

Souvenir Catalogue of Reptiles

“RAJAH”

THE GIANT PYTHON

“THE SACRED AND ROYAL SNAKE”

OF THE

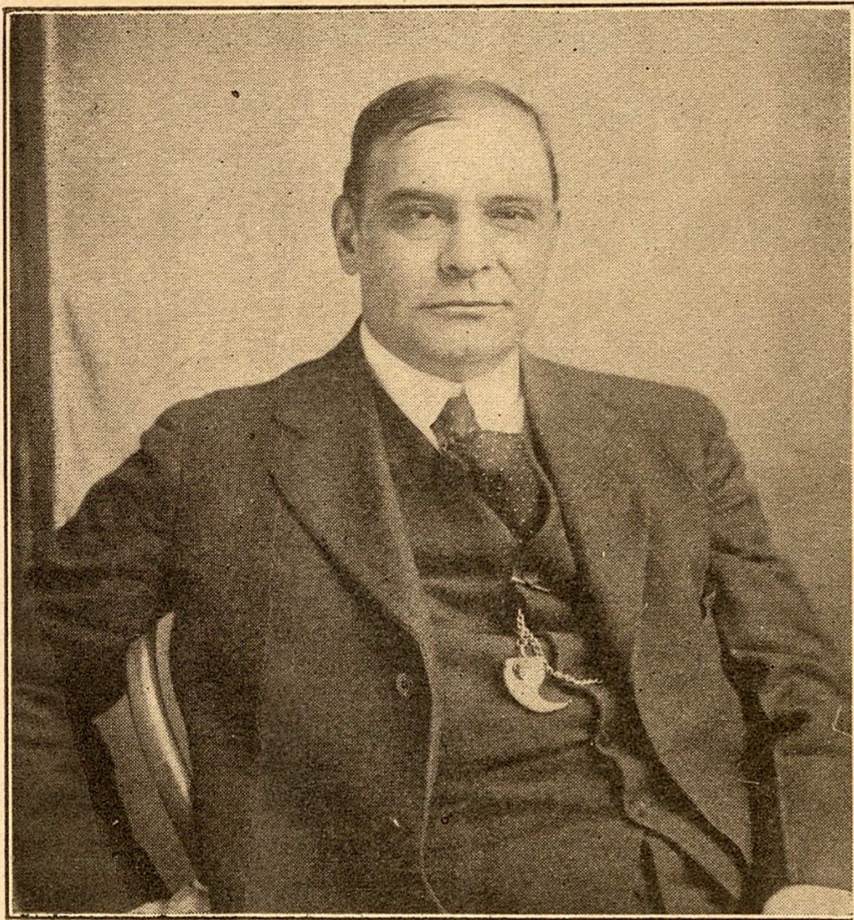
DUTCH EAST INDIES

*where for centuries the natives have  
worshipped those of his kind. Also  
many other interesting Reptiles.  
Illustrated with original photographs*

BY

LOUIS J. BECK

*IN* honor of my son, Corporal Vincent Deforest  
Beck, I dedicate this small pamphlet with  
the knowledge that he would  
approve of my efforts.



LOUIS J. BECK

## “RAJAH”

THERE comes but once in the life of an animal trainer what is known as a real “find”. That “find” is some animal or reptile that has come into their possession that no other animal trainer has ever before had the opportunity of handling. Always it amounts to a tremendous expense and usually means the endangerment of valuable lives in securing the specimen.

In “Rajah” I have been able to achieve that find. Though his capture required the activity of many trained natives for many months through the jungles of Batavia<sup>1</sup>, an expedition supervised by scientists and trained hunters, no life was lost. The hunters who captured “Rajah” considered their expedition well repaid in that it has since been said that never before has so perfect a specimen or so large a one of his type ever been exhibited to the public.

To the natives of the islands he is regarded as one of the sacred symbols and is worshipped as one who is “Sacred and Royal”. None would ever dare to harm him.

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MOAPH<sup>1</sup>: The North Coast of Java, Indonesia today is known as Jakarta.

