



MOTHER AND CHILD: A white rhino cow and nearly grown calf in the thick bush of the Upper Nile

Where the River Nile flows sluggishly between wide expanses of papyrus swamp, and the sun pours down a deadly heat one may find in a small area a few of the rare white rhinoceroses, the third largest of living land mammals.

The Government of Uganda, and those who administer the affairs of the West Nile Province are not very keen to have anyone enter the district where this beast has its sanctuary. When they do give permission it is only with the understanding that none of the rhinos will be harmed. I having assured them on this score they allowed me to take my party out in search of the animals in order that photographs might be obtained. The route was so arranged that while attempting to reach the west coast of Africa we should go near their haunts.

After motoring across Uganda to Butiaba, on the eastern shore of Lake Albert, we loaded our two trucks on board a lighter, which was towed behind the good ship *Samuel Baker* to the western side at a place marked on some maps as Mahaji Port.

One grass hut and a shaky pier covered with a black mass of humanity constituted the entire town and population of this port. When I gazed on the place where the trucks were supposed to be landed, visions of a collapsed pier and my transportation unit under water caused me to seek the captain. He was looking for me also, with a message that a large bridge that spanned a deep canyon had been wrecked by high water, and that if we landed it would be impossible to proceed into the back country. This left no choice but to remain on board and travel down the Nile to the next landing.

As we steamed down the river in the darkness some lights loomed ahead, and not long afterwards the *Samuel Baker* was tied alongside the river-boat *Lugard*, to which all our goods were transferred. The latter boat is built for shallow water, having a draught of only 2 ft. Next morning the river had narrowed and thousands of white ibis flew about and covered the trees on shore like white blossoms.

We landed the trucks and ourselves at Pakwach, this place being twice the



THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES: The cow has larger horns than the bull. Unlike the black rhino, the white species is herbivorous

size of Mahaji Port, boasting of two grass huts. As each truck came off the lighter it punched a hole in the pier, but this was nothing to what happened later, for we went through each and every culvert on the road to Arua, some 120 miles distant.

We stopped the first night at Ngali, and the next day proved to be one of the hardest of the expedition, for from sunrise to sunset our total mileage was ten and one-half. There were five bridges to cross, not regular bridges as we think of them, but logs thrown across rivers, upheld by forked limbs and surfaced with bamboo for a possible cart or car to cross on.

We made an inspection of each bridge as we came to it, and found it necessary to unload everything from the trucks and run them over empty. Luckily for us, as soon as the trucks stopped, a crowd of natives appeared, and these we put to work carrying the loads to the other side.

Two of these bridges were more than 50 ft. high and 200 ft. long, and to lessen the chances of an accident we hauled the trucks over with a long rope pulled by a hundred or more natives. Even then it required plenty of nerve to sit at the wheel and guide the trucks, for the bridges swayed like long snakes, while bamboo cross-pieces snapped underneath.

After this arduous day we were glad to reach the village of Nebbi and make camp for the night. Here I sent for the Sultan, as I wanted to get some facts about his people. He came at once and proved to be a young man with strong features, a pleasant manner and broad smile. Gelasega was the name of this sub-chief, or sultan, he being the son of Sultan Amula, the paramount ruler of the Alulu, who holds his Court at Okaro. We served him with tea, and then, as he spoke Swahili fluently, I was able to get first-hand information about this strange and little-known people.

The country of the Alulu covers that large area extending from the west bank of the River Nile into the high hills near Okollo. I was assured that his people were very old, and they had lived in this country since the early time of man. But try as he would this young Sultan could tell no tale of the past that rang true.

As we passed through the villages of Paida, Neapea, Zeio, Warr, Kango, and Logiri the entire population turned out and cheered the strange wagons. This is Africa at its darkest, the Africa that the early explorers knew, unspoiled by the semi-civilization that has arisen in so many parts, without, so far as my personal observations go, doing anything of real value for the black man.

At Arua I went to see the British official in charge of the district, and his first question was as to the route we had come. When I replied from Pakwach he was more than surprised, and asked how many bridges we had wrecked. It seems that we were the first ever to land at Pakwach and motor to Arua, the road and bridges being only for foot safaries.

Forty-two miles by road brought us again to the Nile, and there we camped close to its shore. On the opposite side a huge papyrus swamp stretched from the river edge to the distant horizon, a swamp that teemed with poisonous reptiles and all that order of things that love the dark and the damp. Pythons of enormous size make this their home, but cross the river in search of small game. Hippos live on the edge and many buffalo not far away.

On our side of the Nile live those rare and strange beasts left over from the long ago, from the age when all the animals of the earth were weird of form and armed for battle, and it was with a feeling that I had been transported back into the age of flying reptiles and sabre-toothed tigers that I followed the lithe negro who strode in front of me as the little party wound in and out through the tall grass, the small trees, and over a landscape that fitted into the mental picture of Africa perfectly.

No matter in what country you hunt the rhino it is always the same story of weary miles under a scorching sun, for all members of this family seem to pick the hardest and most trying country for their haunts. Mile after mile we

HOME of the WHITE RHINOCEROS

The Third Largest of Living Land Mammals in the World

By PAUL L. HOEFLER

The Colorado African Expedition is now engaged in an overland journey across Africa from west to east north of the Equator, and proposes to cross the continent again from west to east. The leader of the expedition in the article below gives an account of a camera hunt of the rare white rhinoceros of the Upper Nile



A QUARTETTE OF UGLINESS: A picture taken on the west bank of the Nile in Uganda. Eight specimens were found together

walked, but just as I felt inclined to call a short halt for a rest the boy ahead stopped still and pointed towards a clump of small trees. Coming up to him I made out two light-coloured shapes standing in the shade, the shapes moving slightly as I looked, thus proving that they were not ant-hills like many "rhinos" we had already seen.

