

## **The rhinos of Carr Hartley in Rumuruti, Kenya, 1948**

(This file edited by Dr Kees Rookmaaker, Rhino Resource Center, October 2012)

# **GATTI-HALLICRAFTERS**

## **Expedition 1947-1948 Mountains of the Moon East Africa**

<http://www.paasw.nl/ghe/01ghe.htm>

The story that follows is edited by Wino Paas in Holland, 2012, who also contributed the scans of the photographs.

The following paragraphs about a visit to Carr Hartley's farm in Rumuruti, Kenya are from a chapter of the account by William D. Snyder. Bill Snyder died a few years ago. The introduction gives the background.

The photographs below of the rhinos in Carr Hartley's compound were contributed by Wino Paas. They were made in the summer of 1948. Snyder had been dismissed from his job with the Gatti expedition in March 1948. He found a new job as sound technician with Arch Oboler.

The Oboler team visited Hartley's farm in summer (June-July) 1948. Hartley gave the photos to Bill Snyder on this occasion. So it is likely that the photographs were made around that time.

# GATTI-HALLICRAFTERS

Expedition 1947-1948

Mountains of the Moon

East Africa

## **CHAPTER 1. The Background and the Beginning**

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Allow me to introduce myself: I'm William D. Snyder of Fargo, North Dakota, better known as Bill or Willy, and I'm acting as one of your narrators for a trip to British East Africa in the years of 1947-48, that's long before the tourist boom hit the continent. I'll be helped in telling our story by Robert Leo, better known as Bob, who now lives in Bozeman, Montana.

Because I'm the lead narrator, all my stuff will be subjective, that is, told in the first person, while Bob's reminiscences will be objective and therefor told in the third person.

I'm telling you that now for no particular reason whatsoever; I just thought it might be a nice way to get going.

At the start of our story period, I'd been a civilian and back in the United States for a year and a half after spending nearly three years in the South West Pacific, half with the Army Amphibian Engineers, and half with the U.S. Army Signal Corps during World War II. I was living with my parents in Fargo, North Dakota and enjoying the luxuries of civilian life once again.

My major hobby was amateur radio, and my station, call letters WOLHS, was back on the air after the FCC had rescinded the order that caused a complete shut-down of all ham radio activities on December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor Day. Using my pre-war ham equipment, I was spending a good deal of time swapping war stories with other veterans around the world.

At the end of the war, I'd been a member of the 58th Signal Battalion for about two years. I had joined the battalion whose job was to give communications support to the I (Roman numeral one, but pronounced "eye") Corp commanded by Lieutenant General Eichelberger. The 58th was an army unit billeted in a tent camp on the outskirts of a sleepy town named Rockhampton, Queensland when I reported for duty.

I Corps functioned only as a tactical unit providing battle orders to various army divisions of the US Sixth Army then commanded by General Walter Krueger. The Sixth Army, part of the General MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Theater of Operations, was at that time leading an invasion of the Admiralty Islands and would soon be invading Dutch New Guinea. The 58th was short a radio officer and that means of communications was to be the main link between

I Corps and Sixth Army as well as Corps and MacArthur's theater headquarters. So, the brass had me released from my detail with the Engineer Amphibians and re-detailed to the Signal Corps.

I had been commissioned as an infantry 2d Lieutenant in June, 1941 after four years of Reserve Officers Training Corp (ROTC) instruction at the North Dakota Agricultural College. After graduating from NDAC in 1942, I was ordered to extended active duty with the 592d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment on July 4th, 1942. At that time the unit was just being organized at Camp Edwards on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. I served as communications officer for the boat battalion for a year and half in training operations in the USA and also with the Australian army forces in Rockhampton and Cairns, Queensland. We moved from the continent of Australia to New Guinea in October of 1943. The part of our unit that operated landing craft took part in the invasion of New Britain and the Admiralty Islands.

I'm not exactly sure how I was selected by Sixth Army for the signal battalion, but it happened. I assume it was because of my radio experience and the 58th was short of officers with that qualification.

When I arrived at Rockhampton, Queensland to join the 58th, I was assigned as radio operation platoon leader, and that led to my becoming the task force radio officer for the Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea invasion in April of 1944. Later, in January of 1945, my assignment was changed to battalion S-3 (operations officer) for the invasion of the Philippines island of Luzon. Shortly after the first phase of that operation I was assigned as company commander of Headquarters Company. I stayed with the 58th until after we had moved to Japan when the war was over. So, making contact with my old army company was a real thrill.

The 58th remained a regular army unit after the war, and I was offered the assignment as Executive Officer of the battalion if I would take a 30 day leave to the USA and then return. I thought that offer over, but declined. I wanted to try my wings at industrial film making, so I left the 58th around the 1st of December and returned to the USA. That finished my extended active duty tour; I did, however, remain in the army reserve until I retired after 20 years of service. So, you can see, a ham contact with Japan and my own outfit was an exciting experience.

