



# HENRY A. SNOW

and the

SNOW MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Written and Edited

by

MICHAEL R. WAICZIS

PREPARED FOR THE NATURAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT  
AT THE OAKLAND MUSEUM

1983



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DR. WILLIAM T. HORNADAY

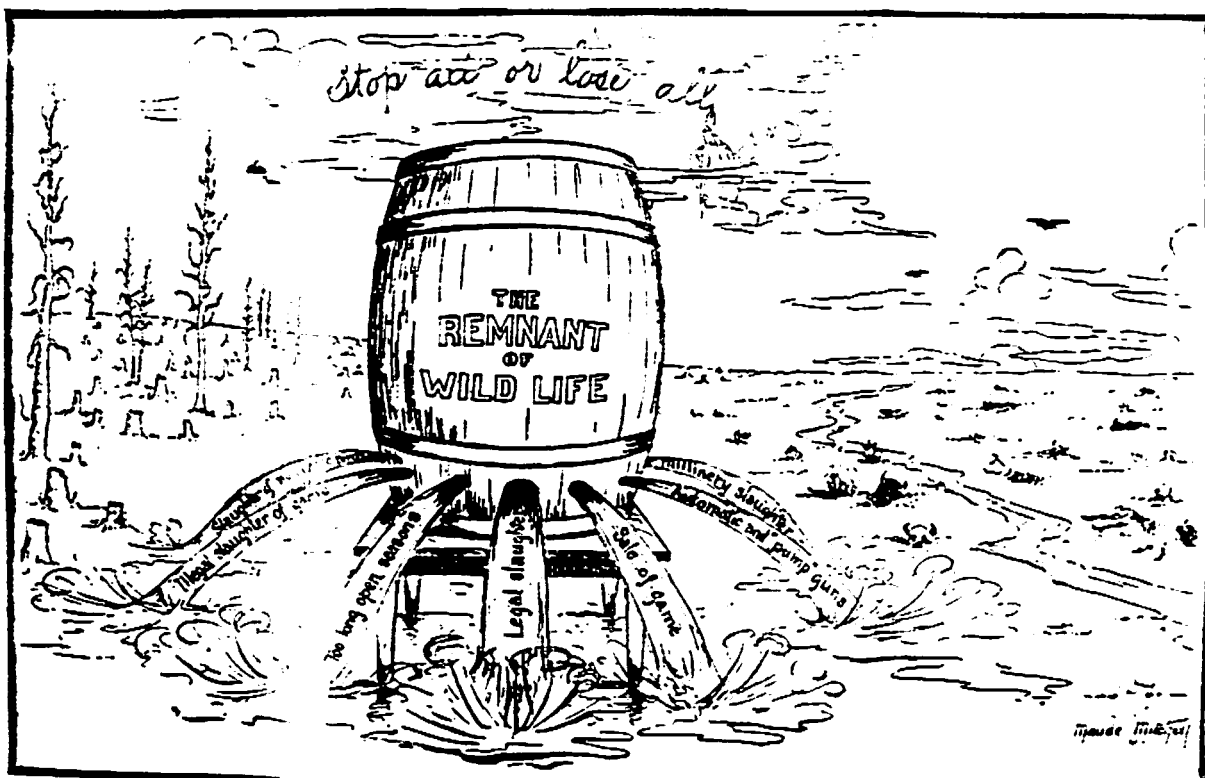
WILLIAM HORNADAY, 1930  
Hornaday led an early 20th century crusade to save wildlife.

