



CHINO!


CHINO!

*Dedicated To*  
JOHN T. McCUTCHEON, *Honorary President*  
*The Chicago Zoological Society*

## FOREWORD

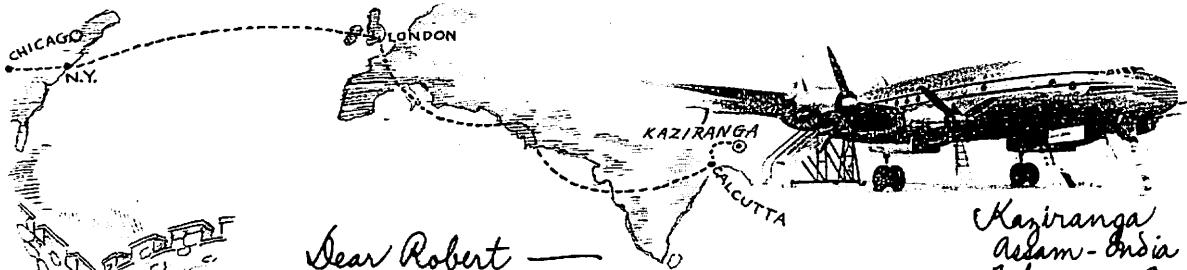
These letters, published by The Chicago Zoological Society, should perhaps be dedicated to one of our Trustees, George B. Dryden. His generous gift made it possible to undertake the acquisition of the two magnificent Indian rhinos now at Brookfield. But they could also be dedicated to Arthur Vernay, whose friendly interest and advice showed us how to proceed, to Sir Akbar Hydari, the gracious and efficient Governor of Assam, and to P. D. Stracey, Senior Conservator of Forests, without whose assistance and cooperation Ralph Graham could never have brought back Kashi Ram and Kamala Rani. But although the letters might be dedicated to all of these, I know our friends will appreciate why we inscribe this little booklet to John T. McCutcheon, Honorary President, whom we all regard with such admiration and affection and in whose last year of active administration as President of the Society, the rhinos, of which he had long dreamed, became an actuality.

The letters were not written for publication. They are informal friendly communications from Ralph Graham, Assistant Director, to his chief, Robert Bean, Director of the Chicago Zoological Park at Brookfield. This informality, I believe, gives them a charm and validity which no labored description of this adventure could have imparted. Unintentionally they disclose the ingenuity, imagination and perseverance of Ralph Graham, who brought the rhinos safely back. We are grateful for his permission to print the letters, for his very appropriate illustrations, and for his tireless efforts in behalf of the Society.

  
Blay Johnson  
President

*Letters and Illustrations by*  
RALPH GRAHAM, Assistant Director  
Chicago Zoological Park

  
Ralph Graham



Dear Robert —

Kaziranga  
Assam - India  
Feb. 20, 1948

From Chicago to London  
to Calcutta in 48 hours!

That sounds as simple as 'from Zinker to Evers to Chance', doesn't it? And it was — almost. Just a matter of climbing aboard the plane and before I could get my composure draped comfortably, here we were, gliding into Dum Dum Air-drome, Calcutta. Many people have written their air-travel experiences and it has been done more graphically than I could ever hope to do; therefore, I'll leave the telling of that part of the trip until our great-grandchildren can hover around and listen in with bated breath.

It is little wonder that we were unable to locate Kaziranga on our maps. I went to the Indian Map Service in Calcutta and they too were successful in not locating it. — After trying for a day, I finally reached Mr. Stracey, Senior Conservator of Forests of Assam, by telephone in his office in Shillong. Due to the quaintness of the Indian phone system, his conversation sounded like Donald Duck with a British accent. I did understand him to say that I was to bring a bearer and enough provisions to last. So last how long — I don't know but it won't be too long, because some so-and-so, whose ancestry I won't mention, broke into my tin trunk and stole most of the food. May he and all his sons have a lifetime reward of indigestion for this! He did leave some Australian tinned butter and cheese and he didn't touch my supply of Vienna sausages. After one meal of the latter, I am beginning to tire of them, consequently my gastronomical adventures for the immediate future do not look very promising.

Mr. Stracey told me to come to Pflaplaty by train where I would be met by a Forest Man. I asked him to confirm my destination by wire and it turned out to be Furkating. The American Express Company got the tickets for me and my bearer and loaned me a bed-roll (that's what they said it was) for a nominal fee.

This is as good a place as any to tell you about my bearer. I found him through the Great Eastern Hotel. When he came to be interviewed, he was as excited as if he held the winning ticket on the Irish Sweepstakes. He salaamed, bowed and saluted for at least a minute. I have learned since that he picked up the salute from the American Army, having been engaged during the war as an aide-de-skillet to a mess sergeant. I'm sure this is true because he has used some of the vocabulary peculiar to that rank. He told me he had been bearer for other animal

KASHI  
RAM,  
bearer.

— bless his simple, honest heart



gentlemen, neglecting to mention whether he was referring to their natures or vocations. He didn't know exactly where Kaziranga is located but vows that he has accompanied gentlemen all over Assam. I think he will be worth his wages. He got us off on the right train with a minimum of yelling at the porters or coolies, as they are called here and thus far he has been an invaluable aid. His name is Kashi Ram (he pronounces it Kahooshee Rahm). He called me Mahoter at first but since I protested, I have become Sahib-Grahoo. He differs from most of his countrymen in that he is larger and he carries that unmistakable badge of station in India - a paunch; - and it's a dilly.

No paunch like that could be cultivated on rice alone.

About 30 hours were consumed in travelling from Calcutta to Furkating - a distance of perhaps 600 miles. We changed trains three times and had a ferry-boat ride across the Brahmaputra at Pandu tossed in for good measure. Train accommodations are primitive but comfortable enough. The main thing to remember is to keep the doors and windows of the compartment locked if you wish to retain your belongings since the natives operate on the premise that 'what's yours is mine'. From Furkating to Kaziranga, it was necessary for Kashi to find transportation as the Forest Dept. was all fouled up on Mr. Stracey's orders. The Forest Officer at Furkating was immobilized with the malaria and could do nothing but shiver. Kashi produced a Model A Ford touring car with a right hand drive and no springs but it delivered us to our destination, where no one was on hand to meet us.

We didn't mind that as our heads were filled with thoughts of what was ahead of us to be done. Then too, the business of settling down and unpacking required our attention. I moved into the Kaziranga Inspection Bungalow which is a rest-house for travellers. It is a duplex job with one fine, big room and a small one which I presume is the bath-room because in it is a big galvanized tin wash tub. The sight of it brings back memories - not nostalgic ones - of my earlier days when my bathing was done in the kitchen in such a receptacle. As I recall, I was not too fond of those ablutions because when it came my turn to be dunked, the water always seemed to be barely warm.

The stockade in which we intend to keep the rhinos, if and when we catch them, has just been started. It is in an ideal location, being in the jungle about 100 yards from the bungalow. It will be about 150 feet by 300 feet, divided into 3 equal enclosures with a dirty little stream running through each. There is plenty of shade to protect the rhinos from the sun. The stockade fence is built of small hardwood logs placed upright, side by side in a narrow trench and lashed together with split cane. It is really a lot stronger than it sounds. The same type of construction is used in the stockades that hold the elephants in the annual keddah or drive. As the fence is completed, a reedy grass is packed several inches thick between the posts. This is to make the fence appear solid to the rhinos so they won't try to get through it - (I hope).