This cow and calf were very shy, and gave us a hard half-hour's work in attempting to picture them. When they shifted and got into the open so that a good view was had of them, we appreciated for the first time the tremendous bulk of these animals. The cow loomed over the calf like an ocean liner over a tug-boat, and the latter was large enough to attract attention in any company, even though it was only half grown. We stalked them with cameras, rushing here and there trying to get into a position where a good picture could be taken. Our two gun-boys tried their best to keep close at hand, but twice when the cow lost her temper and snorted in our direction, the boys made short work of getting into a high perch, leaving us sans guns and too tired to run.

This is a wild and out-of-the-way country very seldom visited by white men, a country where primitive man still lives as he has for untold centuries, for the little contact he has had with the white race has changed him but slightly, and his ways of living not at all.

There is a young Scotsman who gets about this district in the interests of a large trading company, and as he happened along during our stay, we had him for dinner one evening. He told us of an experience he had been through during the construction of his bungalow. The doors had not yet been hung, although otherwise the place was finished. He was sleeping in the bedroom and at his feet slept his only companion, a small dog. During the night he heard a slight noise and wakened just in time to catch a glimpse of a large leopard as it bolted through the doorway with his dog in its mouth.

In a native village less than five miles from our camp, a lion has just been killed that terrorized the villagers for many months. This old lion started its career by killing a woman near the spring when she went for water. Having once tasted human flesh, it demanded more and laid in wait near the spring until another woman had been added to the list. The natives now avoided this place, but the man-eater was cunning and stalked the women as they worked in the sweet-potato patches or in the maize fields until it had killed and eaten eleven women. The men at last went to the white man for help. A man came out from the post and managed to shoot the brute.

Early in the morning we again went in search of the white rhino, and this time were successful beyond all expectations. An hour's walk brought us to a place where some rhinos had wallowed that night. We tracked them then over hill and dale. It was impossible to make out how many there were ahead of us, for the tracks would branch off and then join up again, then all would walk almost in the same footprints.

In far less mileage than we had covered on the previous occasion we came upon them. Gathering the party together into a compact group the cameras were made ready for action, and with two boys to carry the movie outfit, one gun-bearer for any emergency that might arise, and J. and I each with a small camera, we crept slowly towards them.

Both of us had stalked the black rhino, and I had filmed more than one of these truculent creatures, but this was a different animal, and the surprise and thrill that awaited us around the corner of a small bush is impossible to describe, for there stood not two but five huge beasts, one of which would

tower over a black rhino like the Woolworth Building over Trinity Church. How many tons of flesh was represented there I cannot state, but this mammoth pachyderm gave me a good reason to look around to see if the gun-bearer was close to hand. He was not!

The bull stood broadside-on, a mountain of flesh and bone, the profile of head and horns outlined against the sky in such a way as to be more impressive than if seen against a background of trees. They had no suspicion of our being there and went on feeding and nosing about. Placing the camera in position I began to grind away, and as I did I had the time to take a few mental notes.

They are not white, but might appear so in a certain light. The actual colour is a light reddish-brown. The horns are very long and quite slim, the front horn being the longest in all cases—how long I would not care to say, for it would only be a guess, but the record horn for a white rhino cow is 62½ inches. Its muzzle was truncated and had no prehensile tip, this being why it is sometimes referred to as the square-lipped rhinoceros. The skull has great length and when it turned and faced me I could not but remark the enormous width of its face caused by the square mouth and flat front surface of the horn. When it walked its head was carried low and it seemed that the earth jarred just a bit.

The big rhino walked slowly to within thirty yards of me and then must have heard the clicking of the camera, for he moved away, to be followed by seven more. I got them all as they crossed the screen one behind the other.



MONSTERS OF THE BUSH: Two bulls feeding. They are exceeded in size only by elephant and whale

After this scene we worked with the eight rhinos for some three hours, filming them from many different positions, and in so doing we took quite a few chances, for although their vision is poor and their hearing not so good, they have a marvellously keen scent, and as the wind was somewhat gusty and often veered about it kept us busy keeping to their windward. Once the wind suddenly changed and placed us in a rather uncomfortable position for a while. We were almost surrounded by the eight rhinos when the air carried knowledge of our presence to a cow with calf. She turned on us and snorted, then made a short dash forward. Behind us within forty yards stood three of the group, two more were close to hand on our right, while the big bull was eyeing us from a distance of not more than fifty paces to our left. Had the cow charged it would have been hard to decide just which way to run.

We kept after a young bull, trying to get some real close-ups, until he got angry at our persistence and charged. It came as a complete surprise, for we had by now got quite used to them and had lost all fear, so there was a mad scramble for a while. The rhino had all the advantage, for in a hand-to-hand battle he would have won hands down, while we could not shoot.

As he rushed towards my camera I forgot all else and tried to attract his attention to myself, at the same time looking about for a suitable tree. He came about half way and then showed some hesitation, and just at this point in the comedy-drama J. got hold of his gun and fired a shot into the air. The report frightened the angry rhino and away he went, this time in the proper direction for a charging rhino.

Well satisfied with the day and thankful that nobody had been hurt, we trekked back to our camp on the Nile. Going down to its bank for a swim and to watch the hippos disporting across the way, we discussed the white rhino and its probable fate under any Government other than that which now protects it. We agreed that it should continue to be protected, for although a formidable beast and well able to hold its own against any opponent in the animal kingdom, it would soon vanish under the gunfire of the modern hunter.

The white rhino is a left-over from prehistoric times, a weird animal as well as a rare one, a ponderous beast still tramping through the torrid heat, amid the silent jungles that skirt the western shores of the Nile.