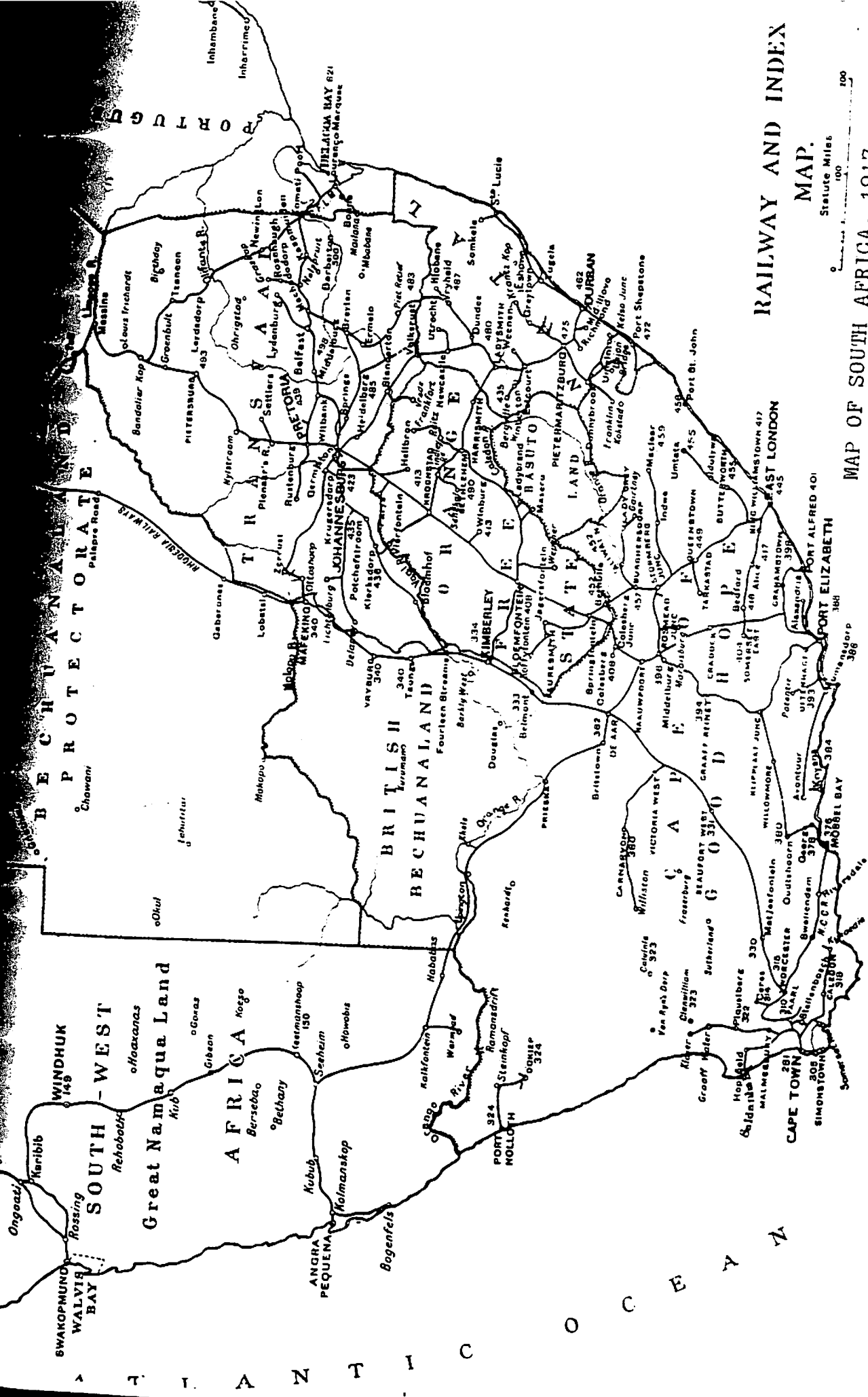
20

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"STOP ALL OR LOSE ALL"

An illustration from Hornaday's book, Thirty Years War for Wildlife, 1931.





# RAILWAY AND INDEX

MAP.

Scale Miles 0 100 200

MAP OF SOUTH AFRICA, 1917

The Simson/Snow expedition disbanded midway through 1920. Alone, Henry and Sid Snow nearly lost their lives in Bechuanaland.

## REUNIONS AND RHINOS

Few scientific expeditions to Africa in the early twentieth century were as thoroughly successful as the "Oakland Museum Expedition", which, under the able leadership of H.A. "Del" Snow, spent two years on the continent gathering museum specimens and making one of the most exciting and comprehensive films about Africa ever produced.<sup>1</sup>

Enduring unhospitable wilderness and life threatening situations, Oakland's expeditioners journeyed thousands of miles in South Africa and British East Africa in search of specimens for the Public Museum. During the extended safari

cont.

twenty-five thousand feet of motion picture film and over four hundred 'stills' were exposed, and a vast collection of museum specimens consisting of forty complete (3-5 specimens family groups, (about 169 mammals), 1,500 birds, 5,000 bird's eggs, and 40,000 insects and bugs, were secured for the City's proposed natural history facility. <sup>2</sup>

The ultimate success of the expedition, however, must have looked rather questionable to Del Snow\* late in the Summer of 1920 as he and his son Sidney arrived back at the coast of South Africa after nearly losing their lives in Bechuanaland. It was a dark moment for the two Californians, they were sick with malaria, all alone, thousands of miles from family and friends, and far away from Oakland where the bottom seemed to be falling out of the museum movement. In addition, Snow could not expect any more money from Oakland. To make matters worse, his business partners, W. Cole and the Gross brothers, managing the picture company back home, apparently deserted Snow just when additional funding was needed to keep filming. And with experienced hunter Leslie Simson absent from the party, H.A. Snow, in truth a greenhorn at safari hunting, had to think fast and keep his head if he was to save the expedition and keep himself and his family alive.

