

INTO THE TRACKLESS JUNGLE WHOSE SOLITUDE CRUSHES

Topographer of Exploring Expedition Travels With Camera and Violin, Finds Grand Piano and Skilled Girl Musician in Luxurious Home Hundreds of Miles From Civilization



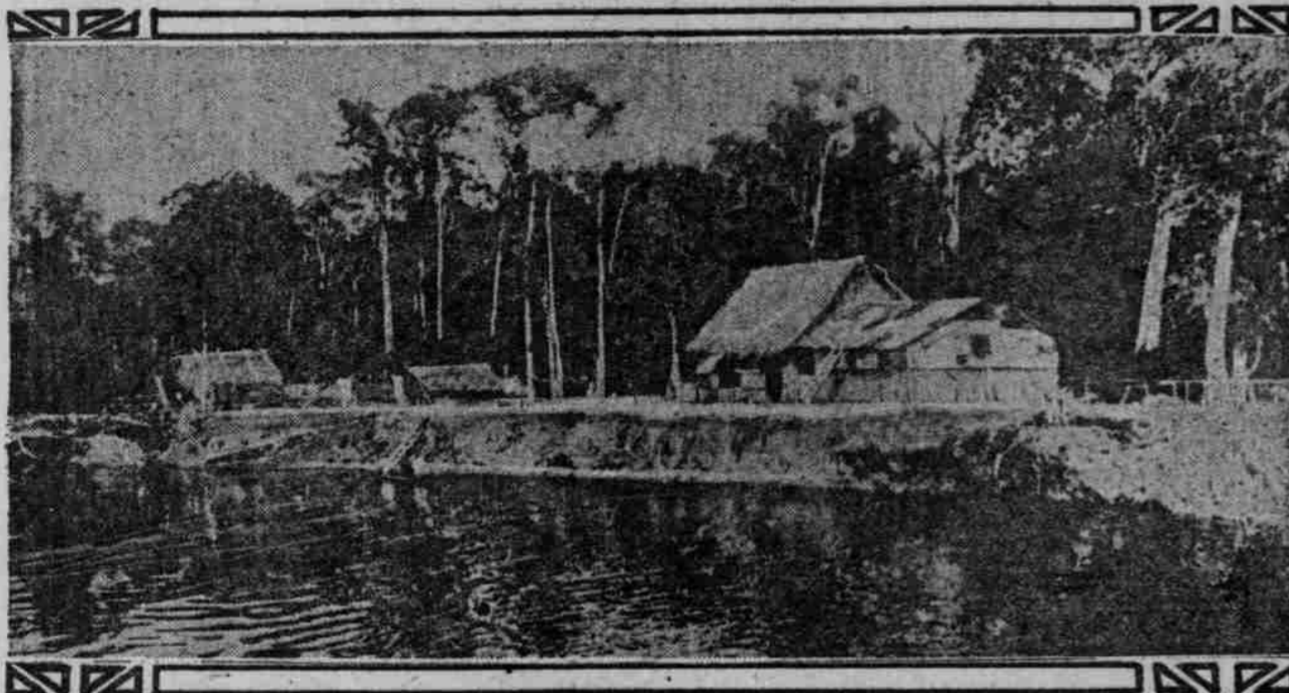
Lieutenant Earl Church, topographer with explorers.



Home of Pontes, millionaire Portuguese rubber trader and king of the jungle, whose rule is supreme 700 miles up the river.



Monsters of the Negro forests rival our redwoods in size.



Scenes along the Negro, where mighty forests seem determined to crowd man and his work into the river. Trees and indescribably luxuriant vegetation quickly reclaim clearings as if jealous of encroachments.

A GREAT adventure in loneliness, with the oppressive weight of the vast, baffling jungle afflicting the soul with increasing intensity. An incursion into the land of supersilence, where the anathemas of monkeys, the shriek of parrots which raucous cough of the jaguar and the weird scream of the saddleback tapir echo in the moss-hung, creper-entwined forest arcades of the jungles of the Amazon.

A journey into a region where Dame Nature reigns with the barbaric cruelty and splendor of a Cleopatra—regions in mocking contempt of the artifices of civilized men, setting against him deadly fevers, legions of vampire bats with their wicked beaks, armies of sandbar ants eager for human flesh, pestilential insects which burrow under the flesh, causing nauseous ulcers; gruesome fish equipped with razor-like teeth; fish which leap from tropical rivers for the luckless hand, dangling over the side of a canoe; swarms of mosquitoes twice the size of the Jersey variety, laden with the germs of malaria. An expedition into a forbidden country, where an intense equatorial sun plays horrible pranks with the human brain; pranks which alternately make the victim perle or saturate and daily crowd him closer to the borderline of insanity. And at night while the victim reclines in his hammock comes the dream induced by the fierceness of its rays, dreams in which amorphous monsters grimace and sibilate.

