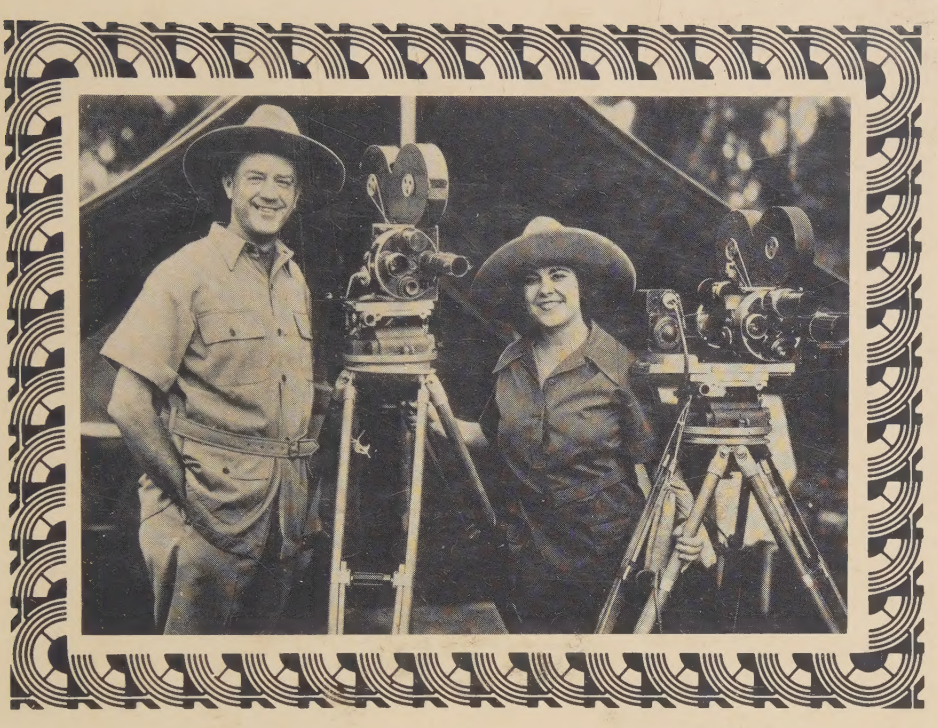


Exploring with

MARTIN AND OSA JOHNSON

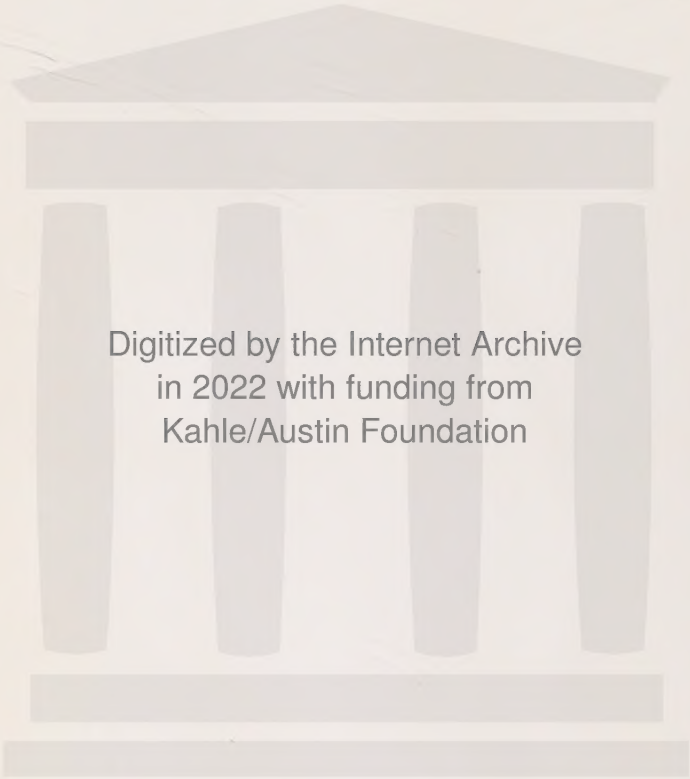
by Kenhelm W. Stott, Jr.

MARTIN AND OSA JOHNSON SAFARI MUSEUM PRESS

Kenhelm W. Stott, Jr. awarded the Explorers Club's coveted Citation of Merit (14th in the club's 74 year history) April, 1977.

Kenhelm W. Stott, Jr., the author, credits his first interest in natural history to reading Martins' book, **SAFARI, A SAGA OF THE AFRICAN BLUE** when he was eight years old. Not many years later, as a teen-age employee of the San Diego Zoo, he would follow the Johnsons on their frequent visits to the Zoo that housed many of their former pets and specimens. In 1948, Mr. Stott was kissed good-bye by Osa as he left on the first of his nineteen safaris to Africa. He has also retraced the

(Continued on back flap)



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MARTIN AND OSA JOHNSON SAFARI MUSEUM PRESS
CHANUTE, KANSAS
1978

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 78-061257

First Printing: 1978

Printed in the U.S.A.

Dedication

To Martin and Osa Johnson and their friends, Belle J. Benchley, Hugh and Jane Stanton, each of whom contributed in his or her way materially and spiritually to the direction and dedication of many young lives, my own included.

Kenhelm W. Stott, Jr.

Safari, 1933

Introduction

"Accounts of dare-devil exploits have always been read with deep interest. One of the salient features of human nature is curiosity, a desire to know what is being said and done outside the narrow limits of one's individual experience, or, in other words, to learn the modes of life of other persons whose environment and problems are different from one's own environment and problems. To this natural curiosity, the book of travel is particularly gratifying."

This quotation from the introduction to Martin Johnson's first book, **Through the South Seas with Jack London,** was written by one of Martin's associates, Ralph D. Harrison, in April, 1913. It would seem an equally appropriate start for the introduction to a book concerning the lives of Martin and his wife, Osa, written some sixty-five years later by their great admirer, Kenhelm W. Stott, Jr. Accounts of dare-devil exploits are read today with the same consuming interest as we are still interested in "how the other half lives."

If one word were to be selected which permeated and give meaning to the lives of Martin and Osa Johnson, that word would be "Adventure." In one book Martin Johnson thus describes their lives: "Adventure has been our object in a lifetime of seeking the unusual, the unknown, and with all, the wonderful feeling of freedom." Any book dealing with the lives of Martin and Osa Johnson must deal with adventure.

This is one such book.

Explorers, naturalists, photographers, and adventurers, the Johnsons made up their lives of world travels, to the South Pacific islands, to East and Central Africa, and to the island of Borneo, seeking the unknown to increase their own understanding of these regions and to bring this knowledge to the world through their writings, lectures and films.

The Johnsons were an integral part of the great age of photographically documented exploration which began with the advent of photography in 1835 and continues today. The introduction of photography made it possible for men to create fixed two-dimensional images of animate three-dimensional subjects. Throughout this age, refinements were made in the photographic processes including film improvements, the motion picture process, and sound recording techniques. During this age men went places and photographed things, recording them as never before possible.

The Johnsons experienced many of these changes in photography. When Martin started his pursuit of adventure only glass plate negatives were available to him. These, though heavy and fragile, were a definite improvement over earlier photographic processes. The next improvement effected Martin greatly. It was the introduction of nitrate-based films which were flexible and lighter and were considerably easier to

use. Nitrate-based films were explosively flammable if mishandled, but until safety films became available, these nitrate films were widely used.

Martin's introduction to motion picture technology came on his trip with Jack London on the **Snark** when he met three Pathe' motion picture operators in the Solomon Islands. Eight years later on his return to the islands, Martin and Osa took with them the equipment necessary to make their own motion pictures. They soon became famous for their films of the peoples and animals of the South Pacific, Borneo, and Africa. Always keeping abreast of refinements in film technology, the Johnsons added sounded equipment when it became practical, producing **Congorilla**, their first sound motion picture.

The Johnsons' quest for adventure provided the American public with seventeen books, many articles and films. Their popularity was tremendous in the early half of this century and continues even today. Today more than ever, the data collected by the Johnsons provides an important source of ethnological, zoological and botanical material which would have been otherwise lost to contemporary researchers.

Kenhelm W. Stott, Jr., the author of this narrative of the lives and accomplishments of Martin and Osa Johnson, is a Research Associate and an Honorary Trustee of the Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum in Chanute, Kansas. He attributes his early interest in natural history to Martin and Osa Johnson as a result of reading about their adventures in Martin's book **Safari, a Saga of the African Blue** in 1928. As a youngster, he obtained a job at the San Diego Zoo's refreshment stand and subsequently worked his way through several departments, eventually becoming the General Curator of the San Diego Zoo as well as the Editor of the San Diego **Zoonooz.**

Since retiring from these positions, Mr. Stott has traveled throughout the world, to many areas the Johnsons themselves once visited. He has made nineteen trips to Africa and others to Asia, Borneo and the South Pacific Islands in, what he terms, "the footsteps of the Johnsons."

He is currently the Research Associate of the San Diego Zoological Society, a Life Fellow of the Explorers Club, Life Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, and is a member of many natural history groups in America, Europe, Africa, and India. He has written hundreds of scientific and popular articles, several of which have dealt with the contributions of Martin and Osa Johnson, and has edited three magazines.

John C. Awald
Former Director
The Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum
Chanute, Kansas

Ituri Forest, 1930

Wambutti pygmies with skins of the rare okapi.

Cheetah cubs were house cats at No. 7, Lucania Road, Muthaiga.

Foreword

The primary aim of this brief narrative is not to provide a detailed biographical account of the Martin Johnsons but rather to produce a chronological key to their extensive peregrinations. Biographical material, both photographic and literary, exists in staggering abundance.

During their careers Martin and Osa Johnson produced a bountiful but unrecorded number of feature-length films and nearly as many personally-slanted motion pictures to illustrate their lectures. Martin wrote seven books and fifty-five major articles, and Osa ten books, of which six were for children. She also wrote thirty-one articles, twenty-four of which appeared in **Good Housekeeping**. Several books, a number of pamphlets, and innumerable articles have been written about them, many while they were still living. Since their separate deaths, articles concerning their adventures have appeared sporadically but consistently to this day.

Photographic equipment, supplies of every imaginable variety, and travel expenses were demanding, hence the Johnsons had no choice but to make the most of each expedition. Early in their careers, on one prolonged trip that involved widely separated regions, they accumulated sufficient material to produce three feature films, and on another two feature films and two of Martin's books for adults. Throughout their travels, a steady stream of articles by both of the Johnsons poured into America enhancing our understanding of these regions. When Martin and Osa did return to the States, it was usually because of finances or, rather, no finances. To put it bluntly, they were at regular intervals stone-broke. As soon as a commercial feature and a book or two had been prepared, they invariably set off on a lecture tour at break-neck speed. Martin was nothing short of frenetic during his American visits. These visits lasted only long enough to accrue sufficient funds for another expedition. As soon as possible, the Johnsons were off for the wilds on a well-planned trip that would last until the last dollar had been spent. Their modus operandi was merely a means to an end. Photographic equipment, vehicles, supplies for up to a four-year expedition, and transportation for the Johnsons and their freight to and from diverse and distant parts of the globe had to be financed and the only way to accomplish this was to utilize the motion picture films, stills, and anecdotal material from one trip to the fullest in order to finance that next trip, wherever it was to take them.

Martin Johnson's brilliance as a photographer, whether his subject was wildlife, savages or landscape, stands unchallenged, from his initial South Seas efforts onward. He was both an artist and a skilled technician, and the pictorial results from the earliest days throughout his life, from the most primitive still cameras to highly sophisticated sound and electrically propelled motion picture cameras, attest irrevocably to such a contention.

Furthermore, the Johnsons were first-class showmen and knew how to prepare their material, whether for the screen or the printed page, in the most effective manner possible. Each Johnson product bears its own highly individualistic stamp and grows in historical importance with the passing of the years.

Osa, a good photographer in her own right, provided both stills and movies that were almost up to Martin's standards. And it was she who stood by his side with rifle in hand to drop that occasional rhino whose charge was not a bluff, for she was indeed a far better shot than her husband. She shouldered more of the organizational tasks on safari than did Martin, making each campsite, either one for use overnight or one to be occupied more or less continuously for a matter of months or years, as comfortable and functional as possible. While Martin processed films in his wilderness darkrooms, she planted fruits and vegetables and raised poultry—and knew what to do with them; she was a first rate cook. Furthermore, she made curtains, furniture and shelves and ran her jungle households and her staff with military efficiency. The individual abilities of each complemented the other's most effectively; they were indeed the perfect couple.

To anyone attempting an accurate chronological synthesis of the Johnsons' journeys, however, their need to make the most of each adventure provides nothing short of a nightmare. Not only do dates provided in various accounts by other authors about the Johnsons' expeditions contradict one another, but the Johnsons' own accounts, often polished by aides in America while the Johnsons were thousands of miles away, are equally contradictive and upon occasion place Martin and Osa at two far distant places at the same moment. Actually, where the world-spanning Martin Johnsons were concerned, such geographical inconsistencies might very nearly have been truths.

There was invariably a good reason for separating one extended expedition into two or possibly three, all from the standpoint of time and geography. Martin had a keen sense of how to package their material most effectively. A seven-month stay with the grisly Nagapate in the New Hebrides made one compact, cohesive unit; an expedition to the headwaters of the Kinabatangan River in Borneo provided another; and a motion picture concerning the scenery and wildlife of Ceylon still another, yet all were filmed on a single trip. The photographic material obtained on each part of such a lengthy trek was superlative and told a story all its own. The alternative would have been to produce a lengthy hodgepodge, using only highlights and jumping erratically from one part of the world to another. I can recall little movie footage or few anecdotes that could have been omitted. In editing the results of their travels as they did, they made it possible financially to set off on one adventure after another and at the same time provided their viewing and reading public with bonus after bonus.

My own preoccupation with the Johnsons began at the age of eight when I read **Safari,** just off the press. From that date onward I followed them mile by mile, book by book, and film by film.

In 1931 when the San Diego Zoological Garden acquired the Johnsons' two famous gorillas from the Congo Belge, I was a teen-age employee cleaning cages and selling peanuts. When the Johnsons came to town to lecture and visit their "great, black babies", I was privileged to follow them as they and Director Belle J. Benchley walked about the zoo grounds. Although I was not to have more than the opportunity to eavesdrop on Martin Johnson's remarks, I was later to become reasonably well acquainted with the utterly charming Osa. In fact it was she who, in New York in 1948, kissed and bade me farewell on the first of nineteen lengthy African trips of my own, not of the Minibus tour, luxury lodge variety, but to such remote areas as the Virunga Volcanoes to observe gorillas where the Johnsons first photographed them and to the mauve and salmon-colored deserts of the Northern Frontier and the lovely Lake Paradise they surrounded. Interspersed between African voyages, I followed the Johnsons' footsteps to Ceylon, into the interior of Borneo, to New Guinea, the Solomons, the New Hebrides, and Fiji. From time to time in the most unexpected places a wizened Malay or a grinning Kikuyu would ask, since I was an American, whether I knew the Johnsons. It was always a thrill to be able to answer affirmatively. In East and Central Africa, of course, the Johnsons have become sufficiently legendary to survive even the upheavals that have accompanied the emerging of these independent nations. Whenever I pass through the welcoming doors of the Norfolk Hotel, I invariably have a strong conviction that somewhere in that venerable establishment there should be prominently displayed a plaque reading something to the effect of, "On their first night in Nairobi, Martin and Osa Johnson slept here."

Kenhelm Welburn Stott, Jr.

Masai warriors.

Chapter I

The first Martin Johnson expedition transpired without documentation, either literary or photographic. Base camp, established in a cave in a railway embankment, was occupied for only one night. The following morning a chilled and chastened ten-year-old returned to Lincoln, Kansas. When he entered the Johnson home, neither John Johnson nor his wife seemed aware that Martin had been a runaway at all.

Father Johnson had shown a flair for adventure since he too had been a boy, so Martin's restless behavior could scarcely be unexpected. John Alfred Johnson had been brought by his parents to America from Jonkoping, Sweden. As a young man he saw New York and Chicago and opted for a more adventuresome life in the Midwest. He became involved in the then thriving buffalo-hide trade and later provided supplies for General Custer's army.

The next step was a short one—he enlisted to serve under Custer. When military duties were light, he whiled away the hours playing poker.

According to one unverified report it was during an especially intense game that John and a companion failed to hear a "boots and saddles" call. General Custer and his company rode out of camp to the Little Bighorn. Thus, John Johnson and friend were the sole survivors of their company.

Shortly thereafter, John Johnson left the army and settled in Rockford, Illinois, with his mother and stepfather. It was here that he married Lucinda Constant of Humphreys, Missouri, in 1880 and became foreman of the stemwinding department of the Rockford Watch Company. The Johnsons' firstborn was a boy, Martin, who arrived on October 9, 1884.

Early in 1885 they moved to Lincoln, Kansas. It was a busy year for the Johnsons. They opened a jewelry and watch store, produced a daughter, Freda, and later moved to Independence, Kansas, where John opened another store.

Here he added a number of new lines, two of which were to have a lasting effect on son Martin. European novelties, whose crates bore stencilled places of origin — Montreaux, Lausanne, Nuremburg, and Venice—tantalized the eleven-year-old Martin. An indifferent student, Martin excelled in school in only one subject: geography.

Even more influential in the Independence store was the exclusive franchise for Kodak and other Eastman products. In photography, Martin evinced an immediate and serious interest. Father Johnson was quick to realize that this was no passing fancy, so with Martin as an enthralled assistant, he constructed a darkroom at the rear of the store.

While Martin photographed everything in sight, helping himself to the store's photographic supplies (and entirely with Father Johnson's approval), he soon overcame the intricacies of developing films and making satisfactory prints. John further encouraged Martin's interest by obtaining such books on photography as were available.

At thirteen, Martin produced his first wild animal photographs. Learning that a circus was to perform in Kansas City, Martin hopped

a freight train that went, unfortunately, to Topeka. By the time Martin reached Kansas City, the circus had already been gone for two days, and Martin had to content himself by photographing posters that had been liberally plastered about town—snarling tigers, roaring lions, and trumpeting elephants.

A couple of years later during summer vacation, Martin achieved two goals. The first was the construction of the rickety house-boat from which he planned to make photographs in distant places, perhaps "even as far as the Mississippi." One night when Martin was sleeping on board, a violent storm left the raft in shambles and dampened Martin physically but not at all in spirit.

Instead of traveling by water, he used other means of transportation to travel about the state, charging a penny per picture or a dozen photographs for a dime. He meandered south to Coffeyville then north to Altoona, Neodesha and Chanute. By now the summer was waning and his photographic equipment began to malfunction. He had taken a room above the Williams Opera House in Chanute, Kansas. The subjects of his last photographic session in Chanute were a petulant seven-year-old girl, Osa Leighty, and her uncooperative three-year-old brother, Vaughn.

Then it was back to the drudgery of school. Here Martin continued his photography. He was, however, becoming rather bored with the subject matter available and began to dabble in trick photography, self-taught, though sophisticated, and destined to evoke explosive results. On a weekend picnic, he positioned friends and classmates in stilted and sentimental poses so popular in hand-colored lantern slides of the day. . . cheek to cheek, hand in hand, man on bended knee pleading with the object of his affection. Then in the secrecy of his darkroom, he produced prints in which the faces of his friends were superimposed with earlier portraits of faculty members.

The results were met with hilarity by his schoolmates, but not so when they fell into the hands of the principal. He demanded that Martin reclaim every picture he had distributed and bring them to the Office. Once this was accomplished, the principal tore them to shreds and punished Martin in unduly harsh terms. Martin was expelled on the spot.

Over-reaction on the part of the principal produced over-reaction on Martin's part. Independence had become far too confining, so Martin left town on the following morning. Had he remained to finish high school, it is quite probable that he would have begun work full time at the Johnson store and the name, Martin Johnson, would have become as fully obscure as that of the principal who expelled him.

Years later, when Martin applied for membership in the Explorers Association (later to become the Explorers Club), he filled in the blank following "Education" as follows: "Around the World." He listed three books, seven feature films, and seventeen one-reel short subjects. His travels, by the age of thirty-seven, had indeed more than compensated for whatever formal education his high school might have provided.

When Martin climbed aboard the train at Independence following his

expulsion he had sufficient funds to travel as far as Chicago with $1.20 left over, and there he got a job as a bellhop at the LaSalle Hotel. With a weather-eye open for a better paying job, he shortly obtained one at an engraving firm.