\* Throughout the remainder of this work the familiar names of Henry Snow and his family will be used--- Del, Sid, Daisy, Norma, Nydine, and so on.

## Local Information about Game Districts.

*NOTE.—The information given below is supplementary to that given in the Article on Sport and has been most kindly forwarded to the Editors from most reliable sources.*

### Zululand.

Zululand contains by far the most accessible big game areas in South Africa. Within twenty-four hours of landing at Durban, the sportsman can be at Sankelo, the railway terminus, with good small game shooting, hippo and waterbuck within a radius of eight miles. Somewhat further afield, but still within the division of Hlabisa, are buffalo, kudu and rhinoceros.

Although, compared with more distant shooting grounds, Zululand is small in area, it yet offers a wide choice of localities to the sportsman.

There are five important shooting areas, viz. :—

1. That lying between the Mfolozi Rivers, outside the Game Reserve. Game found comprises many of the smaller antelopes; and of the larger kinds, kudu, waterbuck, wilde-beest (brindled gnu), zebra and occasionally rhinoceros and lion.
2. The Lake District, Fuvwazi Bush, and Humberi. This area, comprising all the lower reaches of such fine rivers as the Inyalazi, Hlabiwe, Mzimoni, and Mnywana, and stretches of many miles along the South bank of the Mseundzi and Mkuzi, as also some very dense forest country, affords good shooting. The game includes many of the smaller antelopes and of the larger species, kudu, buffalo, hippo, rhinoceros, inyala, impala and waterbuck, the zebra and wilde-beest (brindled gnu), lion, leopard, wild dog, chita and hyena are more or less numerous.
3. South-Eastern (Umbaba Area. Good shooting can be obtained here, principally hippo, waterbuck and wildebeest, as well as many of the smaller antelopes. The reedbank of the Mlazi Swamp are perhaps the finest in Zululand, and carry magnificent herds.
4. The Umbombo Area, N. S. and W., is almost if not quite equal to the Lake District area from a sportsman's point of view; it far surpasses it from that of the naturalist. All the large game found in the former with the exception of buffalo are to be met with here, some of the species in infinitely greater numbers. This area is the true home of the rhinoceros, and of that rare and most beautiful antelope, the bush-loving inyala. Lions and leopards are very numerous. Sharpe's steenbuck is found, and it is more than suspected that an undescribed species of small antelope, resembling the Livingstone's one, will be located here. An apparently aberrant form of the waterbuck is to be found in parts of the Mkuzi and Pongolo bushes. They are said to differ much in markings, and are characterised by straw-coloured horns, thus resembling the Inyalala.

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### ZULULAND, 1917

These pages describing the game districts of Zululand were taken from a 1917 guide to Africa.

back, inyala, a few kudu, wildebeest and impala. The best inyala and impala heads are obtained from the neighbourhood of Ndumu.

Any of these trips could be accomplished in from one month to six weeks, but two months should be allowed for the Umbombo.

If the sportsman can give three months to his shoot, then the round trip is strongly to be recommended. Leaving Sankelo and travelling via Hlabisa and the Bhekamtotwa Kraal to Bangamane thence to Umbombo, crossing the Division towards the East till the coast road is struck, then returning to Sankelo via Lower Mkuzi Drift, Bambozi, Mzimoni and Hlabiwe. In this way, and by making camps at suitable spots to enable places to be visited which lie off the wagon road, specimens of all game in Zululand could be obtained.

**Native Attendants.**—The Zulu, as also the Shangaan, is a born hunter and will willingly accompany a hunting expedition.

**Stores of sorts** are to be met with in all the divisions where his ant-ten, coffee and sugar can generally be obtained.