Such were some of the experiences of Lieutenant Earl Church, now associate professor of civil engineering at the Pennsylvania Military college. As topographer and astronomer with Dr. Hamilton Rice on exploration work in Brazil, he assisted in mapping some 1000 miles of the Amazon and the Negro rivers.

For seven months he traversed, in launch and canoe, the perilous network of little-known water courses of the upper Amazon and Negro, frequently penetrating regions which no white man had ever before seen. By strict attention to quinine he kept the fevers from ravaging his system, and by taking daily baths in a solution of bichloride of mercury he repelled the attacks of the poisonous insects.

Sometimes the thrill of shooting rapids broke the frightful monotony of dazzling, copper days. There were hair-raising adventures a-plenty. Sometimes his boat was caught in the turbid suction of a mighty river cataraact and whirled through treacherous passages of jagged rock amid clouds of milky spume. Death poised expectantly on every hidden rock, but was always cheated of its prey. Then, too, came the surge of deep interest upon the finding of some forest anachorite, living apart from his fellowman on the fringe of the jungle.

There were Indians of misty tradition, who stepped from labyrinthic woodlands to gaze for the first time on the face of the white man. But, more remarkable still, Lieutenant Church came upon a palace of modern luxury 700 miles from the last outpost of civilization. It was the home of a millionaire Portuguese rubber trader, a little oasis of civilization on the Negro in the vast desert of rioting vegetation. The rubber trader, with his native wife, beautiful daughters and stalwart sons, lived happy and content, though separated from civilization by hundreds of miles of trackless jungle.



Falling launch wrecked in the great rapids of Negro.

On either bank, ranged like ancient monoliths, are huge trees, trees as large as our redwoods. Creepers wind from trunk to trunk, forming an impassable barrier, and behind the first row of trees are more trees and more creepers. Garlands of moss hang downward from lofty branches. Orchids flaunt their vivid colors everywhere. There are scores of wild flowers, too, such as I had never seen before, and their heavy perfume mingles with the dank breath of rotting vegetation.

And the beautiful rare blue butterflies—they are everywhere. These dainty creatures of the air volplane in the sun, alighting frequently in the chalice of rare flowers to feast upon hidden nectar. Sometimes you see clusters of them on a branch, and if your glance is only casual you think you are gazing upon a beautiful flowering shrub.

"Every foot of the way up the little-known Negro there is something of interest. The edge of the jungle on both sides of the stream is a stage on which little forest-dramas are being constantly enacted. Crane-like birds make genuflections in the brake, looking for all the world like polite old gentlemen in dress suits at a dinner party. On rare occasions you surprise a jaguar taking a mid-day drink. He favors you with a sleepy stare from his topaz eyes and slithers off into the jungle. Hosts of bright-plumaged birds rise from the brake and fly further into the jungle. There are few songsters among the feathered inhabitants of the Amazonian jungles. Almost every note I heard from feathered throat was as discordant as the ravings of a tumbler.

"In the afternoon you begin to get cloud effects which are indescribable in their exquisite beauty. Clouds—wonderful clouds—parade across a sky of turquoise, their edges shimmering as with mother-of-pearl or the most exquisite of silver. Sometimes they are heaped up like lofty mountains panoplied with the whitest of snow, and then again they take the form of moated castles or ancient galleons with sagging sails.

"The 'cloud-maker' of the Amazon is a master artist. Just before the tropic night drops down precipitately, without the courtesy of a twilight, he spreads his fleecy canvases up aloft

with an iridescence that fills the soul with awe and wonderment. To find the equal of these colors you must search the opal, the topaz, the ruby, the emerald, the sapphire, the dazzling wings of the peacock, the chalice of the tulip and the soft petals of the rose.

"A night on the Negro is something never to be forgotten. The black, mysterious river mirrors the stars so perfectly that you seem to be looking at another sky. From the jungle comes the wail of the howling monkeys that travel in bands and will attack man at the right opportunity. Frequently from some hidden water-hole you hear the cry of the jaguar.

"I shall never forget one night on the Negro, a night in which a silvered sickle of a moon helped the stars to light the bosom of the river and the stars of the sky. Here the Amazon, a river of milky whiteness, joins the Negro, a river of the richest ebony blackness. For some miles after the union a black and white river flow side by side, refusing to mingle. There is something startlingly human in the contest of these two great rivers to maintain separate individualities.

"Some distance up the Negro we came upon a river with a large mouth which had never been explored. It was a white river like the Amazon. We tried to get our launch up this river, but were unable to do so on account of the numerous sandbars.



Native boatman and his family on the Negro river.

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"We were never worried about food. We had along plenty of canned stuff, and Meguel, our guide, kept us supplied with farina, a sort of native cereal, and plenty of game.

