

BOYS' LIFE

The Magazine for All Boys, Published by the Boy Scouts of America

Rhino!

TRUE ADVENTURES OF CARL AKELEY

Illustrated by Lynn Bogue Hunt

BIG game hunters, when they indulge in their favorite pastime of arguing as to which are the most dangerous wild animals, almost invariably put the rhino near the top of the list, but it is a safe bet that very few of them have waited to see what would happen if they did not interrupt a rhino's charge with a volley of shots. It would take a lot more than curiosity regarding a rhino's habits and character to keep a man who is in his right mind from shooting when one of these ungainly creatures of appalling size and diabolic aspect makes a rush in his direction. The rhino wears the grouchiest expression of any of the jungle beasts. The lines of his jaw suggest determination, his sharply pointed ears cock belligerently, and two horny spikes surmount his nose at an angle that sets one to imagining dizzily how it would feel to be tossed from them and whirled violently through space. Moreover, whenever he smells man, he starts to charge about in a manner so terrifying that he has succeeded almost as well in getting himself shot up as in establishing a reputation for ferocity.

I should have gone on accepting the traditional view of the rhino and shooting to save myself every time one got wind of me and came snorting and puffing in my direction, had I not been caught one day on the high banks of the Tana with one of them threshing through the bushes toward me and no weapon but a camera at hand. Twenty-five feet of open ground separated me from the scrubby forest through which he was plowing. There was nothing at hand to climb and he could travel much faster than I could. My only hope for escape seemed to lie in an overhanging bush growing over the brink of a cliff that made a sheer drop to the crocodile-infested river thirty feet below. The bush might or might not hold my weight, but I determined to swing out on it, trusting that the rhino would rush past me into the river and that by some lucky chance I would not join him there.

The bushes parted. The rhino plunged headlong into the open space where for the first time he could see me. Trembling, I backed toward my bush. Then the unexpected happened. The rhino stopped short, dropped his head and almost closed his little pig-like eyes. His whole attitude indicated that he was going to sleep. He became so rudely oblivious to my presence that only my sense of humor kept me from retorting indignantly to his insult. My gun-boy by this time was aware that my camera studies had been interrupted and was poking me in the back with my gun, but I hadn't the heart to shoot at the great dozing hulk before me. A stupider, more harmless, more ludicrous object I never beheld.

With my gun half aimed, I talked to him to arouse him from his lethargy, but he stood there motionless, totally ignoring me, until my *safari*, coming through the bushes, provoked another charge. I could hear the thump-thump of the loads dropping to the ground as the black boys took to the trees or scurried out of his way, but he drove aimlessly through them and sauntered off into the bush. The stage had been set for a tragedy, but the play proved to be a farce.