One day during the lunch hour, he discussed with friends the possibility of foreign travel—and the discussion turned into a wager. He had precisely four dollars and twenty-five cents. Martin made a bet with his skeptical co-workers that he could manage to get to Europe on that meager sum.

After lunch, he failed to return to work but instead climbed aboard a freight train for New York. Once there he sneaked into the grandiose Waldorf-Astoria and wrote to his family on hotel stationery. "Dear Folks: Gee but N. Y. is big! What do you think of the bluff I'm putting up? I just walked in the Waldorf-Astoria and didn't pay any attention to the millionaires around me."

After describing his extensive sight-seeing in and about New York he went on to announce, "You will be further amazed now—be prepared—I am to take 28 horses worth $250.00 each to Liverpool early Monday morning." The letter was dated only "Saturday, 1906", but his visit to New York must have been early in the year.

In any event, Martin and his 28 horses eventually reached Liverpool after a rough crossing. Having delivered his charges, he went to London, then to the Continent where he mopped floors, polished windows, washed dishes, accepting any menial task that would provide funds to enable him to continue his travels. His voyage took him to Brussels, to Stockholm, to Brest and to Paris and finally to La Havre where as a stowaway he recrossed the Atlantic on a freighter and headed for Independence. When he descended to the railway platform, he passed unrecognized by "that plump, jolly druggist," as Osa once described Charlie Kerr, who was in later years to play a prominent part in Martin's future.

Martin knocked on the screen door of the Johnson home and addressed the lady of the house, "Sorry to bother you, lady, but could you spare a poor bum a cup of coffee?" The moment Mother Johnson realized who the "poor bum" was, she sat down and wept with joy. John, upon learning of the prodigal's return, declared a holiday for himself and for Freda, now eleven, as well.

For a brief period, Martin worked diligently at his father's emporium which soon doubled in size. A vacant store was renovated as a photographic salon and across the two store fronts appeared a new sign, JOHNSON AND SON. Despite the success of the enlarged business, Martin once again began to feel a fettered restlessness. Once having tasted the tantalizing fruits of travel, he found more and more that Independence offered him no independence whatsoever.

The November 11, 1906, issue of **Cosmopolitan**, which Martin described as his favorite magazine, contained an article concerning a proposed round-the-world yachting trip of author Jack London and his wife, Charmian. The journey was to last for seven years and the ketch-

rigged craft, now under construction in San Francsico, was to be named **The Snark**. A peek at a dictionary definition of that whimsical name might possibly have tempered Martin's innate ebullience: "nonsense creature by Lewis Carroll for his **The Hunting of the Snark.**" Undaunted by the possibility that Londons' craft was perhaps ominously named, Martin wrote Jack London at once, describing the ingenuity his "highly successful" European jaunt had required.

There are two versions of the correspondence that ensued. One was provided by Martin himself in **Through the South Seas With Jack London** (Dodd, Mead & Co., 1913) and may well have been accurate. On the other hand, it might have been due to literary license which in subsequent books Martin was not averse to using when it made for a more readable narrative. Martin's version of the telegram that arrived four days later was CAN YOU COOK, to which he responded SURE, TRY ME.

A second and more lengthy version appears in an excellent booklet written by Mariam L. Mih for the Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum and the Chanute Chamber of Commerce in August, 1961. In this version, London's telegram read IF YOU CAN COOK AND TAKE A TRICK AT THE WHEEL, THERE'S A JOB FOR YOU. SALARY $25 A MONTH, and Martin's reply was CAN COOK AND TAKE A TRICK AT THE WHEEL. SALARY NO OBJECT. Version number one, considerably more "punchy," is the one that has appeared in all other accounts.

Martin devoted a month to a none-too-successful attempt to learn the basics of the culinary arts. Then he set off for the West Coast, bursting with an enthusiasm that throughout his life seemed unquenchable, regardless of circumstances. He reached Oakland in December, 1906, now twenty-two years of age. He met the Londons and liked them on sight. He also became acquainted with the captain and designer of the **Snark**, Roscoe Eames, who by coincidence happened to be Charmian London's uncle. Martin spent considerable time with the Londons' nurse, Old Mammy Jenny, in further but non-productive efforts to improve upon his cooking abilities.

San Francisco was in a state of shock and confusion, still reeling from the effects of the disastrous earthquake that had occurred earlier in the year, but Martin seems to have enjoyed every minute of his time spent there. He explored its ruins, visited opium dens, made innumerable friends, and during his stay accumulated four still cameras that were to record the voyage of **The Snark**—and to start him irrevocably down the road to a photographic career of a magnitude he'd never dreamed of.

Strikes and an unbelievable array of constructional mishaps provided one delay in departure after another. Original plans for the creation of **The Snark** predicted a cost of seven thousand dollars but by the time the craft was completed the figure had risen to nearly thirty thousand. When the hull was finally constructed, it slid gracefully down the ways and was moved across the bay to Oakland for rigging and fitting. Martin was ecstatic about the results and considered the **Snark** a thing of sheer

beauty. It was forty-five feet long at the water line, fifty-five over all, with a width of fourteen feet. It boasted two masts plus a seventy horsepower engine for emergency use only.

The Londons fell deeply in debt and upon occasion became thoroughly discouraged. More than once, Jack was to comment, "She (**The Snark**) was born unfortunately." But Martin's enthusiasm soared undaunted, despite one delay after another. Actually, had the **Snark** been completed on time, October 1st, Martin might have spent the rest of his life photographing squalling babies, high school graduates and stilted family groups in Independence.

During the construction period, Martin stayed either at the Londons' home or slept on board the **Snark**. On one occasion, had he not been on board for the night, the **Snark** might well have added a twenty-sixth to the twenty-five boats that sank during a storm of hurricane proportions. Martin spent the night fighting the elements to a point of exhaustion, but ultimately he saved the precious **Snark** from destruction. The event was strangely similar to the one in which Martin attempted to save a house-boat in Independence, but on this occasion his efforts were successful.

On April 23, 1907, the **Snark**, with the Londons and its crew of four, dubbed "the Snarkites" by Charmian, slipped through the Golden Gate and began its bizarre and trouble-plagued odyssey. Once off the coast, they were met by almost relentlessly rough seas that resulted in sea-sickness that struck the entire company, including Martin. One fortunate aspect of the heavy seas was that Martin's culinary deficiencies were not put to much use. No one was hungry and such little food as was consumed came from cans. The captain and his crew were at one another's throats at such times as they felt well enough to argue. The only subject upon which all agreed (excepting Martin) was the poor quality of cooking whenever Martin felt well enough to fulfill his duties in the galley.

Twenty-seven days after its departure, the **Snark** reached Honolulu. There all crew members except Martin resigned and eventually even Captain Eames, by this time, felt he had had enough of the **Snark** and was readily replaced by one Captain Warren. Martin was promoted to engineer, probably as much because of the poor quality of his cooking as any great degree of excellence in his engineering abilities, and a new cook was signed aboard. Martin certainly was not qualified to be selected as navigator. At one point en route to Honolulu, his experiments with the sextant placed the **Snark** somewhere in the mid-Atlantic.

For five months the **Snark** sailed from island to island in the Hawaiian group and Martin was charmed by them all, even Molokai, the leper island. Where high-rise condominiums and hotels now lie, picturesque native villages dotted the landscape. Balmy weather and refreshing tropical squalls assuaged the horrendous memories of the rough crossing from San Francisco.

On October 7, 1907, the **Snark** sailed from Hilo on what London referred to as "the long traverse," a two thousand mile jaunt as the crow flies to the Marquesas. Tradewinds and adverse currents made the

Londons choose a somewhat longer route, and it did not prove to be an easy one. Lack of winds and currents in the doldrums cost them many days. Provisions spoiled and ran low, but since fish were plentiful the Snarkites did not suffer from hunger. However, when their fresh water supply ran out, they came dangerously near to dying from thirst. The trip to Nuku Hiva took sixty-one interminable days and, when they dropped anchor at Taiohae Bay, it was a joyous occasion for all.

The Londons and Martin hired horses and guides for a visit to Typee Valley, which had achieved fame through Herman Melville's **Typee**. Another brush with literature occurred when they met a Mrs. Fisher who in the past had welcomed as boarders Robert Louis Stevenson and his family before they moved on to Samoa. Martin's prose as he wrote of Nuku Hiva was rapturous and continued to be so enthusiastic describing the ensuing months as to approach tedium.

After twelve days in the Marquesas, the **Snark** set sail for the Society Islands on a winding course through the treacherous reefs of the Tuamotu Archipelago. Stevenson, during his cruise, became lost in them for two weeks, and whalers and trading ships avoided them assiduously, nicknaming them appropriately as the Dangerous Archipelago. Passing through the Tuamotus, the **Snark** reached Tahiti nine days later. The Londons and the crew, expected in Papeete two months earlier, had been given up for lost. Thus they were greeted warmly not only by Tahitian residents but also by two hundred sailors who cheered from an American warship at anchor.

A mountain of mail awaited Jack London. Included were reports that Jack's business affairs had fallen into such bad shape that it was necessary for him to return to the States to straighten out matters. Three and a half months—all enchanting to Martin—passed before London returned and the party made plans to move on. During that peroid Martin learned a smattering of Polynesian dialects and a version of what he called the hula-hula (which he was later to teach Osa for use on their lecture tours).

From Tahiti, they sailed to other, nearby islands of the Society group, their last stop being Bora Bora, "marvelous island." Finally on April 15, 1908, they set sail for the Samoan Islands, "genuinely sorry to leave Bora Bora". Thirteen days later they sighted the Manua islands, nearest of the Samoas. Ninety miles further on, they reached Tutuila and Pago Pago Bay, "the prettiest land-locked harbour I have ever seen." After a week, they moved on to Apia, on the island of Upolu. It was here that Robert Louis Stevenson spent his last years. Upon his death, he had been buried on a mountain top near the home he had named Vailima.

Martin wrote in great detail of Samoa's beauty, its inhabitants and their customs, just as he had of each island they had previously visited. He accumulated vast quantities of detailed material—ethnologic, linguistic, historical and esthetic, and until near the end of the **Snark's** wanderings he continued to view even the most devastating events with a dauntless enthusiasm that does not appear to have been entirely shared by his companions.

From the Samoan Islands, the **Snark** headed for Viti Levu, largest of the Fijian Islands. When it reached Suva, Captain Warren, who had become rather bellicose (among other bits of unorthodox behavior, he broke the cook's nose), was discharged. He was replaced, surprisingly enough, not by a professional seaman but by Jack London himself. Describing Suva, Martin wrote it "looms up from the sea, quite like a modern city, and is really the most modern in this part of the world."

It is on page 268 of Martin's **Through the South Seas with Jack London** that the first (and to the reader, quite welcome) disparaging remarks are made. The **Snark** had reached the New Hebrides and its company was exposed for the first time to Melanesian cannibals "only one degree removed from animals." Martin seemed shocked, so much so that he felt he must refrain from speaking plainly. When Martin and the Londons wished to accompany Rev. Watts on a trip into the interior of Tanna to visit a native village, the good Reverend "threw up his hands in horror." It was no place to take a civilized woman.

Trader Wiley, a "big, jolly-looking Scotsman" with a wicked reputation, was ultimately persuaded to guide them into the interior. Sunday, June 22, the Londons and Martin landed on Tanna to find Frank Stanton, who dealt in copra, awaiting them. Trader Wiley, who three years before had witnessed a cannibal feast on the island, was ill it seemed, and Mr. Stanton now volunteered to stand in as a guide. The natives they encountered "were the most savage, heathenish folk I have ever looked upon." When Mrs. London asked how she should describe these people in her diary, her husband replied, " 'Worse than naked' and let it go at that!"

The **Snark** resumed its cruise through the western New Hebrides, the Londons and Martin going ashore by day at various islands, but judiciously returning to the security of their boat for the night. When sailing, they spent all of each day on deck so as not to miss the "beautiful scenery," which indeed it is, but the entire tone of Martin's narrative gradually becomes less radiant as the voyage progressed—and little wonder. By this time, tropical illnesses including yaws began to affect each of them, and the undiluted enthusiasm that had pervaded Martin's account thus far began to wane.

Once they put into Vila, on Efate, which then as now was governed jointly by France and England. Then, however, it was a headquarters for schooners involved in "blackbirding," a quaint practice of kidnapping natives en masse to be sold in the labor markets of Fiji and Samoa. Now, it is a small but delightful town with a picture-postcard atmosphere and contains one of the most luxurious resort hotels I have ever seen. Cannibalism and blackbirding ceased long ago. Only the danger of typhoons remains.

The imminence of the typhoon season made the Snarkites decide to move on to the Solomons. By June 28, they reached Santa Ana, an islet off the eastern tip of San Cristobal. There they added to what was already an over-load of artifacts no less than one hundred spears. In trade, they provided brightly polished "junk" jewelry Martin had received in San Francisco by freight from his father in Independence.

From island to island, large and small, the **Snark** worked its way along the British Solomons, including San Cristobal, Santa Isabel, Malaita, and Guadalcanal.

Martin wrote, "In none of these islands had any (outsider) been back more than a few miles from the coast." Although the Snarkites were not to witness cannibalism itself, they came upon ample evidence of past feasts where gnawed human bones remained.

Although I never have seen the anecdote in print, I heard Martin describe an unusually sociable group of natives who visited the **Snark**. With them, they brought bananas, mangos, other fresh fruit and broiled meat. While Charmian, not feeling well at the time, nibbled at a banana, Martin and Jack gnawed hungrily at the meat which was delicately sweet in flavor and somewhat like pork.

A disquieting suspicion seems to have hit both of them at the same moment. What kind of meat was this? The reply was a cheerful bit of pidgin, "him long pig." Both Martin and Jack raced for the rail.

At Penduffryn, the largest copra plantation of the Solomons, the **Snark's** company had brief respite from the savagery they witnessed continually in the New Hebrides and the Solomons. There "the largest group of white men ever gathered on the island of Guadalcanal made things hum with good time."

But the Snarkites were discouraged, weary of the primitive people they encountered, and increasingly beset by illness. Jack's hands and feet had begun to swell, becoming extremely sore, and his skin began to peel away. While they were tempted to chuck the whole thing, they retained sufficient stamina to cruise two hundred miles north to visit Ontong Java, sometimes referred to as Lord Howe Atoll. There Martin added unique headstones to an already priceless pictorial record of the South Seas employing the wet-plate emulsion on glass process practiced at the time.

Two months later they returned to Penduffryn to find that three motion picture cameramen from Pathe' Freres in Paris were preparing to film Solomon cannibals. All three had fallen sick and their chemicals, improperly packed, had deteriorated. Martin, though far from well, was healthier than they, and his chemicals were in excellent shape.

The misfortunes of the French group were to provide an opportunity that was to shape Martin's entire career—his first experience with filming motion pictures.

He joined them on an expedition up the Mbalisuma River to a village named Charley. "This," wrote Martin, "was the first time a white man had set foot in the interior of the island of Guadalcanal." After securing considerable footage in the hinterlands of the unexplored island and its inhabitants, the party returned to Penduffryn where Martin found the Londons' physical condition had dangerously deteriorated. There seemed no choice but to reach civilization and receive the best medical treatment available. On Thursday, November 5, Martin, Jack and Charmian left the Solomons aboard the steamship **Makambo.** Wada, the cook, and two Tahitians stayed behind aboard the **Snark** at Aola, Guadalcanal, while the **Makambo** made its way to Sydney. On Sunday, November 15,

they dropped anchor in Sydney Harbor. After seventeen months they had returned to civilization and any hope of continuing the seven-year voyage was forsaken.

Both Martin and Jack were hospitalized, but not Charmian who was the least ill of the three. When Martin recovered sufficiently, they decided he should go by freighter back to the Solomons to pick up the **Snark** and its three guards. This trek alone involved two months and nearly four thousand miles for the round trip. Martin, Wada and the two Tahitians reached Sydney on March 5, 1909, and the **Snark** was placed on sale. The Londons had opted to recross the Pacific, but Martin was determined to complete his tour around the world.

Learning that Theodore Roosevelt was planning an extended African trip to collect specimens for the Smithsonian, Martin wrote an application to join the expedition. Unfortunately, the group was fully formed, so Martin's request was rejected.

His next move was to sail to Singapore, then west through the Suez. At Port Said he hoped to meet Roosevelt and apply once again to join the group that boasted among its members not only Theodore Roosevelt and his son, Kermit, but also the renowned mammalogist, Edmund Heller. Upon reaching Port Said, Martin found the Roosevelt party had passed through three days previously. He had missed, by so short a time-span, what was to become the most prestigious and comprehensive scientific expedition ever to visit East Africa. The fact that Martin was discouraged at having missed such an opportunity is understandable. However, it is nothing short of astonishing that Martin's zest for adventure remained undaunted after the gruelling, nearly disastrous voyage of the **Snark**.

The Londons reached San Francisco in June, but Martin worked his way through Europe, pausing in Paris to purchase two and a half reels of the Solomon Island films he had helped to photograph. With these and seven thousand still pictures, he crossed the Atlantic, arriving as a stowaway in Boston in September.

When he reached Independence, the railroad platform was jammed. Once again Charlie Kerr was there, but this time the druggist recognized Martin. Flags and banners flew and a brass band welcomed him loudly, if not entirely musically. Martin was never again to be merely a home-town boy returning unnoticed from a trip. He was now and throughout his life would remain, a topnotch genuine celebrity.

Chapter II

Sic transit gloria mundi could never have been more applicably employed than to describe Martin Johnson after his return home. He had negatives from which to provide slides, his movie film, his diary, and his brief encounter with fame. But fickle Gloria he was soon to lose unless he could find some practical use for her. Fortunately, Osa on the horizon was to be a far more reliable companion and a prettier one, at that. Early in 1910 it was Charlie Kerr, the druggist, who came to the rescue. His revolutionary suggestion was that he and Martin open a theatre. There Martin could show his slides and motion pictures and lecture along with them. Although Martin was virtually penniless, Kerr was sufficiently enthusiastic about the idea to sell his flourishing drugstore in order to fund the new project.

They rented an empty store and turned it into a theatre, the concept of which was both unique and appropriate. The store-front became the prow of a ship; inside, the ceiling lights were so placed as to suggest the deck plan of a boat. It was christened the Snark, well chosen and a good bit of timing since Jack London, at the height of his popularity, was to publish **The Cruise of the Snark** the following year.

Martin's initial attempts at lecturing were painful, no doubt more so to him than his audience. Charlie Kerr quickly erected a podium of upright pipes supporting what appeared to be a portion of a ship's rail (and Martin) and a lighted rack to hold his notes. Now no matter how weak Martin's knees might become, he could grasp the rail tighter than he had ever gripped that of the original **Snark**. Soon he discovered that his audiences were so fascinated with the films and slides themselves that they paid little heed to the shortcomings of his lecturing technique. As he became more relaxed, he began to enjoy sharing his **Snark** adventures and effectively conveyed his enthusiasm to avid listeners.

He developed a style that was direct and natural; throughout his life his lectures seemed more in the nature of relaying anecdotes to intimate friends, rather than formalized and stilted types of address that might tend to separate him psychologically from his audiences.

The Snark theatre became so popular that a second theatre seemed indicated, and Snark No. 2 came into being. The two theatres augmented Martin's lectures with other movie fare produced in quantities by a burgeoning motion picture industry.

By the time everyone in Independence had cruised with the landlocked Snarks at least once, Martin began to take his lecture to neighboring communities. He had added a girl singer to perform between slides and films—Gail Perigo, girlfriend of Dick Hamilton, one of his projectionists.

When the three presented the **Snark's** voyage early in the spring of 1910, one audience contained pretty, little Osa Leighty who had come to Chanute's Roof Garden Theatre to hear her friend Gail sing. Osa thoroughly enjoyed Gail's singing but she was not overly impressed by the lecturer and his films. By the time he began to show the

savages of the New Hebrides and the Solomons, Osa was so thoroughly revolted she walked out.

In April Osa mustered sufficient courage to travel by train all the way to Independence ostensibly to hear once again her friend Gail sing. When she bought her theatre ticket, she looked up to find the cashier was Martin. She later claimed she found him no more appealing than before. This time, however, she presumably stayed all the way through the lecture.