"It was with relief, after a journey of hundreds of miles up the Negro, we arrived at the plantation of Pontes, a millionaire Portuguese rubber trader, known in that region as the king of the Negro. He is indeed king in that faraway jungle domain. He is the last tribunal and can impose the death sentence, if he so desires, upon his subjects, who are 50 or more Indians and half-breeds, who gather rubber in the forests. Pontes has 11 children, two of whom are now in Portugal, one being a practicing physician in that country. Among the children at home was a beautiful daughter, educated in Portugal. She was a wonderful musician and could make a piano weep or laugh at will. For the first time since leaving civilization I was able to take my violin from its case and play some of the classics with her accompanying me. Often at night we would play with the wail of the jungle beasts mingling with the compositions of Wagner and Beethoven. It was strange, to say the least.



A Portuguese rubber station in Amazonian wilds.

gro. At length we reached San Gabriel, 40 miles above the rapids.

Here Dr. Rice's party was obliged to return to Pontes' plantation for supplies, and in running the rapids on the way back the launch struck a rock. Pontes came to the rescue in a smaller launch and took the members of the party to his home. The next day the party decided to abandon exploration further up the river because of low water.

On the return to Manaus the expedition explored the little-known north shore of the Negro. The mapping was done by Lieutenant Church.

"The Negro," said Lieutenant Church, "is filled with small islands and the north shore had never before been explored by white men. The width of the river ranged from three to 30 miles. Sometimes it looks like a great island-dotted inland sea. We came upon the river Paduri, which flows into the Negro. This river has never been explored. We mapped the mouth of the stream.

"It is probable that if one had the good luck to navigate the Paduri he would discover that it formed a connection with the Grinoco water system. All the rivers in that region seem to be connected in one way or another.

"But I must speak of the dreams which come to travelers in the tropics—dreams the like of which I have never known. Shapeless monsters hop and grimace all night long and the most unreal colors float across the vistas of sleep. The mind seems to hark back to the beginning of all things, when the earth was a ball of steaming vapor and prehistoric monstrosities were in vogue in the animal kingdom. An Amazonian dream is an experience to be dreaded. Compared to it, the wildest nightmare of the temperate northland is as nothing."

TRAP-SHOOTING DECLARED IDEAL SPORT FOR WOMEN

"Gun-Shyness," Infirmity of Weaker Sex, Said to Be Easily Overcome. Greatest Recreation in World, Says Chicago Woman.

ONE thing only has stood in the way of American women taking up one of the very finest outdoor sports, trapshooting, and that is that most of them are naturally "gun shy." Before a woman can indulge in the traps, with any pleasure or efficiency, she must totally overcome her fear of firearms. This many of them are now doing, very much to their own peace of mind, as they have quickly discovered.

Everything else being equal, trapshooting is just as truly within the sphere of the real womanly woman as any other form of athletic exercise or play, and that it is an ideal form of sport in which the sex is bound to become interested in greatly increasing numbers is the sentiment of those modern Dianas in various sections of the United States who have recently taken to trapshooting and have found it a most fascinating pastime, which unlike a good many other outdoor sports can be indulged in the year round.

In most sports where men have women as their opponents they do not play their hardest for victory. The idea of the "weaker" sex still prevails in a good many masculine minds. This, however, is not true in shooting at clay targets. At the traps women meet the man on an equal footing because there is no way by which she can be favored, except when the man is handicapped, and the good shooter frequently gives the weaker opponent of his own sex an advantage either by standing farther away from the trap or by adding birds to the score of the less proficient gunner.

This may be one of the compelling reasons why they are learning to overcome their gun-shyness, so that they may engage in a great outdoor sport on absolutely equal terms with men.

The idea of killing live birds, so objectionable to many women, is entirely eliminated in trapshooting without the loss of interest or excitement in the game. The hunting instinct, a remnant of the primitive, is no doubt equally strong in women as in men, and surely no more satisfactory way offers expression to it in an absolutely harmless manner than at the traps. It takes one out of doors and into the country, with all the appeal of natural surroundings and chances for a score. It does not necessitate long hours of physical exhaustion in training. An hour at practice is sufficient. But for a test in skillfulness, accuracy, control and self-confidence trapshooting is a good many folks agree, the ideal sport for women to show their ability.

In the matter of temperament the highly-strung, quick-tempered woman is, as a rule, her own worst enemy in most games. But that type is also a quicker thinker, and with a little smoothing down occasionally the woman who thinks quickly is the best judge of the flight of a target. Highly sensitive nerves are evidence of keen perception, and one who acts as promptly as she "sets things" makes a good shot.

At the recent grand American handicap trapshooting tournament, held at Chicago, Mrs. Albert H. Winkler of the windy city gained a new honor for her sex in the trapshooting world by winning the woman's amateur trapshooting championship, and thus becoming the first officially recognized woman champion.