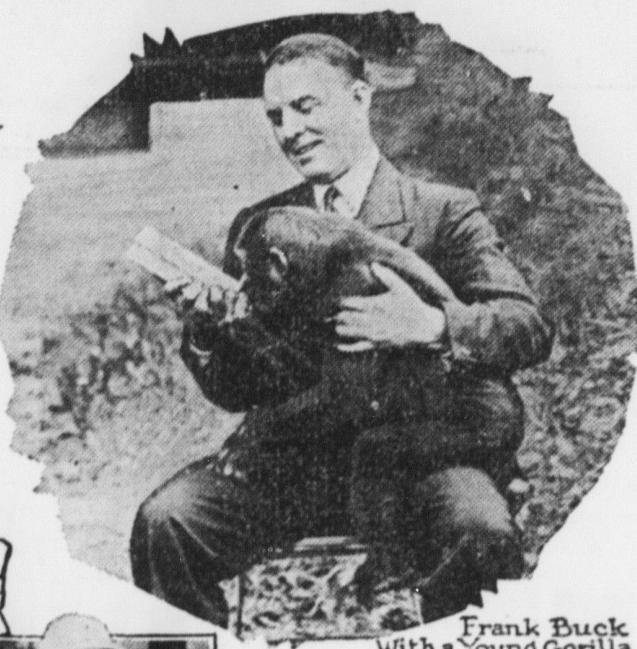


The Man Who "Brings 'Em Back Alive"



Frank Buck Holding a Tiger Cub



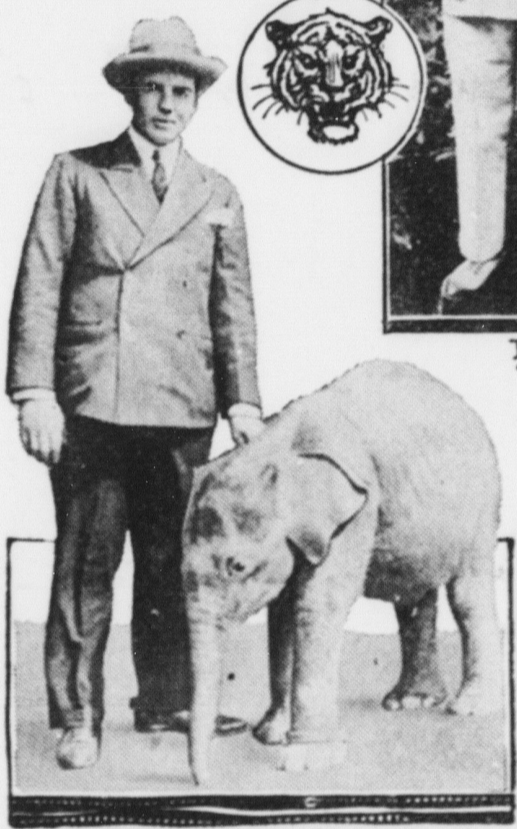
Frank Buck With a Young Gorilla



Frank Buck "at His Most Civilized"



Frank Buck With a Baby Tapir



Frank Buck and "Baby Boo"

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

If, a few years ago, a certain mother down in Texas had been more successful in performing the ceremony of "laying on of hands"—a ceremony familiar to innumerable mothers of innumerable active, venturesome little boys—then thousands of visitors to certain zoological parks in various parts of the United States would never have had the thrill of looking upon the only authentic man-eating tiger ever brought to this country, the biggest king cobra ever captured alive, two of the exceedingly rare Indian rhinoceroses and the tiniest baby elephant (just two feet and ten inches at the shoulder) ever brought across the seas.

But lest that statement appear to be too paradoxical let it be explained at once that she was the mother of Frank H. Buck, who as a collector of live animals, reptiles and birds, is without a peer in the world today. She had discovered her young son busily engaged in the capture of a big, angry, buzzing rattlesnake near the Buck home on the outskirts of Dallas, Texas, and the "laying on of hands" ceremony was observed forthwith to convince him that there were less dangerous ways for a lad of his years to earn money. (He was collecting rattlesnakes because an old doctor in Minneapolis, Minn., who manufactured a "magic snake oil," was in the market for the reptiles.)

Frank Buck will tell you that the ceremony was performed in a most thoroughgoing fashion. But it failed of its purpose. For from his earliest childhood wild animals and birds fascinated him and the desire to possess them was his mastering passion. So the mother who tried to shape the destiny of the foremost exponent of the art of "bringing 'em back alive" was due to be fooled from the beginning.