I feel very selfish in having this wonderful adventure all to myself. I've wished many times that you could be here to enjoy it with me and to go without saying that I could use your good counsel. I try to soak up every sight and scene so that at least I can share my experiences by the telling of them when I return. - My best to all

Ralph

P.S. - I forgot to mention that the dirty stream furnishes my drinking water.



Kaziranga - Assam  
Sunday - Feb 29 - 9 P.M.

Dear Robt:-

This has been the most memorable day of my life. As you already know from my cable, we've got our first rhino and he is a beauty. Right now he is a very tired fellow from fighting all day and he is having a well earned rest and sleep in the stockade where we've just released him. Come to think of it, I'm a bit tired, too, but I can't go to bed until I tell you about today. -

At six o'clock this morning, just after I'd finished breakfast, a little squirt came tearing into the compound yelling, "Sahib, RHINO! RHINO!" Kashi and I bumped into each other, into the bed and buckets and the bungalow trying to get ready in a hurry to go to the pit. It seemed like an hour before the elephants came but it was only 5 minutes.

The elephant I rode, Sherkhan (King of the tigers), a huge fellow 10' 3", trudged across the rice paddies, forded a small stream and plunged into the tall grass of the sanctuary. The sanctuary is almost entirely over-spread with this grass which is called ekra, elephant or jungle grass. It grows so thickly that a man on foot can't possibly get through it but the rhinos have worn a labyrinth of trails which they keep open by constant passage. The elephants seem to favor the trails rather than push through the virgin grass. It was on these trails that pits about 4' wide, 12' long and 6' deep were dug and covered daily with fresh, green grass.

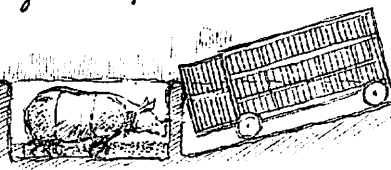
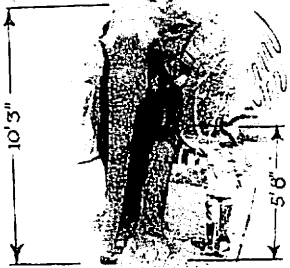
Pit no. 2, our destination and the one in which our rhino had fallen, was a mile or two from the border of the sanctuary so it didn't take us long to cover the distance. We were made aware of the location of the pit by scores of coolies who were milling around the vicinity. The Forest Officer had asked them to come as we needed many workers. Some were put to work chopping a trail through the ekra so that the cage could be pulled to the pit. Others filled holes and chopped down hummocks ahead of the elephant and cage, so that the cage, which was mounted on sections of a tree trunk that served as wheels, would roll more smoothly. Other coolies dug a long, wide ramp with the deep end (4') separated from the front end of the pit by an 18" thick wall of earth.

Our rhino, a big male, was standing belly-deep in mud in the pit. When anyone approached he threw his head up so savagely that he pulled his front legs free of the mud. This mud had been a merciful shock absorber that cushioned the rhino's fall. He continued to throw his head up periodically and struggle to get out but after some minutes of this he would stop his exertions and rest. By the time we got him into the cage, he was a very tired rhino.

I'll try to describe briefly the process we used to transfer him from the pit to the cage, but I think the accompanying sketch below will give you a clearer conception of how it was done. The cage was pushed down the ramp by the elephant and the end-gates of the cage were swung open so that they touched the barrier of earth that was between the



No. 1  
Feb 29



ramp and pit. The cage was covered with ancient pieces of canvas. This was to make the sides appear solid to the rhino to discourage him from trying to batter his way out. Heavy jute ropes were placed around his neck and were hitched around posts sunk in the ground a few feet to the rear of the pit. These snubbed his forward movement as he fought his way into the cage. Another rope ran forward from his neck, through the front end of the cage and up the ramp. Clasped to this were 75 or 600 coolies and they pulled on the rope to help the rhino negotiate the climb into the cage.

After chopping away the barrier of earth between the pit and the ramp, the rhino, after many attempts, finally succeeded in lunging into the cage. We slammed the end gates shut, pushed the bolts home and I - for one - prayed that they would hold. Akbar, the other elephant, was hitched to the cage and the slow-three-mile haul to the stockade was accomplished without mishap. When we liberated the rhino in the stockade, he was so tired he staggered in a few steps and laid down and went to sleep.

I guess the telling of today's events makes them seem very simple and as though they were accomplished in an hour or two. Actually, we started to work at the pit at seven o'clock this morning and at nine - tonight - the rhino stepped into the stockade. All materials and equipment were of the crudest sort but at least they served their purpose. It doesn't matter whether we induced the rhino into our parlor by means of offering him a movie contract or by pulling him there in an old, beat-up iron cage; the main thing is - WE HAVE ONE RHINO!

In closing, I'd like to pay tribute to the elephants, without whose help the job could not have been done. Sherkhan pulled the cage to the pit and Akbar, the most magnificent elephant I've ever seen, pulled it and the rhino back to the stockade. Akbar is a tusker and tops big Sherkhan by two inches.

And so to bed -  
Ralph

P.S. When the Forest Officer asked me what I intended to name the rhino, the only Indian names that I could think of at the moment were Mahatma Gandhi and that of my bearer, Kashi Ram. I chose the latter and hope that at Brookfield it does not become translated to Butch, Mac or Jack. — Rg.



1948  
FEBRUARY  
29  
GREATEST DAY IN HISTORY  
DUN  
ANNIVERSARY  
BIRTHDAY

Kaziranga. Sun. Mar. 7

Dear Robert:—

Nothing has happened as exciting as the events of one week ago today and I'm sure nothing ever will. That will always be THE date. But to get you up-to-date on things Indian. First of all, Kashi, the rhino, is doing fine. Of course Kashi, the bear, is doing fine also and he is highly pleased for having a rhino named after him. It makes him a local big-shot among the natives.

Kashi (the rhino) rested Sunday night, Monday & Monday night but Tuesday, just after dawn, it was a different story. He went to work on the fence. He was in the south enclosure and after a few pushes, he broke into the middle enclosure and then into the north one. Here he made repeated, concentrated attacks on one corner. The stockade crew, armed with bamboo poles, pushed him on the nose as it appeared through the fence. After each attack, he would withdraw to meditate a few minutes before the next onslaught. The boys mended while he meditated, shoving new posts between the old ones, lashing them with split cane. Kashi stopped fighting by eight o'clock, went back to his south enclosure and rested until Wednesday morning, at which time he went through a repetition of his performance but less violently.

Again on Thursday morning it happened but this time it was only a half-hearted, token attack. Since then he has made no effort at all to escape but seems completely reconciled to capture — LONG LIVE KASHI!

I have wired Calcutta to start building the wooden shipping cage — including in the wire, the approximate size of Kashi. Mr. S.R. and I went over details of the cages while I was in Calcutta and he seemed to understand how I wanted them built. He would not take a down-payment on the cages or anything to prepay their shipment. He said he would take care of that & I could reimburse him when I returned to Calcutta with the rhinos. I also picked out a number of birds, reptiles and mammals for Brookfield. He promised to save them for me, again refusing a down-payment.

Mr. Stracey, the Senior Conservator of Forests, Mrs. Stracey and their fox-terrier, Peggy, came for a short visit Wednesday. We pooled our food supplies and we all had our lunch together. I contributed Vienna sausages. — They are both very pleasant, affable persons and were most interested in what I told them of the zoo. In the course of our conversation, he suggested loading the rhinos on the river boat at Silghat, a distance of 45 miles. This would be much better than hauling them to Gauhati, which is 165 miles.





