

AMERICA'S SECOND LIVE RHINOCEROS

By Stuart Thayer

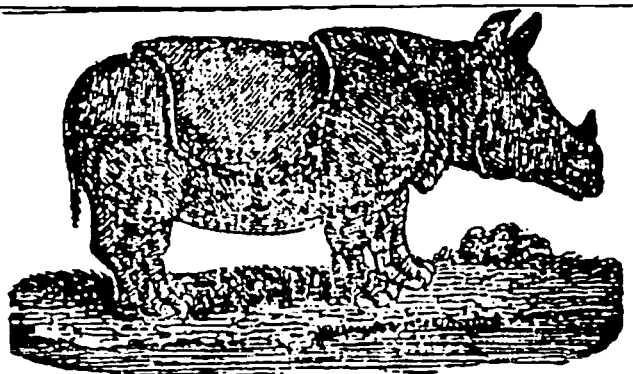
The William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan recently acquired some of the the papers of Marmaduke Burrough (ca. 1798-1844), a Philadelphia-trained doctor who had an interest in natural history. Burrough, as Robert Cox expressed it, "received a little sloop from the bucket of diplomatic spoils," in 1828, by being appointed American Consul in Calcutta, India.

He sought to buy a rhinoceros, apparently feeling that he could profit by exhibiting one in the United States. A man named Andrew Davidson offered him two rhinos from the plains north of the Brahmaputra River. One of these was a six weeks-old

male (as of 15 March 1830), five-feet, six inches long, and three-feet, six inches high. The other was an eight-foot long female, four-feet high, and three years-old. Davidson told Burroughs that there were already three rhinos in America, but that there was room enough for even more, "as I'm informed it is rather a large town." Davidson's price: 2,000 rupees for the pair.

In fact, when Davidson made this statement, there were no live rhinos in America. The first one arrived in Boston on 9 May 1830, and was put on exhibition at the Washington Gardens, Boston, on 14 May, by what was to become the firm of June, Titus and Angevine. All previous specimens--there might have been two--were stuffed. Peale's Museum in Philadelphia exhibited one in 1826 that had died en route from India to England. Tom Parkinson, *in fitt*, reported that Peale bought the skin and skeleton of another in July, 1830, but its origin has not been determined.

Davidson further offered to make a



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A living Rhinoceros, or Unicorn, called in the native language of the East, Goudar, exhibiting at the room lately occupied by the Automaton Chess Player, a little below Walnut street, where the Ladies and Gentlemen of Philadelphia and its environs, are respectfully invited to call and see this very extraordinary animal.

This advertisement for Burrough's Rhino or Unicorn appeared in the *Pennsylvania Packet* in January 1831. Author's collection.

harness for the female, so that she might draw a carriage. In any event, Burrough purchased the pair, and had them shipped to Calcutta. On 7 May Davidson sent feeding instructions. He advised laying in a good supply of well-pressed doobgrass, along with pressed wheat bran. For a change of pace he suggested patting the bran into cakes and baking it. Davidson also informed Burrough that there were eight more rhinos where these came from, four of each sex.

Richard Reynolds, America's foremost authority on early captive rhinos, is of the opinion that all these animals were of the Great Indian species (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), especially since Burrough's advertisements in America showed that species. However, he points out that the now nearly extinct Javan rhino (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*) also occurred

in the area of the Bramaputra River at the time in question.

The female of the pair died sometime before Burrough could ship them to America, there is nothing in his papers reporting this. The ship Georgian was chosen for the voyage. The bill of lading is dated 14 June 1830, and lists 500 rupees to ship a living rhinoceros and the skeleton and skin of a second one. Other gear cost 10 rupees more. A native of Bengal was taken along as the animal's keeper.

The ship landed in Philadelphia in October, 1830. The rhino was put

on exhibition at Maelzel's Hall beginning 9 December. Maelzel's Hall was a popular place for commercial exhibitions, menageries, and the like at 48 South Fifth Street. It cost Burrough \$40 a month for the rent.

Edward Freis & Co. had charge of the exhibition, and charged \$120 for wages for the two months the animal was at Maelzel's, 26 November to 26 January. This was for two attendants in the hall. Burrough paid for the advertising, \$15 for two engravings, one large one for posters, a small one for newspaper use. The initial newspaper cut was the same as the one used by June, Titus and Angevine in Boston, which raises an interesting question. Perhaps, JT&A had their cut engraved in Philadelphia.

Three newspapers were used in the advertising. The *American Sentinel* charged \$17 for an ad that ran daily from 25 December to 21 January. The *Pennsylvania Inquirer* sent a bill for \$19 for five sixteen-line ads. *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser* carried eighteen ads at a cost of \$19. In addition to these Burrough had 300 handbills printed

at a cost of \$6. There is no accounting for posters in the collection.

The "boy," presumably meaning the Bengalese keeper, was boarded for seven weeks and five days at a cost of \$15.75, and his laundry cost another \$2.50.

All this expense was apparently more than Burrough cared to carry, as he offered the animal for sale beginning 20 November, and paid \$5 to *Poulson's* for nineteen sale ads.

While the purchaser is unknown to us, the evidence points to James Raymond and Darius Ogden, as it was their New and Rare Collection of Living Animals that exhibited it in 1831. They spent the late summer and fall in Ohio, and then went south through Kentucky, and ended the year in Savannah, Georgia. The rhino was on exhibit with this

menagerie in 1832, 1833, and 1834. In the last two of those years the title was Raymond & Ogden's Menagerie.

With the formation of the Zoological Institute in 1835, James Raymond and Noell E. Waring folded this menagerie into that monopoly of animal caravans. It was Branch V. The rhino was still well-advertised through 1837, when all notice of it ceased. This probably dates its death. In 1840, a Raymond affiliate, J. E. M. Hobby & Co. had a stuffed rhino in its consist, which could well have been Dr. Burrough's importation.

The Calcutta phase of this report is from "The Jacksonian Unicorn," by Robert Cox, which appeared in *The Quarto*, 1:7 (April 1997). *The Quarto* is a publication of the Clements Library Associates.

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