When the Buck family moved to Chicago, the boy, no longer able to capture small wild animals and birds as he had done on his native soil, haunted the Lincoln Park zoo and the pet stores in the big city, feasting his eyes on strange new animals and birds from far-off corners of the earth. What money he was able to save he invested in owning some of these birds—paying for one pair, incidentally, a price ten times as great as he himself could charge when years later he became a collector.

When he grew older Frank Buck's hobby took him to South America in search of rare birds. This was followed by a second trip to the southern continent and when he sold his collection of live birds he found the deal so profitable that he resolved to go in for wholesale bird and animal collecting. And that was the beginning of a unique career.

Today Frank Buck can go into almost any zoo in the United States or walk through the menagerie tent of any circus and, looking through the bars of the cages, greet the inhabitant thereof as an old friend. For it was he who brought that inhabitant from his native haunts to this place so that the thousands of Americans who have before only heard of the existence of some strange animal can see the animal in the flesh.

Obviously a man with such a record has had more than his share of thrills and narrow escapes from death. Obviously, too, an account of them could not be told within the space of this article any more than a full account of them could be told in the book "Bring 'Em Back Alive," written by Frank Buck with Edward Anthony and published by Simon and Schuster. But there was space in that book to tell of the time Frank Buck found himself sliding into a pit with a man-eating tiger which he and his helpers were trying to get out of the pit into a cage; of the time one of his leopards escaped aboard ship and how he went into a cabin where the leopard was at bay and roped him; and of the time when a king cobra escaped from its cage and cornered him in a hut in his compound at Singapore.

"Yes, I have had more than my share of thrills," Frank Buck will tell you. "But I am frank to say that these close calls do not represent a love of looking death in the eye. I am not that kind of adventurer. I take no unnecessary risks. When a man operates on as big a scale as I do he doesn't have to look for trouble. No matter how careful one is, something is bound to go wrong when live animals and reptiles are handled wholesale. It is then that experience counts."

And he might add that experience counts in other times than when something goes wrong and an adventurer such as he is looks death in the eye. A big game hunter has to think of saving only one life—his own. But a man who collects wild animals, as Frank Buck does, has to think of saving his own life and the animal's too. For the biggest king cobra, a giant orangutan, an Indian rhinoceros, or a man-eating tiger is utterly valueless to a zoo or a circus if it is dead.

Experience counts, too, in keeping the animal alive after it has been captured. It may seem strange to call Frank Buck a dietitian. But that's exactly what he is and he is an expert in matters of diet to the most finicky epicures in the world. He can't guess how to accustom a wild animal to the change from the food which it eats in its wild state over to "civilized fare." He has to know! The capture of some rare wild animal may represent a great outlay of money and time, plus the ever-present element of danger to the collector. But if, after the beast is captured, its captor doesn't know how to keep it healthy, both physically and mentally, the whole investment of time and money and the potential value of the animal when it is delivered to the zoo or circus may be an entire loss.

Typical of some of the dietetic problems which Frank Buck has had to solve was the case of Baby Boo, the two-foot-ten-inch elephant which he brought back on one of his trips. So far as is known there has never been written any book on "The Care and Feeding of Infant Elephants." So when Frank Buck bought one from a party of Battiks in Sumatra and it was delivered to him in a half-starved, weak and wobbling condition there were no precedents for him to go by in determining what to do to keep from having a dead baby elephant on his hands. Here is what happened, as he tells it:

"My problem had just begun. I had to get some food into that elephant's belly—and without much loss of time. I sent All (his native assistant) out to scout around for a milk-goat. He brought one back and hurriedly milked it. I tried to pour some milk down the stubborn pachyderm's throat but I couldn't get her jaws open. Once or twice I managed to get them partly open but before I could pour the milk down she closed them again.

"I considered five or six different plans for feeding that animal, dismissing them as impractical as fast as they popped into my head. Then I got an idea that I thought was worth trying. The first step was to send All to a nearby clump to cut me a length of bamboo. As is commonly known, a stick of bamboo is made up of a series of joints, the wood being

hollow between joints. All brought back exactly what I had sent him for, a piece of bamboo about two inches in diameter. I cut off a piece about nine inches long, leaving the joint to form the bottom. This gave me a device which I planned to use as a feeding tube. I sharpened the opening till it came to a point, and, satisfied that I was on the right track, I proceeded with the next step.

"Before this could be carried out we had to get our elephant (we practically carried her) to the shack where we had arranged to spend the night. I instructed All to boil some rice in water. When the rice was cooked, I mixed some goat's milk with it, the result being a thin but nutritious gruel. Then I proceeded to fill my bamboo with this substance.

