

# **AFRICANA NOTES AND NEWS**

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**AFRICANA SOCIETY  
AFRICANA MUSEUM  
CITY OF JOHANNESBURG**

# **AFRICANA AANTEKENINGE EN NUUS**

**DEEL 26 MAART 1984-DESEMBER 1985**

**AFRICANA-VERENIGING  
AFRICANA MUSEUM  
STAD JOHANNESBURG**

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### GUBBINS AND THE AFRICANA MUSEUM

6 September 1985 can be seen as the Africana Museum's Golden Jubilee because on that date in 1935 it became a separate municipal department under the directorship of Dr. John Gaspard Gubbins, whose collections formed the nucleus of the Museum. This historic occasion should not go unremarked and the following article by the late Reginald Frank Kennedy is published both as a tribute to the Museum's founder, J.G. Gubbins, as well as to Mr. Kennedy who was Acting Director of the Africana Museum from May 1938 until his retirement in 1960. After that date he continued his association with the Museum compiling the invaluable *Catalogue of Pictures in the Africana Museum* which appeared in 1968 with a two-volume supplement in 1972 and the *Catalogue of Prints in the Africana Museum and in books in the Strange Collection of Africana*, which was published in 1975.

With this paper which was read by Mrs. L.J. de Wet for Mr. Kennedy at the Wartenweiler Library, University of the Witwatersrand on 24 August 1977 we salute two men whose contribution to Africana research has been of major importance.

H.B.

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### J.G. GUBBINS AND THE FOUNDATION OF THE AFRICANA MUSEUM

BY

R.F. KENNEDY

At the entrance to the Africana Museum, on the second floor of the Library Building on Market Square, is a commemorative plaque erected by the City of Johannesburg in 1940. The inscription reads: "John Gaspard Gubbins 1877-1935. By his vision and energy this museum was founded — Aan sy visie en energie is hierdie museum te danke". The part

SPARRMAN ON HOTTENTOTS—The Swede Anders Sparrman (1748–1820) travelled in the South African interior in 1772 and 1775–76. He published a full account of his observations at the Cape, *A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope*, first in Swedish in 1783 with subsequent translations into German (1784) English (1785) French and Dutch (1787). Some of the more important zoological discoveries were the subject of a number of short papers published between 1777 and 1780 in the journal (*Handlingar*) of the Swedish Academy of Science, but it is probably unknown that his remarks on Hottentots were also printed separately. There exists a short contribution in the *Magazin für das Neueste aus der Physik und Naturgeschichte*, 4 (1): 25–32, Gotha, 1786, entitled “Beytrag zur Naturgeschichte der Hottentotten. Nach Herrn Sparrmann”. The information contained in the paper may have been compiled “according to Mr. Sparrmann” as stated in the title, and not actually written by him. This may be the reason why it remains unnoticed in the biography published soon after Sparrman’s death in 1820 or in any other bibliography concerned with his travels. The paper is mainly concerned with the appearance of the Hottentots and their clothing, their weapons and houses. The information is the same as is found in his travel journal.

Dr. L.C. Rookmaaker

**AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF NEEDLEWORK TOOLS**—In his introduction, Edwin F. Holmes, the authority on thimbles, points out that whereas the history of needlework is well documented, it is only in recent years that interest has focused on the implements of the craft. The author, Gay Ann Rogers, is well known for her books on needlepoint design, *Tribal design for needlepoint* and *Needlepoint designs from Asia*. However, for many years she has collected needlework tools, concentrating on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The fact that she is a professional needlewoman has enabled her to evaluate items with a trained and professional eye, and we are indeed fortunate to reap the benefits of her expertise in her excellent book, *An illustrated history of needlework tools*. Her research in identifying and describing tools has taken her to libraries and museums on both sides of the Atlantic and the book is profusely illustrated with 194 plates, most of which are the author’s own outstanding photographs. The contents are conveniently divided into eleven parts, namely Fitted needlework boxes, Sewing cases and chatelaines, Needles and needlecases, Thimbles and thimblecases, Scissors, Tape-measures, emeries and waxers, Pins and pincushions, Thread containers, Needlework clamps, Handwork tools and Plain sewing and handwork gadgets. There is a useful index and bibliography as well as six pages of notes which clarify references made in the text of the book. The wide range of articles discussed are fascinating collectors’ items, both from the point of view of the infinite variety of materials used in their construction, and for the fanciful shapes in which many of them were made. Not only will private collectors and museum personnel find