

Big Game

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For fifteen idyllic years in the 1920's and 30's, my father was a professional big game hunter in Africa, India and IndoChina. This gave me, as a boy, enormous stature among my friends. He gave up these pursuits when he married and I was born - he never took me to Africa - but he was known throughout our hometown of Baltimore for having lived a life of high adventure in the most exotic parts of the world, during the depths of the Depression when everyone else was struggling to keep their heads above water.

And what wonderful stories he told! He was not free with them: I had to pry them out of him. My happiest memories from my boyhood were evenings sitting and listening by the fire in his den, the floor covered with the skins of big cats, the walls clustered with heads and antlers casting shadows by the firelight, the wastepaper cans hollowed elephants' feet, while the huge cape buffalo above the mantel scowled furiously down at me. My eyes would wander over to his gun cabinet where the rifles and shotguns gleamed in ranked array, and I wondered which of them had brought down the big brute over the fireplace. And all the while my father told, or by special request retold, tales of his adventures. It was heaven.

He also kept journals for most of his life. Even after all these years his handwriting is a trial for me, but several journals of his more significant expeditions were typed - goodness knows by whom - and fuzzy carbon copies have been a second source for this paper. Tonight, I would like to share some of those tales with you.

Those of you with long memories will recall that I read a paper ten years ago dealing with my father's lifetime of adventure, and in it I made mention of his big game hunting years. There may be some very brief references tonight to matters mentioned in that paper, but the great majority of this paper will be new to you.

But first we must set the stage. Africa is a very different place today than it was in the 1920's. Sub-Saharan Africa really did not open to the white man until after World War I, when new drugs made survival possible in lands where, just thirty years before, early white explorers had died within weeks from insects and disease.

Consider: My father first went to Africa in 1920. This was the twilight of the era of the great explorations, but there was still much about Africa that was unknown.

- It was only sixty years since the first intrepid explorers made their heroic

attempts to discover the source of the Nile, and Burton and Speke finally found it.

- Just fifty years before, Stanley found Livingston in Ujiji.
- Forty years earlier, the Zulu wars climaxed at Rorke's Drift.
- Twenty years before, the Boer Wars brought the British Empire to its knees.
- Fifteen years before, Stanley again invaded the interior, this time armed with

Gatling guns against the native tribes, to find Emin Pasha

- There was a hiatus in exploration during World War I (the time of the African Queen) and the continent was largely undisturbed except for hostilities in German East Africa (Tanganyika).

- Ten years before my father's adventures in Africa, ex president Teddy Roosevelt captured the nation's imagination with his big game expedition.

- At just the time my father arrived, there came a rush of colonial farmers and adventurers from England... most of them battered survivors of The Great War, and many of them second sons and remittance men from Britain's great families. Their companions were a remarkable breed of independent women like Karen Blixen (Isaak Dineson) and Beryl Markham. And the great hunters came: Denys Finch-Hatton, Bror Blixen, Bring 'Em Back Alive Frank Buck, Carl Akeley, and all the others. White hunters flourished, as big game hunting - once the exclusive domain of the first colonists - became accessible and sportsmen rushed to the interior.

A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since those days when Africa was still the Dark Continent, and tonight, as we sit here in this room, big game hunting is no longer the supreme adventure, as it was in those days. Standing to the charge of a maddened bull elephant was once the most daring thing a man could do. But times change. Today our sympathy is with the elephants, not the hunter, and we worry about their survival.

One more critical difference between Africa then and now: Anyone here tonight who is motivated to do so can be on a plane to Dar Es Salaam tomorrow morning... can sleep Wednesday night in a tent camp on the Masai Mara, listening to the lions cough in the night... can view the Serengeti's great migrations of game and predators on Thursday from the comfort of a Toyota Land Rover... can visit the Ngorogoro Crater on Friday and the Olduvai Gorge on Saturday... and be back in time for next week's paper.

But in the 1920's a proper safari would require upwards of a full year, door to door: with at least sixty days and nights on slow boats coming and going, a minimum of

four months walking and riding camels and mules through the bush, typically making five miles on a good day, and a good two months of sitting around and waiting for boats, waiting for supplies, waiting for licenses and permits, waiting for bearers or trackers, waiting for beasts of burden and all the myriad pieces of a well-planned expedition to fall into place. It was not for impatient men.

