

*The New York Times*  
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## **AFRICAN PYGMY'S FATE IS STILL UNDECIDED**

**Director Hornaday of the Bronx Park Throws Up His Hands.**

### **ASYLUM DOESN'T TAKE HIM**

**Benga Meanwhile Laughs and Plays with a Ball and Mouth Organ at the Same Time.**

"Enough! enough!" said Director William T. Hornaday yesterday, after he reached his office in the Zoological Park in the Bronx. "I have had enough of Ota Benga, the African pigmy. Ring up the Brooklyn Howard Colored Orphan Asylum. Tell them that they can get busy tinkering with his intellect. I'm through with him here."

This outburst came after the keepers had had their say and after they had told the Director of their troubles on Sunday. There were 40, 000 visitors to the park on Sunday. Nearly every man, woman, and child of this crowd made for the monkey house to see the star attraction in the park – the wild man from Africa. They chased him about the grounds all day, howling, jeering, and yelling. Some of them poked him in the ribs, others tripped him up, all laughed at him. Then, when the keepers had caught him once again, they asked him how he liked America.

Benga has answered this question often lately, and like this:

"Me no like America; me like St. Louis."

The truth of the matter is that Benga was in the ethnological exhibit at the St. Louis Fair. Dr. Kerner [sic] took him back to Africa again when the Exposition was over. He brought the pigmy back recently and he present trouble arose.

The trouble over the little man has not ended yet. It broke out afresh with renewed virulence last evening, when Director Hornaday had already begun to breathe a little freer. The negro boy is still on his hands and likely to stay there.

After Director Hornaday had given that order to call up the Colored Orphan Asylum, he went to the telephone himself. The Rev. James H. Gordon, who is at the head of that institution, and who is also the Chairman of a committee recently appointed by the Baptist Ministers' Conference to get the pigmy out of the monkey cage and to look after his temporal and spiritual welfare, was not at home. So the Director talked to Mrs. Gordon. She told the Director that she was sure that Mr. Gordon meant what he said concerning his willingness to keep and educate Benga.

Mrs. Gordon evidently feared that there might be some hitch in the formalities, and immediately started for the Bronx Park to tell Director Hornaday personally to send the pigmy to the institution.

Mr. Gordon arrived at his Brooklyn home, which is at 1,550 Dean Street, in the meantime. When called up on the telephone he promptly said:

"Take him? To be sure we'll take him, and be glad to get him. We will show the public what can be done with an African pigmy. We'll show them how much can be done for him that is better than putting him in a cage with monkeys. Temporarily, the Rev. Dr. Sims of the Sixty-

third Street Church will take care of him. Then he will be sent to the colored school at Lynchburg, Va. We will do something for his mind and soul, as well as for his little body, black as it is. Take him? Sure we will.”

In a few minutes the TIMES reporter who had made the inquiry was called up by the Rev. Mr. Gordon again.

“It’s all off,” shouted Mr. Gordon over the telephone. “Mr. Hornaday and I couldn’t agree. He wants me to sign an agreement to give the pigmy back to Dr. Verner again when he wants him. Nothing doing on that. I’m sure the committee would’t [sic] agree to let the little African savage go back into the custody of a person who allowed him to be caged with monkeys for public exhibition. No, Sir. I wouldn’t sign any such agreement as that.”

Mr. Hornaday’s account of his interview with the Rev. Mr. Gordon, which was also over the telephone, was:

“Benga will not go to the Howard Orphan Asylum. I just had a talk with Mr. Gordon over the ‘phone. He wants the pigmy for good – says he will not sign an agreement to give him back to Dr. Verner when the latter wants him. To that I wouldn’t agree.”

“Was it because he considered Dr. Verner an unfit person to have charge of Benga that Mr. Gordon refused to sign the agreement?” Mr. Hornaday was asked.

“Yes,” he admitted, “the reason given was something like that. But I knew better. I have known Dr. Verner for a long time, and know him to be an eminent [sic] respectable and good man. The negotiations between Mr. Gordon and the Howard Orphan Asylum and myself are all off.”

While the talks between Director Hornaday and the Rev. Mr. Gordon were going on over the telephone, Mrs. Gordon arrived at the gate of the Bronx Park. For some reason she was not admitted. She reported to her husband that a man at the gate had told her that Benga had been driven almost to desperation by the Sunday and Monday crowds.

About the time that Mrs. Gordon was at the gate, the African pigmy was in the office of the Director. The latter had received a letter from Dr. Verner, who is in North Carolina, with another inclosed for Benga. There was a good deal of fun in the office over this letter to the African savage. Dr. Verner understands and writes Benga’s language, and can talk to him as well, but the Director lacks this accomplishment. The letters of the words were in English, but the words were the queerest Director Hornaday had ever seen. He wondered at first how he should interpret the contents of the letter to Benga, and then decided to read it phonetically. This he did. Meanwhile Benga stood before him nodding and laughing. He became attentive and his countenance took on a comprehending expression during the reading of the communication from his friend and sponsor. Benga also said “yes” from time to time, and repeated the words read to him, though slightly altered in the sound. What the letter contains the Director said last night he didn’t know.

“I hope that Benga does,” he added.

The crowds chased Benga around the park yesterday as they did on Sunday.

Benga was proud in the possession of a mouth organ yesterday. This he blew with vigor, producing unearthly sounds. Late in the afternoon he got possession of a rubber ball, and the crowd had a treat such as Benga hasn’t furnished heretofore. Holding the mouth organ with his left hand, he bounced the rubber ball with his right.

On account of the unsatisfactory outcome of the negotiations between the clergymen’s committee and Director Hornaday the fight for custody of the African savage received new impetus again. The committee will consult counsel again to-day and take Benga with them for a

personal interview with Mr. Hornaday. The latter said last night that they might save themselves the trouble.

The ministers' conference met yesterday in Mount Olivet Church, West Fifty-third Street. Although Mr. Gordon was not present, the conference indorsed what the committee has done in the interest of the pigmy, and urged it to go on with the good work. Wilfred H. Smith, the committee's counsel, was not present.