Kashi (the bearer) and I went to inspect the jetty, at Dilghat on Friday and found that it would not be at all suitable, since it would not begin to support a crate full of rhino. The jetty is a makeshift affair - being nothing but planks supported by bamboo poles jammed into the sand. It must be that way on account of the rise and fall of the river during the dry and monsoon seasons. As it is now, the jetty stretches over the sand - perhaps 150 yards - to the water but in a few weeks its length may be shortened to 10 or 15 yards. The only alternative loading point now is Gauhati, as no one seems to know of any ghats or jetties that are nearer. At least I feel better for having looked at Dilghat, as I feel I should not pass up any opportunity to make the shipping operation smoother and easier on the animals.

I hope to be able to send a cable in a few days, informing you that we've snared a female rhino. Mr. Stracey was reluctant to leave the pits open later than March 15<sup>th</sup> but said he would in our case if we did not have a rhino (female, I hope) by that time. If we don't have another by then, it looks as though I'll have to organize the 'Locals' into the "Brotherhood of We Gotta Catch a Female Rhino Even if We Have to Push Her into the Pit".

Rhino Even if We Have  
To Push Her into the Pit".  
Cheerio -  
As we Colonials say -  
Ralph.



March 4 — aboard an Airways India plane bound for Gauhati from Calcutta

Dear Robert —

I can almost see the look of consternation on your face as you read the above heading and hear you say, "Now what, in Hell is he doing, flying around India?" The answer is as follows. - Last Monday, Mar. 8, I had a letter of confirmation to my telegram from Mr. S. R. and at the end was typed, "It is requested that Rs 3000 may be paid to this office at once to enable us to pay the cost of cage, freight & trans. chgs."

You can imagine how baffled I felt after the agreement with Mr. S. R. on the arrangement of payment for the cages and also how futile I felt,

being isolated up here in the jungle with my closest banking facility in Calcutta. Since I'd been warned not to carry much cash, there was only one thing to be done and that was for me to get down to Calcutta, make the payment and return to Rajiranga as quickly as possible.

Kashi and I caught a bus to Nowgong at noon; a jerk train took us from there to Chaplamukh (30 miles) in the evening and there we sat all night until 7 a.m. Tues. for a 'Kiddie Kar' train that hauled us to Gauhati. It would have taken two days from there to Calcutta by train and only 3 hours by plane so I didn't hesitate a moment in choosing the latter. I had lunch in Gauhati with the pilot and co-pilot who flew us to Calcutta. The pilot was a 6 foot 3 inch





Texas, Capt. Anderson, completely equipped with cowboy boots. Glory be! and this in the far-away, mysterious Orient. He had National Guard training where I took my dear old infantry basic - at Camp Wolters, Texas. That fact really cemented our mutual admiration society. He asked me to his home for dinner while I was in Calcutta and I met young Akbar Hydari there. He is the son of His Excellency, Sir Akbar Hydari, Governor of Assam, who granted permission to capture our rhinos. I asked Akbar to convey our thanks to his father for this.

The first thing I did upon arriving in Calcutta (after bathing) was to get a draft for Rupees 3,000/- and took it to Mr. S. R. He seemed extremely perturbed because I had come to Calcutta to get the draft. He said that my trip was unnecessary, as the post-script requesting payment was tacked on by an over-zealous book keeper. I'm making no comment on that. At any rate, when I left Calcutta, we were on the best of terms. He promised to cut the quoted price on the cages to a reasonable figure; also the prices of tigers and other mammals, birds and reptiles. He wouldn't let me choose our tigers as he said he was getting in 3 fine young specimens and that he would include these in the lot for my inspection and choice. - The crate was about half finished and of very strange construction but I guess it will be OK, if he follows the instructions I gave him for changes. It had no skids or runners on the base. The weight of the cage rested on the upright corner posts. That may be fine for a 4 poster bed but lousy for a rhino crate.

Now for the important thing - OUR FEMALE RHINO!  
I'm so delighted over her capture that I'm sillier than ever but I'm also burned up because I had to be in Calcutta when she fell into the pit. I hope the boys got her into the stockade with no mishaps. I got the Forest Officers wire announcing her capture yesterday (Sat) at 1 P.M. and immediately sent you the cable. Mr. Stracy called from Shillong to tell me the news also and he was as exuberant as I. I am taking one draft to him in payment for Kashi and I've arranged with the bank to send the other when I take over



the female. I rushed out to Mr. S. R. with the good news and I gave him the dimensions of the dainty gal rhino. (She must be fully as large as Kashi.) He promised me on his word that he will have his crew work day and night to finish the cages and that he will ship them on the river boat, Myola, on Wednesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>. It takes about two weeks for the boat to reach Gauhati. That will be about March 31<sup>st</sup> and it means that I'll have a race on my hands to get the rhinos out before the monsoon begins in earnest.

If the monsoon is worse than the samples we've had, I'd better build some water-wings for the rhinos. It was 100° in Calcutta yesterday but raining now.

The flight to Calcutta from Gauhati took a bit over 3 hours as we had to fly around Pakistan but on this, the return trip, will reach Gauhati in 1 1/2 hours flying directly. The reason for this is that Sir Akbar is flying into Gauhati with Lord Louis Mountbatten, enroute to Shillong and our plane has to clear the field before their arrival!



I'll cable you as soon as the veterinarian gives me the health certificate on the female rhino; then I'll air-mail it so you can arrange for the all risk life insurance with Lloyds. - Now we have the only pair of Indian rhinos outside of Calcutta! Hooray! Ralph

Kaziranga - Assam - Sun. Mar. 21

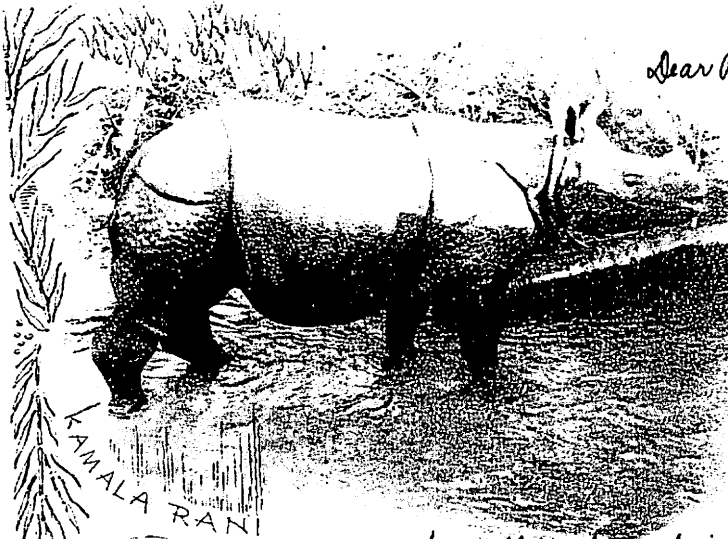
Dear Robert

There is nothing of great importance to report this time except that the female rhino is a humdinger and she seems to be thriving. She is about the same size as Kaohi but a bit heavier in the midriff. The Forest Veterinarian and I (for no good reason) suspect that she is pregnant. She is not calming down as quickly as Kaohi did but I'm sure she will be all right in time. Unless I get word to the contrary, she shall be known henceforth as Kamala Rani - Lady Lotus to you.

But to get back to a semblance of events in their chronological order. We had barely cleared the field at Gauhati last Sunday when Lord Louis Mountbatten, His Excellency, Sir Akbar Hydari and party landed in their plane. The streets of Gauhati and Pandu were lined with spectators. I would have liked to watch the procession, too, but I could not spare the time.