My father left college in 1917 after just one term. Underaged, he joined the RAF (then the Royal Flying Corps, which was not finicky about age) to fly fighters in France. When the war was over, he found himself with no career options, some demobbing pay in his pocket together with a small bequest from his mother, and the world at his doorstep. He set out to see that world, and along the way he washed up in Abyssinia (today's Ethiopia). For the rest of his days he was intrigued by that mysterious land... and while he hunted in many other countries, he returned to Abyssinia whenever he could.

Perhaps the largest of the challenges he faced was how to earn a living doing what he loved to do: hunting. There were essentially three options. You could be a white hunter... a guide: but that demanded extensive experience which my father lacked in those early years, and a willingness to truckle to clients who could be very difficult.

Or, you could be an ivory hunter: there was good money to be made, there were elephants everywhere, and it would be decades before anyone raised inconvenient concerns like conserving a vanishing resource.

The third option, which suited my father admirably, was to be a museum hunter. Very few of the world's museums had African wings at that time, and these became a top priority in the 1920's and 30's. Before television, before movies shot on location, before the National Geographic, museums were the only way of introducing the people back home to the world's exotic places and creatures. Museums the world over were clamoring for specimens of African game to put in the wings they were racing to complete. It was a hot market that worked something like this:

My father and his various partners would go on a safari that might last up to a year, taking with them a taxidermist and quantities of salt and formaldehyde. They would collect and preserve multiple skins, hides, horns and antlers for a variety of species. At the end of their trip they would do the circuit of the European museums peddling their wares. They would call on the museum in Munich and say to them, "You have no bongo in your collection." This would almost always lead to a sale and they would place their smallest bongo in Munich. They would then move on to the museum in Leipzig and say,

"Did you hear they just got a bongo in Munich? But I can sell you one that's three inches larger." When their inventory was depleted, they would go to Paris for some R&R, and then back to Africa to do it all again.

In time, my father and his partners developed a reputation and started receiving commissions from museums. Eventually, they developed a mutually productive relationship with Marshall and Stanley Field who wanted the best for their Chicago museum. They eventually reached the point where Mr. Field was picking up the entire tab for their safaris.

But it was still hard, hot work, and not without danger of all kinds: from wild animals, from accidents, from heat and exhaustion, from losing your way, from being abandoned in the bush by unscrupulous outfitters, and -especially - from disease. An example: the whites' first concern was syphilis: it was believed that the natives who were their cooks, bearers, trackers, and - particularly - skimmers all had the disease and that it could easily be contracted if you cut yourself - a common occurrence - while skinning a specimen side-by-side with one of your native staff. A Wasserman test was routine when you came out of the bush.

There were a host of other challenges and frustrations to be dealt with. Among these were;

- Dealing with the local chieftains whose territory you wanted to hunt on... or just to cross. These could be very difficult men. They all had enormous egos - they were all royalty - and they all demanded payments. They also knew that white men traveled with magical medicines capable of curing infections and diseases, or healing wounds that were often fatal... and they typically brought sick or dying members of their personal household to be treated as part of the negotiations. Somehow, my father became the physician on many of their safaris (he had, after all, attended Johns Hopkins for two months before joining the Royal Flying Corps). To his amazement, he had some remarkable cures to his credit over the years: he said it was mostly aspirin, antiseptic and common sense.

- There was endless waiting. Africa is a world where no one hurries, and there is zero tolerance for the impatient white man. You wait for governments, be they national, regional or tribal, to act on your requests and weeks, or even months, can pass while you wait. It makes our impatience when a flight is delayed seem trifling. You wait for your supplies to arrive... or be found... or be unloaded from the ship... or recovered from

thieves. You wait for camels and mules to be found to carry your supplies. You wait for bearers and porters to be hired. You wait for the weather to change. You wait for the game to move. Every single day, you wait for the heat of the day to pass. Days begin hours before sunup: that is when you travel, move camp, or start to hunt. By midday it is too hot for any exertion by man or beast and so everything - everything - stops while you wait for the cool of the evening when the game will start moving. (Those of you who have been on today's photo safaris have experienced this). Every single day, in my father's journals, they are reading or snoozing or playing bridge from mid morning to mid afternoon. A curious aside: The stakes in the bridge games, which might go on for five or six months, were never reckoned in "pennies per point," but rather in squares of toilet paper -typically, one square per hundred points: each man traveled with his personal six month supply and the stuff had true monetary value.