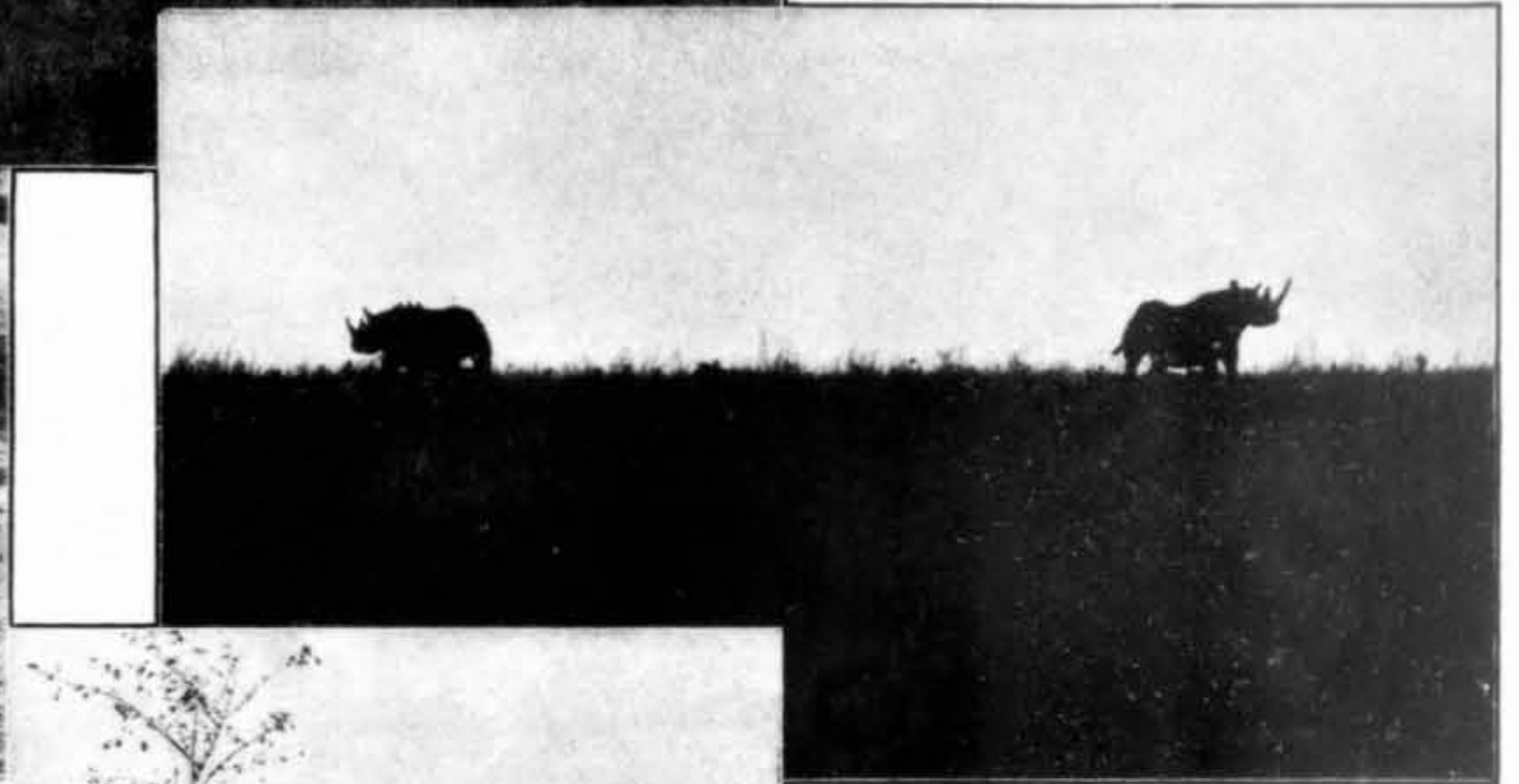
After you discover that the rhino is the most colossal bluffer in all Africa and that his bluff succeeds because of his

ominous aspect rather than because of any cunningly contrived plan on his part, you will find that the old chap furnishes most of the comedy for the drama of jungle life. If by accident you once get close enough to him to study his physiognomy, you will see that he really looks more stolid and dull than dangerous. His narrowing forehead rises in a peak that would resemble a dunce-cap if its outline were not broken by his perky ears, and his shoe-button eyes seem sewed on at the wrong place so that folds of thick, wrinkled hide nearly bury them and so that his two horns are always in the way when he wants to see in front of him. Should he happen to run over you, that would be dangerous, of course. It would probably also be fatal. But I am convinced that the rhino is much too "logy" to have an accurate objective or a fixed purpose and that, if he does run you down, it is a happen-so.

Nor am I arguing from a single instance when I insist that the rhino's claim to be one of the four most dangerous African animals is all a bluff and that in reality he is as stupid as the elephant is wise.

I HAPPENED upon a rhino one day as he dozed in the shade with the usual array of tick birds on his back. A second old rhino ambled leisurely into the picture. Hazily aware of an intrusion, the first old fellow came to attention and got under way, his charge accompanied by a whirl of wings. The newcomer, suddenly alert, rushed to meet him. Heading straight at each other, they gathered speed and force that promised a hair-raising collision. Had the collision occurred, I should have a story with real punch to relate; as it happened, the story is without a climax, for within twenty feet of each other both rhinos halted abruptly. Number one sauntered back to his tree and the tick birds and resumed his nap. Number two proceeded on his way as if there had been no interruption.

On another occasion, I drew a charge from three rhinos when I was sitting on the ground



(Center Above) Whenever a rhino smells man, he starts to charge about. His eyesight is not good, so often his charges are not exactly at the person who has excited him, but a ton or more of galloping rhino, with a nose armed with huge horns, is likely to make the hunter use his gun in an effort to save himself. Consequently the blundering beast is being killed off rapidly.

(Left) Hippopotami spend their days in the water, basking quietly along the sandbars if they are undisturbed. While their beauty is hardly superior to that of the rhino, they are gifted with tempers less hasty.



(Above) When undisturbed the rhino often stands motionless with one or more "tick birds" perching on his back. Three of them can be seen on the back of the rhino at the left. If disturbed, the beast gets into immediate action, but occasionally stops as suddenly as he started and for no apparent reason.

