

MEMBER LIBRARY

HAROLD FRANK WALLACE — Adventurer, Sportsman, Artist



Theodore J. Holsten
EMERITUS MEMBER
Boone and Crockett Club

Early in the spring of 1911, George Fenwick-Owen invited Harold Frank Wallace to accompany him on an expedition into the interior of China. Fenwick-Owen's aim was to secure for the British Museum, specimens of the takin (*Budorcas taxicolor*), a goat-antelope—at the time, an almost unknown animal species. The story of that year-long trip, from Shanghai to Omsk, is chronicled in Wallace's book *The Big Game of Central and Western China*.

The expedition, traveling in primitive carts and enduring considerable hardship,

hunted in areas of western China and the borders of Tibet—landscapes that were little known to the Western World. There, they secured specimens of bharal (blue sheep,) white-maned serow, wapiti, roe-deer and varieties of antelope and gazelle. Most of the hunting was in Kansu Province where they successfully took a number of takin trophies.

An interesting aspect of Wallace's book is his observations of the people and countryside of a primitive China about which little had been written. He tells of areas devoid of trees where woodcutters took everything in sight "for roof poles and coffin boards." He describes how women had their feet bound at an early age causing such deformation that they could barely walk, a brutal practice required to secure a husband. He relates stories of wolves roaming freely, and contrary to our perception, killing the weak and small children.

During their time in the

interior, revolution broke out across China. Wallace and his companion were unable to retrace their route back. They were forced to travel in sub-zero weather in the dead of winter for four months across sections of the Gobi Desert, reaching Omsk in Russian territory in the spring of 1912. When we consider the comparative comfort of most of today's hunting trips, an expedition such as the one Wallace describes seems incredible.

Harold Frank Wallace was born in Scotland in 1881. He was educated at Eton and Oxford and he went on to become a well-known painter and illustrator, particularly of deer and Highland wildlife scenes. He wrote several books describing his worldwide hunting experiences. Wallace was closely associated with many of the well-known big game hunters of his time, leading to his membership in the Boone and Crockett Club. He died in 1962. ■

Selected books by Harold Frank Wallace

Stalks Abroad (1908)

The Big Game of Central and Western China (1913)

British Deer Heads (1913)

Big Game (1934)

Hunting Winds (1949)

LEFT: The Takin (*Budorcas bedfordi*). Drawing by Harold Frank Wallace from the frontispiece of *The Big Game of Central and Western China*.