- A universal annoyance was the tapeworm. Every man had them. My father once said to me, "You never got lonely sitting in a tiger blind: you could always talk to your tapeworm." Some grew to amazing length: it sometimes happened that you encountered polite society when on safari -a colonial outpost in the bush, staffed by a lonely official and his wife who were eager for company and would invariably invite you for a meal. It was de rigueur to tie a piece of string snugly around each leg of your undershorts so no piece of your tapeworm would break off and fall down your pants leg onto the floor. Periodically, the entire safari would stop and dose itself with a potion made from the seed pods of a particular tree to purge the worms. One half of the men - white and native alike - would dose the other half and care for them until they got back on their feet, when the roles were reversed.

And then there was the danger of the sport. The days of Stanley's terrible fights with native warriors were past. Most of the danger came from accidents and illness in the bush. But that is not the stuff of stories. People want to hear tales of danger involving lions, tigers and the like.

Located in colonial Nairobi, there was (and still is) an institution called the Muthaiga Club. This is where the colonials met, drank, ate, stayed overnight when they came down to town from their farms in Happy Valley, and arranged their assignments. It was the invariable haunt of all the hunters - amateur and professional - as they passed through town. And in its bar, my father said, there was only one topic: an endless debate about which is the most dangerous animal. You could go out on a six month safari and

when you came back, it was as though you had never left. The elephant, the rhino, the lion, the hippo (statistically, the hippo causes more deaths than any other African game) all had their advocates but my father was convinced that none could compare to the cape buffalo: "The only animal that hunts man for pleasure," he was fond of saying. His closest brush with death occurred when he was caught in the wait-a-bit thorns and unable to raise his rifle to his shoulder as a charging renegade buffalo known locally as "the Widow Maker" bore down on him. He was saved by his companion who dropped the animal just feet away.

My father considered tigers much more dangerous than lions. They are bigger, more cunning and crafty, and are found in much heavier cover. Tiger hunting typically involves building a blind (rather like a duck blind) at the edge of a clearing, killing a large animal for bait in the center of the clearing, and visiting the kill every day as it rots in the heat until a tiger has found it and started feeding on it. The next day, before dawn, you move into the blind and wait for Mr. Tiger to put in an appearance. Hunting tigers in what is now Viet Nam, my father bought a worked-out elephant from a logging crew in the area, chained it to a stump in the center of a clearing in view of his blind, and shot it. (The chain was to keep the tiger from dragging the dead elephant out of the line of sight from the blind: a feat of which an adult tiger was fully capable). Several days later a tiger found the kill and my father went into the blind. It was a long, hot day and toward mid-afternoon he dozed off. When he woke up and looked out the viewing hole, he was astonished to see the elephant breathing as it lay in the clearing. But he had killed the elephant three days before: how could this be? It became apparent that a tiger on the far side of the elephant had eaten its way inside the body cavity, and was tearing off chunks of meat, causing its ribs to rise and fall. As my father watched, the tiger came out of the elephant, looked squarely at the blind, sensed the danger, and - before my father could shoot - gave an enormous leap, bringing him crashing down through the blind on top of my father. Another leap and he was gone into the jungle, not to be seen again, but leaving my father in a highly nervous state.

On the same hunt elsewhere in IndoChina, in search of seladang and gaur for the Field Museum, things got worse. An extract from his journal:

"Saturday, June 6, 1931. At ten minutes past midnight I was sleeping soundly when I heard Malraison cry, "Vite, vite Carey, votre fusil." The elephants were squealing and the men were moaning "Maung." I thought at first the camp was being charged by