The jackass at the airlines office told me the bus to Shillong left at 2:15. To be on the safe side, I arrived there at 2:00 only to discover that the bus had left at 1<sup>45</sup> and that there would be no more until the next day. No use crying over departed busses, I said to myself, so Kaohi and I began to scour the town for a truck, big enough to haul the rhinos. At one place I met a young man dressed like the cornetist in the Yokelopolis Brass Band; with a red coat and a cap that reminded me of a single raisin atop an overflowing bowl of neglected yeasty dough. He had been with His Excellency's party and was escorting Lord Louis' and Sir Akbar's daughters in the Hydari's Hummer when it broke down and the girls had to be transferred to another car. He was trying to have it fixed and offered Kaohi and me a lift to Shillong whenever he was successful. He gave us the wildest ride of my life up the mountains after dark. Imagine driving between 50 and 70 miles per hour on a single lane mountain road? The tires screamed in anguish continually on the cork-screw hairpin turns. The swaying of the car on these turns threw us and our stomachs from side to side and when we staggered from the car in Shillong, Kaohi, another passenger and I immediately threw-up in front of the office of Chatterjee, Chatterjee, Mookerjee and Chatterjee, Counsellors.

I saw Mr. Stracey, Monday and handed over the draft for Kaohi, the rhino and talked over the other necessary details. He arranged a ride from Gauhati to Kaziranga for me. I left Shillong just after lunch and this time the trip was delightful and the scenery magnificent. My seat companion was a little Irishman, Mr. Cadey, who, I discovered in the course of our conversation had served on every major British front during the war. He had met Peter Pollack of the Chicago Art Institute while convalescing in Cairo, Egypt. As is the custom, we had to break the trip half-way down the mountain for a cup of tea. I can drink the stuff now without making any derogatory remarks about it.



HATERJEE, CHATTERJEE, MOOKERJEE & CHATTERJEE  
COUNSELLORS



Tuesday morning I spent in calling on the railroad people in Gauhati and on Mr. Kaye of the River Navigation Co. and also in looking for a truck. The railroad will let me use their ghat for loading the rhinos on the boat. I liked Mr. Kaye very much and he is eager to help. He is the head of his company in Assam. - He made the suggestion that I look at the ghat in Jorhat which is 50 miles the other side of Kaziranga.

I rode back to Kaziranga in a jeep. My fellow passengers were (count 'em) Mr. Synjan, the owner, his wife, small boy, his two bearers and Kashi. I will admit that our bed rolls, provisions, etc. were carried in a trailer. Overpopulation seemed to be the subject of my thoughts on that trip. Arrived in Kaziranga Wednesday noon and by nightfall I was able to straighten both legs. Had thought the jeep ride would leave me in a permanent creeping posture.

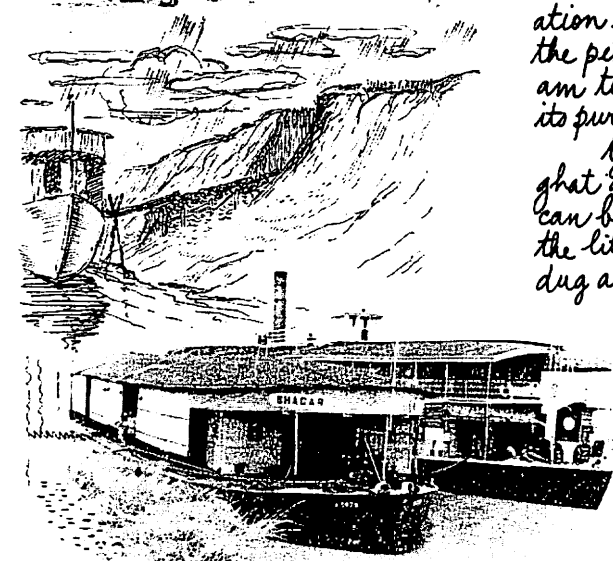
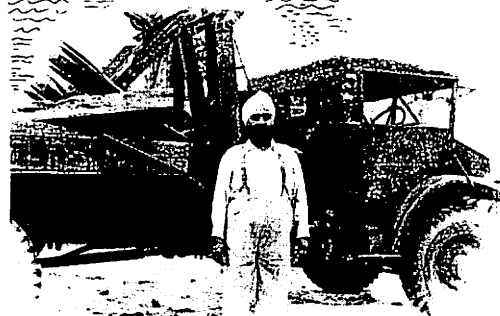
Kashi and I caught the bus to Jorhat on Thursday morning and there we found a taxi that took us the 10 miles to the ghat - or rather 8 miles, because a bridge was down and I had to walk the remaining two miles. This would be ideal to load as the boat was moored next to the bank and we would need very little gang-plank - BUT - I could not haul the rhinos there because of the missing bridge. However, Mr. Buckland, the District Station Master, suggested that I use Shansirimukh ghat, which is only fifteen miles from Kaziranga. It is ironical to hear of a place so close after looking at all the ghats for 200 miles up and down the Brahmaputra.

While in Jorhat I was fortunate in finding an old worn-out Canadian Ford Truck with winch and cables, also a home-made trailer built from a truck chassis. This is by far the most suitable equipment for hauling the rhinos that I've found. The owner and local tycoon, Mr. Sardar Sahib Bohan Singh, (a jolly, fat little Sikh version of Kris Kringle) is willing to rent it to me. The charge is to be Rupees 3/- per mile with Rupees 80/- per diem for the truck and a straight charge of Rupees 1/- per mile for the trailer. That's a pretty stiff price but I couldn't wiggle him down a single Anna on his quotation. He is to furnish the crew with the truck, also the petrol which costs about 70 cents a gallon here, I am to furnish the petrol ration coupons required for its purchase. I get these through the Forest Department.

Yesterday (Sat.) Kashi and I went to inspect the ghat at Shansirimukh and THAT'S OUR PLACE! The boat can be brought almost to the edge of the bank. I showed the little Indian station master how the ramp should be dug and the loose dirt braced for the gang planks. The road from Kaziranga is terrible for the last 5 miles. There are some bamboo bridges will have to by-pass and some fancy grades but I think we can manage. The Public Works Engineer promised help in making the road navigable.

I wrote Mr. Kaye to ask that the cages be shipped on to Shansirimukh instead of unloading them at Gauhati.

Were practically on our way -  
Ralph



Dear Robert -

It begins to look as though I've caught Assam with its monsoon showing. The weather has been anything but dry for the past week. In fact, it is raining civet cats and mongoses right now. I would enjoy hearing the rain hit the thatched roof and run off to the ground, if I didn't worry so much about what the rain will do to the road to Dhansirimukh.

The past week has also been a round of social activity. Word came Monday that His Excellency, the Governor, his family and party would arrive on Thursday to visit the Sanctuary. They left today - a day earlier than planned - on account of the rain. I had a wire from H. E.'s military secy. inviting me to have all my meals with the family.

Prior to their arrival, Kaziranga was galvanized into a boiling pot of excitement and activity. Preparations went on at a great rate - tents were pitched, taken down, moved over a few inches and pitched again. Furniture, cooking equipment of all descriptions, flags, clothing and even lace curtains were to

be seen as they were unpacked. The dining tent is something to behold. It has a large compartment, a small one and a canopy over the entrance under which we lounged in big teak and cane chairs. The floor of the tent was carpeted and the inner walls were of some gold, silky material, embroidered richly with 10 or 12 motifs. There were 60 or 70 servants in the party, also the Governor's guard of Ghurka soldiers.

