gunny-sack that Gargantua tossed between the bars, and holding it until it was gently pulled away. They played again and again, with Gargantua as bland as a bishop. Suddenly Kroener noticed that Gargantua was pouching a little more of the sack each time and proffering a little less, luring him closer and closer to hand.

Kroener stopped the game forthwith. Gargantua did not fly into a rage; he merely sat down, Kroener

recalls, "vundering vat he done wrong, vere he gifs der scheme away."

Gargantua has been smart from infancy, but he has not always been vicious. His viciousness is the result of a mysterious change in character which occurred four years ago. Before that, he had the free run of a house and yard. Before that, of a ship. Before that Gargantua's success story begins at Kribi in the Cameroons, under the shoulder of Africa. The log of the S. S. Humhaw, American West African Line, shows that she touched there on November 5, 1932. A missionary couple were waiting for Captain Arthur Phillips when he came ashore. They had something special to show him - a young gorilla, brought in by a native boy the week before. This one was a coastal gorilla - the largest, strongest kind. It was healthy, weighed around 35 pounds, and seemed about two years old. Phillips felt sure that the missionaries had bought it for no more than a few dollars and a few sticks of tobacco, but he was confident that it would bring up to \$3,000 at home. The bargain was closed at \$400.



Her we see Gargantua on all fours. Note the hairless chest and gigantic forearms

It is almost impossible to tell whether a baby gorilla is a male or a female. Phillips might have weaseled with some such sexless name as Esme or Sidney, but he chose Buddy on a hunch. If Buddy's endowment of viciousness had not been latent, no one could have handled him. He was already strong enough to pick up a sixty-pound hatch and toss it across the deck. Fortunately he behaved as docilely as an ordinary gorilla. His favorite sport was retrieving a rubber ball. When nobody would throw it for him, he would swarm up the jackstaff and cling, or crawl into a fo'c'sle bunk for a nap, or pester the quartermaster into letting him ride the wheel. Everyone liked his antics everyone except a Hausa woman who caught him stealing her sugarcane and slapped him. Buddy waited until she bent over to pray, and nipped her bottom.

Unlike most gorillas, he cared little for fruit and vegetables. He always ate his meat first; he would even gnaw through a hindquarter beef bone to get at the marrow. On Christmas Day the regular passenger dinner was set out for him on a hatch, with a card, "Merry Christmas to Buddy, from the Steward." He started to gobble it, but stopped, pondering. Presently he picked up everything on his plate and licked it. And only then did he fall to gobbling. Phillips thinks he reasoned, "If I hurry and spoil it, they won't take it away from me."

A few days later, the Humhaw entered Boston Harbor. When Phillips came back aboard that night, he stopped in to look at Buddy's new quarters a box in the cross-bunker, out of the cold. The animal was crouched on the floor. Phillips noticed that his eyes were closed and his face was wet, and that there was a strange sour smell, but he could discover nothing wrong. Next morning, sailing for New York, he went to look again. Buddy was groping around the shelter deck, blind. His face and chest were burned raw. His left nipple was eaten away. Phillips realized that someone, presumably a disgruntled sailor who had jumped ship the day before, had thrown acid on him, but not knowing what acid had been thrown, he was afraid to try a random antidote. (It later proved to be nitric acid in a 50% solution.) All Phillips could do was radio a Brooklyn animal collector who had bought apes from him before, and ask to be met at the dock that night with a nurse.

The nurse immediately poured olive oil over the burns, but so much time had already elapsed that Phillips doubted whether it would help. He hated to see Buddy suffer, yet he did not want to destroy so valuable an animal if there was a chance of it surviving. Nor did he want to pay the heavy duty on one that might soon die. He telephoned Washington for a special appraisal. Washington was sympathetic; it set the minimum value of \$50, which represented a duty of \$7.50.

There was still better news at the ship. The steward reported that Buddy could see. Phillips shot a flashlight into his eyes; the sores were hideous, but he blinked. The collector agreed to gamble on him. Instead of the \$3,000 that Phillips had expected for Buddy alone, he sold Buddy and another gorilla, sickly, and six chimpanzees for \$2,500.

