

# MONEY TAKES — ODD SHAPES

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WASHINGTON. — The people of the world have used many strange materials as mediums of exchange. Before gold and silver were adopted as the basis of the paper currency of today, such things as cowrie shells, the teeth of whales, fishhooks, snail shells and stones were used as currency, the National Geographic Society says.

The cowrie shell was one of the most popular materials used for exchange. This shell, which is white or straw-colored, is found in the Indian Ocean.

The inhabitants of Uganda would sell a sixty-two pound ivory tusk for 1,000 cowrie shells or a cow for 2,300 shells. The purchase of a bride was easier, requiring only two shells.

Dog teeth were favored among the Shoshone and Bannock Indians as recently as 1890, when a value of 25 cents was put on a tooth. The people of the Solomon Islands also used teeth in trade.

On another Pacific island, Yap, the inhabitants used stones as a medium of exchange. The island's stone money was cumbersome, one piece sometimes weighing hundreds of pounds. A wealthy islander would surround his dwelling with these massive stones to let everyone know about his riches.

In contrast, the natives of Paraguay had one of the smallest "coins." They cut snail shells to the size of small buttons and used them for money. A hundred buttons bought a sheep. In Nicaragua the same number of cocoa beans bought a slave.