the herd of elephants I had seen that afternoon... Finally I understood that a coolie had been carried off by a tiger, and I fired my rifle into the air. We dove into our duffels for flashlights and went out to look for the coolie... After ten minutes we found his body completely decapitated as though by a knife and tiger claws on his rump. A gruesome sight... The natives dug a grave with their knives. No sign of sorrow in any of them... just deathly fear of the evil genii that lived in the tiger. By two the grave was deep enough and I was glad of it as the sickening sweet smell of human flesh in hot weather is very unpleasant. Then the Karnaks took two pieces of hooked bamboo and dragged the body into the grave as it is taboo to touch a body if the head is off. It seems the dead man had been sleeping in the middle of the other coolies when he got up to answer a call of nature. He squatted down by the fire, as they all do, when the tiger jumped out of the night over the fire, upsetting a pot of beef, grabbed the man by the neck and carried him off. As I was mending my flashlight, bang went George's gun: he had flashed the tiger's eyes as he came back for the coolie. We all went to bed, it being 3:30. I was lying in bed smoking a cigarette when the elephants started squealing again and four shots split the silence. The chief, who had kept watch from the top of the pile of howdahs, saw the tiger coming back a third time, but missed him. No more sleep that night as we all kept watch. The next day the Karnak chief told me the geniis were mad at them for bringing whites into this country for the first time and they were going back to Bundon. There wasn't a thing we could do but pack up and leave this game paradise. The next day we were called upon by the high chief for compensation for the dead man. The usual price if a white man kills a Karnak is thirty piasters but he concluded it was really the tiger's fault and fined all the men one piaster apiece, which we paid for them so the cost of the dead Karnak was \$4.00.

And this was not the only time my father's plans were undone by a man-eater. In 1928 he was on a commission from Stanley Field to collect a rare Indian rhinoceros, a subspecies found only in the province of a maharajah who jealously guarded this resource. When my father approached him for a permit, he was told that he would only be granted a rhino if he would first rid a remote province of a man-eating tiger who had thus far defied all efforts to take him, and was causing great unrest in nearby villages. On my father's first night in the man-eater's area, the tiger leapt out of the dark and over a high thorn boma wall built around the campfire, grabbed a bearer sitting by the fire, and leapt back into the night with the man in his jaws, clearing the boma by a foot. They waited for

dawn, listening to the tiger devour his prey not twenty yards away. At dawn, they soon found the man's mangled remains but were unable to track the tiger. That night they increased the height of the boma to ten feet, and again the tiger leapt over the top and back out into the night with another coolie in his mouth. This time action had to be taken: an opening was made in the boma and my father went out into the night with rifle and a headlamp to light the way. As he approached the tiger, who was easily located by the sound of the man's bones being crunched in his jaws, the light went out. My father beat a hasty retreat back to the camp, firing random shots into the night as he went. The next day, the surviving bearers announced they were leaving the area and heading back to the relative safety of a nearby town: my father could come with them or stay in the camp alone. It was not a difficult decision, even though it meant no rare rhino for Mr. Field.

My father had one other encounter with man-eaters, but of a very different nature. All students of African lore know about the pair of lions which in 1899 brought the construction of a railroad from Mombasa to Nairobi to an absolute standstill. The British had imported over a thousand coolies from India to build the railroad, but where the route crossed the Tsavo River these lions, on successive nights, ate twenty eight coolies. The rest absolutely stopped work and construction came to a total halt. The crisis was discussed in Parliament. Hunters came from far and wide to kill the lions and all failed. The lions were eventually dispatched after a series of truly terrifying encounters by an intrepid British engineer, Col. J H Patterson, who told the tale in a classic book, The Man-eaters of Tsavo. Together with uncounted local natives, the lions' total kill was believed to be about one hundred forty men. Some years later, Stanley Field read that book and determined that he had to have those lions in his museum. By that time, the lions' skins were on the floor of Col. Patterson's home in England. My father was sent to negotiate their acquisition, a rather ignominious task, he felt at the time. But the two infamous lions, now stuffed and fully recreated, are on view at the Chicago Museum of Natural History where they scare children to this day.

And now I would like to take you on a safari with my father, to give you an overview of what it was really like. This may have been my father's grandest safari: Stanley Field was the enthusiastic underwriter and seems to have paid all the bills without a whimper because of his eagerness to have specimens from Abyssinia for his museum. My father kept a careful journal of this trip, on which I will draw.

Abyssinia was still very much an unknown place, filled with myth; the land of Prester John, the home of the Queen of Sheba, the site of King Solomon's mines, with some of the first churches in Christendom - it was largely unexplored, but known to a few to have prime big game hunting. A key objective was to assemble specimens to create a large waterhole group, where animals of all kinds gather to drink, for the grand hall in the Field Museum. My father and his partner had more experience in this little known land than perhaps any other hunters, having undertaken three previous safaris there. In the course of these earlier trips, they had developed a relationship with the Ras Tafari, heir to the throne and later to become Haile Selassie, the Lion of Judah. This friendship was to prove extremely helpful.