Much to Osa's annoyance, Gail had married Dick Hamilton; the two girls earlier had promised one another they would, when the occasion arose and two proper candidates were available, have a double wedding. Now Gail had married without Osa's approval, and somehow it was all the fault of that terrible Martin Johnson and his two Snarks.

Shortly, Martin and Osa were dating with Dick and Gail as chaperones. Martin, in his usual abrupt manner, wasted no time in writing Miss Leighty, asking if he might visit her and her family in Chanute. Receiving her acceptance, he arrived at the home of railroad engineer William Leighty and his wife, Ruby Isabelle "Belle" Holman Leighty, daughter Osa and son Vaughn.

None of the Leightys were overly impressed. Since the visit might be conceived as part of a courting procedure, they viewed Martin not as an explorer and lecturer but as a prospective husband to their little Osa, who had never been farther than thirty-five miles from home. Anyone who would traipse around the world photographing cannibals seemed lacking in the virtues of stability and dedication to the normal, sedentary life desirable in a "family" man.

Osa showed Martin the family picture album. The quality of the photographic contents was poor and Martin outspokenly disapproved. The only passable picture was one of Osa and Vaughn taken many years before—and Martin had been the photographer.

Mrs. Leighty felt it was time to change the subject. "Why don't you sing for Mr. Johnson, Osie?" After Osa dutifully sang one popular song of the day after another, it was Martin's turn to be unimpressed.

Perceiving this, Mrs. Leighty asked, "Don't you care for music, Mr. Johnson?"

Martin didn't mind it, really. He was tone-deaf.

The following Sunday Martin paid another call to the Leighty household. Osa still appeared to feel cooly towards him. Nonetheless, when Gail came down with a sore throat, Martin had grown to like Osa sufficiently to phone the Leighty residence to ask if she might sing in her friend's place at Snark No. 2.

Martin's mother and sister met Osa at the train and took her to the theatre where Martin greeted her crossly, "You're late."

Dressed in her prettiest dress, she sang unrehearsed with a pianist she had never met. While she was entirely pleased with her efforts, Martin was indifferent, being, as he claimed, tone-deaf. The audience, however, seemed enthusiastic.

Osa, after being introduced to Mr. Kerr, spent the night sharing a bed

with Freda in the John Johnson residence. The following day, Martin accompanied her to the station. En route they paused at Snark No. 1 so Martin could change posters in preparation for new films to be shown the following day.

What had been a drizzle became a downpour, and during the midst of it, Martin proposed. Osa, accepting, rather dubiously asked when Martin thought they should be married.

Martin's answer was typical. "Now, of course."

He phoned Charlie Kerr, borrowed some money, and with Charlie as a witness, the Independence ceremony was held at nine that evening, May 15, 1910.

Ever practical, Martin began to consider the ramifications of the situation; he realized that the Kansas marriage involving an under-aged bride without parental consent might present complications.

The couple boarded the very train on which Osa had planned to return to Chanute, but when the train paused at Chanute, it produced no Osa. Passing on, it left a bewildered Mr. Leighty standing on the platform and a tearful Osa on the train.

They disembarked in Kansas City, Missouri, where a second ceremony was held and, according to one unlikely account, they spent five days in a telephone booth attempting to explain their actions to two sets of disapproving parents.

Although I never have seen it in print, I have more than once heard Martin wryly explain the affair by stating, "I needed Osa as a permanent singer. Since I couldn't affort to pay her what she was worth, I had to marry her."

Contrary to expectations, the Martin Johnsons rented a flat above a store and settled down to lead the life of average newlyweds. The Leightys now approved of their new son-in-law, and Osa began to extol the advantages of a house of their own, as opposed to a rented flat.

Despite success in business and a rewarding relationship with Osa, Martin began, as one might predict, to grow restless. Although Osa was not convinced they could make a go of it, they went on tour, turning their interest in The Snarks over to Charlie Kerr. With Osa in a hula skirt singing and dancing Martin's versions of Polynesian songs between showings of the slides and films, their first engagement in Humboldt, Kansas, hardly bolstered their morale. Their total take came to eight dollars.

They crossed Kansas and their next documented appearance was at Rocky Ford, Colorado, where they were only slightly more successful. Osa wrote home telling her family, who had not approved of show business from the start, that they were living off the fat of the land; which was far from true. At best, their income was twenty-five dollars a week, with nightly accomodations twenty-five cents and an average meal fifteen cents.

They spent their first Christmas in Denver where Martin came down with grippe. Osa, who went to a nearby cafe to spend fifty cents for their Christmas dinner, returned with the food only to find Martin had

slipped out to spend their remaining four and a half dollars on a bunch of carnations for her. The flowers were lovely indeed, but neither edible nor negotiable.

On learning of a "strike" at Black Hawk, Colorado the couple moved on immediately. Martin added tales of the Alaskan Gold Rush and Jack London's observations of the phenomenon. Martin was convinced this material was bound to fascinate miners and it did. In no time the Johnsons had stowed away a cache of five hundred dollars! Since other accommodations were unavailable, they lived in the pool hall. They could go to sleep only after the hall closed each evening—their bed was the pool table.

May 15, 1911 their first anniversary, found them in Calgary, Canada. Martin presented Osa with an enormous and plumed $37.50 "Merry Widow" hat. Also he hired a band and together they followed it through city streets in a buggy.

Crowds attracted by this bizarre entourage eventually found themselves in front of the theatre at which, not in the least coincidentally, Martin and Osa were appearing. The crowds poured into the theatre and thoroughly enjoyed Martin's Snark lecture and Osa's South Sea Island songs and dances.

The Johnson fortune, however, had shrunk to three hundred dollars. Somehow, they had to reach New York; that glittering city offered dreams of the big time. It was during 1911 that Jack London, then at the height of his popularity, published **The Cruise of the Snark** and Martin, between appearances, began to write a book of his own, **Through the South Seas with Jack London**.

The Johnsons rented a flat and Osa took in boarders, making their beds and cooking for them. Christmas in New York was no happier than it had been a year earlier in Denver. During this period they continued showing their now scratched and faded slides and their show-business income still averaged twenty-five dollars a week. Added funds from Martin's book and Osa's menial tasks provided sufficient money for Martin to buy Osa an ermine muff and neckpiece and provided a brand new and brightly hand-colored set of slides from Martin's original negatives.

One morning Martin burst into the flat to announce wildly, "I've just seen Martin Beck!" Osa stared blankly; she couldn't remember any Martin Beck in either Chanute or Independence, and obviously only someone from home could produce such high spirits.

"I've not only seen Martin Beck," her husband patiently explained, "I've signed with him!"

Martin Beck, Osa learned, represented the Keith-Orpheum Circuit. At last, the Johnsons found themselves playing first rate vaudeville theatres. They shared a bill with Will Rogers, Chic Sale, and Sir Harry Lauder. Now, when Osa wrote home she could be truthful about their state of affairs. "Some people think our act is the best on the bill!" she proudly wrote her family.

For two years they continued to work for Keith-Orpheum, but when they had packed away four thousand dollars, they announced their retirement.

By now warm friends of the Rogers, the Sales, and the Lauders, they were slightly nonplussed when Chic joyously observed that "now they'd have to change their routine."

They returned to Chanute and Independence to announce that they were on their way to the South Seas to retrace and film the Solomon-New Hebrides section of the **Snark's** cruise.

Both sets of parents were horrified; only Osa's grandmother, long an admirer of Martin, approved. Once more Mr. Leighty admonished Martin, warning him to take good care of Osa among all those cannibals.

Martin sardonically reassured him, "Don't worry. Osa **does** look good enough to eat!"

It was "westward-ho" to California's Valley of the Moon where an awed Osa was first introduced to Jack and Charmian London. As did people throughout her life, they found her irresistible. In 1915 Jack and Charmian saw them off in San Francisco on the **SS. Sonoma**.

By way of Honolulu, Samoa, and Pago Pago, they reached Sydney. With a hand-cranked Universal movie camera, two Graflexes, Jack London's precious 30-30 Marlin rifle, two hand guns, and 6,000 feet of film, they headed north for the Solomons.

By anyone else's standards Martin's Solomon footage would have been considered splendid, but he was dissatisfied both with his photographic results and the natives they encountered, who were less savage under the influence of the continuing efforts of the British to discourage cannibalism.

Perhaps, the wilder New Hebrides would prove more fruitful. They were told that Malekula, with its grim and ferocious Big Numbers (Nambas) tribe, might prove more challenging. As headquarters, they chose the tiny island of Vao off Malekula. There they were welcomed by Father Prin, who, though attempting to discourage them from landing on an island inhabited by forty thousand unruly savages, helped them in every possible way.

Father Prin had devoted his life in an unsuccessful attempt to raise the life style of Malekula's quaintly savage natives. Still, to Martin's joy, they were said to practice both cannibalism and head-hunting—and he was going to film it!

Although Father Prin was strongly set against Osa accompanying Martin to Malekula, she was determined to go. The two set off in Father Prin's whale-boat with five of his more trustworthy men. They landed on Malekula and all too quickly made contact with the Big Numbers and their fearsome chief, Nagapate. He invited them to dinner and lured them up the hill to his village.

There they began to suspect that the entree for the meal was to be the Martin Johnsons themselves. When they attempted to leave, they were seized, and Martin realized their chances of survival were less than slim.

In the true tradition of filmdom, the cavalry arrived just in time—an

aquatic "cavalry" in the form of the **Euphrosyne**, a British patrol boat that wandered regularly through the New Hebrides and only by chance had appeared off the coast of Malekula.

"Man-o'-war! Man-o'-war!" Martin shouted, somehow convincing Nagapate and his men that the patrol boat had come to rescue them. Released, they scrambled down the hillside, firmly clutching cameras and the films of their recent encounter. Meanwhile the **Euphrosyne** passed out of sight and Nagapate realized he had been duped. The Johnsons arrived at the beach with Nagapate and an assortment of his Big Numbers close behind. Falling more than climbing, they tumbled into their whale-boat and were returned to Vao intact by Father Prin's five men.

While unsuccessful in their attempt to film either cannibalism or head-hunting, their **Cannibals of the South Seas** opened at the Roxy in New York to enthusiastic houses. Shortly Nagapate's cruel face scowled from screens all over the country and reached London and Paris as well.

Now Osa was fully as well known a celebrity as Martin and their careers as explorers were assured. Only learning of the death of Jack London in 1916, during their absence, tempered their triumphant return to civilization.

Although the public accepted their film enthusiastically, Martin was far from satisfied. He and Osa had failed to film the actual process of head-hunting and cannibalism on Malekula. So in 1919 they set off again for the South Seas.

When they returned to Sydney upon this occasion, they were better equipped in every way. They had even thought to bring along a projector and a print of their Malekula film. This they showed to Sydney audiences while preparing for their return to the New Hebrides. Unfortunately, a worldwide influenza epidemic delayed their departure from Australia for several weeks. Finally aboard the **Pacifique** they set sail for Noumea, New Caledonia, where they were welcomed by being quarantined on a small off-shore island since several of their fellow passengers had come down with flu en route. Once the quarantine was lifted, they were entertained royally by government officials. In return, they entertained their hosts with the cannibal films that undoubtedly caused some question as to the sanity of the Johnsons, absolutely intent upon returning to an island from which they might not escape so propitiously a second time.

They arrived first at Efate Island where the capital city of the New Hebrides, Vila, was located. As upon the first occasion when Martin saw the New Hebrides, the islands were still a condomimium governed jointly by Britain and France, but during the intervening years Vila had become a fairly attractive little town and what had been its prime source of revenue, black-birding, was far less in evidence. An aging Father Prin, who had given up efforts to civilize the inhabitants of Malekula, now lived quietly in Vila and welcomed his old friends warmly.

Leaving Vila with an added thousand dollars' worth of foodstuffs

and trading materials, they went first to Espiritu Santo where their freighter put in at Api to take on copra. There to their horror, Martin and Osa found the **Snark** at anchor. Black and shabby, it was manned by a Melanesian crew and was used for recruiting, not "black-birding," laborers for sugar and copra plantations.

Passing through Segond Channel off southeastern Espiritu Santo, Martin enlisted the aid of three fully manned schooners for his return to Vao and Malekula. This time, at least, they were to arrive in style. The **Pacifique's** captain went fifty miles out of his way to deliver the Johnsons to Vao where they were soon joined by the three schooners Martin hired.

Lessons, hard learned on their earlier visit, taught them that every conceivable comfort and the best food they could carry would enable them to concentrate on their photography. In later years and during longer treks, they continued to follow this philosophy, facing hardship when it became inevitable but otherwise living as luxuriously as circumstances would permit.

When they returned to Malekula and the very same beach from which they had barely escaped with their lives, they found Nagapate and his Big Numbers awaiting them. Their welcome was surprisingly cordial, so they set up their projector and showed their savage hosts the films they had made on their previous visit.

Members of the audience recognized themselves and were visibly impressed when they viewed faces of friends who had died during the interim. Indeed, the Johnsons must have considerable power to be able to bring back the dead. By means of flares, Martin filmed an astonishing sequence of the Big Numbers as they watched themselves and their dear departed on the screen.

Now the natives were prepared to cooperate fully as the Johnsons filmed life among the Big Numbers to their hearts' content. When the Johnsons decided they had as complete a record of the Big Numbers as they could hope for, they left Nagapate and his part of Malekula to photograph other, lesser tribes of Malekula—the Small Numbers, the "Monkey People," and another tribe whose members decorated themselves with intricate designs of ochre pigment.

Before leaving Malekula, they interrupted a cannibal feast and came away with a half cooked head as evidence. Elsewhere on the island they photographed a master of the art of head curing as he slowly dried a human head over a low fire. After six months they returned to Sydney to spend Christmas of 1919 there.

In writing home Martin stated, "Osa has been disgustingly healthy, never seasick and never had fever, and she has been among savages where white men have never gone. She certainly has more nerve than any woman on earth. . .she tramps on long trips into the mountains. . .and I have had to call a halt many a time when she seemed as fresh as ever."

When the Johnsons had arrived in Sydney with their graphic cannibal footage films, procured only by infinite determination, they were

shocked to learn from their distributor that the public was "weary of savages." They were urged to get some wild animal pictures for a change of pace. Surprisingly, though Australia's wildlife was abundant and diverse and much of it inhabited open, sunny plains, the Johnsons chose instead to head for Borneo via New Guinea.

Borneo most assuredly had its share of wild animals, but they dwelled in dense, ill-lit jungle and even today with "fast"films and whopping great telephoto lenses are exceedingly difficult to photograph. It was early in 1920 that Martin and Osa landed at Sandakan, the largest town on the east coast of North Borneo, then a British Protectorate. After replenishing supplies, they headed south for the little known Kinabatangan River. There they encountered more crocodiles than they had ever seen before, a variety of primates and other small mammals, but found it difficult to photograph them in their shadowy realm.

From Lamag, they proceeded upriver in a Chinese junk to Pintasin. Then they went by raft to Penangah on the upper reaches of the Kinabatangan. They were probably the first people ever to photograph the Tenggara head-hunters. The Tenggaras were inclined to over-indulge in an alcoholic beverage made from the fermented sap of the sago palm and during such celebrations they were apt to turn to their favorite sport.

The Johnsons had had enough of head-hunters for one trip, so they sailed back down the river and returned to the lowlands. There they photographed elephant herds and wild water buffalo.

Still lacking pictures of small mammals, Martin circulated a pricelist offering so much per monkey, a higher price for an orangutan, and another for pythons with an added amount for each foot exceeding twelve feet in length. These they photographed against natural backgrounds but Martin's innate aversion to staged material left him less than content.

After four months in Borneo, they sailed for Singapore with a Chinese houseboy to attend to Bessie, an orang, and two gray gibbons they had purchased. One of these gibbons, Kalowatt, was to accompany them on two subsequent African expeditions.

Now in addition to their Malekula material, they had fifty thousand feet of Bornean film, **Jungle Adventure**, and on the way home they stopped in Ceylon and southern India long enough to obtain footage for a third feature film, **East of Suez**, and then continued on to the States via Cape Town.

It was during this period that they learned of the death of Mother Johnson. She had passed away two weeks before, but word of the tragedy was slow in catching up with them. Martin was grief stricken.

Reaching New York in 1920, they edited and released their three films, and Martin wrote **Cannibal-Land** that appeared in serial form in **Asia Magazine** in 1921 and as a Houghton Mifflin book in 1922. The two years devoted to filming three feature films in diverse and uncivilized parts of the world should have earned them a well deserved rest. But once his films and writings had been completed, Martin with an uncomplaining

Osa was off to the wilds again. "Rest" was a word that found no place in Martin's vocabulary and months spent in civilization were no more than a means to an end. Such sojourns served only to provide funds for the next expedition, and with the Martin Johnsons thus it was ever to be.

Aboard the Snark, 1907

Sailing through the South Seas with Jack and Charmian London, 22-year-old Martin photographed islands, tribesmen and tribal customs that had seldom or never before been depicted. Unfortunately, few original negatives from that trip have survived. Many reproductions may yet be seen in copies of his first book, "Through the South Seas With Jack London," Dodd, Mead & Co., 1913, and a re-issue by Wolf House Books, 1972.

"It is a sweet memory to Jack and me — and Martin. . .swears allegiance to any new venture we may pursue. There is now a little Mrs. Martin who wishes to be counted in." — Charmian London. (The Log of the Snark, Macmillan, 1915.)

Headstones at Ontong Java (also referred to as Lord Howe Island)

Lord! Howe did we miss that island!" (Martin's pun) which led to a competitive series of 'Lord' Howe' puns."
Charmian London. (The Log of the Snark, Macmillan, 1915.)

Now a celebrity, Martin stands proudly in front of one of the two motion picture houses he and druggist Charlie Kerr opened in Independence, Kansas, in 1910.

The Johnson's "home" on San Cristobal, Solomons, 1917.

"I hope heaven is half as nice." Martin Johnson.

Off Malaita, Solomons

" 'Those islands are actually artificial,' he (Bell) said, 'built by the natives to escape being murdered on the mainland . . . Originally the islands were mere coral knobs. . . The natives walled them up, gathering coral stones. . .and earth brought from Malaita.' " Osa Johnson.

Malekula, New Hebrides

"Before many months, Nagapate was scowling out of the screen at audiences in New York and London and Paris." Martin Johnson. (Cannibal-Land, Houghton Mifflin, 1922.)

Malekula, New Hebrides.

"They were the first European to enter many islands of the Solomon group and the New Hebrides - at a time when cannibalism and head-hunting were not figmentation of an impressionable tourist's imagination." Dr. Pascal James Imperato. (The Johnsons in Africa, AFRICANA, Sept., 1966.)

Malekula, New Hebrides

This was the boat upon which the Johnsons fled after it became apparent that they were to serve as the main dish at the dinner to which Nagapate and his merry men had invited them.

Cannibals cooking human flesh, New Hebrides, 1919

"Just THINK of seeing all that truly-truly cannibal stuff! What wouldn't I have done to be there! And the monkey people. It's almost incredible. You lucky explorers!" Charmian (Mrs. Jack) London. (Letter to the Johnsons dated Jan. 17, 1920.)

Malekula, New Hebrides

"All these cannibals are head-hunters. One may see tiny mummified heads stuck up outside the huts." Martin Johnson. (Through the South Seas with Jack London; Dodd, Mead & Company, 1913.)

Tribal portrait, Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides, 1919.

On their second visit to Nagapate and the Big Numbers tribe, the Johnsons prepare for a showing of motion pictures made on their first. The result of the film program was that the Big Numbers now viewed the Johnsons as deities, not potential dietary items.

Vao chief, New Hebrides, 1919

Head-dryer, Malekula, New Hebrides, 1919

Chapter III

1921 was to prove a turning point in the Johnsons' career. Martin was elected a member of the prestigious Explorers Club. Former members had included Theodore Roosevelt, Adm. R. E. Peary, Robert Falcon Scott, Adolphus Greely, Knud Rasmussen, and among current members were Adm. Richard E. Byrd, Lincoln Ellsworth, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, Roy Chapman Andrews, E. Thompson Seton, Sir Ernest Shackleton as well as Sir Harry Johnston and several other noteworthy African explorers. Then, as it does today, it contained the creme de la creme of the world's explorers. Its membership has included three American presidents, various kings, princes and rajahs and now boasts more than 1700 members, among them Sir Edmund Hillary and Norman Dyhrenfurth, both conquerors of Everest, Thor Heyerdahl and even a sprinkling of Congressmen.