Transport is not too easy to obtain, but there are always wagons passing up and down the Coast Road and the main Hlabisi Umbombo Road. Thus specimens and trophies can easily be conveyed to the rail-head.

**Local information** can always be obtained from the Game Conservator, Nongoma, who, if notified in good time, could arrange for carriers and native attendants.

There is yet another direction in which Zululand offers vast opportunities, but those appeal more to the naturalist than to the ordinary sportsman. The *avi-fauna* of the country is still an almost unsalted book. A few have dabbled, but none have plunged, and there lies here a vast field for research work.

(Good bird (game) shooting is to be had including giant bustard, smaller species of bustards, francolin, quail and guinea-fowl.

Crocodile shooting is to be had in most of the rivers; and there is excellent fishing in places.

In the Game Reserves the fauna of the country, including the square-lipped (white) rhinoceros, can be seen, studied and photographed.

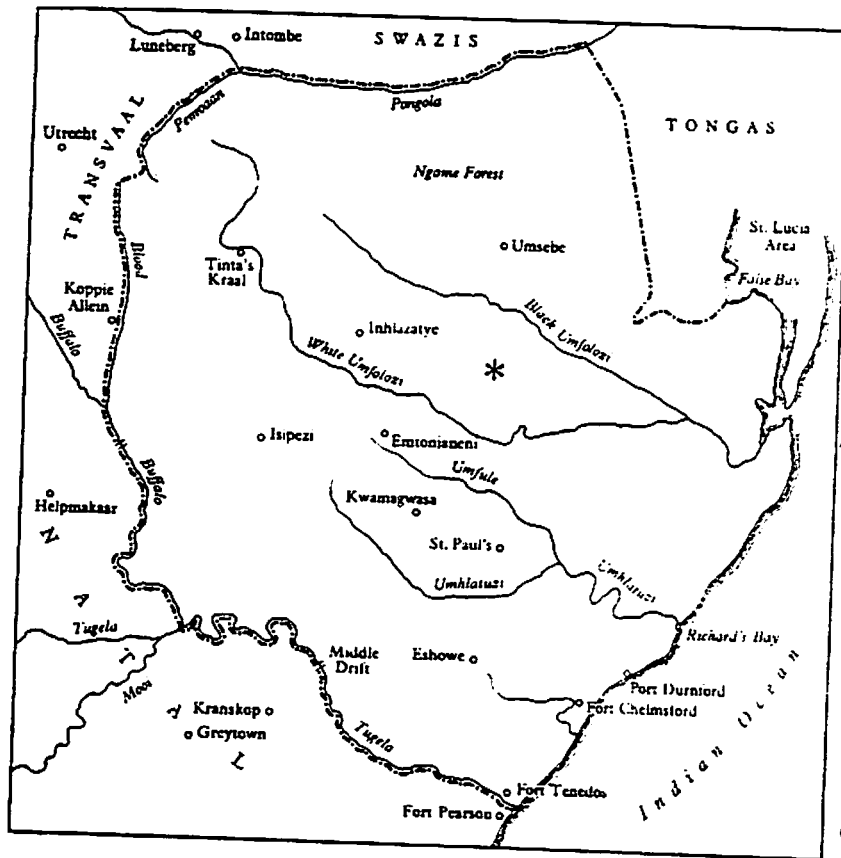
### River and Hunting Expeditions from Khartoum.

Visitors and others intending to shoot are advised to put themselves in communication with the Superintendent, Game Preservation Department. The following routes by rail and river lead to districts where, in many instances, sportsmen can obtain shooting which, both for quantity and variety, is unsurpassed.

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### Zululand

### HUNTING IN ZULULAND, 1920

Posing with a tribe of Zulus are  
(from left to right) Frank Wilton,  
cameraman, Henry and Sid Snow.

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amazingly comfortable and homey. Del had truly made every effort to create a real home in the wilderness. Daisy describes the camp:

The camp..... was beautiful. It was located on top of the hill overlooking the river. Up and down the river banks are great fig trees and around the camp are large numbers of shade trees. Del has built a four room house, you might call it..... built of tree and grass and mud. It is rainproof..... roofed over with poles and interwoven grass. There are many pieces now lashed to the frame, which (makes) a platform..... On top of this platform was nearly a foot of grass for a mattress. When our air mattresses were placed on top of this, it made very fine sleeping..... How Del must have worked and planned to have it comfortable and home-like when I came. He had not even forgotten the floor, which had a number of zebra skins spread around. 11

