



Easy-going Giants --

Two Square-lipped Rhinoceroses Come to the Zoo

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IF THE SHIPPING CRATE is strongly built (and it almost always is), the arrival at the Zoological Park of even the largest and most powerful animal presents no problem — up to a point. The truck rolls through the gates, men and machinery take over, position the crate; a hasty conference assesses all possible follies the beast may commit as it emerges.

Then the crate's door is lifted or swung open. You wait, expecting the worst, the best, or something in between.

You seldom get the best, which is simply a

slow, calm, unhurried, unfrightened emergence of the animal from the box that has been its familiar home for days or weeks. Sometimes it comes out fighting and crashes blindly into bars or fence. It *can* break a leg or its neck. That is the worst.

The best happened on September 4 when Mal-amba and Qagaza came to the Bronx Zoo from Zululand. They are Square-lipped Rhinoceroses (sometimes called White Rhinoceroses) and the first we have ever exhibited. The African Black Rhinoceros we know and respect, and we have

long acquaintance with the great Indian Rhinoceros. By all accounts the Square-lipped is not particularly aggressive, as a species, but there is no accounting for individuals and there was no telling in advance how 1,900-pound Malamba, the male, and 2,800-pound Qagaza, the female, might take to the sights and smells of a stall 25 feet by 25 feet.

They took to it with mild curiosity. A crane with a 100-foot boom lifted Qagaza's crate first and set it smoothly in the doorway of the stall in the northwest corner of the Elephant House. Qagaza was on her feet but standing like a rock as keepers knelt on top of the crate and loosened the bolts that held barrier bars in place just inside the crate's swinging half-doors. The underpinning of the bars was wrenched away and the bars removed, the doors opened. Qagaza just stood there.

Stages in the capture of a Square-lipped Rhinoceros in the Umfolozi Game Reserve. Left — A tranquilizing drug has taken effect and the animal can be walked into the crate. Right, top — It is even calm enough to allow itself to be measured. Center — The crate is loaded on a truck. Bottom — In the corral.

Satour—South African Tourist Corp. photos

She was so obviously not frightened or aggressive that keeper patience wore thin after five minutes. From the top of the crate a broomhandle prodded her rump. She backed up.

Everyone waited, and in another five minutes Qagaza put out one foot tentatively and stepped down eight inches onto the floor of the stall. She came the rest of the way and the men on top of the crate let the half-doors swing shut behind her. Keeper Montana tossed an armload of alfalfa onto the floor and Qagaza began to eat. She explored, found the watering trough and had a leisurely drink. Just as unconcernedly she walked through the connecting door into the adjoining stall and allowed herself to be locked in while the same transfer from crate to stall was accomplished for Malamba. He was even less coy and strolled out of his box in four minutes.

Later that afternoon the two animals were allowed to be together for five minutes. Wild-caught a month before, they had never seen each other and had not been with others in captivity. They sparred a bit with their horns, kept a wary





A crane with a 100-ft. boom was waiting at the Zoological Park to lower the heavy crates down to a stall door in the Elephant House. Nothing disturbed the rhinos during moving.

eye on each other (neither seemed to want the other to get behind it), and then they were separated for the night. The next day they ran together in the outside corrals, and since then they have been together every day and lost all wariness of each other; of people they apparently had little or none from the beginning. Qagaza had been out of her crate less than 15 minutes when General Curator Emeritus Crandall offered her a bouquet of long-stemmed grass and she took it from his hand.

The story of their capture on the Umfolozi Game Reserve in Zululand has already been told in a Newsletter to Members of the Zoological Society, but for the record it can be briefly summarized here. In February the Natal Parks, Game and Fish Preservation Board wrote to the Society offering to sell a pair of Square-lipped Rhinoceroses for three thousand pounds sterling, or about \$8,400, explaining that the Reserve was overcrowded and that the animals were endangered by increased human pressure on the periphery of the reserve. Some Square-lipped Rhinoceroses were being shipped to other areas in South Africa,

and they were being offered to some zoological gardens that might be expected to breed them.

We jumped at the chance to get this magnificent southern form of the Square-lipped Rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium simum simum*), and since the Catskill Game Farm in Greene County, N. Y., and the San Diego Zoo also wanted a pair, we arranged for Harry Overbaugh to fly to Natal, assist in the capture, and bring six animals to New York. Mr. Overbaugh, as foreman of the Catskill Game Farm (which is operated by Roland Lindemann, the Zoological Society's Consultant in Mammal Management), is abundantly experienced in handling big animals and we expected the venture to be just as uneventful as in fact it was. The Umfolozi Game Reserve people scouted for rhinoceroses in a Land Rover, chased them until they were near enough to fire a drug-loaded syringe, waited until the rhinoceroses went

down under the influence of the drug, and then got them into crates and carried them to holding pens at the Reserve. In the days before tranquilizing and soporific drugs and the technique of injecting by a gun-propelled syringe, the capture would have been long and dangerous to men and animals; today it is quick, sure and harmless to all concerned.