One member whose name was synonymous with Africa was Carl Akeley of the American Museum of Natural History. Naturalist, photographer and sculptor, Akeley had revolutionized the art of taxidermy. He developed a crude but effective predecessor of the gunite machine and ultimately invented the Akeley movie camera that was widely used up to and including World War II. Its flexibility made it the ideal camera for news coverage, exploration and wildlife photography.

The two-tiered African Hall in the American Museum was conceived by Akeley, and all of the dioramas that had been completed by the time of his death in 1926 were the result of his brilliant craftmanship. Others to be constructed in later years had already been created as detailed miniatures by Akeley. Several of the dioramas contain specimens collected by the Johnsons and that of the impalas bears Osa's name.

As a member of The Explorers Club, Martin was exposed to other men of equal stature and calibre. Carl Akeley was of special interest to Martin, having filmed East African game herds while collecting material for the African Hall. He urged Martin and Osa to take their cameras to Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika to film the incredibly abundant and diverse wildlife there, predicting even then the day when the great herds would dwindle and in some areas disappear altogether, as indeed they have.

Fired to a searing peak of enthusiasm by Akeley's urging, Martin and Osa began to plan the first of several African expeditions that were eventually to earn them a prominent and permanent place on the roll of African exploration.

The Johnsons' "African period" occupied the greater part of fourteen years, beginning in 1921 and continuing until 1935, with those occasional interruptions necessitated by a lack of funds. On such visits to America, Martin would prepare a book on their most recent adventures, edit a commercial film (Metro, Fox, and 20th Century-Fox being among the distributors of their various films) and a second film to accompany them on their lecture tours about the country. After their marathon Malekula-

Borneo-Ceylon expedition, they were in better financial condition than they had ever been before.

When they, with Martin's father, set off for Kenya in 1921, they were beginning what was to be the most productive period of their lives. It was during this first trip to the not-so-Dark Continent that in embryonic form they were to develop a formula that, though often imitated, was to become so uniquely their own.

They were not the first to photograph African wildlife, by any means. Carl Akeley had already become deeply involved in such a project as had A. Radcliffe Dugmore, and there were others as well. But the Johnsons' timing could not have been better; they were in the midst of the Golden Age of photographic exploration, one which would send Admiral Richard Byrd to both poles, William Beebe far into the briny ocean depths, the Piccards high aloft in their balloon, and Roy Chapman Andrews to the Gobi Desert and its dinosaur eggs.

It was the heyday of the Hero, as opposed to the Anti-hero of today. Good guys wore white hats, villains black ones. Tom Mix, ever immaculate, had his horse Tony; swashbuckling Douglas Fairbanks rescued innumerable damsels in distress—and Martin Johnson, all-American boy with a shy grin and courage unlimited, had Osa, "the best pal a man ever had." His photography was no less than brilliant but he was also a superlative showman who could adapt to rapidly changing times and techniques and make the best of them.

Today the Johnson films would fall into the category of documentaries, but their films contained a highly personalized human element that went far beyond mere instructive documentation. They ingeniously combined their genuine but covertly indicated romance with the danger that, because of primitive equipment of the times, wildlife photography demanded.

They were man and wife against all elements: the fiercest of wild animals, meteorological extremes, and colorfully wicked native tribesmen. As a background, they had East and Central Africa's broad scenic spectrum: coconut palm lined beaches, a variety of deserts from the very bleakest to those covered with thornbush, infinite upland grasslands, thundering rivers, broad alkaline lakes, mountain mist forests and in the Ituri and Semliki the densest of rain forests, and to crown it all impressively photogenic snow-clad mountain peaks, the highest in Africa.

During the course of the next few years, the Johnsons became objects of worldwide admiration. Their comings and goings were followed avidly, especially by the young to whom they had the greatest appeal. Their popularity would become as great and outlast that of most athletic heroes. However superior the technical quality of their films, it was always to be of secondary consideration in the minds of an adoring public. It was in Africa that the Johnsons were to reach legendary heights.

The process of developing the formula that would eventually provide the distinctive stamp of their feature films did not, however, occur overnight, nor was it easily devised. Some of its ingredients were the result of hit or miss inadvertence, others came from Martin's uncanny

ability to recognize what would most please his audiences, with Osa as a more than willing co-conspirator.

To an entire generation of youngsters in the Western World, they would be idolized and beneficially influential, and to a major degree as Mae West is wont to say, "Luck had nothing to do with it."

Their public image was not a concocted one; it was carefully and skillfully controlled. This aspect was due more to Martin's acumen than Osa's. With a camera and an editing machine, he developed what might be referred to in musical terms as "theme and variations"—a central story line with diverse sub-plot adventures.

This approach is only slightly indicated in their first African film, **Trailing African Wild Animals.**. Although its wildlife footage was excellent, the film lacked continuity, with only a suggestion of a story line. In subsequent pictures, Martin combined animal portraiture with a chronicle that offered the traditional beginning, development and denouement. Each of the later African films was a finely honed and sure-fire product.

When Martin, Osa and Father Johnson arrived in Mombasa, they leased a refrigerated box-car for their photographic equipment. As their train left the Indian Ocean behind and passed through sultry lowland plantations of bananas, pineapples, cashews and other tropical fruits into the wooded coastal hills, the landscape seemed similar to that of South Pacific islands. During the night, however, they crossed the Maji ya Chumvi Desert and entered the thornbush and baobab country so typical of East Africa's lowland desert scrub.

As soon as the sun rose, they began to see game—zebra and giraffe, warthog and impala, at first in small groups, then in gradually increasing numbers. The train stopped for breakfast at Voi, now the gateway to Tsavo East National Park, the northeastern section of an eight thousand square mile reserve. Then the train began its slow ascent towards the Ulu Hills beyond which lay the first of the highland veldt or grasslands they were to see.

Crossing initially the Kapiti Plains, then the Athi Plains, they passed herds that numbered in the hundreds—wildebeest, gazelles of two species, kongoni (the local variety of hartebeest), waterbuck, reedbuck, and various other plains animals new and strange to them. Their account of this three hundred mile train trip is one of almost childlike astonishment.

What they saw from the train more than half a century ago does not differ greatly from what one sees today, with the possible exception that game is tamer now than it was then because of the protection it receives along much of the railway's right-of-way. Even then, the herds of plains game stared indifferently at the smoking, chugging train as it rattled by. The Johnsons realized that what Carl Akeley had told them was more than accurate. Although animals were everywhere, Martin wished he might have seen it "in the old days." Nairobi, only a quarter of a century old at the time, was, as Martin observed it, a modern town reminiscent of Wichita, Kansas.

They disembarked at a bustling railway station and proceeded up Government Road through the center of town to the Norfolk Hotel, then on Nairobi's outskirts. The Norfolk is a one-of-a-kind hotel, as distinctive as Singapore's Raffles or Calcutta's Grand. Although tastefully modernized, it retains today the atmosphere that enchanted the Johnsons as it had Theodore Roosevelt before them and every Africa "buff" since. Its Tudor facade remains, but the inner flagstoned courtyard from which so many expeditions departed is now devoted to lawn, semi-tropical trees, and large bird cages containing typical Kenya avifauna. To one side a number of cottages and a swimming pool sprawl through colorful gardens and at the back and one side, two-story wings have replaced the old one-story structures. But the Johnsons, Ernest Hemingway, Robert Ruark, Marlin Perkins and the other past and current celebrities that have loved it through the years would still recognize it and prefer it to downtown hotels that differ little from those in any American city.

After checking in at the Norfolk, the Johnsons paid their respects to the Governor, Sir Edward Northey, who introduced them to Sir Northrup McMillan of the legislative council. Two other early contacts that were to prove of infinite help were Blayney Percival, formerly of the Game Department, and a young American, Bud Cottar.

Realizing the necessity of a more permanent residence, the Johnsons rented a bungalow of their own. While Kalowatt enjoyed the garden, they "camped out" in three rooms, devoting the rest of the house to laboratories and a darkroom to be used in later months by A. Radcliffe Dugmore and even Carl Akeley himself.

Through the agency of Tarleton, Whetham and Burman Ltd., the Johnsons obtained the services of Jerramani as headman. This was a great stroke of luck since Jerramani had accompanied the Roosevelt expedition Martin had tried so desperately to join twelve years before. For a household staff and safari porters they went to the Bureau of Native Affairs to obtain cook, number one and number two house boys, seasoned gun bearers for both Martin and Osa, and a host of porters. With Cottar's aid, they purchased one new safari Ford, a second-hand Ford which they converted into a second safari car, and a lorry capable of carrying as many as forty porters.

Through the Bureau of Native Affairs, they had learned that a porter should not be expected to walk more than fifteen miles per day nor carry a load in excess of sixty pounds. A third minor condition, or so they thought, was that each porter be provided with ample food: **posho** (ground corn meal) that could be added to the meat the Johnsons were expected to shoot "for the pot."

They were now equipped to set off on their first safari. Since they had passed so many animals on the Athi Plains on the train, that would seem as good a place as any for a trial run. With their three vehicles loaded with equipment and porters, they drove out on the plains and found a pleasant campsite on the Athi River. There they set up tents, unpacked cameras and guns and set off to photograph the very same game that had paid so little attention to the train as it passed.

But to men on foot or in cars, the game reacted quite differently. Shooting for the pot was a daily affair for many of Nairobi's two thousand white inhabitants, and the "indifferent" game the Johnsons had viewed from the train set off at a run at the mere sight of a safari car bouncing across the plains. Their reaction to a man on foot was the same.

Martin, Osa and Father Johnson shot off uncounted rounds of ammunition but failed to bring down a single animal. Photographic attempts were little better: when Martin constructed blinds along the river and about waterholes, the game merely moved to other banks of the river and other waterholes. Lesson number one: don't ever build a waterside blind within five miles of other available water.

During the week the first safari lasted, they shot only two animals. Martin finally brought down an impala which he dragged on foot ten miles back to camp. To his dismay, Jerramani and the other porters refused to eat it because it had not been properly **hallaled:** the local version of Mohammedanism rendered any animal whose throat had not been cut before death unfit to eat. That was lesson number two.

The second animal shot was a kongoni. This time it was properly **hallaled** and Jerramani and company accepted it but they were far from impressed.

During a second safari, this one to the Ithanga Hills more than sixty miles northeast of Nairobi, they had their first brush (literally) with African buffaloes, photographed several and brought down two to feed themselves and the porters. Shortly thereafter, Osa shot a leopard. Now, even Jerramani began to be impressed. Martin and Osa were accorded what used to be the customary victory ceremony following the shooting of any of the so called "big five" game animals of which buffalo and leopard were two. Martin was awarded the name of Bwana Piccer (Mister Picture) and Osa, Memsahib Kidogo (Little Mrs.).

Now feeling a bit more like seasoned African hunters, they set off for the Mara Plains in southwestern Kenya, an area where game abounds and which is part of the same ecosystem to which Tanzania's Serengeti Plains, just across the border, belongs. While there were elephant, rhino, lion, cheetah and large numbers of game animals in the area Martin began to realize that filming game in open country was not as easy as he had predicted. After ten in the morning and on through midday to two or three in the afternoon heat waves provided such distortion that even the primitive 135 mm. telephoto lenses, the largest they had, could not be used. That midday was not good for filming proved to be lesson number three, and perhaps the most important of all.

To get decent pictures even in the cooler parts of the day, they were forced to get much too close for personal safety. Osa became a crack-shot, a better one than Martin was ever to become.

At the end of their first year in Kenya, he wrote in a letter, "I have developed seven thousand feet of the 27,000 feet I have exposed on the trip. It is great stuff, as clean and clear as any film ever made. The picture of the elephant charge is the best of the bunch. Osa turned the

crank until nothing but the head elephant's tusks showed in the aperture—he must have been eight feet from the camera when she stopped turning. I remember that she had to sight almost straight up when she shot and saved my life as well as her own. I'll wager there is not another woman on earth who would have had the nerve to turn the crank in the face of what seemed like certain death, and then to have grabbed up a gun and have the presence of mind to shoot! There are mighty few men who would have done the same. I know I would have deserted the camera before she did and I would have run like hell."

In the early part of the century, it seemed impossible that African game herds might someday dwindle and "conservation" was then an unknown word. Furthermore, the only way to get good pictures with the equipment then available was to get so close as to make the animal feel endangered, which more often than not resulted in a charge.

On the Johnsons' first trip, they, as did almost everyone else, thought of hunting as high sport and shot many an animal. Their attitude was to change markedly in years to come.

As more sophisticated camera equipment allowed them to film from greater distances, there were fewer charges, and both Martin and Osa became reluctant to shoot anything except "for the pot" or to bring down an animal that was definitely not bluffing.

From Blayney Percival they learned of a lake that existed on a wooded mountain in the vast desert that occupies the northern half of Kenya. The exact location of the lake was indicated on a map made by a Scottish missionary many years before, so the Johnsons decided to head north to find and photograph the lake. Abundant game, including some of Africa's largest "tuskers", was said to inhabit the forests of Mount Marsabit and the surrounding deserts.

Martin and Osa took Father Johnson as far north as Archer's Post on the banks of the Northern Guaso Nyiro so that he too might see the distinctive forms of animal life that occured there—Grevy's zebra, reticulated giraffe, and beisa oryx. They then returned Father Johnson to Nairobi to catch the Mombasa train and a boat for the Orient.

In a letter to the Leightys, Martin observed, "In the last six months Dad has lived more than he did during all the other seventy years combined."

The trip from Nairobi to Mount Marsabit took roughly a month at that time and the route then used went around the eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya through Embu and Meru rather than on the western slopes through Nyeri and Nanyuki and Timau as the paved road does today. Beyond "the mountain" the road drops down to Isiolo, then to the river at Archer's Post. The Northern Guaso Nyiro originates in the highlands to the west, flows east to the Lorian Swamp, and vanishes before reaching the Indian Ocean.

In 1922, there was no bridge at Archer's Post; safari cars and lorries had to be pulled across largely by rope and manpower. Once across, the engines of the first vehicles would be too soaked to aid in tugging the other cars through the hippo and crocodile infested waters. From the

north side of the river, there was no road at all, only a camel trail that wandered north to what was then the Abyssinian border, a trail over which thousands of slaves and tons of ivory had been hauled in centuries past.

After passing a great mound of rock on the left named Lolokwi, the track meandered through an ever drier desert: first thornbush, then bare lava and sand. En route it crossed several luggas, sand river beds where subsurface water attracted caravans, passed northern tribesmen such as the Merille, Samburu, Rendille, and Gabra, and wild animals that gratefully drank from pools formed in holes that elephants dug deep into the sands. It was at one of these, Laisamis, that Paul Rainey had taken excellent elephant and rhino photos in prior years and Martin Johnson was subsequently to take even better ones. No more detailed and crisply clear rhino photos have ever been taken than those that Martin and Osa took by flash more than fifty years ago.

Marsabit is a verdant mound that rises to no great height above the bleak Kaisoot Desert to the south of it. Between the Kaisoot and Mt. Marsabit stretch grasslands where Northern Frontier plains game occurs in numbers, then the mound itself, lush with wild coffee trees, podocarpus, bamboo, Natal plum and wild asparagus. Scattered around it like a string of ill-matched pearls lies a series of craters.

At Marsabit post, on the northern edge of the mountain, the Johnsons inquired about the whereabouts of the "lost lake."

The Johnsons were able to hire, however, an excellent elephant tracker Martin called Boguni in his first African book, **Camera Trails in Africa,** the same "brother to the elephants" that Martin designated in later books as Boculy. So many names of the early part of the century had never been written down and, when the time came to do so, were recorded phonetically. Boculy professed never to have heard of the lake, but he proved an excellent tracker enabling the Johnsons to obtain first rate footage of the enormous elephants that have inhabited the Marsabit region for centuries.

On one trek, however, he finally led them up the mountain through the densest forest and suddenly, there at their feet, lay a cobalt lake deep in a sheer sided crater.

"Oh, Martin," Osa exclaimed, "It's paradise." To this day those maps which use its English name refer to it as Lake Paradise or Paradise Lake.

For three months, the Johnsons camped on the western ridge of the crater, taking frequent trips down a rugged track to a broad game trail that led to the lake from the south. It was during this three months period that the Johnsons decided to return one day for an extended stay at Lake Paradise but now dwindling finances indicated it was time to head for the States. Martin wrote his book, **Camera Trails in Africa,** and edited the Metro film, **Trailing African Wild Animals.**

While the game footage was outstanding, it was only towards the end of the film that a rough story line evolved. The trip to Lake Paradise offered an example of the narrative device that Martin developed so effectively in years to come. Earlier parts of the film, which were

devoted to "Elephants," or "Rhinos", or "Giraffes," were fragmentary and lacking in continuity. It was only during the first Lake Paradise safari that a running account appeared, the two principal characters being Martin and Osa Johnson.

The next book, **Safari**, and its accompanying film, **Into the Blue**, were devoted primarily to Lake Paradise and the community the Johnsons established there. This time they were well equipped with the joint sponsorship of George Eastman and the American Museum of Natural History.

When first they approached Mr. Eastman, he turned them down cold. On their way back from Rochester, Osa reasoned, "We just didn't present our material and our plans in the right way." So they turned around, barged back into Mr. Eastman's office and emerged with his full support. In addition he introduced them to Daniel Pomeroy and Trubee Davison of the American Museum in New York City.

When they left New York on December 1, 1923, they had six custom-built Willys Knight safari cars and $50,000.00 worth of photographic equipment. They arrived in Mombasa on January 26, 1924, and reached Lake Paradise on April 12. In addition to their vehicles they had 235 porters and 250 crates of supplies.

After constructing an earthen stove, they began building their permanent community around this highly important item: food was, above all, essential.

The structure that was to serve as their living quarters was 17 by 14 feet, mud and dung walled, with a thatched roof and a verandah. It boasted a conventional fireplace, animal skins on the floor, and Osa had the interior painted with pink pigment from the nearby Kaisoot Desert. Other buildings included a kitchen, garage, toolshed, carpenter shop and, of course, Martin's photographic laboratory which contained enormous revolving racks upon which he could dry his motion picture films after development. Now he could view the immediate results of his work rather than waiting until returning to Nairobi before determining the quality of his photography. A system of gutters collected rain water and carried it through a filtration system to barrels that could contain 2400 gallons at a time.

Osa planted gardens containing both vegetables and flowers from Kansas and directed the construction of a poultry yard and a **boma** to protect her sixteen cows and calves.

Instead of building their village on the scenic but windy heights of the crater edge, where they had camped on their previous visit, they constructed it on gentle slopes just to the west of the broad game trail that entered the crater. Furthermore they hacked out a new road from the lowlands southwest of the mountain, saving both time and fuel in avoiding the rough track over the mountain from the north. Part of their new road had already been constructed for them—the broad game trail that led to the lake through the forest from the grasslands nearby was centuries old.

Across the game trail from their own quarters, they built a veritable

fortress so that guests, in particular George Eastman, could watch elephants, rhinos, and buffaloes pass on their way to and from the lake. During the three and a half years of the paradise episode they entertained Daniel Pomeroy and various other individuals collecting for the Akeley African Hall at the American Museum, traveled a couple of hundred miles to share a picnic lunch with the Duke and Duchess of York (later to become King George VI and Queen Elizabeth of England) on the shores of the Northern Guaso Nyiro, and lost Kalowatt by electrocution when she swung onto a powerline during a visit to Nairobi.

They made extensive camel treks to the Mathews Mountains and to North Horr, and nearly a thousand miles to the south to accompany Carl Akeley to the Serengeti. It was here that Carl had promised the tamest lions in the world. The lions were all that Akeley had predicted and both the Johnsons and Mr. Akeley photographed them at incredibly close range.

One evening beside a campfire on the Serengeti, prior to the departure of the Akeleys for the Congo, Martin and Carl talked over their future plans. It was to be their last meeting for Carl died on his gorilla trip to the Virunga Volcanoes in 1926.

On their return to Nairobi the Johnsons decided to climb Mt. Kenya. Neither one had been feeling particularly well at the beginning of the trek and at 14,000 feet both became ill, expecially Osa, who was carried to a mission station in the foothills. Martin was told it was unlikely she would survive. But somehow, with excellent care from the sisters and the best physicians in Kenya, she recovered.

Upon their return to Nairobi, they bought a lovely two-story home amidst four landscaped acres in the Muthaiga residential area of Nairobi, the first and only permanent home they were ever to have.