(Left) Two great spikes surmount the rhino's nose at an angle that sets one to wondering dizzily how it would feel to be tossed from them and whirled violently through space.

out of reach of my gun. There being no alternative, I remained seated, watching their approach, and all three of them rushed past me at a distance of ten or fifteen feet, apparently as well satisfied with their charge as if it had resulted in my destruction.

My explanation is that the rhino's charge is merely an investigating rush. Whenever he catches a scent, he blunders off in the direction from which it comes to find out what it is. The method succeeded until the white man came to Africa with his rifle, because everything but an elephant or another rhino would get out of the way of his onrush and both of these animals are large enough for even his poor eyes to see before he actually gets himself in trouble. However, since no man with a gun is likely to let a rhino come within seeing distance without shooting, the result of his clumsy attacks is that rhinos are growing scarce in Africa.

A FRIEND of mine was on a train on the Uganda Railway when a resentful old rhino, either hearing it or smelling it, set out on his customary charge. The train was standing still in the middle of the plain when the occupants of the car were brought to the platform by a terrific jolt. The rhino, charging at full speed, had crashed into the running board of one of the coaches. The impact knocked him down, but he scrambled up and trotted off a bit groggily, apparently satisfied that railway trains were not to be routed by the traditional method.

After all, the foregoing are deductions drawn from only one man's experience with rhinos. I have met many scores and have been "charged" many times, but as I think back over my experiences I can recall but one case where possibly the charge was in earnest. A single shot turned the beast.

Many men have been killed by rhinos. I have every reason to believe that the rhinos of some regions are more truculent than those I have met and their percentage of bluff is lower.

Rhinos begin their blundering career quite early in life. Late one afternoon at the end of a march down the Tana River from Fort Hall I sat in front of camp in my steamer

I almost thought I was still dreaming and that he was a part of my nightmare.

Stephenson, wandering a little way from camp into the thorn grass, had discovered the baby and the boys had captured it. The commotion began at once. The mother, who was not far distant when it started, came charging in to take a hand. One shot from Stephenson's rifle hurt her only slightly, but it was sufficient to make her turn and plunge off into the jungle. The pole was cut, the deserted baby slung on it, and the noisy procession set out for camp.

Even in the heart of the jungle we did not lack diversion for the next few days after this incident. The unruly infant kept us all busy acting as nurse. An improvised nursing bottle was rigged up and filled with milk and we took turns offering it to him in a gingerly attempt to make friends; but we never approached beyond the limits of his tether, for the ungrateful little wretch charged madly at anyone who came near him. If there was no one about to charge at, true to the tradition of rhinoceroses, he threw himself sputtering and squealing at his tree. After a time, however, he did make friends, and before we sent him back to Fort Hall to be cared for by someone delegated by government officials, he had become entirely docile. Baby rhinos, in spite of their blustering dispositions, do become gentle and somewhat affectionate pets.

It is not a difficult matter to happen upon a baby rhino. I shall never forget a surprise one gave me one morning as I was making my way across a flat covered with dense grass as high as one's head. I was leading the safari, spreading the grass apart with my hands to make a path for my boys to follow. A little gully three or four feet deep and four or five feet wide, hidden until I was right upon it, impeded my progress, but I soon discovered a convenient boulder in the middle of it to serve as a stepping stone. Pushing the grass aside to get a better view of my landing place, I was stretching my foot toward the boulder, when said boulder moved! I backed up hurriedly, wondering if the tropical sun had affected my equilibrium, but when I peeped through my grass screen again, I realized that my rock was a baby rhino. I had not alarmed it for, while I awaited developments, it moved normal-

ly down the little gully and where the gully ended, fifty yards below, there soon emerged the great bulk of the baby's mother. She did a lot of snorting and stamping about, sending the black boys scrambling up trees and running as fast as they could to high ground, and then with her baby galloped away into the distance.

His indulgence in unprovoked charges makes it particularly difficult to get close enough to a rhino to take successful photographs of him, and so, since photographic records are one of the important purposes of scientific expeditions to the field, I undertook before I left Chicago for Africa the construction of a rhino decoy. With steel tubing, wire, and a covering of burlap, I built a very realistic, although rather inoffensive rhino. Two men, one inside the back legs, the other inside the front, could maneuver the dummy, the one in the front having plenty of room to manipulate a camera placed in its head and looking out the snout. The chief difficulty was to simulate the rhino's walk. To transfer the easy, swinging stride of a man to the legs of the rhino, which remind one of nothing so much as those of an old square piano, would have been a dead give-away. Finally, an arrangement of springs in the jointed appendages gave me a very fair imitation of the characteristic rhino gait. A coat of slate-color paint applied in camp after I reached Africa completed the job and I was ready to saunter forth in rhino disguise along the banks of the Tana.