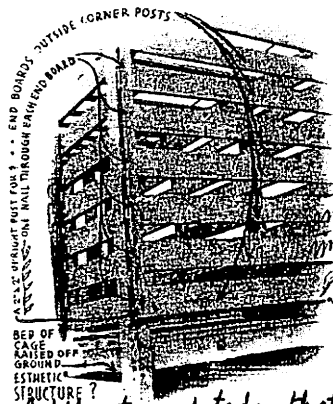
Sir Akbar is a fine, cultured man with a keen sense of humor. Lady Hydari is Swedish and a very gracious person. Only one daughter came on the trip and she has all the zest of a lively, healthy American girl. Akbar the son, I've told you about in a previous letter. I enjoyed their visit very much and we all had a fine time, especially at meals.

One evening Mr. X, representing one department of the Assam government invited himself to dinner with us and showed up in an old, dirty turtle-neck sweater and of course he was late in making his appearance. Sir Akbar invited him to pour himself a drink and so help me, he poured a water glass  $\frac{3}{4}$  full of Scotch and downed it like water. He is a large, fat man and he started the conversation by announcing that the reason he was so fat was because his mother had been frightened while in a prenatal condition by an elephant. He kept us in laughter with his uninhibited manners. He thought we were laughing at his corny jokes. Mr. X had promised me in the afternoon, in the presence of Sir Akbar that he would have the petrol ration coupons ready for me at any time I might need them and the Governor added that I should call on him for any help. - I'll remember that.

We had a nice trip into the Sanctuary. The party required four elephants. Lady Hydari, the Forest Officer, the head mahout and I rode Sherkhan. Near the end of the trip, Lady Hydari became tired and slid farther and farther back on Sherkhan, pushing the Forest Officer and me rearward until we could only remain topside by hanging for dear life to ropes. I should mention that pads are used on the elephant's backs instead of howdahs. We saw 11 rhinos & 19 water buffaloes on our jaunt but Lady Hydari was timid about approaching the rhinos so we didn't get closer to them than perhaps 30 yards.



While the Governor's party was here, I moved out of the bungalow and into a little tent that I'd brought from Calcutta. I pitched it in the jungle about 25 yds. from the rhino stockade. One morning I was whacking through the brush, looking for a suitable piece of bamboo to use as a candle holder. I stopped to rest a moment and had started to lean on a couple of small intertwined branches when I noticed that one of them, instead of being a branch, was a 40 inch cobra. It was exactly the same color and size of the branch and I suppose the only reason I noticed it was because of the light reflected from its scales. For once in my life I didn't jump but had sense enough to back slowly out of range. I yelled for Kashi to bring a string and pole so I could try to catch the snake but he wouldn't come within 20 feet. - He told the natives of the incident and soon a delegation came with the request that I move my tent. When pressed for a reason, they said, "Today Sahib sees mag (cobra), tonight sher (tiger) comes." I thanked them for their thoughtfulness, then forgot the business. When I came back from the stockade at noon, there was no sign of my tent or belongings. The natives had moved them and I noticed that they pitched the tent as close to the compound as they could. - Finally today - just one day short of a month after I ordered it - notice came that a cage would arrive tomorrow. They must mean two cages because Mr. S. R. promised to send them at the same time. I notified Sohan Singh to send a truck tomorrow to haul them to Kaziranga. It won't be long now -  
 Regards - Ralph



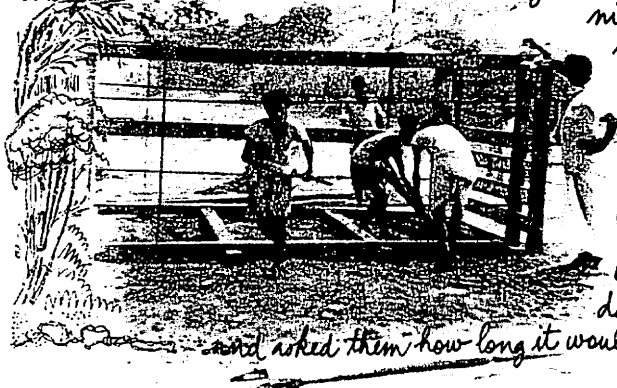
BEF OF  
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 ESTHETIC  
 STRUCTURE ?

I did get word today that the second cage would arrive at Shansirimukh next Wednesday - Apr. 14th

The first cage arrived on the 29th and Kashi and I found a truck in Bokakhat on which we slithered through the mud to Shansiri. The first sight of the cage made me sick, it looked awful - careened over to one side and with all its joints loose. Mr. S. R. had used nails instead of bolts and small ones at that. It looked so flimsy that I didn't think we'd get it to Kaziranga in one piece - but we did.

Mr. Sohan Singh sent two trucks - the winch and cable job that I'd chosen and a small truck. The driver said Mr. X told Mr. Sohan Singh to send the latter, I have the letter I wrote asking for only the one truck - (I got it from the driver) - so if Sohan Singh thinks I'll pay for the small truck, he's miffed. That Mr. X is beginning to get in my hair although I admit he came through with the petrol coupons when asked.

On the way back from Shansirimukh, some natives with flashlights and a rifle flagged us down for a lift. They were on their way to hold an all night vigil over a man's corpse in a hut near Bokakhat. A tiger had killed the man the previous night and the natives thought the animal would return that night. He didn't come then but he did on the following night when they shot and killed him.



When we got the cage to Kaziranga, I looked it over carefully and decided it would be too big a risk to try to use it. Located a carpenter in Bokakhat who said he could furnish four more carpenters. At first (they all tried to gang up to pull the same nail but I organized them so that each man did his own job. We got the cage completely disassembled in less than a day. When I showed them my drawings for the new cage and asked them how long it would take them to build it, they huddled and came out with

Kaziranga - Sun, Apr. 11.

Dear Robert -

Sorry I couldn't write last Sunday

but I have been up to my ears in chores. It will probably be an awful shock to you, as it is to me, to know that to date I have only one cage ready, although

I did get word today that the second cage would arrive at Shansirimukh next Wednesday - Apr. 14th

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10 days as the answer. By keeping them organized on the job and working by lantern-tight part of one night, we had the cage virtually finished in two and a half days. I was almost as surprised as they. We put the cage at the gate of Kashi's stockade and placed his fodder inside of the cage. His hunger was stronger than his discretion and it drove him to enter within a few hours.

I had to keep the carpenters on the pay-roll while waiting for the second cage to arrive, because if I hadn't, they would have gone back to the Public Works Department and they would have been scattered all over Assam when I needed them. - I assume the second cage will be like the first, so I bought lumber and built the base and framework and will salvage lumber from the errant crate to finish it. That way I can save 2 or 3 days. Then I will send the carpenters to Silghat to board the boat and have them knock the cage apart by the time the boat reaches Shansirimukh. That will also save precious minutes. Then I can get a small truck in Bokakhat to bring the knocked down cage instead of having Mr. Sohan Singh's truck come all the way from Jorhat.

It is raining almost constantly now  
Ralph



Low-tide Bungalow - Kaziranga - Sun. Apr. 18.