Photographically the trip was tremendously successful. Their electrically and spring driven cameras with enormous telephoto lenses and their use of self-triggering flash photos of nocturnal animals provided them with movies and stills far superior to those of their first trip.

Upon their return voyage, they paused in Paris long enough for Osa to select an array of original gowns and hats that were to place her for the first time on the list of the world's ten best dressed women, a position she retained for many years.

Upon arrival in New York on the **Leviathan**, May 16, 1927, they had more than enough material for Martin's book, **Safari**, their commercial film, **Into the Blue**, and several books for children by Osa. Years later, in 1941, the expedition was also to provide material for Osa's book, **Four Years in Paradise.**

By December 14, 1927, they were off again, this time with George Eastman via Europe for Port Said. They disembarked on February 28, 1928, to take the overland route to East Africa. They traveled up the Nile by train as far as Shellal, Egypt, then by riverboat to Wadi Halfa on the frontier of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. There the Johnsons with Mr. Eastman boarded the train that cuts straight across the Nubian Desert to rejoin the Nile at Abu Hamed and on into Khartoum. This was the

historic city where General "Chinese" Gordon lost his life in a grueling siege by the Mahdi in 1885 and in to which Lord Kitchener and his forces marched in 1898 to wrest the city from the Mahdi's successors to establish a condominium to be jointly governed by Britain and Egypt. At Khartoum they found another Explorers Club member, Merian C. Cooper, filming the first of his two versions of **The Four Feathers.**

From Khartoum, they made the overnight train trip to Kosti on the White Nile where George Eastman leased a riverboat, the **Dal**, to view for the first time the Sudd, the treacherous papyrus swamp that occupies a vast area in the southern Sudan. There they saw Nile lechwe, white-eared kob, tiang and various other animals that did not reach East Africa and were new to them.

At Rejaf, the Johnsons and the Eastman party left the Nile and Martin made the first motion pictures on record of the northern white rhinoceros, a form rare even then and now on the verge of extinction.

They entered the northeastern corner of the Belgian Congo where they visited the elephant training farm at Gangala na Bodio, then drove down to Gombari where they encountered their first pygmies. They returned to the Nile at Rhino Camp which had acquired its name when the Roosevelt and Heller expedition had collected white rhinos for the Smithsonian there.

The Johnson-Eastman party then proceeded up the Nile, crossed the upper end of Lake Albert to sail up that section of the Nile named after Queen Victoria to Murchison Falls. Here they filmed at close range far greater numbers of hippopotami than they had ever seen before and hundreds of record-length crocodiles that sunned themselves on the banks of the Victoria Nile.

On March 26, 1928, it was on to Nairobi and their lovely home in Muthaiga. George Eastman returned to America while the Johnsons headed south. The short visit they had made to the Ikoma district of the northern Serengeti with Carl Akeley during 1926 had greatly whetted Martin's appetite. Well-outfitted for a long stay, they drove down to the game-packed grasslands of northern Tanganyika where they obtained stills and films of lion not surpassed to this day; not lions charging or being speared by Masai, but gentle, sleepy great cats as they followed their normal activities: rearing their cubs, playing together like giant house cats, and killing only for food.

It was during this period that three Boy Scouts from America were privileged to join the Martin Johnsons in Africa. The Scouts were met in Nairobi, taken down to the Serengeti to share the Johnsons' project of filming "Akeley's" lions, as well as the great wildebeest migration of 1928.

Each year the wildebeest herds follow the rains and the subsequent lush grass produced, from the Western Corridor of the Serengeti to the eastern edge of the plains and north to Kenya's Mara Plains. The films the Johnsons acquired that year proved to be the equivalent to what a similar series of films of America's bison and pronghorn herds a century ago might have been.

Literally hundreds of thousands of wildebeest still roam the Mara and

the Serengeti, but the numbers then were far greater. In some areas the Johnsons passed through and filmed country that is now farmland and gameless. The film footage and adventures of this period in the Johnson saga provided material for a new book, **Lion**, and the film, **Simba**, both of which were released in 1929.

The era of "talkies" had now begun. They were not, as some short-sighted producers so ardently hoped and predicted, a mere fancy that would eventually lose popularity and fade away.

While **Simba** was being shown in America, Paul Hoefler returned from a transcontinental voyage across Africa during which he made sound movies of African tribes and wildlife that were released in 1930 as **Africa Speaks.** At the same time W.S. Van Dyke was filming **Trader Horn** in the very heart of Africa, hauling tons of bulky sound equipment across Kenya and Uganda into the Belgian Congo and south to the Serengeti.

Not to be left behind, the Johnsons immediately acquired sound equipment and with it technicians Richard Maedler, sound cameraman, Louis Tappan, sound recorder, and DeWitt Sage, in charge of keeping both movie equipment and motor vehicles in working condition. Late in 1929, the Johnsons returned to Kenya via Germany. This, their fourth African expedition, was to provide the first "talking" picture to be made entirely in the Dark Continent with no augmentative sequences to be filmed in Hollywood or elsewhere.

It was during the "long rains" that the Johnson party shipped six Willys Knights including two camera cars, one for silent footage, the other for sound, from Nairobi to Uganda by railway.

The long rains had begun in Kenya and the roads were impassable. Uganda roads, on the other hand, were "all weather"roads, essential since central and western Uganda have far greater rainfall throughout the year than does neighboring Kenya.

From Tororo in eastern Uganda, the Johnson party drove northwest to Butiaba on Lake Albert. There they hired a lifeboat from the lake steamer, **Robert Coryndon**, built in Scotland, shipped in sections to Lake Albert and currently being reassembled there. The Johnsons also leased a smaller lake steamer, the **Livingstone**. With their two craft they sailed up the Victoria Nile with sound equipment.

Now they recorded the Nile at Murchison Falls as it roared through a narrow gap in the rocks and plunged one hundred forty feet to form raging, swirling pools below. This time they obtained further and more impressive footage of grunting and bellowing hippos.

Returning to Butiaba, they placed their sound equipment and vehicles on the **Samuel Baker** and sailed across Lake Albert to Kasenyi, a port of entry to the Belgian Congo, where they reclaimed one hundred and fifty cases of petrol, oil, grease, foodstuffs, guns and a phonograph they had sent ahead six weeks previously.

They made their first camp in the Congo at a location five miles from the edge of the Ituri Forest and not far from the town of Irumu. Their primary objective on this occasion was to film Wambutti pygmies, not in the small groups they had seen at Gombari, but in greater numbers and living in villages of their own making.

The Johnsons visited various locales and finally settled on an outpost run by a man named Piligbo who claimed he could provide the large numbers of pygmies they required. Piligbo more than fulfilled his promise; after the first few pygmies arrived from a village deep in the forest and found the Johnsons and their gifts acceptable (particularly salt, which is highly valued since it does not occur naturally in heavily forested country) the word was passed by jungle telegraph (drums). In no time the Johnsons had more than five hundred pygmies on their hands.

In a clearing the pygmies set about building a village and were soon living as they did in their own villages, smaller and deeper in the forest. For three months, the Johnsons filmed pygmy life, their hunts, their dances, and their tribal councils. The pygmies were fascinated by the Johnsons' phonograph and one unforgettable sound motion picutre sequence depicts five-foot Osa towering above her companions and all dancing to the mysterious music that emerged from the phonograph. On August 30, 1930, having obtained miles of pygmy footage, they set out for the Kivu district to attempt for the first time sound films of mountain gorillas.

It was in early October that, with six game scouts, two Batwe pygmies, and 165 porters the Johnsons began to climb Mikeno, the most symetrically pyramidal of the Virunga or Bufumbiro Volcanoes. They climbed first to the saddle between Mikeno and Karasimbi to visit the gravesite of their old friend, Carl Akeley, then upwards to the 11,500 foot level in the chill of the mountain mist forests of bamboo, hagenia, wild celery, and giant lobelias.

When first the Johnsons encountered a silver-backed male gorilla and his troupe at a distance of fifteen feet, the male screamed a blood-curdling roar of alarm, as frightening a sound at close range as any I know, and the troupe retreated.

Osa's comment reflects the reaction of anyone upon his first meeting with wild gorillas, "All of our big game adventures are as nothing compared to the thrills I've had today!"

For weeks the Johnsons and their crew hauled heavy camera and sound equipment through rain-drenched forests filming gorillas which, despite their frightening alarm calls, proved to be not the aggressive monsters of fiction, but the gentle giants Carl Akeley had described—shy, wary and in no manner belligerent.

The problems that confronted the Johnsons were not danger from the animals themselves but the poor lighting of dense misty forests and the damp cold of the gorillas' habitat. Leather peeled from cameras, mildew crept insidiously into lenses, and the perpetual chill penetrated the warmest clothing. Yet the Johnsons photographed and recorded gorillas as they fed, played, and built the nests in which they slept—two sets, one for the midday siesta and another for the night.

Not content with the films they had accumulated on the Volcanoes, the Johnsons descended to Lulenga, and set off for Alimbongo, roughly fifty miles away, in the mountains bordering the west shore of Lake

Edward—now Lake Idi Amin. There they found gorillas even more abundant and more accessible.

One morning, nearing the completion of their gorilla safari, they left their cars and not far from the road inadvertently marched into the midst of a band of feeding gorillas. When the Johnsons and the gorillas realized the presence of one another, the gorilla troupe separated. Most of the gorillas ran in one direction, but two youngsters that had been playing together a few yards away from their elders ran in the opposite direction and up a jungle tree.

The Johnson porters quickly cleared a large area and chopped down the tree. Stunned by the fall, the young gorillas found themselves covered with a variety of tarps, blankets, and burlap bags.

Slung separately on bamboo poles, they were carried back to one of the Willys Knights that bore a sturdy wire-sided and metal-roofed body. It had been used as sleeping quarters for the Johnsons. Now it became a temporary home for the two largest gorillas that had ever been captured. Each weighed over one hundred pounds.

The usual method of gorilla capture at the time was to shoot a mother gorilla and wrench the infant from its arms. Tiny creatures weighing less than ten pounds, such animals would yet be nursing and the mortality among gorillas so captured was high, not to mention the fact that the method of capture was a cruel and ruthless one.

The Johnsons had obtained a permit to export one gorilla for the National Zoo in Washington, D. C.; now they had two gorillas on their hands. The behavior of their captives made the Johnsons believe the animals were male and female. The Johnsons applied to the Belgian Government for a special permit, convinced that the two healthy youngsters provided a chance of breeding gorillas for the first time in captivity. The permit was granted under the condition that the two gorillas, which Osa named Congo and Ingagi (a dialectal word meaning gorilla), would be placed in whatever zoo the Johnsons felt stood the best chance of rearing the gorillas to adulthood and breeding them.

A few days later while driving through the forest, the Johnsons were confronted with a group of natives who carried a sickly, infant gorilla. Martin and Osa bargained for the tiny animal and purchased it. First named Okaro, then later Snowball, it recovered rapidly under Osa's ministrations, fully convinced that she was its mother.

With three gorillas, two chimpanzees, and a variety of Congolese monkeys, the Johnsons set out for their home in Nairobi. In addition to obtaining first films of wild mountain gorillas, they had determined that gorillas had a much wider range and occurred in far greater numbers in eastern Congo Belge than had previously been believed.

When they returned to the United States in mid 1931, the Johnsons delivered Snowball and Teddy, a chimpanzee, to the National Zoo in Washington, D. C. They decided that the zoo best suited to house their two larger gorillas was the one in San Diego, where a mild climate would permit the animals to live outdoors the year round. Because of

published material by Drs. Robert and Ada Yerkes involving the studies of a gorilla named Congo, it seemed best for the sake of future publications to rename the Johnsons' Congo, thus avoiding confusion in scientific literature. Mbongo, a contraction of Alimbongo, where the gorillas had been captured, seemed perfectly satisfactory to the "female," Congo, and "she" responded to the slight name change readily.

Unfortunately, it was later discovered the San Diego gorillas were both males. Manual examination of the two one hundred pound animals had been impossible in Africa. Although customarily gentle, they could, and upon occasion did, inflict severe bites. Osa was once so badly bitten that she required hospitalization.

Arriving in San Diego one year after their capture, the gorillas thrived and eventually exceeded weights of six hundred pounds each. The account of their capture appears in both the book concerning the Congo expedition, **Congorilla**, and the sound film of the same name.

It was in 1932 that Martin casually asked Osa, "How would you like to learn to fly, honey?" Osa looked at him in surprise, since Martin had always expressed an aversion to air travel.

"Well, you'd better," he told her, "I've just ordered two Sikorsky airplanes! We can get to places more quickly than before and even go to areas we've never been," Martin pointed out in what must have been the understatement of the year.

On January 23, 1933, Martin and Osa with pilots Vern Carstens and Captain Boris Sergievsky, Al Morway, a mechanic from the Sikorsky plant, Arthur Sanial and Bob Moreno, in charge of sound equipment, and Hugh Davis, a lab man, arrived by sea at Cape Town, South Africa. There, they had their two planes unloaded.

Both planes were amphibians with retractable wheels. The larger craft, a Sikorsky S-38, had two super-charged Wasp engines, dual controls and using 87 octane gas "could fly faster than 100 miles per hour," Martin boasted. It seated ten, was painted with zebra stripes and named **Osa's Ark**. The smaller, single-engined plane, a Sikorsky S-39, bore giraffe markings, seated five, and was christened **The Spirit of Africa.**

After two tiresome weeks in Cape Town where one unexpected delay after another prevented their beginning the long journey north to Kenya, they finally set off. While the distance was 3600 miles as the African crow flies, their flight plans had to depend on existing air fields, of which there were few, and lakes. This route involved an overall distance of 4400 miles. The two planes often became separated, causing the crew in one plane to worry about the fate of the other craft, but somehow they successfully made their way north without mishap first to Kimberly, then to Pretoria, Bulawayo, Broken Hill, Mpika, and finally Mbeya and Dodoma in Tanganyika.

Now they were on familiar ground, and soon they glided smoothly down on Wilson's Airdrome's grass landing strip. Wilson's is the smallest and oldest of Nairobi's three existing fields. It is now used strictly by private aircraft, but it was the first of Nairobi's fields to be used by

commercial planes. At that time, although a commercial flight from Europe to East Africa was available, the planes involved were "flying boats" that used the Nile and lakes as their landing fields. In Kenya, they landed only at Kisumu on Lake Victoria, just east of the Uganda border.

Wilson's is the airfield that today's tourists pass when visiting Nairobi National Park. Until high park fences were erected in recent years, wandering herds of gazelle and zebra, prides of lion and an occasional cheetah had to be driven off the runway before planes could land or take off. At Wilson's the Johnsons constructed a hangar to protect their two planes from the elements.

During the ensuing year and a half, the Johnsons and their crew flew some 60,000 miles over East and Central Africa. They constructed most of their own fields, one at Nanyuki on Raymond Hook's farm at the base of Mt. Kenya; at least four in the Northern Frontier District, one at Garba Tula, another at Ngornit, a third at the south end of Lake Rudolf, and still another at Garissa on the Tana River. Other airstrips they constructed included the one at Keekorok on the Mara Plains, another at Seronera, both of which are still used daily by flying safaris, and one they hacked out of the jungles of the Ituri Forest in the Belgian Congo.

The number of firsts the Johnsons chalked up on this expedition is beyond count. They flew over Mount Kenya's 17,000 foot peaks and photographed them from the air for the first time. Lack of pressurization kept them from flying over the highest of Kilimanjaro's twin peaks, Kibo, which reaches an altitude of 19,340 feet. But they were the first to photograph it from the air and to fly over its lower peak, Mawenzi. They filmed the "Sea of Jade," Lake Rudolf (now Lake Turkana), and from above photographed the crater lakes on Central Island. During this same excursion they made the first sound films of that vanishing tribe, the Elmolo, as well as the far more numerous and colorful Turkanas, whose brilliantly colored and feathered headdresses are distinctive. Other highlights of their aerial safari show endless herds of elephants moving across the Lorian Swamp in northern Kenya and a sea of the Serengeti's migrating wildebeest from above.

On the ground at Seronera, they used their planes as blinds. One amusing filmed sequence depicts Osa whacking a particularly curious lion over the head with a bag of flour as it peered into the window of her **Ark.**

When Trubee Davison, president of the American Museum at the time, and Al Klein, his white hunter, came to Garissa for four elephants to complete the herd that now stands in the center of the Akeley African Hall, the Davison group made the long dusty trip by car, the Johnsons arriving fresh and clean by air. Not only did the party get its four elephants, it got a fifth that insisted on charging in what was obviously not a bluff.

The Johnsons also flew into the Amboseli region where they used the dry Amboseli Lake as a landing field.

A trip across Uganda into the Ituri forest reunited them with pygmies they had photographed in 1930. As they had with other tribesmen, they took pygmies on short flights to observe the reactions of the little people when they saw their native forests from above.

Reactions from one ethnic group to another varied considerably, but few were able to relate what they saw from above to what they were accustomed to seeing at ground level. The Masai, for example, failed to recognize the cattle they so highly prized. From above, the cattle appeared legless, so obviously they were not cattle since cattle have legs. For the greater part, although these Africans enjoyed the flights, they were far less impressed than the Johnsons had expected them to be.

After eighteen months, Osa became seriously ill, so it became necessary to return her to Europe for hospitalization as quickly as possible. With a baby elephant, four cheetahs, a leopard, and a hyena, the party set off on what proved to be a ten-day flight.

From Kenya they headed for the Nile and followed the commercial route down river, stopping at Juba, Khartoum and Wadi Halfa, photographing from the air the Egyptian ruins they had observed from the ground (or riverboat) with George Eastman in 1928: Abu Simbel, the famous temple just south of the Egyptian border, the temples at Luxor, the Valley of the Kings and the Pyramids and the Sphinx on Cairo's outskirts.

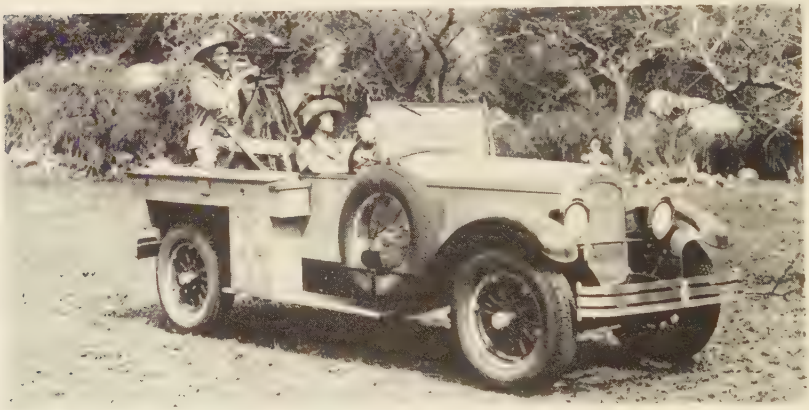
Heading west from Cairo, they flew to Mersa Matruh, Benghazi and Tripoli, then on to Tunis before crossing the Mediterranean. In Europe, they landed at Cagliari, Cannes, Lyons, Le Bourget in Paris and finally London where Osa received sufficient medical attention to enable the party and its two planes to board the S. S. **Manhattan** at Southampton.

When they returned to the States, Martin published **Over African Jungles,** prepared the usual lecture film, and a commercial version for Twentieth Century-Fox. In addition to the exciting flying footage, they had filmed extensively the activities of a large troupe of olive baboons, so they titled their commercial film, **Baboona**.

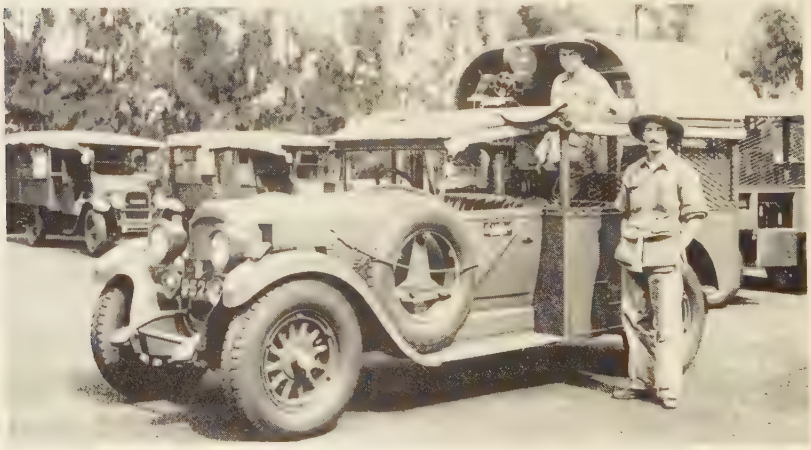
Unnoticed, an era had come to an end—the Johnsons' long relationship with East Africa was over. Although their next expedition would not take them back to Kenya, they planned an unlimited number of African safaris, some to regions they had not previously visited, and others to areas they loved so dearly.

