

Where Science Places Man Among the Primates

By JOHN A. MENAUGH

IN THE LUSH VALLEYS lying among the smoking mountains of the great island of Java a half million years ago there wandered strange beasts the like of which are not seen upon the earth today.

- Primitive elephants now known as stegodons ripped leafy branches from picture-book trees to cram into their greedy maws. Behemoths more fearful in appearance than those of holy writ wallowed in streams and rivers that wound through the valleys. Undersized and curious bovine creatures fed upon the rich grasses. There were unfamiliar antelopes and apes. And the ubiquitous monkeys swung from limb to limb through vast forests.
- Scurrying furtively at the edges of the herds, traversing beaten paths through the jungles, or crouching in the lee of lofty volcanic rocks, gnawing bones and edible roots, were nature's greatest achieve-

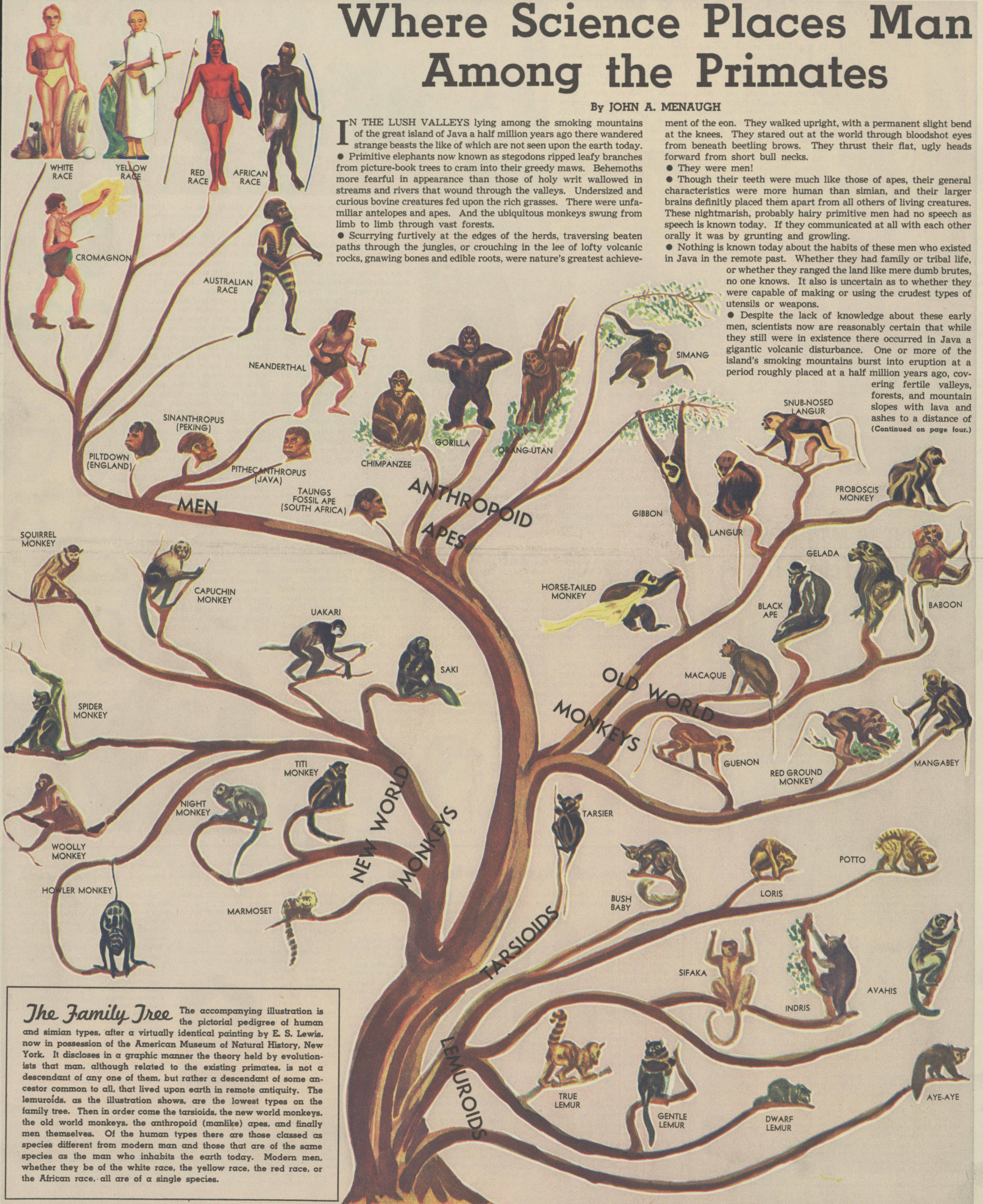
ment of the eon. They walked upright, with a permanent slight bend at the knees. They stared out at the world through bloodshot eyes from beneath beetling brows. They thrust their flat, ugly heads forward from short bull necks.

- They were men!
- Though their teeth were much like those of apes, their general characteristics were more human than simian, and their larger brains definitely placed them apart from all others of living creatures. These nightmarish, probably hairy primitive men had no speech as speech is known today. If they communicated at all with each other orally it was by grunting and growling.

- Nothing is known today about the habits of these men who existed in Java in the remote past. Whether they had family or tribal life, or whether they ranged the land like mere dumb brutes, no one knows. It also is uncertain as to whether they were capable of making or using the crudest types of utensils or weapons.

- Despite the lack of knowledge about these early men, scientists now are reasonably certain that while they still were in existence there occurred in Java a gigantic volcanic disturbance. One or more of the island's smoking mountains burst into eruption at a period roughly placed at a half million years ago, covering fertile valleys, forests, and mountain slopes with lava and ashes to a distance of

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The Family Tree The accompanying illustration is the pictorial pedigree of human and simian types, after a virtually identical painting by E. S. Lewis, now in possession of the American Museum of Natural History, New York. It discloses in a graphic manner the theory held by evolutionists that man, although related to the existing primates, is not a descendant of any one of them, but rather a descendant of some ancestor common to all, that lived upon earth in remote antiquity. The lemuroids, as the illustration shows, are the lowest types on the family tree. Then in order come the tarsioids, the new world monkeys, the old world monkeys, the anthropoid (manlike) apes, and finally men themselves. Of the human types there are those classed as species different from modern man and those that are of the same species as the man who inhabits the earth today. Modern men, whether they be of the white race, the yellow race, the red race, or the African race, all are of a single species.