It proved a knotty problem, however, to persuade a native of the advantages to be gained by playing the rôle of the rhino's rear legs, and so I never had the opportunity to give my decoy a fair trial and returned to America leaving him stored with Newland and Tarlton, safari outfitters, in Nairobi. I had quite forgotten about him, until one day last fall when Martin Johnson, who was about to return to Africa for his five-year photographic expedition, was in my studio talking about various sorts of blinds. He happened to mention an idea suggested to him by "Willie," and I soon discovered that "Willie" was my poor old rhino decoy, accidentally unearthed by Tarlton one day when Johnson was in the Nairobi warehouse. No one remembered to whom "Willie" belonged; but Tarlton, although he refused to sell it, loaned it to Johnson, who experimented with it around Nairobi. The chief thing that Johnson got out of his day with "Willie" was a good

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chair, dozing and dreaming that I heard the violent squealing of pigs. As the racket grew louder and louder, I sat up wide awake and came to the fact that the squealing was not a dream but a reality. The noise seemed to be just below camp and was coming nearer and nearer. Before I had time to investigate, Fred Stephenson came in view with a number of porters bearing a long pole. Trussed to the middle of the pole was a black mass, kicking as violently as it was squealing, that proved to be a baby rhino—such an ugly little fellow that

The bushes parted suddenly, and the rhino plunged headlong into the open space. Mr. Akdey backed up to the bush at the edge of the chasm; below and behind him were the crocodile-infested waters of the river

LYNN
BOGUE
HUNT

feel on the top of my head that they were looking right at me. But there was a little bush in the way, and I can freeze as stiff as a frightened rabbit (that's what they said the noise was, too), and pretty soon my scalp felt they weren't looking at me any more.

So I made another sneak, and got behind the back end of the log. After that the rest of it was easy, because I had cover all the way. I got to the knot, and dug my hand down under the log, and sure enough there was the same saddlebag we had seen them have the night before. But of course, I had my get-away to make, and that was the hard part, because I had to go backward, keeping an eye on them, and every little while looking behind me, to see that I didn't snap any sticks, or make the bushes wiggle with my knees.

Right there was where Mr. Garretson got to work. I don't know what he had been doing, but just as I started to work away, he just naturally strolled into their camp from up the road, as pleasant as you please. He made plenty of noise coming, too, whistling, and walking noisily, as if he hadn't anything on his mind at all!

While Bill and the other man were looking at him I got clear back to the butt-end of the log again. He began to ask them about a strayed donkey, said something about having been fishing over in Middle Park, and coming out over Indian Pass, and camping three or four miles up

the night before. There was a lot more, about the donkey's getting away, and how he had tracked him, or thought he had, down to where the road crossed the creek, and lost the trail there, and seen their camp-fire—I didn't get it all—and all the while I kept making little sneaks from bush to bush. He was all fixed up, too, with trout flies stuck in his hatband. And he didn't exactly tell them any lies—he doesn't like any kind of lying—he sort of made them think things by the way he asked his questions.

They answered him mighty short, and then I saw Bill nudge the other fellow, and they began to ask questions themselves, all about who he was, and what shape the Pass was in, and if he had met anybody on it. I heard him say that he had left his partner in camp, but hadn't seen anybody else, and that the fishing was bully; and by that time I was round the turn in the glade, and too far off to hear any more, and too much in a hurry. For just as quick as I had real cover between me and them I beat it to where he had left the rope tied, and fixed up a scout sign with some sticks and stones, and went over the edge. It was pretty ticklish, too, for the ledge looked mighty narrow, (though it wasn't when I got there) and there was an awful drop below it. When I got down, I sat down under an overhang of rock and waited for Mr. Garretson.

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Rhino!

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deal of amusement, for the rhinos have completely disappeared from the region immediately about Nairobi and the plains animals that are left there proved to be much more afraid of this unfamiliar beast than they were of man. But "Willie" is now the property of Martin Johnson, who is keenly interested in the development of the decoy idea and who proposes to take him along to the country where real rhinos abound. In the future we may reasonably expect some interesting stories of the further adventures of "Willie."