During fifteen years, they had made Nairobi better known to most Americans than Wichita. They had revealed to the world that East Africa was not a land of danger and disease, but one of the loveliest regions on earth. They were never to see it again, together.

The Johnsons' camera car on their first African (1921) expedition.



A far grander camera car was but one of a number of powerfully built and specially constructed vehicles used on the 1924 African expedition.



Martin's camera car-office on the Congorilla (1930) expedition.

Near Seronera, Serengeti

The historic reunion of Martin Johnson (left) and Carl Akeley (right). It was Carl at The Explorers Club who first persuaded the Johnsons to film African wildlife. In 1926 shortly before his death, he introduced the Johnsons to an area near Banagi Hill inhabited by unusually tame lions. On this and three subsequent expeditions, Martin was to immortalize these regal animals by obtaining some of the finest lion portraits of all time. Much of the material appears in the film "Simba" and the book "Lion."

Serengeti Plains, 1934

Although the topi is an abundant antelope on Kenya's Mara Plains and Tanzania's Serengeti Plains, this is without exception the finest topi photo I have ever seen. The shot achieves such perfection that it brings to mind a museum diorama or one of Carl Akeley's bronzes.

Serengeti

Wildebeest during migration — wildebeest still cross the Serengeti following the rains and the resulting new growth of grass; however, in 1928 they could be counted by the million while today they survive in mere hundreds of thousands.

Serengeti, 1934

"We found a fine campsite near some huge rocks in a park of mimosa trees." Martin Johnson. (Diary entry, April 1, 1928.) This location is now known as Seronera Camp, familiar to thousands of tourists who are driven on what is dubbed "the milk run".

Between 1920 and 1935, the Martin Johnsons took literally thousands of magnificent lion photographs. This, as were many of their best ones, was taken near Seronera, Serengeti Plains.

Serengeti Plains, 1928

"Johnson himself I admire greatly for the infinite amount of patience the man must have. . . I know for a fact that the Johnsons spent five months on one lion location getting lion stuff only. Five months in the African bush. . . would have made Job look like a piker." W. S. Van Dyke, director of M.G.M.'s "Trader Horn" (Horning Into Africa.)

Osa with George Eastman, Serengeti, 1928

"(The Johnsons) are both a great addition to our party and she is the life of the camp. Even Percival who says he hates the sight of a woman in camp has fallen for her, and whether she is fishing, shooting, driving a car, making bread, chili con carni (sic), soup or spur fowl fricassee, we all think she is about perfect." George Eastman. (Chronicles of an African Trip, 1927.)

Near Lake Paradise, 1922

From the lower slopes of Mount Marsabit, Martin films the foreboding Kaisoot Desert which the Johnsons had recently crossed for the first time, using game and camel trails and a government track wherever it existed. In years to come, they were to traverse it regularly with no more concern than a trip to the corner grocery might involve.

"A year ago Mr. and Mrs. Johnson returned from their first journey to Africa and gave to the world a photographic record of African game that was of greater interest and beauty than any that had been brought out of Africa before." Carl Akeley. (Martin Johnson and His Expedition to Lake Paradise, NATURAL HISTORY, May-June, 1924.)

"At Thika we decided to stop for the night at the Blue Posts Hotel. It is situated about four hundred yards from two beautiful waterfalls, one the Chania River, the other the Thika." Martin Johnson. (Diary entry, Feb. 28, 1924.) Then considered the end of civilization and the starting point for many a safari, it now lies beside an off-ramp from a freeway.

Safari luncheon with the Duke & Duchess of York, later to become King George VI and his queen.

"They were as nice as they could be. . .We found they had run out of fresh vegetables so Osa got out our tomatoes, cucumbers, egg plant and sweet corn and presented them. . . They had stolen away from (their) big camp. . .and went twenty-five miles to (be by) themselves. Suku and Pishi were all bucked up on having the honor of waiting on the toto of the King, as they called the Duke. . .About five o'clock we had to leave them, and a mighty pleasant day it was." Martin Johnson. (Diary entry, Feb. 1, 1925.)

"I have developed seven thousand feet of the 27,000 I have exposed on the trip — it is great stuff, the picture of the elephant charge is the best of the bunch. Osa turned the crank until nothing but the elephant's tusks showed in the aperture. He must have been eight feet from the camera when she stopped turning. I remember now that she had to sight almost straight up when she shot and saved my life as well as her own. I know I would have deserted the camera before she did and I would have run like hell." Martin Johnson. (Diary entry, March 18, 1922.)

Lake Paradise

"One elephant had the habit of going into our garden every night. . . Each night he would eat a space about ten feet square, pulling up sweet potatoes and eating the vines as well. I must say he was an orderly elephant to stand in one place . . . feed and go. . . without destroying the rest of the patch." Martin Johnson (1925 diary entry, undated, but probably written in Oct.)

Camel safari, northern Kenya

"On this trip we will take thirty camels, two mules, fifty porters, six Boran camel leaders, two camel syces. (These syces are the ones who load and off-load the camels; the Boran who own the camels know nothing of how to load them.)" Martin Johnson. (Diary entry, Dec. 19, 1924.)

Lake Paradise, July 17, 1924

"The bull had one broken tusk . . . I got to work with my Akeley camera and inside of thirty minutes had used every lens, from the shortest focus to the longest, but made only about two hundred feet of film and then settled on the 17 inch as being the best to use." Martin Johnson. (Letter to Dan Pomeroy.)

Ituri Forest, 1934

Forest elephant cows and calves in the Belgian Congo.

Bush elephants, Lorian Swamp, Kenya

"Miss Joyce is here and what a relief it is to get all the correspondence off of my hands. We flew her over herd after herd of elephants within a few hours after she landed in Mombasa where we flew to meet her." Martin Johnson. (Letter dated Nov. 24, 1933.)

Martin and Osa with infant forest elephant in the Belgian Congo, 1934.

Beisa oryx, Northern Frontier District

"About five o'clock we struck the Isiolo Plains and game became plentiful — big herds of common zebra, herds of oryx, Grant's gazelle, a few long-necked gerenuk, and several herds of giraffe." Martin Johnson. (Diary entry, Feb. 28, 1924.)

Northern Frontier District, Kenya

"Common zebra (Grant's) come in herds of twenty to two hundred." Martin Johnson. (Letter to Father Johnson, Sept. 29, 1922.)

Lumbwa debutantes

Kikuyu maidens

Rendille tribesman

Masai belles

Masai hunters, Serengeti, 1925

Lumbwa warrior, Serengeti, 1925

Ikoma hunter, northern Tanganyika (now Tanzania), 1927

Somali girl, northern Kenya, 1934

Turkana, northern Kenya, 1934

Meru warriors, east of Mount Kenya

Turkana tribesman at Lake Rudolf

"For a few months we made a camp (near) the southern end of Lake Rudolf. . .it took our motor cars ten days to get there. . .we flew up in two and a half hours. . .this Turkana chief is wearing a coiffure matted with mud and decorated with ostrich plumes" Martin Johnson. (Letter dated Aug. 21, 1933.)

Archer's Post, Northern Guaso Nyiro

"The rains are my big reason for hurry. They are due in a couple of weeks and I must get across the Guaso Nyiro before it is in flood, as it must be forded, and the rains will make going so heavy that wagons and motor cars could not get through —then I would be stuck for three or four months." Martin Johnson. (Diary entry, Feb. 17, 1924.)

Merille River, northern Kenya

"I asked Boculy how far away Merille was. He said about three hours. After we had been on safari an hour, I again asked Boculy and he said eight hours. I told him an hour before that it was only three hours. He replied that it was three hours from Kampatoonia but eight hours from where we were then. I am still trying to puzzle out his logic." Martin Johnson. (Diary entry dated only 1925.)

Lake Paradise, Mt Marsabit

"Lake Paradise as viewed from the highest ridge of the crater. In 1972, Jack Selsor and I, when on safari with Bob Lowis, camped at this identical spot. Below and across the lake is a broad well used game trail, directly to the right remain the foundations of the Johnson camp." Kenhelm Stott, Jr. (In the footsteps of Martin & Osa Johnson, Zoonooz, July, 1974.)

Lake Paradise, viewed from Martin's lab

"About three o'clock we broke through the forest and there was Lake Paradise in front of us. . .Osa cried because she was so happy. It was the biggest day of our lives - it seemed we had bucked every known obstacle to reach the lake again but here we were and our caravan not far behind." Martin Johnson (Letter dated April 15, 1924 to Dan Pomeroy, American Museum of Natural History.)

Living Room, Lake Paradise

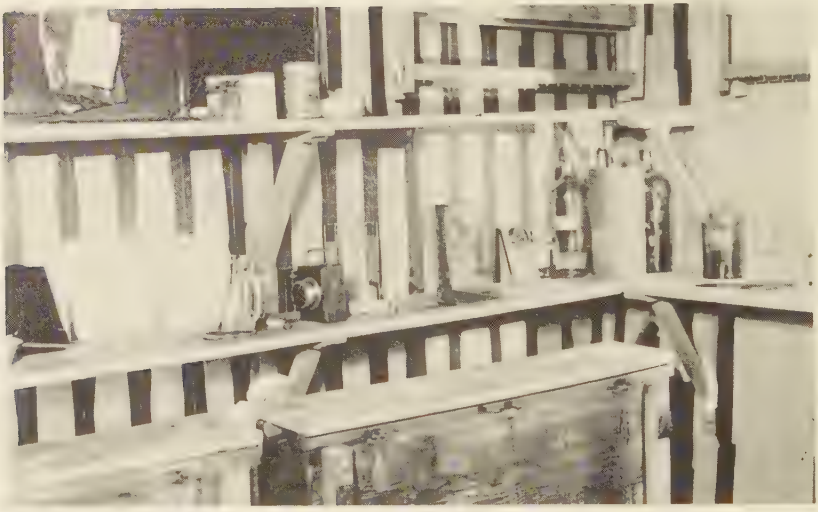
"The building will be of log, with grass roof, the cracks of the logs filled with clay and elephant, rhino, and buffalo dung. These, mixed together make an excellent surface. When finished I will paint the inside with a mixture of paint and glue. The ceiling and floors will be made of the best of my boxes. I have twenty-three boxes from Eastman Kodak, each one the same size, boards an inch thick." Martin Johnson. (Diary entry, May 1, 1924.)

Gardens & staff quarters, Lake Paradise, 1926

"She planted radishes and lettuce and peas and beans . . she now has nearly an acre of nice looking sweet corn . . carrots, parsley, potatoes, turnips, watermelons, cantaloupes, squashes, cucumbers. . .She is very proud of it. . .and wanders about. . .weeding and picking bugs all day long, rain or shine." Martin Johnson. (Diary entry, May 1, 1924.)

Lake Paradise

"I have been planting (a) garden - every day for two weeks - both flowers and vegetables. We will have lots of good things to eat before long. We have several big watermelons . . now I have quite a nice strawberry patch coming on and wonder berries - do you know them?" Osa Johnson. (Letter to her parents, Aug. 31, 1925.)



Martin's lab at Lake Paradise

"I have never had a finer laboratory. The walls are very high and the entire inside is covered with white canvas. The canvas in the darkroom has been painted dark red and I have four ruby lights at convenient places. . .My floors are made of Eastman Kodak boxes. . .sandpapered so they are as smooth as you ever saw." Martin Johnson. (Letter dated June 7, 1924.)

Olive or anubis baboon, Kenya

Old John, as the Johnsons called him, was the leader of a large troupe of baboons that starred in "Baboona," the Johnsons' commercial film released in 1935.

Kenya mountain forests

Colobus monkeys are among the most striking of Africa's many primates. Unfortunately, in some regions they have been annihilated for their long fur which some women find attractive in coat-form.

The aardvark, a termite-eater, is a fairly common animal in parts of Africa. Being nocturnal it is seldom seen and even more rarely photographed.

Greater or thick-tailed galago, an African relative of Madagascar's lemurs.

Both striped and spotted hyenas occur in East Africa, but the spotted is much more often seen and heard.

Northern Kenya

"Boculy says this is the best time to go to some of the waterholes at the foot of the Mathews Range. . .the whole countryside is unique for its desolate and beautiful scenery." Martin Johnson. (Diary entry, Nov. 26, 1924.)

Kenya's Northern Frontier District

". . .nor have I done justice to Osa and Martin Johnson whose photographic records of that land are so important in addition to the study of African wildlife." George Eastman. (A Safari in Africa, NATURAL HISTORY, Nov.-Dec., 1927)

Laisamis, December 18, 1924

"I lay down in the sand about twelve feet from the flashlight lamps, without anything. . .for protection. . .About 10 o'clock Osa gave one whistle, I raised up and saw a rhino coming right down our path. . .I took a chance and made the electrical contact that made the flash, but I forgot to close my eyes so I was blinded for about three minutes. . .later two more rhinos. ." Martin Johnson.

December 26, 1924

"Yesterday I was up at four developing plates. . .I was not prepared for the big surprise when I developed two wonderful rhino flashlights that we had made at Laisamis. . ." Martin Johnson. (Report to stockholders, Martin Johnson African Expedition Corp., Bulletin #4.)

Buffalo, Lake Paradise

"I have always marveled that game does not go away never to return after a flash, but they seem to pay little attention to it, sometimes coming back in less than half an hour." Martin Johnson. (Undated diary entry, but certainly 1925 and probably during the autumn.)

"Osa hates rhinos, it seems they dislike her too, for they always take out after her." Martin Johnson (Diary entry, June 8, 1925)

Bull buffalo, Ndoto Mountains

"Directly ahead. . . .I saw a big buffalo with its head up staring at us. . .he moved back of the bush and almost immediately reappeared to our right. . .he turned and ran into the bush, and then. . .I found out how the quick movement had been made. The first buffalo had disappeared behind the bush. . .another had appeared fifty yards closer. Their movements were synchronized so perfectly that it seemed to be the same fellow closer." Martin Johnson. (Diary entry, March 27, 1925.)

Ndoto, Kenya

"Examining the (reticulated) giraffe, we found a lion had done a most thorough job. . .I had my camera all ready and saw a fine leopard come down the riverbed and turn to the kill. He stopped and looked all around and then went to eating off the giraffe's hump." Martin Johnson. (Diary entry, March 16, 1925.)

The Johnsons, Nairobi, beside an early K.U.R. car.

"It was a rare team they made, this partnership between these two handsome young people from Kansas. Indeed, in the annals of travel and exploration, they were unique. They shared each other's thoughts, experiences, hardships, dangers. And I don't know any couple that had so much and such continuous fun together." Lowell Thomas. (The Story of Martin Johnson, NATURAL HISTORY, March, 1937.)

Lumbwa on the Serengeti, 1926

"This time the spearmen succedded in surrounding (the lion). . .Pat (Ayre) had driven Martin as close as he dared . . .decidedly too close for safety, but they were willing to take the chances for the sake of the picture. Presently he broke for the last time, . . .and it was amazing how quickly they filled him full of their keen weapons. . . .it was all over in seconds. . .Martin got a wonderful picture. . . .that will be a very valuable part of the record Martin is making for the Museum. . . Lion spearing will soon become a lost art. There have been a number of attempts to make motion pictures but none (before) have been satisfactory. . .Others have been faked, one of the notable ones having one foot of the lion in a steel trap" George Eastman. (Chronicles of an African Trip, 1927)

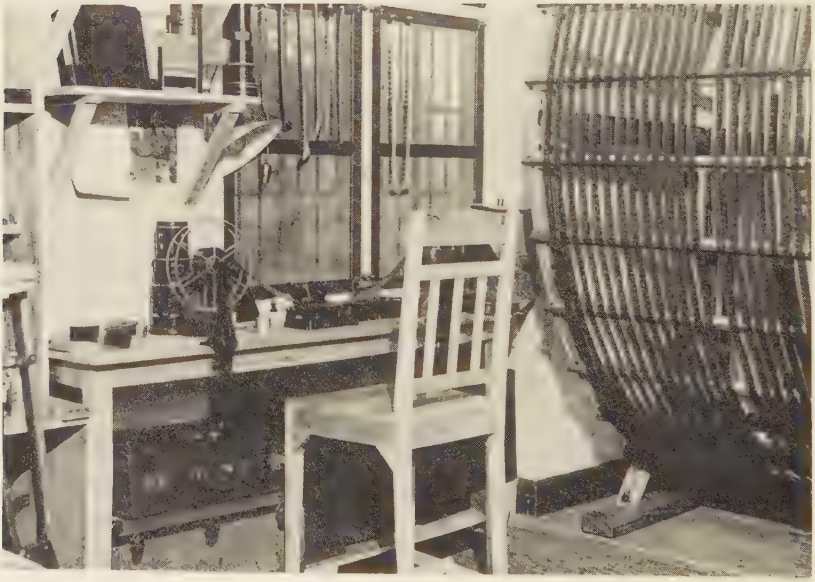
Lion at Grant zebra kill

"A masterpiece — one of the dozen or so photographs Martin Johnson selected as his best. His legacy to the world is a splendid portrayal of a vanishing wilderness, photographed with patience, courage and artistry." Lowell Thomas. (The Story of Martin Johnson, NATURAL HISTORY, March, 1937.)

"We were photographing (a leopard) from a blind when he suddenly saw us through the opening where the lenses were protruding, and with a mighty spring came through the opening. Can you imagine a little five foot square blind built of grass and logs. . . containing Osa and me, a friend, and a full grown leopard? Luckily, this friend had his rifle in his hands and shot the leopard only a few inches away from us!" Martin Johnson. (Letter from Nairobi dated April 17, 1934.)

Muthaiga, Nairobi

"We are back again in Nairobi. My home is very beautiful. . .I am going to do a lot of planting. The coming rains are due about March 17th. . .I do wish you could see this lovely place." Osa Johnson (Letter to parents, March 13, 1928.) Number 7, Lucania Road, purchased in 1927, was to be the only permanent home the Johnsons ever had.



Nairobi

"I wrote you about moving into our new home, where we lived as on safari until January 15, when work on the new laboratory and garage was well under way. . .We had Blower add shelves to the ceiling in the store-rooms, tables were built for the kitchen. . .a sink and drying-drain table was added to the pantry." Martin Johnson. (Letter dated Feb. 15, 1927.)

Victoria Nile, 1928

The Johnsons visit Uganda's Murchison Falls for the first time.

Lake Albert, 1928

Returning from the Congo, the Johnson-Eastman party cross the upper end of Lake Albert.

Frame from Movie Film

"We all wanted to talk at once. . .gorilla camera hunting was the most thrilling sport of all. . .'All of our big game hunting adventures are as nothing to the thrills I've had today,' was Osa's comment." Martin Johnson, 1930.

Ituri Forest, Belgian Congo

"Yesterday we took a long walk into the forest. . .it is perfectly beautiful. . .has orchids and ferns everywhere. . .This dense forest seems. . .as if it has a curtain of mystery down over it. . .everything seems so still and you feel as if you were in another world." Osa Johnson. (Letter to parents, undated but undoubtedly autumn, 1930; bears heading "Somewhere in the Congo.")

Carl and Mary Akeley

"In Meru we got word of Carl Akeley's death. This was a big shock because Carl spoke our language and was one of the finest men that ever lived. . .He was a sculptor, inventor of the famous Akeley camera, a splendid photographer, and the father of a new system of taxidermy that is now being used throughout the world." Martin Johnson in Safari.