The cast of characters included my father, his boon companion Harold (Babe) White, the naturalist C J Albrecht from the museum, and a third hunter, Maj. Jack Coats, heir to a thread fortune, who was a contributing underwriter for the expedition. A word about Babe White from Atlanta, who hunted with my father on all of their early safaris, and who appears in the records as the leader of this one. He was a giant of a man, standing six feet ten inches tall, and tipping the scales at seventeen and a half stone, according to a contemporary account (about 250 lbs). He was something of a curiosity wherever he went, with an unaccountable appeal (to my father) for the ladies. His signature trademark was an overnight bag made of an elephant's scrotum, which he carried at all times. It made quite a statement.

They sailed from New York to Le Havre on October 16, 1928 with twenty-eight pieces of luggage (including three hundred pounds of tinned bacon and ham, as well as my father's personal supply of ten thousand Chesterfield cigarettes) and acquired more as they passed through France to Marseille. One of their curious purchases was a large library of gramophone records for the long days and nights in the bush, including a number of laughing records - recordings of uninterrupted, nonstop laughter. Hunters and explorers found these indispensable when the natives' mood turned sour and they refused to carry out their orders: a brief session with these recordings and everyone was happy again, and returned to their work.

On November 7 they sailed from Marseille on a slow boat to Djibouti, "the hottest port in the world," at the foot of the Red Sea, where they spent a week assembling their baggage and gear before moving on by train to Dire Dawa, the point of entry into Abyssinia. Here they were joined by the last three members of their group: Ohneiser, the

taxidermist and an expert in African mammals, Steininger, the museum photographer, and Terps, the dragoman and the most essential member of their team. With the group assembled, they moved on to Addis Ababa.

Their plan was to depart from Addis Ababa and work their way south through more than four hundred miles of uncharted Abyssinian bush, crossing eventually into Turkana in northern Kenya, near Lake Rudolph and continuing another three hundred miles to Nairobi, arriving there six months later, in mid June. Their quarry was every form of Abyssinian fauna: not just big game but antelope, birds and rodents for the museum collection... and, of course, the Waterhole Group for Stanley Field.

In Addis Ababa they had a happy reunion with the Ras Tafari and obtained his personal imprimatur for their expedition. They shopped for the rest of their provisions and gear, and hired twenty six personal boys, syces, skinners, gun bearers, cooks and camp staff. They spent three long weeks buying mules and camels, and assembling their negadi - by far their leading frustration. The negadi were their wranglers, or animal packers and handlers. If it was a challenge to find fifty sound mules and another fifty strong camels, it was even harder to hire and hold fifty Somali natives who were sufficiently honest, dependable, and willing to sign up for six months in the bush: endlessly the negadi signed on and then changed their mind and quit, or disappeared, or delayed, or demanded more money or payment before leaving. An entry from the journal:

"Babe and I laughed, comparing this with our first trip here seven years ago when we blew into Addis after tiger hunting in Indo China, with just three suitcases to our name. Now we have over 5,000 pounds of equipment... one item of food is 1,400 pounds of hard bread. There are 700 pounds of salt just to cure the Waterhole Group. There are three Jeager 9.2 rifles, nine Luger pistols, eleven 8.2 Mannlicher rifles, one Jeffery .404, one Springfield 30-06, two 12 gauge shotguns, a .22 double barreled bird gun, and a .28 rifle."

A key priority was locating a mule that could carry Babe White. On a previous trip, they had found a prodigy of a white mule that was up to the task, and had proved such a phenomenon of strength and fortitude that the Ras Tafari claimed him for his own stable. To soften up the Ras, they presented him with a fine tiger skin which so pleased him that he grudgingly consented to loan the White Onion for this trip.

On December 11, two months after leaving home, all was finally ready. The animals were loaded and the caravan set out from Addis on the long trek south. From day

one there was trouble with the negadi. Animals were poorly loaded and their packs slid off, or poorly tethered and they wandered off into the night, easy prey for predators. Their goal was to start moving before dawn, but escaped mules had to be tracked down at first light before they could be loaded. There were nightly losses to leopards and hyenas. It took weeks of mishaps and delays before the caravan worked out its problems and shook down into a functioning team.

They would travel for four or five days, loading the animals before dawn, and setting out at first light. The hunters moved ahead, looking for game:

the laden pack animals followed several hours behind. They made camp in the midday heat, having covered perhaps ten miles of mostly mountainous terrain. When they reached country that looked promising for game, they would settle into a more permanent camp for as much as a week while they hunted the surrounding area. Central Abyssinia is very mountainous: while the days were hot, at altitudes approaching ten thousand feet the nights were biting cold. Water was always a priority and the location of the next waterhole always determined their direction.