THERE are two races of the Square-lipped Rhinoceros in Africa: the southern, found only in the Umfolozi and Hluhluwe Game Reserve and adjoining state-owned lands and native reserves, and the northern *Ceratotherium simum cottoni*, which has a much larger range in Uganda, the Congo and the Sudan. The latest official count gives about 600 individuals of the southern race in an area of some 212,000 acres — half of them crowded into 92,000 acres. In a large part of the Umfolozi Game Reserve there has been at least one Square-lipped Rhinoceros per square mile, and for short periods as many as 30 to 42 per square mile.

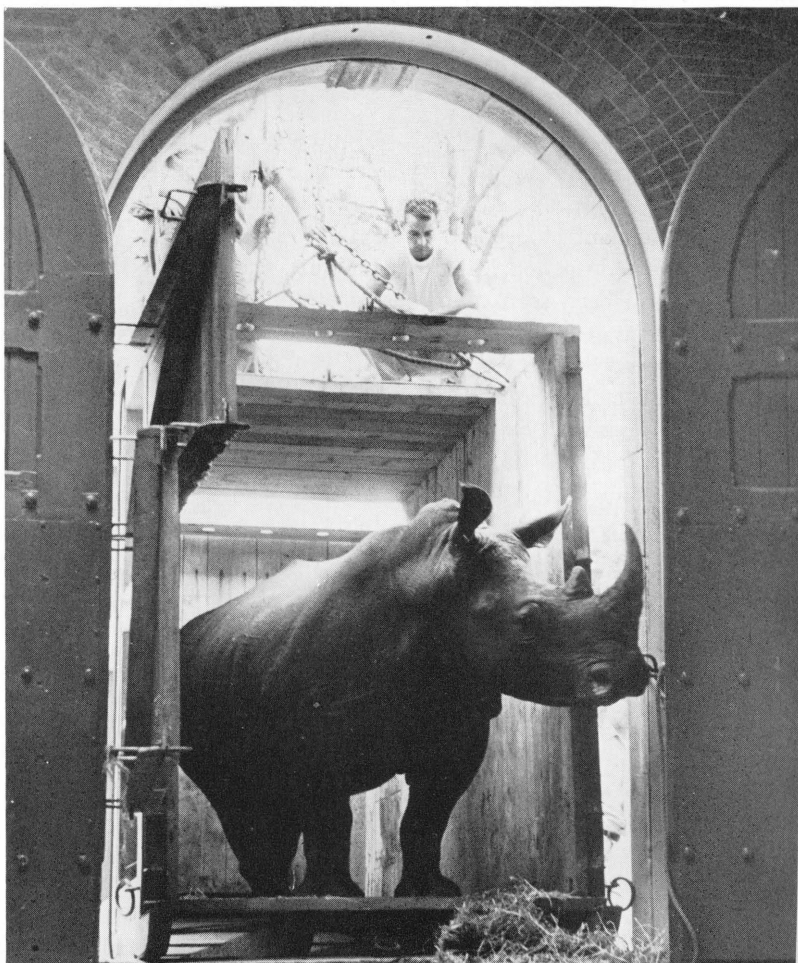
Unlike the Black Rhinoceros of Africa, which is a browsing animal, the Square-lipped is a grass-