Dear Robert

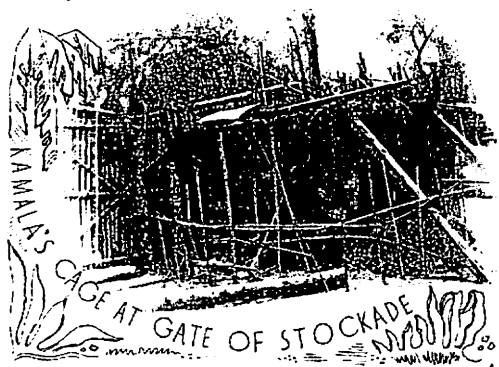
I wish I'd studied navigation at some time in my life. It looks as though I'll need an ark to get our menagerie out of here. Last Sunday night we had an awful downpour with lightning and all the trimmings. At daylight I dashed down to the stockade as usual and found the stream had risen about 3 feet and that the current was weakening the fence. One bank was being undercut so I got two boys to spend the day dumping baskets of gravel as a fill, while a gang of coolies dug a channel around the stockade. They finished by nightfall and we immediately diverted the flood waters in it and so far we've been able to keep a fairly normal level of flow in the stream even though we've had heavy rains all week. - I have a depth gauge of marked bamboo stuck in the stream bed and I keep as close a watch on that stick as a young she-bear does on her cubs. Did I tell you that the average yearly rainfall at Cherrapunji (about 100 miles from here) is 600 inches? It's the world's record. I believe Chicago's annual rainfall is about 33 inches.

Last Monday night at the height of the storm, the Forest Officer came in drenched to the skin, with the news that he'd just come back from Shansirimukh on his bicycle and that the second cage had arrived there in the afternoon - a month and two days after date of promised shipment. I guess I was at least glad that it was no later. After thanking him I announced that now, by gum, we'd pull out Wed. or Thurs. at the latest - BUT -

Kashi and I wangled a ride to Shansirimukh on a truck the next morning to look at the cage. It was better and stronger than the first one, even though it was of a funny, cock-eyed construction. It was wider, higher and longer with the floor raised a full six inches above



the ground. I don't think I would have been surprised if the cage had come with Chippendale legs.



As soon as we got back to Bokakhat, I sent a telegram to Mr. Sohan Singh in Jorhat, asking that the truck, trailer and crew be sent immediately; also asking for an acknowledgement of my telegram. Heard nothing in two hours so sent another wire and left word with the Postmaster to send the reply to me by messenger. As soon as we reached Kaziranga, we moved the cage from Kashi's stockade to Kamalai, thus giving her a chance to familiarize herself with it and have less trouble getting Kashi into the other cage when it was finished.

Wednesday morning I sent a Forest Guard to see what was wrong in Jorhat, since I had no answer to my two wires. I expected him back that same evening but he didn't show

up. Thursday noon I finally got a telegram from Mr. Sohan Singh which read, "Office closed—sending crane—securing petrol." This eased my blood pressure until mid-afternoon, when another messenger came with another telegram from him which told me bluntly, "Regret petrol unavailable—please arrange." That did it! My blood pressure caromed up to 999 and it zoomed still higher about 6 o'clock when the Forest Guard came back with the information that Mr. Sohan Singh was ready to send the truck but that Mr. X did not have any petrol coupons and his April allowance was exhausted. I was so burned-up I couldn't eat any supper—not even one of Kashi's good chapatis—and of course the sound of the incessant rain only added fuel to my temper.



Kashi and I caught the bus at 6 o'clock Friday morning and arrived in Jorhat at eleven. That's pretty good time in these parts—50 miles in 5 hours. I went directly to the Police Inspector who told me that Mr. X had drawn ration coupons for 200 gallons of petrol on Monday. Then I went to call on Mr. 'Fatsoo' X and I caught him with his excuses completely down. He spluttered, cleared his throat, fumbled with his bamboo cane and couldn't stop the quivering of his fat jowls. When he couldn't tell me why he didn't have my petrol coupons, (one doesn't mention the immense profit in the petrol black-market) I described for him in detail—and in a voice loud enough to be heard in Tibet, my exact opinion of all his antecedents up to and including himself. I adjourned the meeting by telling him I'd go for help elsewhere and that he could go to —. He knew I meant to go to Shillong to see the Governor and he also understood the destination I named for him.



Then, not being able to find Mr. Sohan Singh, I went to the telegraph office and wrote a long telegram to Sir Akbar and one to Mr. Stracey, only to have the clerk refuse to accept them because a rain storm had broken the wires to Shillong. Went back to the Police Inspector and he met me with the good news that Mr. 'Fatsoo' X had just used the police wireless to ask Shillong for permission to purchase 200 gallons of petrol for me. Permission was granted and the Inspector promised to see that Mr. Sohan Singh would get the coupons.

'Fatsoo' caught up with me at the Oak bungalow, where we'd gone so Kashi could fix our lunch. He expuded explanations and apologies. He next took off for Mr. Sohan Singh's office and when I arrived, their hatched-up story was that our trouble was due to a misunderstanding of dates, which was utterly silly as I had Sohan Singh's telegrams to prove it. Mr. Sohan Singh promised that the truck and trailer would leave that day and 'Fatsoo' gave his flexible promise that the petrol coupons would be given to Sohan Singh. Believe me, I walked out of that office feeling wonderful (but shaky) that I'd won the round. If I hadn't won, it would have meant a trip to Shillong and a loss of more





valuable time, I called Mr. Buckland at Neamati ghat while I was in Jarhat and we've set the 20th (Tuesday) as loading day at Shansirimukh. He thinks he can have a flat-boat there by that time. If I don't have the rhinos there by Tues. he can hold the boat with no inconvenience.

The truck and trailer arrived here with the cage yesterday noon and oddly enough, the sun was shining at the time, although the road from Shansiri to Bokakhat was a morass of mud and water. We started to work on the cage immediately and by 10.30 last night it was in fairly good shape. We used most of it without taking it apart. We finished rebuilding it late this afternoon.

I've been trying to cure enough grass to last the rhinos to Calcutta but when each batch is almost dry, a sudden rain will soak it before I can get it under any shelter. Over a ton has been spoiled to date. I keep the bit that has been saved in the bungalow. - Change my clothes two or three times a day and the only difference that makes is that the fresh ones, when just as wet, are not coated with mud. - We dropped the end gate behind Kamala this afternoon. She fought for a while but is quiet now. - I close with the thought that the 1st Joe who says, "Don't you just love the rain," like Charlie McCarthy, so help me, 'I'll mow 'im down!' -  
Regards - Ralph.



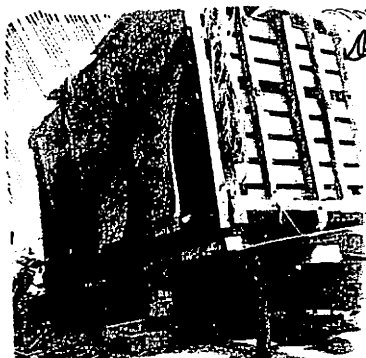
Shansirimukh - Assam - Sat. night - Apr. 24.

Dear Robert -

The past week has been one of the longest years of my life and one I'll never forget. Sahib Grahson makes humble salaam that it is over and done with. - I'm writing this tonight by combined camp-fire and lantern light, sitting on the bank of the Brahmaputra. I'll ask one of the boys to mail this letter to you from Bokakhat.

Since I'm known as One-step-at-a-time Graham, I'll pick up the threads of the 'Rhino Saga' where we left off last Sunday night. Early Mon. a.m. we began to load Kamala on the trailer and had her half-way on when the bed of the trailer started to split. The Sikh boss wanted to patch the wood but that would have been utterly foolish, so we had the carpenters rebuild the bed - using 4" x 6"s as the foundation. We finished the bed about 8 o'clock Tues. morning and started to load Kamala again. The Sikh boss and I argued over methods until noon when I told him he'd better do things my way - or else. Or else what, I don't know, but the threat worked and he acceded (in a fashion).