The hunting was not only for museum specimens but also for meat to feed the caravan, for personal trophies, and often just for sport. It was hot, hard, dirty work and on many days nothing much happened: a new kind of duck or goose might be spotted and collected. But then there were moments of excitement, too: Another excerpt:

"Three cheers! My Galla guide and I started off this afternoon up the mountain. Set traps for leopard and hyena. The Galla stopped me, pointing back down the mountain with his spear. Two miles below we could see a nyala buck climbing toward us, taking the giant heather in his stride. We hid on a ledge watching him come. It was a grand sight. He stopped about eighty yards below us to take scent. It was an easy shot and I got him first crack, in the ear, breaking his neck at once. The Galla looked to the sky and kissed his hand to God. Sent him back to camp to get men to carry the meat and I started skinning him out. I would guess his outside measurements would be better than thirty-eight inches: a very fine bull. While we were skinning him Babe showed up and spotted a clipsinger on a cliff one hundred yards away. He took a shot and missed. The clipsinger took a swan dive off into space. Damned pretty sight."

Every day, there was a steady stream of patients coming to my father's clinic. Some excerpts from his journal:

"We have a new \$3,000 medicine chest which unfortunately came from Berlin. All

the names and directions are in German and I don't speak the language so I am finding out what things are by trial and error. If a man complains of headache and the medicine I give him makes it worse, I write that down and try it out on the next stomachache case. Haile Bokale, Cook's Boy, came to me with a lump on his heel which I thought was a cyst or ulcer, but when I cut into it it proved to be a solid growth which bled like hell so I put salve on it and sewed it up. He is moving quite nimbly today."

"There was a woman needing attention. Closing the tent door, I made an inspection. A long running sore well down her stomach. Probably syphilis so I painted her with iodine and taped her up."

"Asfar, Steininger's boy, got sick and started vomiting while the rest were skinning. When they got back to camp I dosed him with castor oil but he vomited and retched all night. This morning we found nothing had moved for three days so we tried more castor oil but it wouldn't stay down. We tried mustard and water but still no good so we got out the enema using plenty of soap but nothing doing. Terrible pains and his stomach inflated. We tried morphia for pain relief but he died at 9:15. Damn shame: he was well liked and an excellent worker."

Jack Coats developed a major toothache about three weeks out, and they had nothing with which to pull the tooth. He was in agonizing pain for weeks. They considered going back to Addis, but it was a long way. They detoured to a missionary outpost looking for help, but only came up with a pair of heavy pliers which were too big for a single tooth. (The missionary was so lonely that he left his post and joined their caravan for a week: he was starved for music, having heard none for two years and spent every moment listening to their gramophone records). After almost a month, Jack Coats' tooth began to subside and he was able to finish the trip with aspirin, tedj, and opium.

From time to time they passed regional towns presided over by a dejazmatch, or provincial governor. Traveling under the personal protection of the Ras Tafari, they received warm welcomes, were treated to fine native meals and hospitality, often with considerable ritual, and provided with regular tribute from the villages in the dejazmatch's province: fresh milk, honey, eggs, sheep, goats, the occasional bull, firewood, hay for their mules, and gallons of tedj, the local homebrew. A word on the cattle they were given: explorers in Abyssinia found the Gallas had perfected a technique of cutting choice pieces of meat from cattle without killing them. They plastered the wound with salt to keep the flies out, and could keep the animal alive, the meat more or

less fresh, and beast moving with the caravan for three or four days before it died, and everyone feasted.

They passed by Hagara Salaam, a major provincial capital presided over by Dejazmatch (Governor) Berue, a very important figure who was keenly aware of their friendship with the Ras Tafari.. From the journal:

"His wife sent us lunch (four sheep, three baskets of pancakes, soup, three kinds of chill and gallons of tedj) carried by sixteen slaves led by a major domo who insisted that it be eaten in his presence so he could report how much we enjoyed it. Dejazmatch Berne arrived under a white parasol, mounted on a mule covered with gold brocade and red trappings: his retinue stretched over a mile across the plain. Soldiers, cavalry, slaves and loot-carriers before and after. Horses dressed in sky blue, yellow and red trappings. Today and tomorrow are baptismal days in the Coptic church and he would like us to attend. We set off for the first of four churches, accompanied by 300 soldiers and several thousand followers. A lot of priests in fancy robes, crowns, gaudy brocaded parasols, ornate incense burners, carrying oblong drums beating first one end, then the other. We bowed whenever the Dejazmatch bowed. Then off through the town to the next church in procession led by six mules with huge drums and drummers mounted on their backs, then twenty buglers, a corps of ordinary drummers, twenty oboe players, then the priests, several hundred soldiers and behind us the Fituaruries (Generals) and Grazmatches (Colonels) marching haughtily. Women lining the road yodeling Indian fashion, the occasional beggar or criminal breaking through the line of soldiers pleading for mercy, lepers and cripples shrieking either praise or curses, I couldn't tell which. If they got too annoying they were clubbed on the head and thrown to the side of the trail, half dead. Some very dead."

As the weeks went by the caravan gradually moved south, and came down out of the mountains. By mid April, after four months of hard trekking, they were in the Sagan River valley, filled with all kinds of game. One by one, they collected worthwhile specimens... but many days would pass with nothing that was good enough, and no shots fired except for meat: at this point the caravan numbered sixty-eight men to be fed. This was hot, dry country in which camels were better beasts of burden than mules, but the camels were prone to infirmities, and could not travel over rocky terrain. Still, they traded mules for camels whenever they passed native market towns. They found drought in the Sagan valley and, more than ever, water for the animals was a pressing priority and the

determining factor in where to make camp. An excerpt:

"This morning we found that Babe's big mule had led the rest off in search of water as they had none for two days. The men finally found them at 9:30 and brought them in. The longest our mules have gone without water is six days: the longest for the camels has been is eleven days."

Another excerpt will provide a feeling for a typical day:

"Up at 5:45 and on the trail by 6:45. The caravan followed at 8:45. The grazmatch sent along four horsemen armed with spears as a ceremonial guard but our brave escorts left us at the ridge saying they couldn't go further for fear of being castrated by the natives in the next valley. Checked the zebra bait but only its crotch had been chewed by a jackal. Plenty of game down at the lake (Stephanie) but the trail down from Gooji is impossible for camels. Babe potted a waterbuck for meat. Tsetse have been reported but we didn't see any. Made about ten miles down and back. Made camp about 1:00 by a lovely spring - very unusual. Waterbuck liver for lunch. Caravan catches up about 2:00. Two rubbers of bridge - I am down 65 sheets. Gave each other haircuts. Went out toward evening and stalked a black lion for over an hour. Got to 300 yards but no shot. C.J. saw a huge greater kudu bull but missed with four shots. Cold as hell tonight. Listened to Forza del Destine by the fire. Bright moon, lots of lions coughing. Tomorrow we move camp down to the lake."

As they reached lower altitudes, approaching Kenya, fever (malaria) attacked the white men intermittently. They all had it and were periodically laid low in hot weather. They dosed with plasmochine or, as a last resort, quinine whose side effects they preferred to avoid. All the men, including the natives, suffered from a crippling foot worm which had to be dug from the soles of their feet with knifepoint. From time to time they were lousy. The flies were terrible. And of course they had to treat their tapeworms periodically. It was hard traveling and the pack animals began to give out:

"April 30. When we got to the bottom of the hill below camp another camel died, making the ninth to pass out since we left Addis: also one horse and seven mules are dead."

A curious incident:

"A half an hour from camp we saw a fresh hole in an ant hill. Babe looked in and saw an animal: 'Snout of an aardvark' he yelled, and shot at it with his revolver. The aardvark started digging like hell and soon disappeared. Ismail found some oryx horns by

the trail and started digging with them. Finally Jack reached in the hole and felt him about three feet in so the digging resumed with vigor. C.J. and I got him by the tail and tried to pull him out but we couldn't budge him and the digging resumed. C.J. fired at his rump and Mr. Aardvark dug with renewed vigor too. At last he slowed down and we could hear him breathing hard. A space was cleared and two shots were put in his back. More digging, then three of us got him by the tail and pulled him out. C.J. skinned him out: he was five feet eight inches long and weighed about 170 pounds. The tongue is more than a foot long and they have no teeth. These are rare animals, totally nocturnal, and tough to get. We are pleased."

