

MEMBER ADVENTURES

THE ACORN SERIES - HUNTING IN MANY LANDS



Theodore J. Holsten
EMERITUS MEMBER
Boone and Crockett Club

Early in the history of the Boone and Crockett Club, Theodore Roosevelt and George Bird Grinnell solicited stories from Club members. These were published in a series of volumes over a number

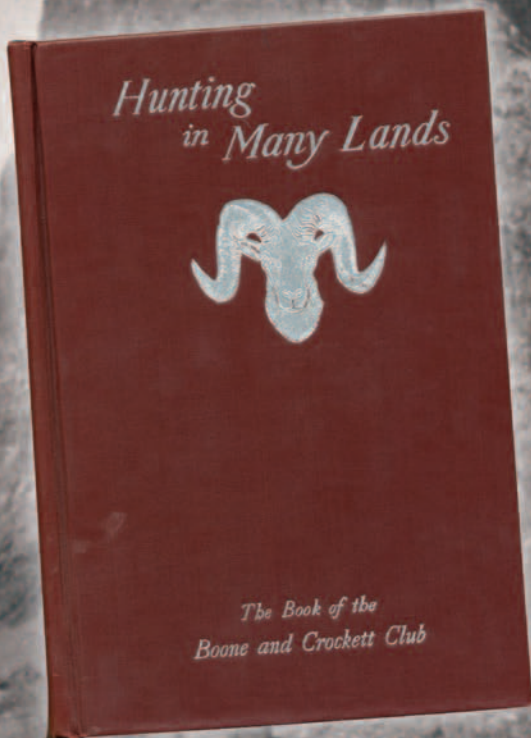
of years in what we today call the Acorn Series. *Hunting in Many Lands*, the second book in the series, was published in 1895, and it included an article, "Hunting in East Africa," by William Astor Chanler. His safari lasted six months. Independently wealthy, he was only 21 years old at the time. Here is an excerpt from what he wrote:

"I left camp at dawn and it was not till noon that I saw game. Then I discovered three rhinos, two together lying down, and one solitary, nearly 500 yards away from the others. The two lying down were nearest me, but were apparently unapproachable, owing to absolute lack of cover. The little plain they had chosen for their nap was as flat as a billiard table and quite bare of grass. The wind blew steadily from them and whispered to me to try my luck, so I crawled cautiously toward them. When I got to within 150 yards, one of the beasts rose and sniffed anxiously about and then lay down again. The rhinoceros is nearly blind when in the bright sun—at night it can see like an owl. I kept on, and when within 100 yards rose to my knees and fired one barrel of my .577. The rhinos leapt to their feet and charged straight at me. "Shall I load the other barrel or trust to only one?" This thought ran through my mind but the speed of the animals approach gave me no time to reply to it. My gun-bearer was making excellent time across the plain toward a group of trees, so I could make no use of the 8-bore. The beasts came on side by side, increasing their speed and snorting like steam engines as they ran. They were disagreeably close when I fired my second barrel and rose to my feet to bolt to one side. As I rose they swerved to the left and passed not twenty feet from me, apparently blind to my whereabouts. I must have hit one with my second shot, for they were too close to permit a miss. Perhaps the shot turned them. Be that as it may, I felt that I had a narrow escape.

When these rhinos had quite disappeared, my faithful gun-bearer returned, and smilingly congratulated me on what he considered my good fortune. He then called my attentions to the fact that rhinoceros number three was still in sight, and apparently undisturbed by what had happened to his friends. Between the beast and me, stretched an open plain for some 350 yards, then came three or four small trees, and then from these trees rose a semi-circle hill or rather ridge, on the crest of which stood the rhino. I made for the trees, and distrusting my gun-bearer, took from him the .577 and placed it near one of them. Then, telling him to retire to a comfortable spot, I advanced with my 8-bore up the hill toward my game. The soil was soft as powder, so my footsteps made no noise.

Cover, with the exception of a small skeleton bush, but fifty yards below the

The Crown of Chief Mountain
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rhino, there was none. I reached the bush and knelt down behind it. The rhino was standing broadside on, motionless and apparently asleep. I rose and fired, and saw that I had aimed true, when the animal wheeled round and round in his track. I fired again, and he then stood still facing me. I had one cartridge in my pocket and slipped it in the gun. As I raised the weapon to my shoulder, down the hill came my enemy. His pace was slow and I could see that he limped. The impetus given him by the descent kept him going and his speed seemed to increase. I fired straight at him and then dropped behind the bush. He still came on and in my direction, so I leapt to my feet, and losing my head, ran straight away in front of him. I should have run to one side and then up the hill. What was my horror, when pounding away at a good gait, not more than fifty feet in front of the snorting rhino, to find myself hurled to the ground, having twisted my ankle. I thought all was over, when I had the instinct to roll to one side and then scramble to my feet. The beast passed on. When he reached the bottom of the hill his pace slackened to a walk, and I returned to where I had left my .577 and killed him at my leisure. I found the 8-bore bullet had shattered his off hind leg, and that my second shot had penetrated his lungs. I had left the few men I had brought with me on a neighboring hill when I had first caught sight of the rhinos, and now sent for them. Not liking to waste the meat, I sent to camp for twenty porters to carry it back. I reached camp that night at 12:30 A.M., feeling quite worn out." ■

The Member Adventures series will continue to feature highlight and excerpts from Boone and Crockett publications written by our adventurous members.

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