Mt. Mikeno, Belgian Congo

"They visited the grave of Carl Akeley, on the slopes of Mt. Mikeno, in the Virunga Range." Dr. Pascal James Imperato. (The Johnsons in Africa, AFRICANA, Sept. 1966)

Wambutti pygmies, Ituri Forest, Belgian Congo, 1934

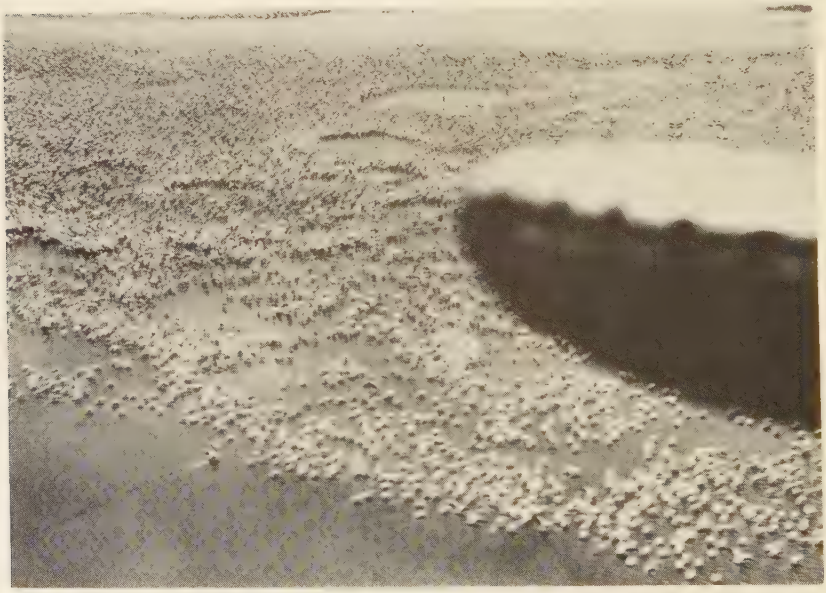
Ubangi women, Belgian Congo (now Zaire), 1928

Wambutti pygmies, Belgian Congo, 1934

"Pygmies lined up hoping for a ride. They were not one bit interested in how the plane flew but they did love to fly. . .Once we had thirty-six of them packed inside." Martin Johnson.

"In 1930, the Johnsons made the first thorough study of the pygmies of the Ituri forest. It was during this expedition that they added sound to their motion pictures." Dr. Pascal James Imperato. (The Johnsons in Africa, AFRICANA, Sept. 1966.)

The single-engined "Spirit of Africa" bore giraffe spots, while the larger "Osa's Ark" was zebra-striped.



Rift Valley, Kenya 1934

The Johnsons had filmed flamingoes on the alkaline lakes of the Rift Valley on many occasions. Now they were able to observe and film them from above.

Serengeti Plains

"A few days ago we flew down to the Serengeti Plains in Tanganyika in an hour and a half, found a good landing place, had lunch with ice cold beer. . .flew back by a different route and were home (Nairobi) before dark. . I then sent my motorcars off with our camping equipment. They will be five days getting there." Martin Johnson. (Letter dated Aug. 21, 1933.)

Masai giraffe on the Serengeti

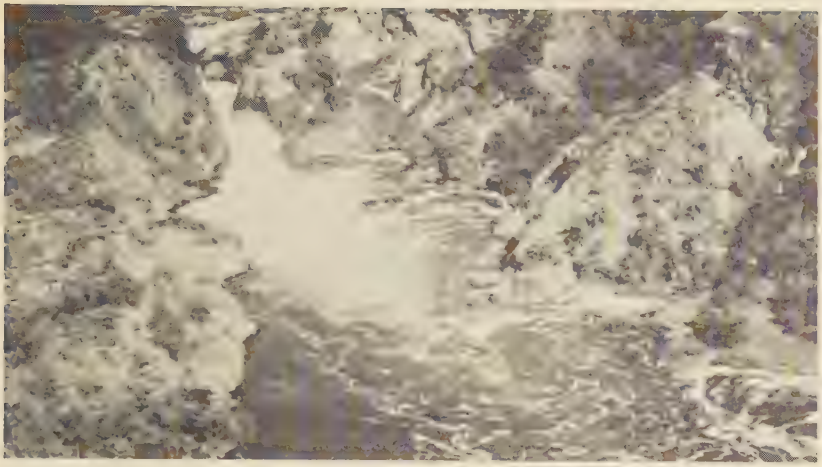
Masai giraffe are characterized by maple-leaf blotches. Two other East African giraffes are the liver-colored reticulated giraffe of the deserts of the northern eastern region and the Rothschild or "five horned giraffe" of the northwest.

Osa and Osa's Ark, Serengeti, 1934

"Lions pay no attention to the human form if they can see it only from the waist up. Had Osa stepped to the ground, they would have run away or. . .attacked her, probably the latter." Martin Johnson.

Nairobi, 1934

"The Johnsons were never without pets at their home in Muthaiga, a suburb of Nairobi. Shown here — a leopard, a litter of cheetahs, a forest elephant and a spotted hyena. Osa subsequently donated the cheetahs to the San Diego Zoo." Kenhelm Stott, Jr. (In the footsteps of Martin & Osa Johnson, ZOONOOZ, Sept., 1974.)



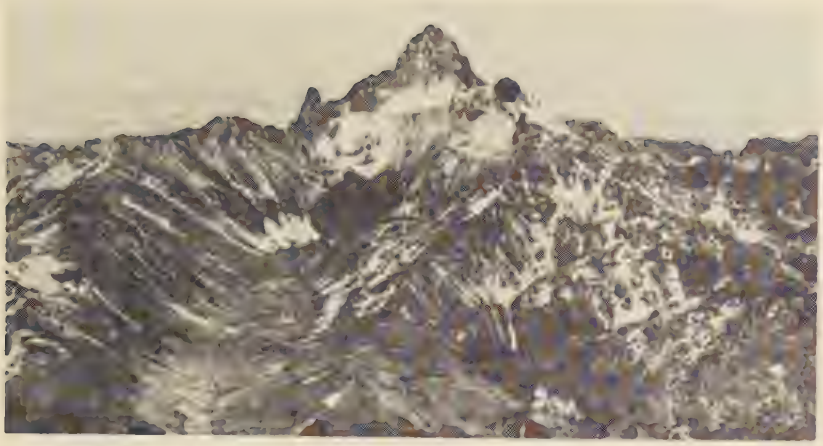
Victoria Nile, Uganda

"We flew along the river. . .and it was fun watching the hippos dive under the water as we came over them. . .crocodiles would splash under the water. . .We flew over Murchison Falls — beautiful from the air." Osa Johnson. (Letter to her parents, undated but probably 1934.)

Tana River, 1934

"They constructed their own landing strips, since none existed in the majority of places they visited. They built strips at Garba Tula, Nanyuki. . ., Ngornit, and at the southern end of Lake Rudolf." Dr. Pascal James Imperato. (The Johnsons in Africa, AFRICANA, Sept., 1966.)

Campsite near Nanyuki, with Mt. Kenya in the background, 1934.

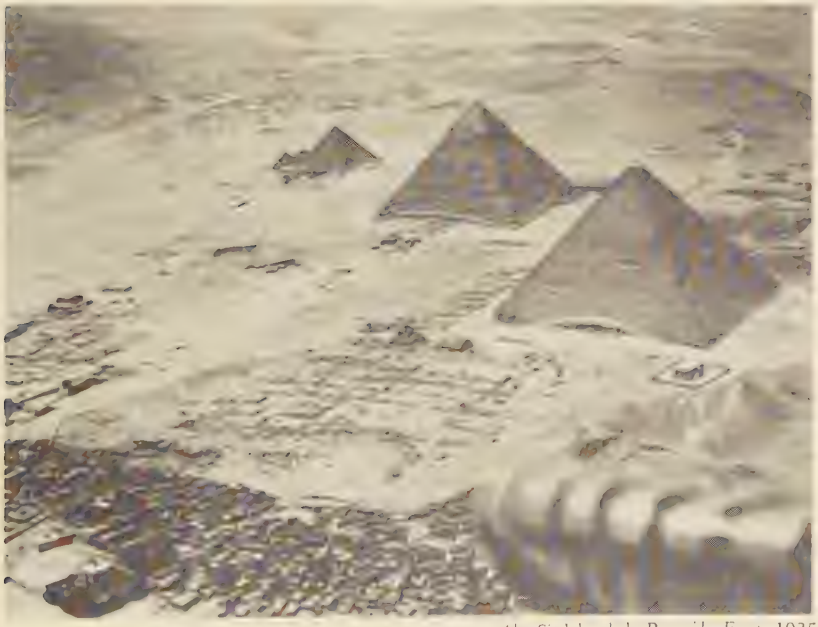


The Johnsons filmed Mount Kenya from above for the first time.

Central Island, Lake Rudolf

"We took (off) five days ago in our big plane for Lake Rudolf. . .We stayed there several days making pictures of the Turkana natives, then we flew to Central Island to photograph crocodiles — we had a hard time taking off in such rough water and bumps. I though the plane would crash any minute, and Vern (Carstens) was so very worried — bless his heart, he's been so faithful to us." Osa Johnson. (Letter to parents, undated but probably 1934.)

Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest mountain — 19,340 feet. Left, Mawenzi; right, Kibo, the higher peak.



Abu Simbel and the Pyramids, Egypt, 1935

When Osa became critically ill in East Africa, it became necessary to fly up the Nile to the Mediterranean. The Johnsons had now flown the full length of Africa. They continued by plane to Great Britain and on to the United States by ship.

Chapter IV

The decision to revisit Borneo in 1935 in no way indicated a loss of interest in Africa. It was conceived only as a change of pace and locale, with every intention of returning to Africa upon the completion of the Bornean expedition. Neither Martin nor Osa had any way of knowing it was to be their last trip together.

On August 13, 1935, they left New York on a Dutch freighter, the **Kota Pinang**. They were accompanied by more than two hundred crates of gear, pilot Jim Laneri, sound engineer, Joe Tilton, and the smaller of their two Sikorsky amphibians. The craft was renamed **The Spirit of Africa and Borneo,** which appellation appeared in English, Chinese and Malayan on the fusilage. Its bow bore the watchful eye that decorates Chinese junks and Arab dhows alike to bring good luck and ward off evil spirits.

Last Adventure, the book that describes this expedition, was found in rough draft form more than a decade after Osa's death among the stacks of Johnson material stored in the Chanute, Kansas, home of Belle Leighty, Osa's mother. Published in 1966, it was edited by Dr. Pascal James Imperato, of New York, a specialist in tropical medicine, an authority on African art, and a victim of chronic and incurable admiration for the Johnsons. Previously having written articles about the Johnsons, he was an ideal choice to complete the task of using Osa's first draft material and interpolating data from Martin's diary.

Following the Mediterranean-Indian Ocean route, Martin, Osa, Jim and the plane were off-loaded at Belawan, Sumatra. While Joe escorted the expedition gear by sea to Singapore, **The Spirit** was reassembled in Sumatra. Once air-worthy, it took off for the Malay Peninsula, crossing the Straits of Malacca to Port Swettenham, port for the nearby city of Kuala Lumpur. After an overnight rest and refueling, **The Spirit** bore its congenial threesome to Singapore where Joe and their supplies awaited them.

Martin arranged to have the expeditionary gear and Joe transferred to a smaller ship, the **Marudu**, which soon began chugging its way across the South China Sea for British ruled Kuching, Sarawak. Meanwhile, the Johnsons and Laneri spent several days in and about Singapore, spending most of their nights as guests of the Sultan of Johore, whose palace lies on the Malayan mainland, just across the causeway from the island of Singapore.

On September 30, **The Spirit** with Jim at the controls took off for Pemangkat Bay on the west coast of what was then Dutch Borneo. Landing to pick up additional fuel, they learned that prearrangements had somehow fallen through and no petrol was available. Though their fuel supply was now low, they had no choice but to chance getting through to Kuching.

As a courtesy and a precaution the British Royal Air Force provided an escort amphibian piloted by Captain Riccard. Both planes reached Kuching successfully to find good old Joe (and the **Marudu**) once again

awaiting their arrival. They dined that evening with the last of the White Rajahs of Sarawak, Sir Charles and Lady Vyner Brooke, at the royal palace.

Early the following morning, Martin, Osa and Jim took off for Labuan, leaving Joe once more to escort their gear by ship. The 325-mile jaunt to Miri in eastern Sarawak passed uneventfully and they paused for lunch at the Miri Club, the counterpart of which is, or rather was, to be found in every British colony. The next hop was a short one to the island of Labuan which then belonged to Straits Settlements. Later it was annexed to British North Borneo and subsequently became part of Sabah, when North Borneo achieved its independence.

At Labuan, they refueled and filed a flight plan that would take them along the traditional coastal route around the northern tip of North Borneo, then south to Sandakan. At Beaufort near Kimanis Bay they changed their minds, deciding that an overland route south of the Crocker Range and Mount Kinabalu would not only be shorter, but more adventuresome. Borneo's interior had seldom been penetrated by air.

Turning southeast they followed the Papar River to its headwaters. At an altitude of 8000 feet, they found they had excellent views of the Crocker Range but also to their dismay they were confronted with one of the torrential storms for which northern Borneo is noted. Flying blind for a period, they eventually emerged from the storm and strained their eyes searching eastward for a glimpse of the Sulu Sea. Instead they found they were heading directly into another storm which moved malignantly towards them from Mount Kinabalu.

Kinabalu is Borneo's highest mountain, the tip of which reaches 13,455 feet. Called "the Chinese Widow" by some, the mountain is a long rugged mass of rocks higher at one end than the other and might suggest to the imaginative a reclining female figure. At the moment it looked anything but picturesque, but they soon were spared from viewing it when they were enveloped by the oncoming storm. Once again flying blind, they rose to an altitude of 12,000 feet and found themselves looking down on the peak of Mount Alab. Again they were faced with the problem of a fuel shortage. There was no alternative but to turn around and head back to Labuan, providing they could find it. As they returned to what they hoped were the lowlands, they left the storm behind and settled comfortably down in the sea beside Labuan. There they spent the night.

The following day, chastened somewhat by their recent and potentially disasterous experience, they agreed to fly the longer but approved route. But with typical Johnson obstinacy, by the time they reached Kimanis Bay, they had decided to make another try at the overland crossing.

The sky ahead seemed clear and the verdant forests below were brushed by a brilliant tropical sun. They crossed the Crocker Range, flew along side "the Chinese Widow" and soon saw the turquoise waters of the Sulu Sea ahead. Below estuaries writhed in serpentine fashion among the broad nipa palm-mangrove swamp that bordered Labuk Bay. Here they turned south searching for Sandakan which lay just beyond

a point of high ground. Eventually, they spied a windsock that languidly floated from a mast atop Sandakan's customs house.

The flight had been delightful and they landed nearly beside the customs house. The route they had just completed was then considered extremely hazardous; now it is the one used daily by commercial craft.

Once ashore, Martin and Osa registered at the Sandakan Hotel to find it was also occupied by the Sultan of Brunei and his fifteen wives. The Johnsons had crossed his Sultanate two days before. Unlike North Borneo and Sarawak, Brunei's oil-rich lands remain a state independent of East Malaysia, despite the fact that Malaysian neighbors have more than once cast a covetous eye at its wealth of natural resources.

On their first evening in Sandakan, the Johnsons were entertained at Government House with the result that the Governor offered them as a semi-permanent residence a two-story, eight-room house, one of a number of official residences that lay atop the wooded hill north of town. In addition to a dazzling view of the Sulu Sea and the nearest of the Philippine Islands of the Sulu Archipelago, it offered cool breezes that seldom reach the flat, low commercial section of Sandakan.

Although not air-conditioned, the house provided electricity and great Somerset Maughamish fans which twirled lazily from the ceiling. It had, as well, two bathrooms, one of which with modification would serve amply as a darkroom.

In a neighboring house lived Harry Keith of the Forestry Department. His authoress wife, Agnes Newton Keith, was soon to write **Land Below the Wind** and after the war she published the dramatic account of imprisonment by the Japanese and family solidarity, **Three Came Home.**

In return for free billeting, the Johnsons agreed to provide the government with copies of all photographs and such data as their explorations might accrue.

A spell of bad weather gave Martin more time than needed to renovate the bathroom and for once they had preceded Joe and their two hundred-odd crates. A brief break in the weather gave them opportunity to fly about Sandakan Bay and over the island leper colony. When the heavy rains returned, they had much to occupy their time: hiring house servants and a skeleton crew for the forthcoming expedition into the interior and unpacking their supplies once Joe and his vessel had arrived. When the weathered cleared they took off in **The Spirit**, heading south for the Kinabatangan River they had explored by raft so many years previously. While searching for a suitable site for a base camp, they spotted a clearing at Abai which to this day appears only on a few maps. It is located near the mouth of the river.

Returning to Sandakan, they accumulated a veritable army of porters, coolies, trackers, guides and an interpreter, courtesy of Mrs. Keith. Martin further engaged a fleet of gobongs (dugouts) and their owners, plus a fully-crewed Chinese junk.

Once this armada had sailed to Abai, the Johnsons settled in to make the place both comfortable and functional. They cleared an area approximately the size of four city blocks and construction began. With bamboo

poles and rattan rope converted from vine-palms, they built a two-room home for themselves, another for Joe and Jim, and several for the subalterns of their small army.

The ever-necessary photo lab was among the first buildings to be completed and next a combination kitchen-mess hall. Then, in preparation for casual callers, they built a guest house. No matter where they went, the Johnsons were always visited by government officials and others aware of the American photographic team. Such visitors invariably received cordial welcome.

Further structures housed their equipment which included a generator. They amazed their conglomeration of hired Bornean tribesmen, Chinese and Malays by plastering the inside of the walls and placing doors and "window doors" at convenient locations. After completing a complicated network of raised walkways, highly advisable in lands so regularly inundated by tropical downpours, they named their community Johnsonville in honor of Martin's father who had died the preceding year.

As was her custom wherever they set up a camp they intended to use for an extended period, Osa planted a garden. She had brought every imaginable sort of vegetable seed as well as an assortment of non-endemic flowers, the latter to augment an infinite variety of native orchids.

But Borneo was not East Africa, where Osa had planted gardens wherever they set up semi-permanent camps. Here, despite the heat and the abundance of water that promoted rapid growth, Osa's imported vegetables and flowers were removed almost as fast as they grew. Long-tailed and pig-tailed macaque monkeys recognized an easy source of unfamiliar yet tantalizing food when they saw it; and what they missed, white ants snipped off and carried away.

Rather as a test exploration, the Johnsons flew up the Segama River which ran parallel to the Kinabatangan and, as do all rivers in eastern North Borneo, flowed into the Sulu Sea. Then they proceeded to Darvel Bay where they investigated the village of Lahad Datu and the dense rain forests surrounding it. There they found the vegetation teeming with "monkeys galore, snakes, wild boar (the distinctive bearded pig), and several other animals, but no elephants."

Although **Last Adventure** does not discuss the matter, the Asian elephant is generally considered to be a non-native in Borneo and is restricted to the northeastern section of the island. Borneo's elephants are believed to be descendants of animals given to sultans of a bygone era; some authorities view Bornean elephants as representatives of the Sumatran race, others believe them to belong to the Malayan form. Allowed to run wild, they have adapted well to their new home and increased until there are now fair numbers of them.

Contemporary elephants seem not in the least affected by the brief period of domestication through which their ancestors passed and are now as wild and dangerous as elephants that occur naturally on Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula and west to the Indian Peninsula and Ceylon. They attack readily and seem delighted at an opportunity to mash human intruders, native or otherwise, into the mud and do so with regularity.

A similar attempt was made to introduce elephants by the Sultan of Sulu on Jolo Island, one hundred miles northeast of Sandakan, but none of their descendants remain.

One of the objectives of the Johnsons on their second trip to Borneo was to procure sound movies of the tattooed Tenggara head-hunters and their neighbors, the Rumanaus, who similarly like tattoos and heads. On the upper Kinabatangan the Johnsons not only succeeded in making the films they had planned, but also emerged with their own heads intact. As a bonus they were able to photograph primitive pygmoid peoples, closely allied to tribes that lurk in the densest jungles of the Malay Peninsula and the Philippines.

Films of zoological significance included pictures of sun or "honey" bears, as Osa called them, the Bornean form of sambar deer, gray gibbons, first photographs of the red-coated, blue-faced maroon leaf monkey, the elephants they had not found on Darvel Bay, and herds of stampeding Hose's buffaloes. They also filmed mud-skippers, those remarkable fish that flop out of the sea to bask on rocks or climb the lower branches of mangroves, tree-growing oysters that at low tide are completely deserted by the sea, flying snakes, and "flying fox" bats. They filmed for the first time in the wild the proboscis monkey which bears a nose that reaches bulbous porportions in the adult male. One portrait of a mature male photographed by Martin Johnson was to be reproduced as a postage stamp issued first in 1939 when North Borneo was a British Protectorate. Two subsequent versions bore a Japanese overprint for use during the occupation. A fourth version with a military overprint came after the war, and finally a fifth version carried an overprint alluding to North Borneo as a Crown Colony.