"This done, All got his shoulder right under the elephant's forequarters till she was almost standing on her back legs. Then I forced the point of the bamboo tube between her tightly closed jaws, gradually working it in until I could tip it up and dump the contents down her throat. Stubborn to the last, she tried to keep from swallowing, giving in after a few seconds of gurgling. A second tubeful was prepared and the operation was repeated, this time the task proving less difficult. In all, I fed her three tubes of gruel that session.

"An hour later I put the obstinate little girl to bed, covering her up with some old gunny sacks. The following morning there was a definite improvement in her condition, some of the wobbliness having disappeared. We gave her her breakfast, repeating the performance with the tube. This time it was unnecessary to prop her up.

"A little later in the morning we put her on a bullock cart and took her back to Dornji, from where she was transported, along with my other specimens to Singapore. We had no trouble feeding her en route, the bamboo feeding tube working perfectly."

One other item which a wild animal collector needs to have in his psychological equipment for following his profession is diplomacy. That Frank Buck has that is shown by the fact that some of his rarest specimens have been obtained because of his friendship with oriental potentates and his skill in handling the native peoples of the jungles where he has had to go to find his animals. Among these people Frank Buck is a great "tuan" (chief) and he is that to coolies in the Malay peninsula and to Indian rajahs. If he hadn't been he would never have been permitted to penetrate the forbidden jungles of Nepal, which is closed to white men, and bring back with him those two Indian rhinos which now have their homes in the New York and Philadelphia zoos.

If he hadn't been, it is doubtful if he would have been able to make the remarkable moving pictures which resulted from his last trip to the Orient. For it was a faithful coolie who came speeding to tell his "tuan" that a python was lying near a trail used by a tiger and that resulted in an epochal film record of a python-tiger fight, the like of which few white men have ever seen and none has ever before photographed.

For to cap his career of "bringing 'em back alive" Frank Buck has lately brought back a movie record of life in the jungle, which is as unique as the record of his career as a collector of wild animals. He also has brought back the memory of one of his narrowest escapes from death—the memory of being stalked by a tiger, of tripping and falling backward when the big cat hurled itself at him and of looking up and seeing the striped belly of the animal passing over him. "Yes, it was a rather close call," said Frank Buck in telling me of this incident. "But—well, you see me here, don't you?"

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FEW FISH ESCAPE PURSUIT OF OTTER

Among all the animals that are good fishermen, there is probably none more capable than the otter. You can often locate him by finding broken shells of shellfish, of which he seems to be especially fond. He leaves the scattered fragments of his meal on the banks of streams and lakes and among the rocks.

The coat of the otter is of brown fur, and it is so valuable that, in order to prevent men from taking it from him, as he prefers to wear it himself, he hides away near secluded lakes or water courses far from any place where men live. He is almost twice the size of the mink, being often 40 inches long, and looks something like a seal when he is partly out of water and his wet fur gleams in the sun.

This clever fisherman is the champion of the fishing veterans who wear fur. No fish is too swift for him. Whereas the mink prefers to take his fishing easily, the otter dives, swims or floats after his prey. He is an expert swimmer and can dart about under the water with wonderful speed, so that no fish has much of a chance when he goes fishing. He always catches his fish.

Another water dweller who sometimes get credit as a fisherman, but lives on a vegetarian diet, is the beaver. The beaver builds his home out in the water and there stores up his winter food. He likes the bark of trees and these he cuts down when they are succulent and tender with the sap. He gathers enough to tide him over the winter time, and lives on his board, leaving the fish, strangely enough, strictly alone.

Frank Confession

"So you want to marry my daughter," said the man. "Who put you up to coming to me about it?" "To tell the truth," sighed the young man, "it was the banker who holds my notes."

The Job Hunter

"Has your man found a job yet, Mrs. Wagges?" "Yes, indeed, I start to work Monday."

Every man has a grievance and he'll tell you all about it upon the least provocation.

Doing one's full duty is rare.

Plays His Bride In

Bridegroom was only one of the roles taken by C. H. S. Parsons, son of Rev. Dawson Parsons of St. James', Sheffield, England, at his own wedding. Acting as organist, he played the bridal march as his bride, Miss Nellie Howarts, entered his father's church. Then he joined her and marched with her to the altar.

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Had to Know

Mother was growing tired of answering Junior's numerous questions. "Now be quiet and don't ask so many questions." "Well, I wouldn't, mother if I knewed."



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