MY safari sometimes consists of fifty black boys, sometimes of as many as a hundred and fifty, all of whom have their work in the field. There is the headman, who is supposed to be in charge of the whole show, excepting the gun-bearers and tent boys, who are personal servants. There is a gun-bearer and a tent boy for each white hunter. As his name implies, the gun-bearer carries his master's gun and ammunition, and assists with the tracking. The tent boy keeps his tent and clothing in order and serves him at the table. Needless to say, a cook and his assistants are important members of the expedition. Soldiers, heterogeneously armed and uniformed and known as askaris, guard the camp at night and look out for the porters on the march. Then there are the *syces* or pony boys in charge of the horses and equipment, and finally, the rank and file of porters whose duties can hardly be enumerated. They carry the loads on the march, gather wood for the cook and the camp-fire, bring in game, beat for lions, set up the tents, or fight a grass-fire—in short, they do almost anything that the occasion demands.

CUT deep into the banks of the rivers and lakes in Africa, one comes upon parallel tracks with grass growing between them much like those of a wagon. Although the hippo is at home in the water and spends his days there, he finds his food on shore and comes out at night to graze in the meadows and it is the hippo on his midnight excursions who leaves in the heart of the jungle this characteristic double track so reminiscent of civilization. The awkward old fellow's legs are too short and stiff for him to place one foot in front of the other as he lumbers along; hence, the parallel paths.

Resolved to avoid the difficulty of rescuing a dead hippo from the water, and curious to find out what goes on in Africa after dark, we started out one bright moonlight night from our camp at Lake Elmenteita to find a hippo feeding. Africa by day and Africa by night are different countries. The moonlit jungle is awesome as well as beautiful, for one never knows where wild beasts, resentful of intrusion, may be lurking in the shadows of friendly rocks and trees. For several hours we wandered about, inspecting every black mass we saw with our field glasses. In most cases the black splotch turned out to be a bush or a boulder, but finally we discovered one that moved. My eyes had grown accustomed to the semi-

darkness and the moon was clear, so that I could see the moving object, a fine hippo, more and more distinctly as we cautiously approached. We were, perhaps, within thirty yards, when he made a movement that indicated that he, too, saw or heard us. I fired. There was a mad rush and then a tremendous splash! Whether or not my shot had told, the hippo had defeated our purpose. He was back in the lake and there was nothing further for us to do that night but to go back to camp and to bed.

At daybreak our hippo was floating in the shallow water with much the appearance of a partially submerged balloon. The boys had to wade in, tie ropes around him, and the tug of war to haul him ashore began.

Our moonlight hippo hunt was merely disappointing. Mr. Abel Chapman and his brother, hearing of our experiment, decided to have a try at the game and had an experience that escaped disaster by a hair's breadth.

The moon was past the full and late in rising when they camped with their safari a couple of hundred yards away from us on the shore of Lake Elmenteita. On the night selected for their hunt, they went to bed, leaving instructions to be called when the moon rose, but shortly after midnight they were awakened by an askari with the news that a hippo was right close to camp. The whinnying of a pony had given the alarm. Drawing on coats and field shoes and summoning their gun boys, Mr. Chapman and his brother hurried out of their tents. The night was still gray and starry but they could make out the shadowy form of a great beast about three hundred yards distant. They had approached to within fifty yards and Mr. Chapman had dropped on one knee to take aim, when with a hissing snort the massive body rushed forward. Both men fired. One gun boy, failing to recognize a harmless hippo in the snort and charge, fled into camp. The other stood firm, but a second gun was unnecessary. Five yards farther the beast came on, then dropped, plowing up the ground with his snout as he fell.

Boys from camp hurried out with lights that the hunters might inspect their hippo and it was then that Mr. Chapman discovered that they had killed not a hippo at all, but an unusually fine rhino and one with three horns—a beautiful specimen and very rare indeed. For days I had been looking for one in this country and, ironically enough, the prize of the whole region had deliberately walked into the camp of our neighbors.

The shot that brought down the big trihorn was little short of miraculous. Crashing into the neck between the ears, it narrowly missed the two great horns as the rhino came on headlong, and smashed into the spinal column. No bullet aimed in broad daylight ever did its work more effectively. Had the shot been less fortunate, Mr. Chapman's supposedly harmless hippo, being instead a wounded and infuriated rhino, might easily have done enough damage seriously to impair my theory regarding the bluff of the rhino.



To-morrow's Telephones

So vital a factor has the telephone become in American life that the demand for it would undoubtedly grow even without increases in population. New businesses are founded; others expand. New homes are established in town and city, in suburban dwellings and apartment houses.

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