We finally got Kamala's cage tied down with ropes and elephant chains and we shoved off about 12. We got to Bokakhat with no mishaps. I wanted to continue as it was not raining at the moment but the Sikhs wanted to eat. By the time they finished, a steady torrential downpour was on us. They wanted to camp for the night but the rain abated some by 4 o'clock and I insisted on continuing. We had gone only a little over a mile by 8 but we'd negotiated the worst stretch of the road. We were stuck innumerable times and had to resort to the cables each time.



it to patch the wood but that would have been utterly foolish, so we had the carpenters rebuild the bed - using 4" x 6"s as the foundation. We finished the bed about 8 o'clock Tues. morning and started to load Kamala again. The Sikh boss and I argued over methods until noon when I told him he'd better do things my way - or else. Or else what, I don't know, but the threat worked and he acceded (in a fashion).



Once the truck slid off the road and turned over on its side against a bank. It took over an hour to lift it by sheer coolie power and get it back on the road. - I left two of the boys, Bunduah and Pusoai, to look after Kamala that night as I had to find some bags for the grass and take them back to the cutters. The next morning, Bunduah reported that he had seen a tiger on the prowl and that a wild rhino had come sniffing around the cage but neither had started any trouble. - Starting at 8 o'clock the next morning we finally reached Shansirimukh about 4 in the afternoon. Three and a half miles in 8

hours. We fought mud, water, rain and natives all the way and I am glad to report that we had no serious mishaps. The fight with the natives was in keeping them away from Kamala. A Hindu believes that if he touches a live rhino once in his lifetime, he will be assured a safe passage to and a comfortable, reserved niche in Heaven. We pushed natives away from the cage until almost dark and there were plenty to push. I estimated there were about 2500 people on hand seeking a pass to Hindu Heaven. I got back to Kaziranga at midnight with the gunny sacks, a whopping headache; soaked from top to toe in mud and with no immediate desire for anything but sleep.

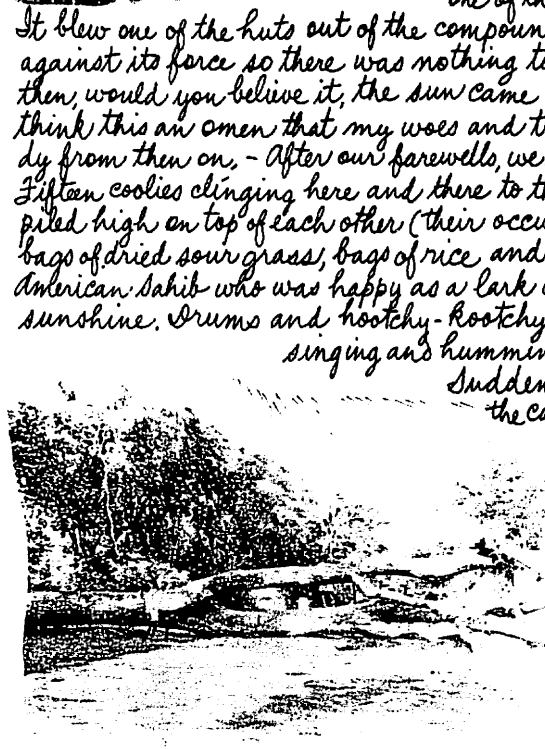
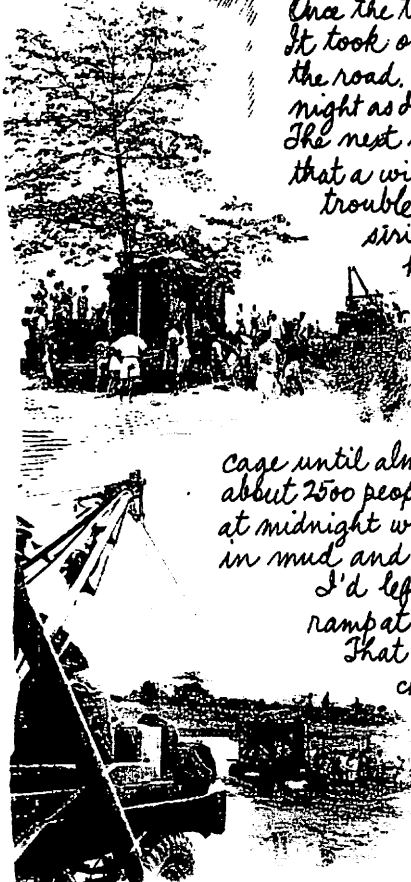
I'd left instructions with the stockade crew to dig a pit with a sloping ramp at one end. I intended to push the trailer down the ramp into the pit. That would put the bed of the trailer on the same level as the ground. After chocking the wheels, Kashi's cage could be pulled horizontally on to the trailer. The Sikhs thought I was completely daffy but the plan worked like a charm. Whereas it took five hours to load Kamala, we were ready to move Kashi in an hour.

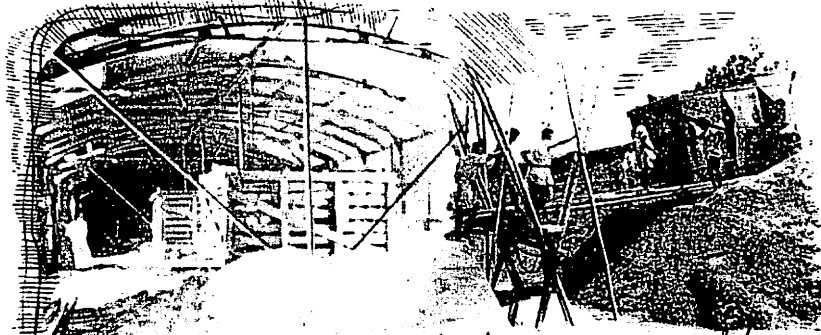
It had been drizzling all Thursday morning but just as we were pulling Kashi out of the jungle to the road, a sudden and one of the worst wind and rain storms I've ever seen, struck us.

It blew one of the huts out of the compound and part of the roof off the bungalow. We couldn't move against its force so there was nothing to do but wait. The storm lasted only a short time and then, would you believe it, the sun came out and all the clouds disappeared. I was silly enough to think this an omen that my woes and troubles were over and that everything would be just dandy from then on. - After our farewells, we started down the road - a very optimistic and happy lot. Fifteen coolies clinging here and there to the truck, trailer and cage, home-made bird cages of bamboo piled high on top of each other (their occupants seemed unconcerned), bed-rolls, tin trunks, baskets, bags of dried sour grass, bags of rice and many other strange objects, including a drenched little American Sahib who was happy as a lark over the prospect of getting Kashi to Shansirimukh in the sunshine. Drums and hootchy-rootchy flutes appeared and all of us joined in screeching, singing and humming the Assam version of "It ain't gonna rain no more."

Suddenly the truck stopped and I looked over the top of the cab to see what was wrong. Directly across the road was a huge tree, 5 or 6 feet in diameter, that had been uprooted and blown down by the storm. Heavy jungle on one side of the road and water and mud on the other. We could do nothing but huddle for 8 hours while a gang of coolies chopped and sawed a passage through the tree and of course by that time it was raining again.