When the QSL card confirming my radio contact with the 58th arrived, I laughed at this statement by Sergeant Snyder: "Nobody remembers you here in HQ company." During our ham contact I had told him that I had been the company commander, so he apparently had asked the old timers about me, but they were all gone home to civilian life.

CHAPTER 13, The End  
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#### CARR HARTLEY, GAME EXPORTER

One of the great African friendships we made was that of Carr Hartley, the African game exporter of Rumuruti, Kenya. In the map that Gatti has in his website story, I see that he admits he stopped at the Hartley ranch after we were there. So, you can be sure the pictures of rhino, the albino zebra, and other "wild" animals that Gatti shows in his books were probably taken in Hartley's many pens. So here are a few of the pictures we got from Carr after we had been there. Hartley had two white rhino that the kids could ride. And he had a big pen of giraffe that could pose for close shots, and a flock of 26 ostriches that I recognize as being shot at the ranch. The photos of cheetah posing on top of the International Station Wagon are certainly taken at the Hartley ranch. He had four that were petting quality, and I heard it took a lot of Gatti's coaxing to get one of them to stand on the top of an International station wagon for a still picture. .

In a Gatti movie originally called "African Adventure" for the International Harvester Company, of which I have a worn out and damaged print, there is a sequence of Hartley's cheetah climbing all over an IH station wagon. Those were Carr's barnyard animals posing for the pictures. I got the damaged film print from a local IH dealer and had it transferred, after patching, to DVD in the year 2003.

Oboler's recordings were about Hartley's game farm, and how he collected wild animals for circus and zoo use. We filmed capturing a giraffe, but the young animal died from the chase. .

Another one of our adventures was in a Pygmy village in the Ituri forest. It cost us a cow that one of our negotiators found for sale. On the cover of the Decca photograph record is a drawing of one of the Pygmy drummers, the one with the hole in his drum head, which was taken from a photo that we snapped there.

The little people, many less than 48 inches high, showed us how they made a village in a hurry as they were nomadic in nature. With their machetes they chopped bushes down and made the beehive-shaped frames first, then they covered their little huts with long leaves from some local trees. It was in no time at all that their village was up and ready for occupancy. I often wondered if the same group we had demonstrating for us, were the ones that Gatti used when he was there before the war and was featured in his "Jungle Yachts in the Congo" booklet that he gave to Bob and me when we were interviewed in Derby Line, Vermont.

At a luncheon in the nearby Parc Albert headquarters, the park superintendent made his famous statement about keeping Gatti out of the park he controlled. I'll never forget those words.

Where Gatti was pretending that East Africa was in need of exploration, and he was the man to do it, Arch Oboler was trying to tell of how life in both the native and European villages was going on. And he wanted to paint the picture that it was a modern country, because there were railways with dining cars and steamships carrying passengers in comfort on the inland waterways.

One of the wonderful water trips we had was on the SS Murchison on the Nile river from Lake Albert to Murchison Falls. This river voyage started the night before and we anchored during the night just a short ways from the falls. The accommodations were small but very comfortable, and the food service was excellent. The next morning the boat was surrounded with hundreds of Hippos, called river horses in the local jargon, while on the river banks, there were many crocodiles of giant size basking in the sunshine.

So the skipper of the Murchison started to take us up the river to the falls landing. As we journeyed, he kept swinging the boat toward one shore and then the other to let me get shots of the animals, including rhino and elephants, which also populated the Nile river area. It was great!

The boat docked near the falls and all the passengers hiked up to the top of the falls to cap the greatest boat trip I have ever been on for seeing wild life. The Oboler's liked it very much, too. We made a lot of recordings on the voyage also. It was something!

I seem to remember that Ernest Hemingway, many years later, was injured in an airplane accident near Murchison Falls. It made big headlines in the newspapers.

I also remember the day we were at Jinja, Uganda where the second largest lake in the world, Lake Victoria, dumped water over Ripon Falls and started the Nile river flowing to the Mediterranean Sea. This was just before the British built a huge dam there, knocking out the falls. However, the dam harnessed the power of falling water and changed it to electricity in the Owen Falls scheme.

Nearby was a Jinja golf course, where I saw a sign which said, "Balls hitting hippo may played again without penalty." I always wanted to play that course and hit a hippo.

Rhinoceroses in the compound of the farm owned by Tom Carr-Hartley (b.1909) in Rumuruti, Kenya. These photos were made by Hartley in the first half of 1948.

1. Black rhinos





2. Hartley had a pair of white rhinos which he captured in Sudan, probably in April 1948.