Buddy's new owner was Mrs. Gertrude Lintz, who had made a career of pet-fancying. Her Hercuveen Kennels of St. Bernards have many times won best-of-breed at Westminster Shows. The man who showed the Lintz dogs was Kroener, a young German. Kroener had such a way with animals that she engaged him to work for her exclusively, and when she began adding sidelines of other pets - she has paid \$50 for a pair of pigeons, \$125 for a rabbit, \$1,000 for a St. Bernard - he took care of them, too. The day she came home with her first chimpanzee, Kroener threatened to quit. By the end of the week he was devoted to it. From chimpanzees it was only a short step to gorillas.

Mrs. Lintz summoned an oculist to examine Buddy at once. He confirmed her belief that sight had not been destroyed, and prescribed drops and salve. The first time she tried to administer the drops was the only time Buddy bit her. Fright and pain doubled his strength; Kroener could not hold him. Finally Mrs. Lintz had to lie prone on a table, with a pear in one hand, a dropper in the other. As Buddy reached for the pear, she squeezed the dropper.

Mrs. Lintz made him wear mittens as a protection against himself, but he managed to pluck open his sores again and again. It was six months before they healed completely. The scars they left are responsible for the intense malevolence of his expression. All other young gorillas seem

prematurely aged, the skin around their eyes is so loose and creepy. The tight scar tissue around Buddy's eyes gave him a challenging scowl, and the left side of his upper lip was drawn into a permanent sneer.

Both scowl and sneer were helpless hypocrisy. They did not reflect his disposition. Mrs. Lintz was astonished to find that, despite his brutalizing ordeal, he was still playful and friendly.

Buddy's training began. At school-time, each morning, Mrs. Lintz hustled him into overalls, to keep him alert and give him self-respect. The first lesson was in walking erect. Buddy soon learned to lurch around, swinging on Mrs. Lintz's arm, but he refused to walk alone. One day she filled his hands with peanuts, put a banana under each armpit, then crossed the room and called him. If he had put his palms down, Buddy would have lost the peanuts; if he had removed his elbows from his sides, he would have lost the bananas. He naturally did neither. Thereafter he always walked erect when dressed. Eventually, Buddy became so proud of his accomplishment that Mrs. Lintz had special shoes made for him - sneakers, with a tap-dancer's plates on ties and heels, so that he could hear himself clatter along.

By the year's end, he understood such simple commands as "Put on your clothes," "Get your Kiddie-kar," "Bring me a banana." Mrs. Lintz quenched his flares of disobedience by pointing to a grotesque Chinese mask and warning him. "Look out! It's the bogey-man!" Later she found she could get the same effect by whipping a doll's head from her pocket. The sight of it terrified him. Someone told her that it probably aroused his dormant memory of a fearsome African bat that had a red and white face.

The only other things that terrified Buddy were trolleys and trucks. Until he became so huge that Mrs. Lintz could not be sure of controlling him, his daily pleasure was a ride in the front seat of her car. As long as the street was clear, he would grunt and pound his chest; but as soon as a trolley or a truck approached, he would scream and pull her coat over his head.

In 1934, when Buddy was four years old, Mrs. Lintz exhibited him, another gorilla and some chimpanzees at the Chicago Century of Progress. Two years later she took them down to Miami for

the winter, and there Buddy had his second encounter with brutality. A Negro boy whom Mrs. Lintz fired for laziness crept back the next night and gave Buddy a drink of half sugar-syrup, half disinfectant. In the five weeks before his stomach healed enough to permit him a full meal again, he lost eighty pounds. And still he remained amiable. Miraculously, the outrage had no more effect on his disposition than did the first one.

The following summer he was exhibited on the Steel Pier at Atlantic City. Now seven years old, he was in the middle of shedding his milk teeth. Mrs. Lintz helped him with them by letting him bite down on a strip of burlap, then jerking it away. Buddy's teeth engrossed him. He kept each one for days, scrutinizing it, hiding it at night.

Mrs. Lintz did not realize at once that loss of his teeth indicated loss of his childhood, that his strength was becoming too colossal for him to control it, that even his love-pats had turned into stunning clouts and first warning came when he tried to fondle a kitten that strayed into his cage, and crushed it to death. Mrs. Lintz found him mourning over it in bewilderment, as Lennie mourned over the puppy he had not meant to kill in "Of Mice and Men." Regretfully she decided that it would be folly to take him out of his cage again, or enter it with him.

This sudden, puzzling loss of privileges and companionship made him sullen. Like Hitler, his genius for malevolence ripened in confinement. Buddy's sullenness began to alternate with bursts of rage. Intervals between the bursts shortened. There came a month of unabated fury and then, abruptly, the chemical reaction was complete. The precipitate was a cold, concentrated ferocity, impervious, insoluble and inexhaustible.