By the time Daisy and Norma arrived in Zululand, Del had nearly completed his collection of South African species. All he needed was an adult rhinoceros. Somehow Snow obtained a permit to hunt rhinos, which were becoming quite rare, and he and Sid and Wilton, and a sizable party of safari "boys" set out one day to 'bag' one of these dangerous beasts. Del offers an interesting account of the nearly fatal hunt:

We left camp at daylight and walked the game trails until we had nearly reached Mount Impalla. This is a good

lookout place. We were there a few moments when one of the natives noticed two "mecomga" (white rhinos) going around the side of the mountain..... We stalked them for nearly an hour and at last got in a position where the wind was right to attempt to crawl up on them. At this time they were feeding, but before we had crawled all the way to them they decided in favor of a nap. It occurred to me that there wasn't a tree within 200 yards to use in case of an emergency. I deliberated for a moment, when the animal scented me, for she instantly got to her feet and gave an awful snort--- then started right for me.

The other got in position and down they both came--- one on each side. My nerve stayed with me, so I raised my big gun and let fly at the head of one of them, but it only seemed to give her more speed. I jumped behind a small bush, which was to one side and when she went by me I let her have the last shot of my big 477 express. This turned them, which gave me time to reload and before they could recover I shot twice more, but still no rhino fell. I was commencing to think they had charmed lives. With my last two shots they started off up the mountain, swinging their heads from side to side.

Snow started after the wounded rhinos, following the trail of blood left by the enraged beasts:

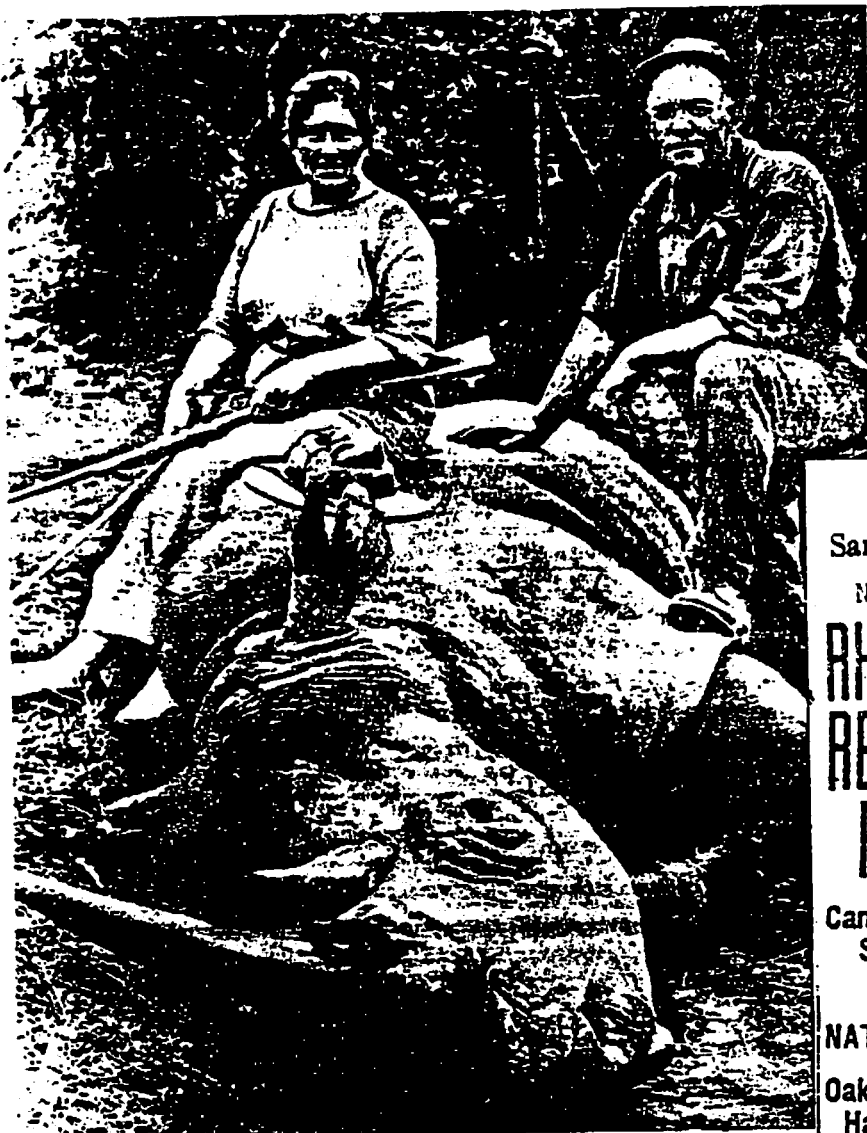
We tracked them for two miles and found one of them under a big thorn tree, which (had) limbs that touch the ground. Thinking her dead, from the amount of blood she had lost, we got ready to make both movie and still pictures. Wilton and Sid..... got out the cameras and with help of about twenty natives went back where the rhino was.....

