

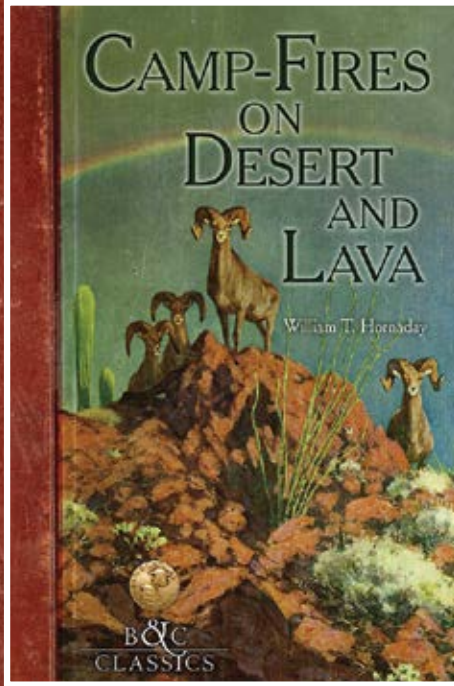
HORNADAY

CAMP-FIRES
ON
DESERT
AND LAVA

THE B&C CLASSICS SERIES EXCERPT

CAMP-FIRES ON DESERT AND LAVA

WILLIAM T. HORNADAY



CHAPTER XV DOGS IN CAMP

*Travel to Terra Incognita With One of America's
Greatest Conservationists*

*In the latest release from the Boone and Crockett
Club's Classics Series, hitch a ride with William T.
Hornaday as he travels to an unexplored chunk of
the Sonoran Desert circa 1907. There, he finds not
just lava and sand but a world of robust beauty—plus
a bipolar, flesh-eating dog named Rowdy.*



Hornaday's outfit coming through MacDougal Pass within two miles of MacDougal Crater, looking north. Hornaday Mountains close by on the left.

Camping with dogs is much the same as camping with men. It is all right if you know your dogs in advance and exercise an option; but when you do not, it is different. I am fond of dogs—in their proper place; and in about nine cases out of every eight, a hunter's camp is no place for them. Kaiser Smith, of the Canadian Rockies, was distinctly different; but Kaiser was a Wise One, and knew how to make good.

Every proposed camp-dog is doubtful gravel until panned out. In a camp where skins are being preserved and cured, there is always the danger of poison; and Heaven help any hunter who, wittingly or unwittingly, poisons his friend's favorite dog. No one knows why it is, but every man, no matter how "ornery" the pup may be, loves his own dog and sees in him things which seem

to justify his existence, even long after all other persons have wished him in the canine paradise.

While we were trailing westward from Sonoyta, traveling hard and doing no taxidermic work, Jeff Milton's dogs, Rex and Rowdy, were not at all bad. It was later on that they made their records. Frank Coles's Bob was a nuisance, nearly every waking hour, from the day that his front foot was run over. He was compelled to ride in one of the wagons, because walking was impossible for him; but by a most curious process of thinking, when off the ground he always thought that walking was quite as easy for him as riding! As a result, he was continually desirous of jumping off the load, and perpetually striving to do so. Lie down quietly while riding, he would not. Half the time some one held him forcibly, and beat him the other half to make him lie down. When we were traveling above Sonoyta, Bob wore out an average of three men per day.

We thought that his first foot under a moving wheel would make him wagon-wise: but it did not. No sooner had we cured his first hurt than he immediately achieved a second one, similarly. How he managed the doing of it no one ever knew, but at all events the little mole-headed dog succeeded in getting his left hind leg run over, without being killed. The tibia was fractured, beyond doubt; but it might have been worse. Again we bandaged him up and poured on arnica, and again he blinked

at us and wigwagged his thanks. For the next week he was a quiet invalid, and made no more trouble until we began the return journey.

Going up to Gila Bend, I thought he would drive Frank Coles to drink; and sure enough he did. Bob's lame leg No. 2 was nearly well, and every time we jumped a jack-rabbit he was wildly ambitious to jump off and chase it! As well might a chipmunk chase an antelope. Bob was held with a leash, he was held by the neck and ears, by injunction, by *lis pendens* and *quo warranto proceedings*. But a hundred and fifty times per day did he struggle, suddenly and wildly, to get free and leap overboard. On about one hundred and forty of those occasions he was beaten almost to a pulp, only to come up smiling ten minutes later for another trial. It required all the time, strength and attention of one able-bodied man to hold that absurd little lame cur on the top of the load where the rest of us dwelt during the flight out of Egypt.