In addition to "Rajah", the "star" of the show, there are many other reptiles. There will be reptiles of various sizes and breedings from every part of the United States and Canada. Most of these reptiles have never before been exhibited.

It might here be well to add a word about my experience with animals. My experience with animals has been that of thirty years and has been one with almost every animal ever captured and held in captivity. I have interested myself and specialised in reptiles from the various corners of the earth. For instance among my exhibits are a number of snakes as small as five inches, known as "Ribbon snakes", and others ranging to the tremendous length of the famous "Rajah".

It may be remembered that I was the owner and educator of "Georgette", the famous female chimpanzee who, in 1916, I loaned to the Prospect Park, Brooklyn, N. Y., zoological gardens, for the benefit of the children. Following her death fully 5,000 people viewed her. For many years I have trained and exhibited various types of animals ranging from tigers to elephants.

Always have I been an earnest advocate of the humane treatment of animals and because of that treatment have ever been able not only to train but become friends with animals of all kinds. It is a far cry from the friendship of an elephant to that of a snake, but it can and has been done. Incongruous as it may seem, there is very little difference in the treatment of the two. Both only require kindness and understanding.



Louis J. Beck and fair assistant accompanying "His Royal Highness" – Rajah, on a little trip through the country.

# CATCHING A SNAKE

**T**HOSE who have viewed with interest the various types of snakes in zoological gardens may have wondered just how the snakes were procured. To tell the complete story would be impossible within this space, but a brief view of the method may be given. It will be more interesting to deal with the history of one of the larger snakes, such a snake as "Rajah."

Such a snake, or python, is usually found near the banks of one of the big rivers of South America, Asia or India. A scientist or hunter first employs a sefari<sup>2</sup> of native hunters and sets forth into the jungles where it has been learned may be found the larger species of reptiles. From then on the natives are literally in charge.

Knowing the habits of the reptiles the natives know at what time of the day or night to find them filled with food and therefore asleep. At such a time they creep upon the sleeping snake, a monster who could not be approached at any other time, and quickly wrap about his head a burlap bag which is

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MOAPH<sup>2</sup> Likely a typo that should say "safari"



Group of natives employed in snake hunting

instantly tied. Six or seven natives then carry him to a specially provided wooden box in which he is transported to the nearest boat landing from which he is shipped to "civilization".

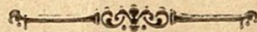
Shipping boxes are of heavy wood, air being provided by rows of gimlet holes. Inside the snake is encased in a burlap bag.

Arriving in a city and when removed from the burlap bag the snake must stand a rigid inspection and measurement by a man who knows all about snakes. This man, called the "head snake handler", secures the neck of the snake in a noose of rope,

twists it until it holds tightly and holds it so while seven or eight other men straighten the reptile out. It is then dragged to a section of the floor marked as is a ruler, where he is, with a great deal of difficulty, measured.

Following that procedure the reptile is passed before the hands of other inspectors who examine him inch by inch throughout his entire length. There must be no bruise upon his body to lessen his value. Particular attention is paid to the condition of his skin and of his jaws.

The price of a snake of great length is by the yard and the texture of his skin.



**T**HE first public appearance in the United States of the famous python, known as "Rajah, the Sacred Royal Python", was at the Fair Grounds at Mineola, New York, during the week of September 26th. At that time, among the many interesting exhibits and attractions shown, "Rajah" plainly showed himself to be the chief. One of the many proofs of that is the following letter from Mr. Andrews, Superintendent of the Fair. His letter follows:

The Agricultural Society of Queens-Nassau Counties,  
Mineola, L. I., N. Y.

