

1925-2025

un an avec Howard Phillips Lovecraft

#216 | 6 août 1925



« Non seulement les sorties ne me fatiguent pas, mais elles sont en fait d'une grande valeur physique et psychologique. Elles m'ont bronzé et donné plus de couleur, comme Loveman l'a remarqué immédiatement après ne pas m'avoir vu pendant deux mois, et elles me mettent de plus en plus dans l'état d'esprit d'un travail efficace pour la création littéraire. La vue des champs verts, des bois et de la beauté rurale est absolument essentielle à mon bien-être et, au milieu des cauchemars de cette métropole babylonienne, je ne peux qu'être reconnaissant à ce qu'existent quelques endroits comme Prospect Park, les Palisades ou Hunter's Island et qu'ils soient encore accessibles. Ai-je mentionné que sur Hunter's Island se trouve une belle demeure coloniale en pierre, aujourd'hui occupée par la branche locale de l'administration du parc, de la troisième phase géorgienne de l'architecture et datant probablement de 1780 à 1815 ?

Lovecraft à sa tante Lillian, lettre du 6 août 1925. (Et image : Red Hook, Visitation Church.)

[1925, jeudi 6 août]

Up late — write letters — read, wrote, & retired. LDC////

Levé tard. Écrit des lettres. Lu, écrit & couché. Lillian.

Comme un trou : la lettre postée hier soir s'arrêtait au 5, celle qu'il enverra demain reprendra depuis le 7. Pas sorti de chez lui, c'est sûr. Écrire, lettres, ou pour soi, ou notes pour fictions à venir ? Merveilleuse expression dans la lettre à Lillian qui reconstitue les jours de la semaine écoulée : « *Well, such is which. Write when convenience dictates, & meanwhile pray consider me* » (« Bon, voilà de quoi c'est fait. Écrire quand les circonstances l'imposent » — singulière distorsion du sens ordinaire de *convenience*, qu'on rendrait plutôt par « quand les commodités le permettent », mais justement, il y a ce *dictate* beaucoup plus fort), suivie de la signature habituelle : « *Yr most aff: Nephew & obt Servt, HPL* ». Journée creuse, sauf à considérer la note en post-scriptum : prêt à écrire une autre histoire, peut-être demain. Et on va voir que ce ne sera pas si simple. Galpin, qui vit à Paris, lui a envoyé une longue lettre sur sa vie chez nous, sans doute aussi pour annoncer la visite prochaine de son épouse — mais sans lui — aux USA : Lovecraft fera dès le 16 août ses offres de service comme guide et *expositor*, accompagné de Frank Belknap Long. Dans le journal: prouesse de ce maçon en super man, pour 16 dollars par jour. Tragique de cette mère qui ne sait pas nager et va dans l'eau jusqu'au cou pour assister impuissante à la noyade de ses deux fils. Et un toubib d'Afrique du Sud qui autopsie un homme récemment décédé parce que d'après lui, le médecin, l'homme avait le plus grand crâne jamais vu dans l'humanité.

New York Times, 6 août 1925. De Kansas City, Missouri, le 5 août. Poser 36 000 briques par jour sur un chantier d'autoroute, soit environ trois camions et demi, James Brown, Indien et ancien joueur de football à Carlisle, en a la réputation parmi ses pairs et est considéré comme le champion du monde des poseurs de briques. Il travaille si vite qu'il faut cinq hommes avec lui pour fournir les briques, et deux autres pour préparer la route devant lui. Il est payé 2 dollars de l'heure, soit 16 dollars par jour.

'Largest Skull in World' Found in Africa Is Held to Show Cradle of Race Was There

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Special Cable to The New York Times.

CAPE TOWN, South Africa, Aug. 5.—What is believed to be the largest skull in the world has just been discovered by Dr. Drennan, Professor of Anatomy at Cape Town University. The find, it is asserted, adds much to the already strong evidence that the Homo Sapiens was a native of Africa.

The skull is that of a native who died several weeks ago and the Professor, on examining it, found that it measured 212 millimeters in length and had a capacity of 2,000 cubic centimeters.

Professor Dart, who is already noted as discoverer of the famous Taung's skull, regards the present discovery as highly important because it resembles in all particulars the famous Boskop skull. The Boskop race was very primitive and was found nowhere except in Africa, yet the skull procured by Dr. Drennan is declared to be a perfect Boskop skull belonging to a native of the present day. Professor Dart, therefore, believes that the discovery materially strengthens the theory that Africa is the cradle of humanity.

Professor William K. Gregory of Co-

lumbia University said last night that the discovery that a present-day native had a huge skull resembling that of the long extinct Boskops was interesting, but did not establish that the skull-form was a "throw-back" or a reversion.

"It is doubtful whether there are any reversions," he said. "Many characters which have been supposed throw-backs to the features of ancient forefathers have not stood up under analysis."

"In some modern races, for instance, it used to be thought that vestiges of bone indicated a reversion to their three-toed ancestors, but this proved to be an entire mistake."

"We have in the Museum a series of skulls of South Sea Islanders, some of tremendous size. Many modern negroes have skulls of great capacity. Skull variation is so wide that a modern skull might easily have the Boskop form. On the other hand, Professor Dart is a man of great ability and any conclusion that he reached would merit careful consideration."

Nearly every part of the world has been claimed as the cradle of humanity. Most anthropologists put it in Europe. Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn put it in Central Asia and took part in the great Andrews expedition, which is now attempting to prove it. Dr. Gregory found that a skull discovered in India, which he called Dryopithecus, seemed to be the common ancestor of man, gorilla and chimpanzee.