Once Frank Coles said to me in a low, sad voice, like a man in confession-al, "I've wished a thousand times since we started that I'd left him at home! He don't seem to savvy a trip like this even a little bit."

In good sooth, we gave Bob too much credit at the off-go, and he deceived us all.

Of the two other dogs, Rex, the older one, was not so bad; but Rowdy was an unmitigated Case. He was a

Hornaday's camp in the oasis below the Papago Tanks.



fully-grown but only half-baked pointer-cur, with a brain like an affectionate pet monkey and the appetite of a hyena. The first time I saw Mr. Milton feed him and Rex, he established his reputation and justified his name. While Rex soberly and decorously took one good mouthful from the pan, Rowdy made two quick passes, four gulps, and presto! the pan was empty! Rex looked at him reproachfully, with a pained expression on his solemn countenance; and then we knew why the older dog's ribs were so conspicuous. Rowdy smiled genially at Rex, and all of us, and wagged his tail for more. No wonder he was fat, the gourmand.

It was at the Papago Tanks that Rowdy met his Waterloo. His decline and fall began on the day that the first sheep were killed and brought in. With his usual care for their comfort, Mr. Milton gave Rex and Rowdy an ample civilized feed of sheep scraps. Our good friend Jeff was almost painfully conscientious in providing for the comfort of his horses and his dogs.

With four sheep in camp to be worked into food and preserved specimens, meat scraps and trimmings of sorts began to accumulate

rapidly. In that dry atmosphere, fresh meat remains fresh and sweet for many days. I had arsenic and alum, but dared not use a morsel of either save on the scalp of Mr. Milton's sheep, at his special request, because I feared an accident with some of the dogs. Later on, I gave myself an hourly compliment for having had sufficient intelligence to adopt that policy, and adhere to it.

Rex was very reasonable, and knew one thing that thousands of human beings do not know. He knew when to let go! Instead of gorging himself on sheep meat, he ate reasonably each day, stopped at enough, and acquired merit.

But not so Rowdy. He was a dog of vaulting ambition, but utterly lacking in the divine sense of proportion that keeps dogs and men out of trouble. He undertook to consume all the waste mountain sheep that covered a zone two hundred feet wide around the camp. For days he laboured at the task, early and late, and often he worked overtime, by moonlight. In the small hours of the morning we used to hear the steady rasp of Rowdy's molars on pelvis and femur, mingling with the weird falsetto of envious coyotes, and then we

dreamed that we were back in New York, listening to music on the phonograph.

About the third day after he began operations on a large scale poor Rowdy became ill. As soon as it became evident that his case was serious, we began to give him medicine, in doses of work-horse size. He developed a case of fever, which looked very much like distemper, but fortunately was not. Our remedies made no impression upon him, and when finally we started home from the Papago Tanks, with Rowdy in my charge, because his master had ridden ahead to the settlement, I thought he could not live to Sonoyta. Instead of dosing him further with medicines, I decided to try starving him, relying upon Nature to see him through. Although at first too sick to hold up his head, we gave him a good bed and plenty of water to drink, and at last he actually began to improve. By the time we reached Sonoyta he was decidedly better, and after our departure he presently recovered. For an overfed dog of any breed, great or small, the best medicine is starvation!

The worst error made by Rex was on his last night in camp with us, at Santo Domingo. By

a brilliant and quite unusual stroke of genius some one tied him to one of the wagons—a circumstance most fortunate as it proved—and about the only time it was ever done. Just before supper was served Dr. MacDougal took a lighted lantern and started to walk past the end of the wagon to which the dog had been tied. Like a thunderbolt out of a cloudless sky, Rex sprang up and with fearful growls lunged forward at the Doctor, to bite him! A more savage attack I never saw made by a dog. Rex seemed eager to tear a good friend in pieces. The Doctor swung his lantern fairly into the jaws of the raging dog, and quickly backed one or two paces beyond his reach; which seemed to make the animal all the more angry. Had Rex been free and made such an attack, the results might have been very serious; especially to the dog in the case.

The next day we parted company with Rex and Rowdy, and we shall meet them no more in this vale of tears. ■



Photo of "The Finest Giant Cactus" taken by Hornaday.

Geographer Godfrey Sykes was part of the expedition and was responsible for mapping the Pinacate Region. Prior to the trip, no adequate maps of the area existed.