Wilton glanced in to start the picture, while Sid was set up further back, when with a rush the rhino came out on the charge (smashing through Wilton's tripod and camera) and Wilton lost no time side-stepping.

She started toward the entire party. I was a few yards away in the rear and started to get my gun in position for another shot. Most of the natives were up in trees. Wilton, Sid, one native and myself were on the ground. The animal took a vicious lunge at Wilton (who jumped head first into a thorn bush)..... and started for the native, who had ventured too close. It looked positively certain she would get the negro, for she seemed only a couple of feet behind him, going like mad and making close swings with her great horn.

At this time I got in another shot, which hit her over the eye. This infuriated her and she started for me and let me tell you dear Oakland never appeared so good. As she came nearer she looked the size of an S.P. boxcar, and that horn seemed to grow as I watched her mad approach. My nerve stood by me, for I realized it was either the rhino or me, so I took careful aim at the butt of the ear and pulled the trigger. She swung around and dropped in her tracks, absolutely dead within a few feet of Wilton and I. A great load rolled off my nervous system when I realized it was over in a great deal shorter time than it takes to tell it. <sup>12</sup>

The rhino hunt signalled the end of Snow's South African safari, and Del began thinking about the prime hunting grounds



HENRY AND DAISY WITH THE RHINO,  
ZULULAND, 1920

The Snows pose with museum specimen in the interior of Zululand.

San Francisco Chronicle  
November 18, 1920.

## RHINOCEROS RESENTS HAVING PICTURE TAKEN

Cameraman in Zululand Is  
Saved From Mad Beast  
by Timely Shot

NATIVE LAD JOINS HUNT

Oakland Expedition Members  
Have Thrilling Experiences

on Collection Trip  
*S.F. Chron.* H-25-2  
OAKLAND, November 27.—Tales of thrilling encounters with the war-like white rhinoceros, the most savage and ferocious animal in South Africa, are told in a letter received yesterday from H. A. Snow, one of the leaders of the Snow-Simson big game expedition in Africa by John Rowley, curator at the Oakland Museum. How an enraged rhinoceros bent on attacking Frank Wilton cameraman, was killed only ten feet from his prey by Snow, is related in the letter.

An interesting feature of the expedition, which is now on the swampy plains of Zululand, was that concerning Vaalpin Buchvansev, fourteen-year-old native Zulu boy, who refuses to leave the party, although his father and brothers have departed for their own village, hundreds of miles away. The young Zulu boy thinks the Americans are white gods, Snow said, and is invaluable about the camp, doing odd jobs and amusing the party.

of East Africa he had dreamed of seeing for so many years. At last it seemed nothing could stop him. The expedition was organized and under control, and after a year of what amounted to experimental hunting and filming, the Snows were seasoned safari hunters who knew how to survive life on the continent, hunt dangerous game, and photograph wildlife like professional film-makers. Del's conflict with Simson was a distant memory now, his fever was much better, and he had most of his family with him for support.