Jekyll was now irreversibly Hyde. Only the remnants of Mrs. Lintz's affection were restraining him from the success that awaited. Perhaps it is significant that a thunderstorm brought his release.

Awake one midnight in her lightless room, Mrs. Lintz heard the storm break over the neighborhood. Presently she heard, too, the sound of her door being opened slowly and the soft rasp of bare feet. (Poe has described how Madame L'Espanaye and her daughter, of the Rue Morgue, once heard the same soft rasp.) The footsteps approached the bed. Harsh fingers groped along her shoulder.

"Buddy," Mrs. Lintz forced herself to say, "Buddy, let's go get a banana."

She slipped out of bed and took his hand. The monster gibbered and pranced at every flash of lightning, but she led him downstairs talking all the while and into the dining-room, where she found a bowl of fruit. A banana baited him back into his cage, on which someone had forgotten to close the padlock.

••Next morning she told Kroener that she could not run another such risk. Kroener wrote to Sarasota, and John Ringling North replied by telegram that he and his brother Henry, vice-president of the circus, were leaving immediately. Old John Ringling had always longed for a big gorilla. His nephews began to bargain on the spot. Mrs. Lintz asked \$25,000. The final price, \$10,000, included Buddy, two chimpanzees and Kroener's contract.

John Ringling North's first act was to telephone Professor R. M. Yerkes, of Yale, co-author, with his wife, of "The Great Apes," and ask him to inspect the animal. Yerkes reported that he was in perfect condition. Next, North wanted a more impressive name. Mrs. Lintz sometimes varied "Buddy" with "Buddha," partly because he would sit for hours with his arms folded, and partly because of the Oriental flavor. But North wanted a sonorous mouth-filler. While the New York Public Library struggled to compound African words into "King of the Jungle" and "Monarch of the Mountains," Henry North, remembering Rabelais' giant, suggested "Gargantua." The name was adopted. And as Gargantua he entered Sarasota in triumph.

His subsequent career with the circus tends to substantiate Disraeli's theory that the secret of success is constancy to purpose. From the moment of his immediate attempt to assassinate Butler, Gargantua has never relaxed his efforts to kill any or all of his associates. He has not succeeded, but he has come extremely close.

The bars of his first cage were eight inches apart wide enough to pass his forearm. Alarmed by the narrowness of Butler's escape, North warned everyone to stay well away, but it is part of a circus workingman's credo to treat all captive animals with careless contempt. A bull punk an elephant herder was the first to step inside the deadline. Gargantua flicked out his hand, hooked a finger under the

man's necktie, and jerked him against the bars. The shock ripped the tie, and the man fell to the ground, unconscious but safely out of reach. Gargantua threw the tie after him. The knot was as hard as a pebble.

John North himself was the next to be caught, in the act of demonstrating how it had happened to the herder. Gargantua bit his right wrist to the bone. North is a showman in the heroic tradition. On his way to get a shot of anti-tetanus, he stopped at Butler's office to shout, "If I don't die, it's marvelous publicity!"

Gargantua's third victim was Kroener, of all people. It was a warm day, and Kroener was using a long hooked pole to open a skylight over the cage. The skylight stuck. To get a better purchase, Kroener took one step backward. Gargantua, in wait for just such an error, nipped him up by his sweater, pulled his left arm through the bars, and sank his teeth into it. Kroener stabbed blindly behind him with the pole, screaming, until he managed to hit the gorilla's face. But before he was dropped, his arm had been so savagely mangled that it has been crippled ever since.

Gargantua's favorite playthings at that time were some big tin cans. It took him only a few hours to learn that, by flattening them enough to slip between the bars, he could extend the radius of his onslaughts. One of Life's photographers was the first fruit of this discovery. Gargantua waited until he was occupied with his camera, then laid him out with a smoke ball. The photographer was able to complete his assignment only by dressing in a football uniform, complete with helmet and nose guard.

It was obvious to the North's that the public could not be exposed to these bombardments. Gargantua clinched the case for new quarters by catching a severe cold. The upshot was a custom built case by Carrier Engineering Corporation and equipped with air-conditioning machinery that maintains a constant temperature of 76° and relative humidity of 50%. Ceiling and two end compartments were 3/8-inch steel plate. One end housed the machinery; the other was made into a temporary pen center section.