Most spectacular of all films resulting from the second Borneo expedition were those of an enormous male orangutan which, after several days, the Johnsons succeeded in capturing in much the same manner as they had the gorillas in the Belgian Congo in 1931. This magnificent creature was originally named Abai after the place of his capture, then later Trusan, a word meaning "back-water" in one of the Bornean dialects. Regrettably, Trusan did not survive long after reaching the United States, but a smaller male, Bujang, fared somewhat better as a gift to the San Diego Zoo.

Not included in the account offered by **Last Adventure** were encounters with Japanese survey and photographic teams in strange and out of the way places. The Johnsons, upon their return to this country, reported their encounters to State Department officials, who accepted the Johnsons' report quite casually, failing to see any particular significance in the matter, or so Osa told me. Five years later, the State Department might have indicated greater interest.

The second Borneo film, when released commercially, was an absolute gem. Printed in opalescent platinum-sepia, it contained what was without doubt the most brilliantly artistic cinematography the Johnsons had yet contributed. In addition to its superb wildlife footage, its scenic material was no less splendid. Sepia somehow conveyed the lush dankness of

shadowy rain forests, almost as well as color film might have done, and back-lit scenes of their lanteen-sailed junk against a background of "watered silk" Sulu Sea virtually glowed. Critics' reactions to the new film were without exception rapturously complimentary.

Chapter V

By the time they sailed from Borneo, they had logged more than 30,000 miles of flight over jungle and swamp despite the problems inherent to air-travel over one of the world's least charted and meteorologically unpredictable regions. During approximately a year and a half, they had accumulated an impressive list of "firsts", photographically, aeronautically and zoologically.

Once back in America, Martin edited the Twentieth Century-Fox film, **Borneo**. Then he prepared the customary more personalized version for the upcoming lecture circuit. Their first engagement was held at the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, and, as did the commercial version, their illustrated lecture brought rave reviews. From Salt Lake they were to proceed to southern California to visit old friends at the San Diego Zoological Garden.

The morning after their Salt Lake lecture, they read their reviews happily, then boarded a commercial aircraft for California. This was Tuesday, January 12, 1937, and they were due in San Diego on Saturday for lunch with Mrs. Benchley, myself and a few other members of the zoo staff. It was, needless to say, an engagement to which I looked forward with impatience. Saturday evening they were to present their Borneo lecture at Russ Auditorium.

On Tuesday afternoon their plane began to make its descent into the San Fernando Valley and Burbank Airport, then the commercial airport for the Los Angeles area. The plane flew into a dense layer of mist and strayed slightly off its course.

As passengers tightened their seat belts and straightened their hats, the plane smashed into a rugged mountainside in the Newhall-Saugus area. Being celebrities, the Johnsons had been placed in the more luxurious front row seats. While passengers to the rear of the plane escaped with minor injuries, those in the fore-section including the cockpit were badly injured.

Rescue teams accompanied by newscasters struggled up the mountain slope to the scene of the crash. There the unenviable task began of extricating the injured from the wreckage. The procedure seemed interminable.

Throughout the greater part of the night, I, with thousands of others around the country, listened as the events were described by radio in minute detail. Although audiences were assured that the Martin Johnsons had escaped serious injury, the anguished screams of one man could be heard in the background. Somehow, I was certain it was Martin, which suspicion was later confirmed.

Eventually, all passengers and crew members were carried down the slippery slope on litters, and the Johnsons were rushed to the nearest hospital, Olive View Sanitarium. There, at Osa's insistence, they shared a room. Both were mercifully placed under heavy sedation. X-rays revealed that Osa had sustained a concussion and a broken leg. Martin

was far more seriously injured with severe facial damage and internal complications. Osa was only vaguely aware when screens were placed about Martin's bed.

Although the morning papers of January 13 indicated both of the Johnsons would recover, an 8 a.m. newscast announced to a stunned world that Martin had died. What sheer irony it was that Martin, who had piloted planes over thousands of miles of uncharted areas in Africa and Borneo, was to die in what, even then, was considered a "milk run" flight between Salt Lake City and Burbank.

When Martin's body had been removed to an unmarked crypt in Forest Lawn Memorial Park, a still-sedated Osa prepared to meet the press. In her semi-conscious state, she had her hair dressed and applied makeup to hide facial bruises. After twenty-seven years as a show business trouper, she automatically complied with the rules of her profession. Her radio interviews revealed the state of shock in which she lay, her voice weak and tremulous.

Shortly, she was moved to the Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles where she spent several weeks recuperating. It was during this period that she signed with Clark Getts to serve as her business manager, a function Martin had heretofore performed. When Osa was well enough to travel, she accompanied Martin's body back to Chanute, Kansas, for burial.

By June she was anxious to get back to work and assuage the pain of Martin's death. With a second unit from Twentieth Century-Fox she spent five months as "Technical Advisor" in Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika making background shots for **Stanley and Livingstone.** It was to star Spencer Tracy as Stanley and the background footage she provided proved highly effective. It offered scenes of a stand-in Tracy and his line of porters moving across the Serengeti with a pride of lions feeding voraciously in the foreground, films from a boat that depicted Victoria Nile hippos splashing about with "Stanley's" safari moving along the shore beyond, of hundreds of Kikuyu tribesmen in warpaint surging over the crest of the Kedong Escarpment, and finally at Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika a recreation of the village in which Stanley supposedly uttered the immortal words, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume."

During the autumn of 1937 she began a lecture tour, reaching San Diego in February, 1938. She was accompanied by her mother, her brother and his wife, and Osa's manager, Clark H. Getts. During the day, she toured the zoo and chatted with old friends and in the evening presented **Jungles Calling** at Russ Auditorium. This lecture contained footage from all Johnson expeditions and offered in embryonic form the outline of a subsequently record-breaking book and a commercial film, released by Columbia and titled **I Married Adventure.**

During 1938 and 1939, she continued touring with **Jungles Calling** but found time to write her book **I Married Adventure** and work with Columbia on the film of the saga of her adventures with Martin. Both the book and the picture were released in 1940. The book became a runaway best seller at once. It was chosen as a book-club selection, abridged for

Reader's Digest, went through printing after printing and was translated into a dozen foreign languages. The filmed version required bridging sequences showing frontal views of Osa but only rear views of a substitute Martin Johnson. Osa, at forty-five, was made up to appear as she had as a bride and at various stages of the Johnsons' careers. The stand-in Martin retained a full head of dark hair and Osa found it highly amusing since Martin's hair never was dark and towards the end of his life had begun to thin conspicuously.

In 1941, Osa and Clark Getts were married by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia on the steps of New York's city hall. This marriage lasted only a few years. For Osa, no one could fill the shoes of Martin Johnson, the man—or perhaps by this time, Martin Johnson, the legend, exerted a certain influence.

During the same year, Osa wrote **Four Years in Paradise**, which concerned the same period as Martin's **Safari**. While not as well received as **I Married Adventure** its sales were respectable.

In 1944, Osa published **Bride in the Solomons,** a timely release since the previous year American troops had stormed the same shores of Tulagi and Guadalcanal the Johnsons had filmed twenty-five years before.

At the outbreak of war, both planes had been sold. One eventually sank in the waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The other was flown in Alaska for several years until its crash following the war.

Osa continued lecturing and making public appearances. After television came into wide usage, both **Baboona** and **Borneo** were shown in that medium in 1950. Later a series of 26 half-hour segments of **Osa Johnson's Big Game Hunt** were shown on independent television stations from coast to coast.

I saw Osa several times during the forties, both in San Diego and New York. When last I talked to her by phone, she was planning to return to East Africa to film it in Technicolor. Early in the thirties Martin had tinkered with 16mm Kodachrome in Kansas during the development of that process, and for the flying safari to Africa the Eastman Company had presented Osa with a custom-built camera and Kodachrome film for experimental use. The striking results brought her an award from the Eastman Company. Since 35mm color film required such bulky equipment at the time with cameras containing reels for three separate negatives, their use in the African wilds would have been exceedingly difficult. Furthermore, processing would need to be done in America so that weeks would pass between the filming of a sequence and relaying news to the Johnsons whether the results were satisfactory.

Osa's color safari was never to be. On January 7, 1953, a representative of the Associated Press called to inform me that she had died from a heart attack in her New York apartment.

The immediate reaction of shock offered little relief from the infinite sadness I knew would eventually manifest itself. At the moment, I was only dully aware that an era of singular significance had come to a close and I had lost a dear and widely-admired friend.

In the years that followed, no collaborative efforts combined the photographic skill of the Johnsons with that ever-present ingredient, the warm human affinity so deeply ingrained in each Johnson product. Their partnership was a one-of-a-kind situation, never to be duplicated.

Now, many of their early nitrate-based films have been lost to posterity, but others remain intact. One by one, their books have gone out of print, only to arise like literary phoenixes in sporadically-produced reprintings.

It is in Chanute, Kansas, that their spirit survives on a most personal level. There the Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum increases in size and quality year after year. Its principal structure was once a freight office which the Santa Fe Railway presented to an organization spearheaded by the late Belle Leighty, Osa's mother and Dr. James Butin, a local civic leader. The Johnson treasury of stills, films, journals, and correspondence is now available to the public and are preserved for all time. A remarkable collection of West African art has been donated by Dr. P. J. Imperato and others to augment those artifacts the Johnsons brought back from East and Central Africa, as well as from Borneo and the South Pacific. Portions of their journals and a hefty and vibrant representation of their correspondence are preserved there, plus an enormous number of original negatives and prints.

There remain gaps in the Johnson saga but a steady trickle of memorabilia continues to find its way to Chanute — perhaps a letter written to a friend by Martin while on safari, a poster representing an early film, or a photograph (for which there remains no negative) presented to someone who had aided the Johnsons somewhere along their worldwide travels. Such data comes from individual and institution alike, and little by little gaps are filled and dubious dates are either confirmed or refuted.

Chanute, though a relatively small community, stands firmly behind the museum, and its valid pride in the establishment guarantees continued growth and improvement. A dedicated director and staff, volunteer aid, a local working board of trustees and an honorary one that includes Lowell Thomas, Clark Getts and Vern Carstens, pilot on the African aerial expedition, guide its continuing development.

Such perseverance has created in rural Kansas one of the finest collections of Africana in existence. But the Johnsons and their heritage have not become the exclusive property of Chanute. They remain heroes, in the truest sense of the word, to all who thrill to exploration and adventure. They have left us infinite documentation of parts of the world that have changed so vastly since the beginning of the century. The wealth of historic photography they accumulated through the years was the result of relentless courage and determination, especially during their early expeditions when, with limited finances and the most primitive equipment, they recorded truly savage tribes and little known wildlife. Their photographic legacy is unequalled and their varied contributions are yet given due recognition throughout their own country.

From The Explorers Club and plaques in the Akeley African Hall in New York City to bronze legends that identify the busts of their two great gorillas near the entrance of San Diego Zoological Garden, their names are indelibly engraved.

Most of all, for those of us who have vicariously shared in the present century's Golden Age of Exploration, a period during which the tip of Mount Everest and even the surface of the moon have come within reach of mankind, the names Martin and Osa Johnson are permanently inscribed high on its Roll of Honor.

North Borneo

A contrast in the Johnsons' house-boats on the Kinabatangan River — 1920 and 1935.

The center of Sandakan, North Borneo, as it was in 1936.

Martin called this lovely seascape "On the coast of North Borneo."

"Murut headhunters stalking game. The Muruts were extraordinarily accurate with the blowgun and the bow and arrow." Osa Johnson (Last Adventure, William Morrow & Co., 1966.)

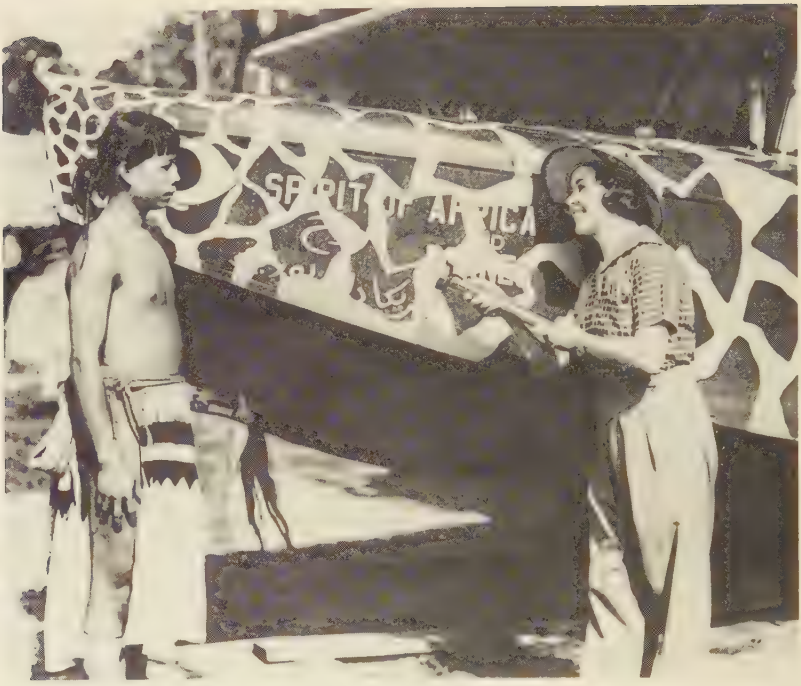
Upper Kinabatangan, North Borneo

"Martin Johnson shakes hands with one of the chiefs of the Tenggara. They are all arrayed in slipover shirts, parangs, pipes and turbans for the occasion." Osa Johnson (Last Adventure, William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1966.)

Land Dyak orchestra, North Borneo

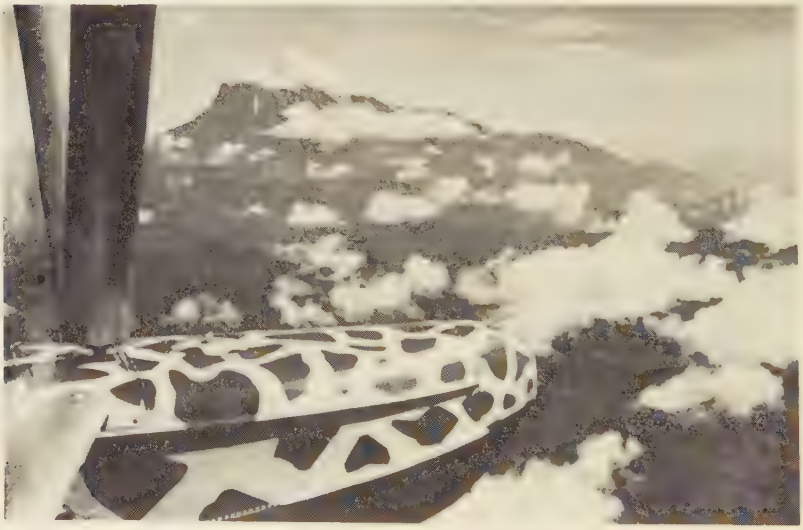
Tenggaras, upper Kinabatangan, North Borneo, 1920

Murut, North Borneo (now Sabah)



Johnsonville, North Borneo, 1935

"The Spirit of Africa" now became "The Spirit of Africa and Borneo." Its bow bore the painted eye that many Asians believe to ward off evil spirits.



Mt. Kinabalu, North Borneo, 1935

A second attempt at the risky inland route across North Borneo proved successful.

Kinabatagan River, North Borneo, 1935

The Johnsons in search of proboscis monkeys in a nipa palm lined tributary of the Kinabatangan River. While studying orangs, proboscis monkeys and other primates in North Borneo in 1959, Jack Selsor and I encountered an elderly Malay who was proud to have been one of the Johnsons' porters more than twenty years previously. K. Stott, Jr.

North Borneo, 1935

Martin and Osa made the first stills and motion pictures of wild proboscis monkeys. This shot of an adult male was so striking as to be selected for reproduction on a North Borneo postage stamp. It went through five issues: the State of North Borneo in 1939, then two Japanese over-prints during the occupation, next a British Military overprint, and finally in 1947 representing North Borneo as a British Crown Colony.

The younger the proboscis monkey, the smaller the nose.

North Borneo, 1920

The Bornean pangolin or "scaly anteater" is abundant, yet seldom seen and had never before been photographed. It is nocturnal, wary, and feeds on termites.

North Borneo, 1935

A mud-skipper utilizing the [illegible] fins. Martin moved referring to the species as the "tree-climbing fish" and provided this photographic documentation.

Kinabatangan River, North Borneo, 1936

Crocodiles such as this, king cobras, and flying snakes were among the less popular neighbors of the human inhabitants of "Johnsonville" near the village of Abai.

North Borneo, 1935

Although Osa contended that sun bears were gentle and friendly, we found Dyak tribesmen feared them more than any other inhabitants of Bornean jungles.

"They procured some amazing photographic material of the private life of the orangutan." Lowell Thomas. (The Story of Martin Johnson, NATURAL HISTORY, March, 1937.)

Kinabatangan River, North Borneo, 1936

"With these small dugouts, the expedition was able to paddle and pole its way well beyond the point where the river was navigable for the raft." Osa Johnson. (Last Adventure, William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1966.)

Kinabatangan River, North Borneo, 1936

This magnificent shot of a male orangutan is probably the finest photograph of a wild orang. The animal was eventually captured in much the same manner as had been the mountain gorillas in the Congo in 1930. The event provided a thrilling sequence in the Johnsons' final film, "Borneo."

THE END

would scarcely be a fitting conclusion to this chronicle of Martin and Osa Johnson and their adventures together. Gaps and conflicting dates in their saga remain, especially between 1913 and 1919. Anyone in possession of data concerning this period is urged to submit it to the Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum, 16 South Grant Avenue, Chanute, Kansas 66720. Such contributions would be invaluable in providing a more fully documented account of the Johnsons' early years. Furthermore, they would permit contributors to participate vicariously but substantially in **Exploring with Martin and Osa Johnson.**

(KWSjr.)

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Postscript:

I feel that I have been accorded a privilege in having the opportunity to work, during the final stages, on the publication of this book. One rarely is permitted to work with such a knowledgeable and gracious person as Kenhelm Stott, Jr. The work of compiling the material, held by the museum, into readable form has been a painstaking task. We at the museum are very grateful to Mr. Stott for his willingness to undertake such a project, and it is only fitting that we publicly say

THANK YOU!

Sondra Alden
Director

A project of this nature requires many people. The museum would like to herewith acknowledge their work.

In alphabetical order:

John Awald, Brookings, SD; former director of the Safari Museum; under whose administration the book had its start and took its form.

Barbara Henshall, Chanute, KS; member of the Board of Directors of the Safari Museum; who searched the files of the museum for Johnson prints and negatives, as well as being chief proofreader.

Patricia Henshall, Chanute, KS; Museum Staff Member, whose knowledge and expertise were invaluable in the final proofing and editing of the book.

Dr. Pascal James Imperato, New York City; Honorary Trustee of The Safari Museum; who participated generously in every phase of the manuscript's preparation.

Doyle McKinney, Chanute, KS; President of the Board of Directors of the Safari Museum; the photographer who printed the Johnson pictures for the book.

Paul Nelson, Chanute, KS; Member of the Board of Directors of the Safari Museum; who took the typed draft and handwritten notes and put it all into print.

C. Jackson Selsor, San Diego; a valued associate of Kenhelm Stott, and a great friend of the museum.

This book was printed on
70-lb. Woodbine India colored enamel
with
Garamond Type
by
News-Standard Printing Co., Inc.
Chanute, Kansas

Johnsons footsteps in Ceylon, Southern India, Australia, Malaya Peninsula, Borneo, New Guinea, the New Hebrides, the Solomons and Fiji. Mr. Stott, a well known zoologist, mammalogist and writer, has been the General Curator of the San Diego Zoo, the editor of its magazine, ZOONOOZ, and the leader of the Primate Studies Program of the San Diego Natural History Society.

Mr. Stott is now an Advisory Consultant for the Smithsonian Institution, a research associate of the San Diego Zoological Society, a Life Fellow of the Explorers Club, Life Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, and a member of many natural history groups in America, Europe, Africa, and India. More importantly to the publishers of this book, he is a research associate and honorary trustee of the Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum in Chanute, Kansas.

Entry Way to the Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum, Chanute, Kansas.