Indian Lays 36,000 Bricks As Day's Work in Kansas City

KANSAS CITY, Mo., Aug. 5 (AP). Laying 36,000 bricks a day, or about three and one-half carloads, James Brown, an Indian and former Carlisle football player, has gained a reputation among construction workers on a highway near here as being the world's champion bricklayer.

So fast does he work that five men are kept busy supplying brick and two others are used to keep the face of the road even ahead of him. He receives \$2 an hour, or \$16 a day.

7 UNCONSCIOUS MEN CARRIED FROM TOMBS

Six Are Victims of Alcoholism
and One Tries Suicide by
Hanging in His Cell.

Seven men were carried unconscious from the Tombs yesterday and hurried away in an ambulance to Bellevue. Two of them may die. They, with four others were said to be suffering from acute alcoholism. The seventh man tried to hang himself in his cell.

The six victims of alcoholism were sentenced yesterday in the Essex Market Court for being drunk and disorderly. Joseph Geary of 25 Pearl Street was sentenced to pay a \$10 fine or go to jail. He was unable to pay the fine. The other five, John Mulligan of 320 West Twenty-third Street, Thomas Neary of 160 Bleecker Street, James Wilson of 317 East Seventy-fourth Street, George Dill, 133 East Thirtieth Street, and Evan Edwards, 25 South Street, were sentenced to six months each.

The man who tried to hang himself was Edward Ruthberg, a tailor, of 307 West Forty-sixth Street, a Federal prisoner, who was held in the morning for trial for possession of narcotics. He recovered consciousness after reaching the hospital. It was said at the Tombs that the six victims of alcoholism had collapsed from the after effects of prolonged debauches.

Dill and Edwards were removed from the prison in the afternoon. The five others were all found unconscious about the same time several hours later.

Ruthberg was in a different tier from the others. Claude Nichols, guard at the prison, found him hanging to a cell bar with his belt around his neck. The guard cut him down and as officials were turning in a call for the ambulance the guard from another tier brought in word of the four men having been found overcome in their cells.

The tailor would not give any reason for his attempt at suicide. The prison officials said it would have been impossible for the four suffering from alcoholism to have obtained any liquor after entering their cells. They said that while it was the custom of magistrates to postpone sentence on convicted drunkards until they are sober, it was probable that the signs of the early breakdown had not yet appeared at their arraignment.

Mother Sees Two Sons Lose Lives in River; Wades Up to Her Neck as Boys Go Down

Special to The New York Times.

RED BANK, N. J., Aug. 5.—Unable to swim to their rescue, the wife of a Jersey City police lieutenant saw her two young sons drown in the Shrewsbury River, near Fairhaven, tonight. She tried to wade out to the boys, but the water was too deep and she watched them go down with their arms locked about each other.

The boys were Thomas Shaughnessy, 13 years old, and his brother, Francis, 7. Their father, John, is stationed at the Seventh Precinct in Jersey City. The home of the family is at 238 Wilkinsons Street, Jersey City.

The mother and the boys had been spending the Summer at Fairhaven.

About 5 o'clock she accompanied them to the river bank and watched them play. They found a raft by the shore and clambered onto it while she was not looking. The raft broke loose and drifted into the stream. Their mother called

for them to come back. The boys were enjoying the trip, but in response to the parental summons they tried to swing the raft back to shore.

They lost their balance and fell. The mother screamed as she saw their heads bob up and sink again. She ran into the water until it reached her neck and then had to turn back. She hurried to a telephone and called the Red Bank police, but by the time aid had arrived it was too late. The bodies were recovered.

Lieutenant Shaughnessy was on duty when he was informed that his wife was hysterical and wanted him to come to her at once.

The informant, a woman neighbor at Fairhaven, at first did not want to reveal the drowning, but the policeman said:

"I know; I know. Those kids of mine were playing at the river again and went under."

The couple have two other sons.

JOHN DAVID

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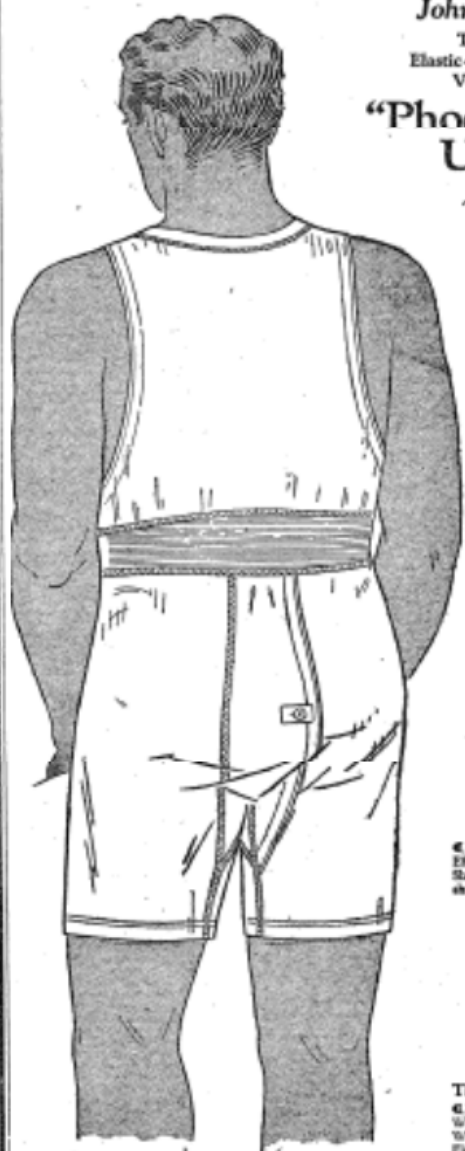
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