SEPTEMBER 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 1922

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Vice-President—I. Cornell Remsen, Hollis Avenue, Queens, N. Y.  
Treasurer—Henry W. Underhill, Jericho, N. Y.  
Race Secretary—John J. Van Nostrand, Floral Park, N. Y.  
Racing Manager—Horace P. Murphy, Syracuse, N. Y.  
Horse Show Secretary—Charles W. Smith, 342 Madison Ave., New York City  
General Supt. Fair Grounds and of Privileges—J. H. Andrews, Mineola, N. Y.  
Secretary Society—Lott Van de Water, Jr., Hempstead, N. Y.  
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Mr. Louis J. Beck,  
205 - 30th Street,  
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Fair Grounds, Mineola, N. Y.  
October 14th, 1922

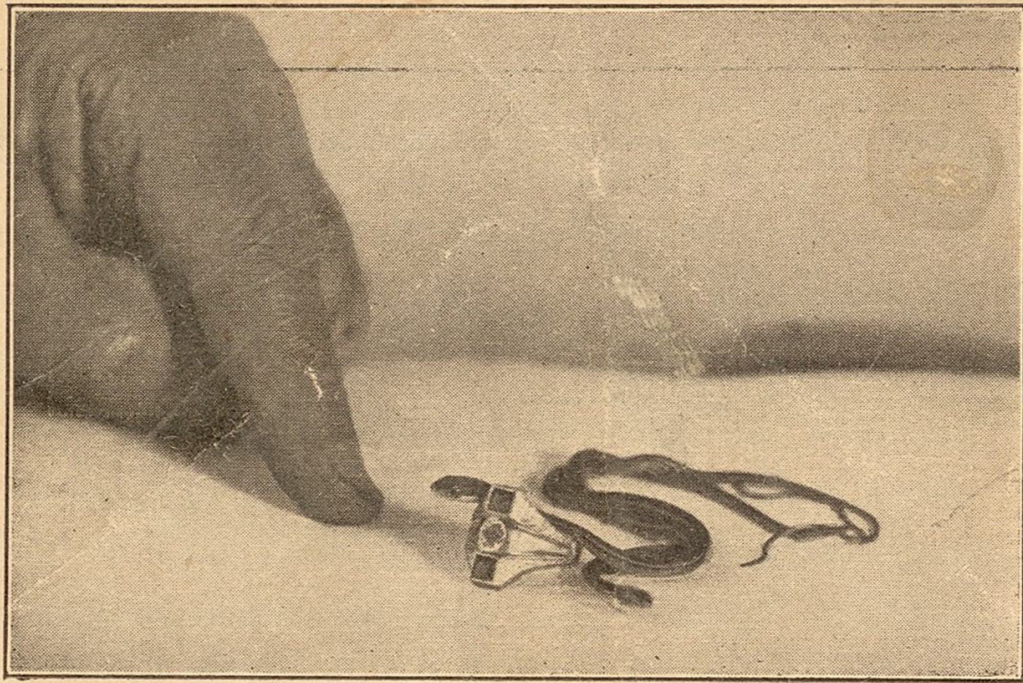
Dear Mr. Beck:

It may interest you and others to know that the first appearance of Rajah, the Sacred Royal Python, in this country, was at our County Fair, where it naturally attracted deserved crowds and attention, many recognizing in the novel exhibits, points of an educational character as well as one rarely ever given the privilege of patrons at county fairs. We appreciate your coming here to give us first honors, and we thank you also for the way the exhibit was conducted, as meeting every promised condition.

With kind personal regards, I am

Yours very truly,

*J. H. Andrews*  
Supt. of Fair Grounds and of Privileges.



Unique picture of week old Ribbon snakes born in captivity

## REPTILIAN EXHIBITS

- No. 1—"Rajah", the Sacred Royal Python, in his permanent travelling home.
- No. 2—The den of the Boa Constrictors, some of the largest species of their kind.
- No. 3—The den of the Milk snakes.
- No. 4—The den of the Black Racers.
- No. 5—The den of the Ribbon snakes, showing a mother and her family.
- No. 6—Skull of giant "Sacred Royal Python of India."
- No. 7—Collection of skins of reptiles from various parts of the world.
- No. 8—Various surgical instruments used in curing mouth diseases in reptiles, such as cancer, etc.