Gargantua's stamping ground was 20 feet long, 7 feet wide, 7 feet high. Its sidewalls were half-inch thick panes of plate glass, set double with an

air-space between. Lining the panes and shutting off the pen were chilled steel bars, 7/8-inch thick and two inches apart. Over-all the vehicle was so big that when Gargantua was leased to the Bertram Mills Circus for exhibition in London, his passage had to be shifted from the Queen Mary to a Dutch freighter; the Queen Mary's hatches weren't wide enough.



M'Toto poses on her swing.

Despite his almost constant traveling during the season, Gargantua never varies his daily routine. It begins at eight in the morning, with a breakfast of three fresh eggs, a tablespoon of liver extract and a little chocolate syrup mixed into three pints of the best milk. After breakfast he sponges his face, hands and armpits and mops the floor. Scrupulously neat, he doesn't discard the wrapper from a candy bar or stick of gum, but crumples it into the smallest possible pill and hides it.

The rest of his morning is devoted to exercise and plot-boiling. He prowls around his cage, then sits and ponders, then prowls again. At noon he gets a vegetable luncheon: two bunches of celery, a few sweet potatoes, carrots, onions and beets. After luncheon he naps flat on back, feet in air until Kroener brings him a basket of assorted fruit and wakes him for the matinee crowd. His last meal comes at 10 p.m.; it is the same as his breakfast. By 11:30 he is asleep.

Gargantua's morning scrub is the single vestige of his early training. He has not even walked erect since he removed his overalls for the last time four years ago. Kroener has tried to teach him

elementary tricks, but Gargantua makes no attempt to learn them. He realizes, Kroener says, that he cannot be disciplined. No one dares approach close enough to punish him, and he is too valuable to be starved into obedience. He responds to only one threat: when Kroener wishes to clean the center section of the cage, he frightens Gargantua into the pen by thrusting a king snake toward him. A snake is the only thing he fears. When the elephants parade past him, he redoubles his efforts to uproot the bars and get at them.

Saving its necessary space limitations, the cage is ideal for his health. Few other beasts, and certainly no humans, exist under such optimum conditions. It is ideal for the spectators' safety too; Houdini could not have escaped from it. And also for Gargantua's, since the glass is bulletproof. But it has been a disappointment in one respect. Gargantua's ferocity transcended the needs of showmanship, and the North's halfheartedly hoped that the clean air would improve his temper. It has not. The bars will admit only his fingers, but he has already succeeded in breaking Kroener's cheekbone, punching out two of his teeth, and ripping a flap of skin from his wrist.

Far from resenting this ingratitude, Kroener becomes incensed if anyone disparages his darling in favor of, say, Massa, the gorilla at the Philadelphia Zoo. In Kroener's fond eyes, Gargantua is black but comely. Kroener will follow a detractor out of the tent, shouting, "I hov seen dot Massa! He is nutting! Nutting! My Gahgy could preak him in two!" Then, cooing over his shoulder towards the 11-ton cage shaking under the monster's tread, "Sure, poy, you could, hem? Sure!"

The proudest moment of Kroener's life came in Detroit last July. Word flashed back from the ticket gate that Joe Louis had just entered. Kroener was ready for him armed with all the late Arthur Brisbane's arguments to the effect that a gorilla could outfight a heavyweight champion, plus some new arguments of Kroener's own. Gargantua was ready for Louis, too. He pounded his massive chest, rattled the bars, and smashed his fist against the steel ceiling.

Louis gave no sign. He leaned on the guard-rail, watching everything, saying nothing. But when he turned away, it was not toward the show in the big top. It was toward the exit. He tore up his ticket as he left.

CONCLUSION

We have brought you another of our most complete plans of wagon construction. Along with this plan we also gave you the history and background of the wagons occupant; and hope this had made your model building more enjoyable and enlightened.

In one last bit of information we would like to add that there were eventually two such cages. One for "Gargantua" and later one for his mate Toto. The mating never really came about as was hoped by all concerned, thus the second cage was built. The two famous Gorillas were however billed as Mr. and Mrs. Gargantua and were two of the rarest and most valuable animals in existence at that time.

We then had two such cages almost identical. One for "Gargantua" and one for "Toto." The facts on these two cages can be found at the conclusion of this article. The fact that there were two cages could account for the differences encountered by Mr. Robinson and the others in compiling construction materials.