We stayed in Bokakhat that night & continued to Shansirimukh on Friday. I won't burden you with all the slippery, muddy and wet harrowing details but





I can assure you it was a good old-fashioned blood-and-thunder night mare. We reached Shansiri in time to get Kashi loaded on the boat by dark and we had Kamala on by noon today. Believe me - Brother Robert - Hedy Lamarr, the Taj Mahal and Mt. Everest notwithstanding - the rhinos safely aboard the flat boat was the most beautiful

sight of my life. I am going to sleep on some grass between the cages tonight and I don't care how much it rains. - The little Indian station master here told me. Between spits of betel-nut that the river had risen 26 feet in the past two weeks and that at full flood in May it would overflow its banks. The natives retreat to the hills to wait out the monsoon, then return, build new huts on the sites of their old ones and wait stoically for another monsoon to drive them out. That seems downright monotonous.

Please tell everybody, especially Mr. Bryden, that the battle is practically won now and time is the major thing separating us from good Brookfield.  
For the last time from Assam - my best regards  
Ralph.

Great Eastern Hotel - Calcutta - Sun. night - May 9.

Dear Robert -

At long last, after a 15 day trip down the Brahmaputra and Ganges Rivers, we reached Calcutta late this afternoon. The first thing I did upon coming ashore was to find a barber in the hotel. Did you ever go two months without a haircut? I feel practically naked now - that I'm shorn.

The trip was enjoyable although I didn't have any time to sit and enjoy it. - I woke up the morning we left Shansirimukh with a rip-snorting, nose-dripping cold but I wouldn't have cared if it had been double pneumonia because the rhinos were safely aboard. - A number of the birds I'd collected, died before or just after we started, from continued exposure to the wind & rain. There was just no way I could protect them. - Grass for the rhinos was the biggest problem. On the morning we left, I had all the coolies I could find, cut and bring grass to the boat, where we spread it on deck and turned it several times daily. Although it was not sun-dried, it cured somewhat. The Forest Dept. supplied grass at two stops but it was no more than one day's feeding. I bought paddy straw at two other stops but it was miserable. It is the stem of rice.

I didn't want to be unprepared if Kamala was pregnant and delivered her calf on the trip so I cut sections of bamboo for bottles. I mooched a piece of rubber from the boat crew and made it into a crude nipple. Then I practiced milking Kamala for about an-hour each day. She was most co-operative - the hussy. There was not enough room in the cage to accommodate a calf so I intended to raise the end gate and have each member of the crew shove a timber across the end, leaving just enough space at the theatre of operations to take the calf and still not allow any possibility of her escape. We practiced this once or twice each day and perfected our technique until we could do it with the precision of a Notre Dame "B" team. A urinalysis was made at Gauhati and it showed that Kamala was pregnant but would not have her calf for at least a month. I had the boys continue to practice regardless of this opinion.

I brought two men, Bapu and Bunduah, from the stockade



crew along to Calcutta and will keep them there until I sail. They are practically worthless but I've got to have someone with the rhinos at all times. I caught them both asleep several times but after threatening to fine them Rupees 1/- each time, one has been on guard whenever I inspected.

We stopped in Gauhati the same day that Sir Akbar and Lady Hydari were going through on their way to Bombay to see their newly married daughter and her husband off to England. They invited me to have lunch with them and Mr. Kaye of the River Navig. Co. After lunch we all went out to the flat boat so they could bid the rhinos a bon voyage.

Kashi (the bearer) was down with the malaria for two days on the boat but now he seems as chipper as ever. He is casting very broad hints that sound like, "My wife, he stay Calcutta - you take Kashi sukawgo". He also says please send boss salaams from Kashi.

Regards and salaams from  
Ralph

KASHI RETURNS  
TO ELEGANCE



Sun. May 23 - On board S. S. Steel Surveyor

Dear Robert -

You would probably like to wring my neck for not writing from Calcutta but I couldn't spare the time for anything but preparing for the voyage home. I was on the run from 6 every morning - seeing the Customs - the American consul - going to Newmarket - animal markets - River boat Co. - Port Commissioner - trucking companies - the docks - American Express - the bank - the Food Administrator - the police - trying to find food for the rhinos and other mammals, birds & reptiles - getting permits and going to Budge Budge (16 miles from Calcutta) 3 to 4 times a day to see the rhinos on the flat boat. The last few days I hired a Sikh taxi by the day in order to save time. Actually it was cheaper that way.

The first thing I did Monday A.M. in Calcutta was to go see Mr. S.R. To make a long story short, I got no satisfaction whatever from him. All the animals that he promised to save for me had been sold to a representative of the London zoo. He refused to reduce the price of the cages and the trucking

charge even though I showed him quoted prices from commercial firms in Calcutta. Their quotation for building the cages was 1/3 of S.R.'s and the trucking price for moving the cages with the rhinos was exactly 1/2 of what S.R. wanted for trucking the empty cages.

I left the rhinos on the flat boat instead of taking them to S.R.'s place. This was cheaper and much easier on the animals. The flat boat was taken to Budge Budge which was inconvenient for me but fine for the rhinos as there were not so many natives swarming over the boat to pester them. I made arrangements with the Port Commissioner there to call me day or night, at any hour, if either Babu or Bunduah thought I was needed. We continued to hold our 'midwifery' drill once a day during this time. After scouring Calcutta I found suitable bottles, nipples and sterilizing equipment. I told Babu and Bunduah repeatedly to call me if Kamala showed any unusual signs - such as restlessness.

On Sunday morning (16th) about 7 o'clock, Kashi and I were going over accounts when suddenly I had an overwhelming urge to call the Port Commissioner at Budge Budge. When I reached him, he told me he had been trying to call me for an hour. I found later that the hotel operator had been calling me in Room 267 instead of 73. The Port Commissioner's news stunned me. It was that Kamala had delivered her calf which was dead but that she seemed to be all right. I called the zoo to have the vet



ready to go in five minutes but when Kashi and I got to the zoo, he was not ready. I left instructions for him but somehow things got fouled up and he didn't make his appearance all day.

The little calf, a female, had not been taken out of the cage for some time after it was born. It seemed perfectly formed, although there was a small cut on its back - probably done when it dropped. I was utterly sick and almost to the point of uncontrollable fury at Bapu and Bunsuah, who had not stood watch during the night but had slept and had not noticed anything unusual until the calf was being born (about 6 o'clock); then they notified the Port Commissioner. I was even more bitter at them after one of the boat crew told me Kamala had started to fuss at one o'clock. - Coming down the river I had told Bapu that it was necessary to roll a rhino calf in order to start its respiration but evidently that information made no impression on him. In fairness to him, however, some of my instructions may have gone astray in their interpretation and translation by Kashi. I sent for and got a doctor who was not inclined to be of much help. Late in the afternoon a little Indian woman doctor

came to the boat (I suspect that she was a midwife) and she went to work with me like she knew what it was all about. Together we relieved Kamala of the placenta, after which she immediately seemed to relax and rest.

I blame myself for the loss of the calf but in retrospect I don't see how I could have done any differently. I had to make all the arrangements for the shipment of the animals, procuring their food, etc. These things and arranging dozens of other details took so much of my time that I could only run down to Budge-Budge to see the rhinos no more than four times a day.

I didn't buy the tigers for which you sent the draft. The female was a fine specimen but the male was old and broken down - its lower fangs were broken and it was off its feed. The complete list of animals I'm bringing will be shown on the Consular Invoice. I couldn't complete the Invoice until an hour before I boarded the boat. I will air-mail it to you from Colombo, Ceylon, where we stop for a few hours.

This trip has really been the most wonderful experience of my life and I've enjoyed every bit of it except losing the calf. I am more than grateful to you and to the Society for making the trip possible and more important for having confidence in me to achieve the mission successfully.

BROOKFIELD -

Here we come and will  
I be glad to see you!

Ralph G.