As the weeks progressed they steadily collected museum quality giraffe (all three varieties), zebra (both varieties), oryx, gerenuk, bushbuck, clipsinger, waterbuck, gazelle, reedbuck, ostrich, greater and lesser kudu, eland, sable, nyala, hyena, jackal, ehu hunting dogs, wolf, warthogs, countless rodents, waterfowl and birds of prey.

By the end of June they were approaching Nairobi, six hard months after they set out from Addis Ababa. Of the original twenty-seven camels they bought in Addis, only eight had survived. Of the twenty additional camels they acquired along the way, there were only eight. Of the original fifty mules, just fourteen survived the whole trip. They sold off their surviving livestock and excess gear and set off for southern Kenya, Tanganyika and the Serengeti to fill out the specimens they had not yet collected. There was an emotional farewell as they paid off the gun bearers, camp boys, and negadi who had made the long trek with them, and now turned around to walk back to their homes in Abyssinia, leading the Ras Tafari's big white mule.

The remaining weeks in Tanganyika were comparatively easy traveling by truck, and a paradise of game where every species was plentiful. They soon filled all the gaps for their waterhole group - principally cape buffalo, lion and rhino. And then the hunting was over.

I am at a loss to explain the poor marksmanship that plagued the group throughout the safari. My father and Babe White shot for a living: they had to be good. I know my father was a fine shot: squirrel shooting with him as a boy, he consistently made clean kills with a .22 into the top branches of tall oaks in full leaf. But that is not what happened in Africa, There were very few clean kills of anything. It took multiple shots to bring down most game. At the halfway point on their safari my father, who loved to keep track of things, notes in his journal that he had thus far taken ninety-eight shots to kill

twenty-eight animals, or three and a half shots per kill. And there is not a drop of remorse in his journal over the many, many animals that daily got away wounded, and were casually written off as lion bait.

I have pondered this poor shooting and come up with several possible explanations:

First, their rifles were not nearly as good as today's weapons, which are pinpoint accurate. And they were shooting with open iron sights, not telescopic ones. Virtually all of their shots were at more than one hundred yards, and at that distance the bead front sight would pretty much blot out most targeted animals. There was no thought of a head or heart shot at these ranges: just put a bullet in him if you can and hope for the best.

Second, their ammunition was slow and in many cases hard nosed, passing completely through the animals' bodies without a knockdown effect, as today's high speed expanding bullets all do.

It also appears to me that, for whatever reason, their stalkers could not get them closer to the game. Anyone who has been on a photographic safari to Africa knows that you can generally be driven to within twenty yards of most game. When I first saw this, I asked our guide how there could possibly be any challenge in shooting these animals. He smiled and assured me that it was quite a different matter stalking game on foot. To demonstrate, that afternoon he took me and my sons afoot to try to get within shooting range of some giraffes: we could not get within five hundred yards of them. African game have been conditioned to ignore vehicles, but to be especially wary of men on foot. Amazing.

By the first of August they were back in Nairobi selling their gear, treating and packing skins for shipment to Chicago, and preparing for the long voyage home. On Sunday, September 29 they were back in New York, just two weeks shy of a year from the day they sailed, and one month before the stock market crashed. The Waterhole Group was an enormous success and remains to this day one of the finest exhibits of its type.

My father went on to many other big game adventures, but they came to a halt when he married in 1933. He never hunted in Africa again. However many other adventures were in store for him, and his intimate knowledge of little known parts of the world would prove extremely useful in World War II for planning air wars and, later, in the Cold War, when the quarry was even bigger game. But hunting was his life passion.

A final excerpt from his journals...

"Followed the elephant tracks for three hours and suddenly heard them crashing in the bamboo ahead. Very thick and they were only thirty or forty yards ahead but I couldn't see a thing. Finally I saw a tail twitching, but no tusks. Tiran came up and said there were seven of them feeding but it wasn't safe to shoot in such thick stuff as there were no trees big enough to stop an elephant in case of a charge. He was right. So we followed hoping they would feed out into more open forest where we could spot a tusker. Three hundred yards further I heard crashing again which to me is flat out the most exciting sound in the world. This is the grandest sport there is. There is absolutely nothing to compare. Suddenly a huge head showed up through the bamboo coming straight for us. The coolies were all up a tree as usual. He was coming for me so I fired immediately. Down he crashed but no sooner had he hit the ground than I heard a squealing to my right and there was a cow charging straight for me..."

Let's leave him there... a happy man doing what he loved best.