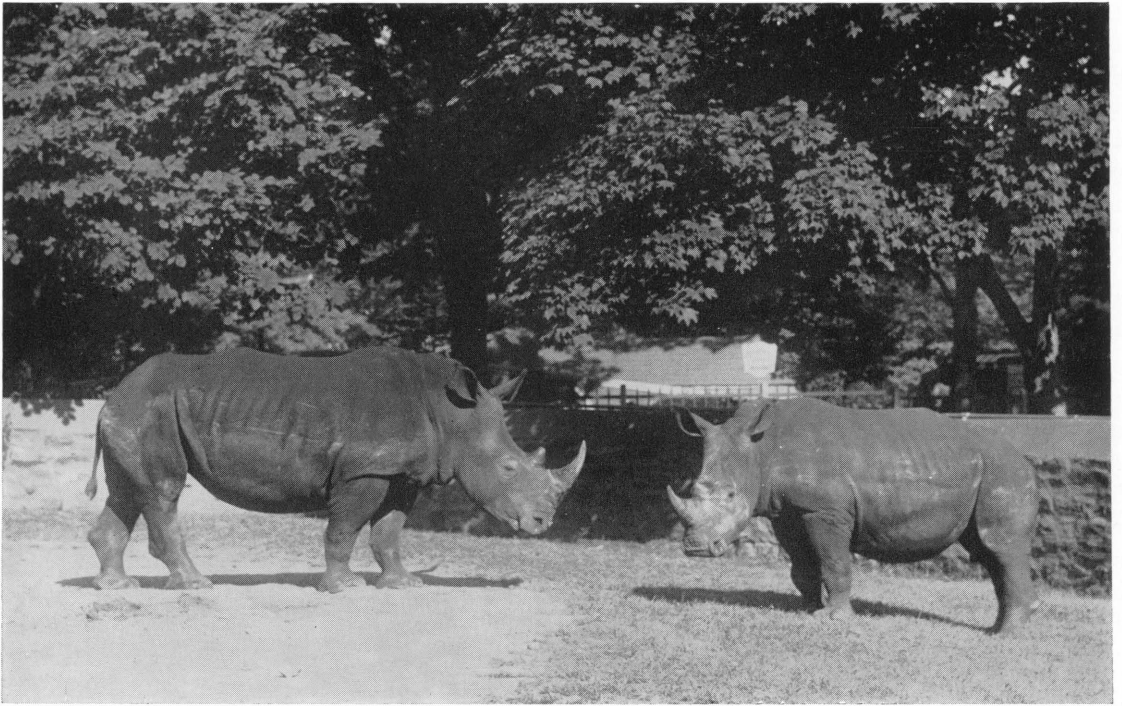
feeder and it naturally takes a good deal of territory to support a large population. It is, indeed, the largest land animal next to the elephant and the weight of a big adult is about four tons, although three tons is average. The largest specimens on record stood six and one-half feet at the shoulder and the longest horn in the southern race was 62 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The usual length, however, is between two and three feet and the posterior horn is always much shorter than the anterior.

Square-lipped Rhinoceroses have a poor sense of hearing and sight, but a keen sense of smell. They have the advantage, however, of usually being accompanied by Red-billed Oxpeckers which have excellent sight, and whose flight and cries of alarm warn them of approaching danger. When a group of rhinoceroses is alarmed by the birds, the big animals stand up in an alert posture, heads outward and facing in different directions. If the danger seems imminent, they charge away from it. Unless they have been severely harassed by hunters, they are not aggressive toward human beings and in the Umfolozi region there is only one record over many years of a man being gored by one — and even that record is doubtful. There

The swinging doors of the heavy shipping crates were opened and for a few minutes the rhinoceroses surveyed their new home — and then, calmly, they emerged.

Landau—UPI Photo





is a record of a Square-lipped Rhinoceros apparently wantonly charging a truck, but it was seen to shy away from the vehicle when it was six feet away and the conclusion was that the animal's sight was so poor that it did not realize what it was running into.

All accounts tell of the animals' delight in wallowing in mud or water. We have noticed that they like to pitch up in the shade of the Elephant House and lie or stand out of the sun for long periods. In the Umfolozi, water turtles have been seen congregating around wallowing rhinoceroses and eating the ticks on their bodies.

We do not know enough about the reproduction of the Square-lipped Rhinoceros to forecast the possibility of our animals producing offspring. The male is presumably about $2\frac{1}{2}$ years old, the female about 4 years. We do know that they usually have one calf at a birth, after a gestation period of about 16 months. There are many stories of the strong attachment between the calf and its mother — such as incidents of a cow rhino being killed and her calf standing by her side, driving off jackals and vultures, until it succumbed to starvation. Calves make a squeaking noise when they are lost or frightened, and adults puff, snort and make a variety of loud sounds.

The second day after the Square-lipped Rhinoceroses were in the Zoological Park, they were turned out in their big yard at the Elephant House. They seemed only a little wary.

Since seeing Square-lipped Rhinoceros in the flesh, the alternative popular name of "White Rhinoceros" is all the more puzzling. The "White Rhinoceros" is actually so dark that it could well be called black — whereas the so-called African Black Rhinoceros, *Diceros bicornis*, is unmistakably strongly brownish in coloration!

Many theories have been advanced as to why the animal is popularly known as the White Rhinoceros — that the first animals seen by hunters and explorers had been wallowing in whitish clay, for instance. Boer hunters are said to have called it "Witrenoster" in Afrikaans — translated as White Rhinoceros. But why they chose that name is unknown. In any event, the "White" Rhinoceros certainly is not white, and we are using the more descriptive name of Square-lipped Rhinoceros.

It will, as time goes on, be interesting to see what their names of Malamba and Qagaza (bestowed by the Umfolozi officials) become in the daily usage of keepers and public!