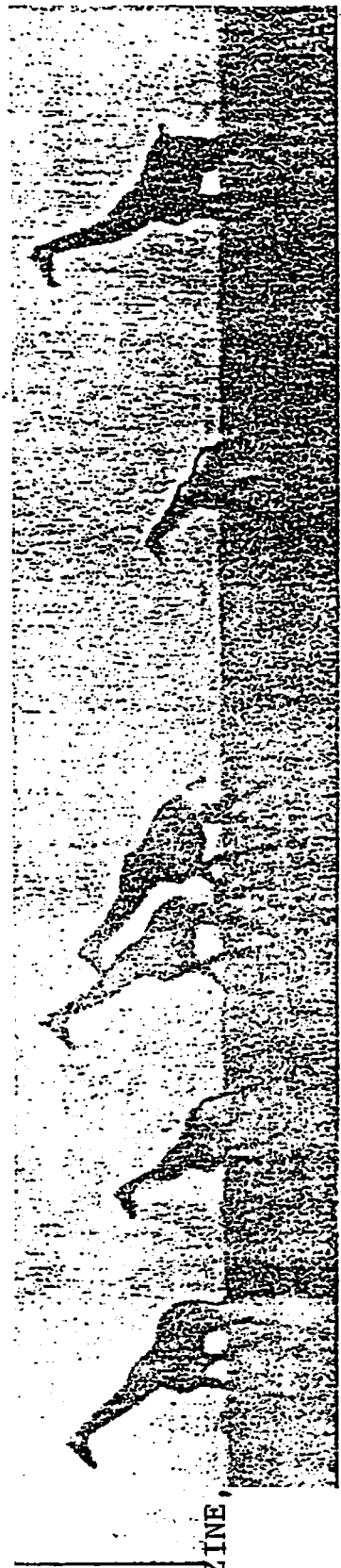
In November the family returned to Durban where they rented a house while waiting for passage to East Africa. Durban was a good place to recuperate from a year of safari living, and the Snow's enjoyed the conveniences offered by this amazingly modern African city. When Del Snow wasn't relaxing he was packaging and shipping his trophies back to Oakland where his daughter Nydine took charge of them at the Public Museum. Sid spent hours in the darkroom developing film and making prints while Daisy and Norma visited, enjoyed sit-down meals at hotel restaurants, toured museums, and took pictures.

A month after arriving in Durban Frank Wilton, Snow's sole surviving cameraman, decided he had enough of rampaging rhinos and left suddenly for the United States. Del decided to hire another photographer, a Mr. Jensen, rather than take over the filming himself. Jensen agreed to travel to East

(Photographs by the Snow African Expedition)

THE Dark Continent is the Eldorado of big-game hunters and photographers of wild animals; but no expedition has ever before enjoyed the success that was achieved by the Snow African Expedition which, under the leadership of Mr. H. A. Snow, left San Francisco in 1919 on a journey that was to carry them eighty thousand miles before their return to this country in the early part of 1922. Sixty-five thousand miles of this total distance represents African travel through a land of fevers, sleeping sickness and swarming insects. Mr. Snow and his party exposed over one hundred and twenty-five thousand feet of motion picture film and over four thousand feet of "stills," and their achievement in bringing back practically the entire film in perfect condition is a feat unexcelled in the history of African photography. The difficulties that are encountered by the African photographer are incalculable by anyone who has not personally experienced them. Heavy loads of cameras, tripods and films have to be transported under the most trying conditions; the only water available for film development is frequently ruinous, because of its chemical composition, to the celluloid base; the tropical heat makes it a work of the highest skill to obtain clear

negatives, and makes it almost impossible to preserve undeveloped film in good condition; and, not least of the difficulties, it is neither an easy nor a safe task to get the wild animals within camera range. Mr. Snow and his son Sydney, the photographer, overcame these obstacles by mounting their expedition on Fords, by developing every foot of film immediately in pure rain water hoarded for the purpose, and by exercising every manner of photographic ingenuity. As for the vicious animals, H. A. Snow and his Winchester were always equal to this menace, although the rifle seldom spoke until the charging beast was at the very foot of the camera. In addition to the photographs obtained, Mr. Snow brought back with him complete museum groups of more than fifty distinct African species, each group consisting of an adult male, an adult female, a baby of each sex, and a two-year-old. The work of curing these skins and of transporting them called for the greatest skill and enterprise. The film from which these pictures have been selected has been produced by Mr. Snow, and is now being shown in this country under the title of "Hunting Big Game in Africa with Gun and Camera."



THE COMEDIANS OF AFRICA

Every herd of giraffes is an animated cartoon, and an utterly mute one, for they are incapable of uttering a sound. With their swaying necks that reach eighteen or nineteen feet into the air, and their lumbering gallop, these tallest mammals in the world, who feed from tree tops, offer the photographic hunter one of his most humorous targets. But it is an elusive target; this herd evaded the lenses of the Snow expedition for three months.

## H.A. SNOW'S AFRICAN BAG

African Elephant, large male.....	1	specimen(s)
Black Rhino, family group.....	4	"
White Rhino, family group.....	3	"
Cape Buffalo, family group.....	5	"
Reticulate Giraffe, large male.....	1	"
Hippopotamus, family group.....	4	"
Lion, family group.....	5	"
Leopard, family group.....	3	"
Serval Cat, family group.....	3	"
Burchell's Zebra, family group.....	4	"
Chapman's Zebra, family group.....	5	"
Grevy's Zebra, family group.....	3	"
Lichenstein's Hartebeest, family group.....	4	"
Coke's Hartebeeste, family group.....	4	"
White-tailed Gnu, family group.....	5	"
Brindled Gnu, family group.....	5	"
Common Duiker, family group.....	4	"
Duiker, family group.....	3	"
Klipspringer (rare) male.....	1	"
Dik-dik, family group.....	3	"
Sing-Sing Waterbuck, family group.....	4	"
Common Waterbuck, family group.....	5	"
Reedbuck, family group.....	4	"
Impalla, family group.....	5	"
Blesbok, family group.....	5	"
Springbuck, family group.....	5	"
Gemsbok, family group.....	4	"



25. Estes, Dana., "Mombasa and East Africa", Independent, No. 66: 1390-97, 1909, pp 1390-93.
26. \_\_\_\_\_ The Guide to South and East Africa, London, Sampson, Low, Marston, and Company, 1917, pp. 713-14.

## 8. REUNIONS AND RHINOS

1. \_\_\_\_\_ "Fleet Footed Game of Jungle and Veldt", Travel, 40:15-22, March 1923, page 15.
2. MacMahon, Henry, "A Western Yankee in Africa", Outing, 81: 243-246, pp. 245-6, 3/23
3. ibid., pp. 243-44
4. Sumner, Keene., "The Snow Family's Adventure Hunting Wild Animals", American Magazine, v. 56, December 1923, page 121
5. Akeley, Mary., Carl Akeley's Africa, New York, Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1930 (general reference)
- Johnson, Martin., "What I am Trying to Do", World's Work, Vol. 46, August 1923, pp. 373-83 (general reference).
- \_\_\_\_\_, "No Feminism in Darkest Africa", The Literary Digest, Vol. 89, April-June 1926, page 54. (general reference)
6. MacDougall, Sarah., "Thrills of Big Game Hunting" Cincinnati Tribune, 1/29/22, newsclipping, O.M. Archive, Snow Museum Scrapbooks, The Oakland Museum History Department.

7. Sumner, op. cit., page 12.

8. ——— "H.A. Snow Writes of His Experiences in the Dark Wilds of Africa", San Francisco Chronicle, 10/24/20, located in the private collection of Mrs. Norma Snow Willburn

9. Snow, Daisy., "The Realization of Our Dream" an unpublished manuscript describing the Snow Family safari, 1920-1922, taken from Mrs. Snow's diary. Pages 34-42.

10. ibid.

11. ibid., pp. 44-45

12. ———, "White Rhino Gives Hunters Battle", Oakland Daily Post, 11/22/20, story taken from a letter from H.A. Snow written at Camp Daisy, Zululand, Southern Africa, located in the O.P.M. Scrapbook, O.M. Archive, The Oakland Museum History Department.

13. Snow, op. cit., pp. 80-91

14. ibid., pp. 80-97

## 9. HUNTING BIG GAME....

1. Snow, Daisy., "The Realization of Our Dream", an unpublished manuscript describing the Snow Family safari, 1920-1922, taken from Mrs. Snow's diary, pp. 98-99.

2. ibid. (general reference.)

28 JUL 1998

Oakland Museum of California

PAGE 1

Accession No.: SW3

Taxon: Ceratotherium simum

Common Name: White rhinoceros

Description: mount; conventional taxidermy; embryo

Found: Zululand

Dimensions: height 52 IN  
width 53 1/4 IN  
depth 24 1/4 IN

Remarks: Label reads: Baby White Rhinoceros (Embryo)  
(Rhinoceros simus)

So far as is known, this is the only embryo White Rhinoceros in the world, with a value impossible to estimate.

This is one of a group of White Rhinoceros that were collected in Zululand, Africa by the late H.A.Snow.

White Rhinos are very rare, only one small band in all the world. They differ from the Black Rhino in that they are slate-colored and square-mouthed.

Mounted by Museum Taxidermist, Melvin Johansen  
declared surplus 12/13/88: deaccessioned 5/10/89

Exhibition: H.A.Snow Show 1982

TOM, 25 Years of Collecting California