

COWABUNGA SAFARIS

Africa un... how



The *JUST NOW* News - A now-and-then Newsletter for alumni and friends of COWABUNGA SAFARIS published whenever we have enough news and time to put it together.



I'd Rather Be On Safari (the inside story)

Gary K. Clarke

What is it about being on Safari in Africa that makes it such a singular experience?

A Safari is more — much more — than seeing and photographing animals in the wild. It's the thrill of exploring new areas, the adventure of living in different cultures, the excitement of unanticipated eventualities. There is an exhilaration in knowing one is living fully by living in the African bush.

The bush heightens one's awareness, sharpening imagination and senses, with no need for other resources. Trees and rocks, rivers and plains, mountains and valleys, regarded with almost spiritual reverence, take on enhanced value. There is elation with all that is living, discovery of oneself, a vision of a pure universe unsullied by the pettiness and contingencies of everyday human existence.

So begins my book.

Yes, at long last, after years of people saying "You should write a book", I have. And in response to the oft asked question, "When are you going to put your Safari experiences and thoughts in book form?", the answer is no longer "someday", it is *just now*. (Had I been quick enough, I would have replied, "Would you buy it?")

Now that it is done I'll admit: I hate to write — it is a job. But, I love to have written! It is most gratifying and such a sense of accomplishment. For me it is also an extension of the overall Safari experience, because it enables me to share the joy that is Africa, not only with experienced Safarists but arm-chair travelers as well.



The first part of the book is *Just Now Stories*, recounting some of my adventures and misadventures in Africa. Many would call them campfire tales. Part II is entitled *The View From The Loo* consisting of reflections and contemplations while responding to Nature's call on Safari. Part III, *Safari is a State of Mind*, contains essays, poetry and considerations. The appendices include a chronology of my first 100 African Safaris, the codes of Cowabunga, and a glossary.

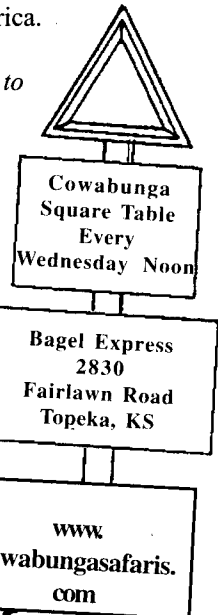
The book is not a "continuous story". I realize now that I have been writing it for quite some time — probably since my first Safari in 1974. I've maintained a Journal from each Safari, so the book is a collection of vignettes from various journeys as well as thoughts and philosophies about wildlife and Safaris in Africa.

I think the book will have particular significance to those who have been on Safari. It also should appeal to those who have dreamed of going on Safari. The book is more than just wildlife stories. I've tried to convey my *feelings* for Africa. Some final thoughts from my Preface:

Those who ask me why I keep going back to Africa obviously have never been. I ask myself the same question and I keep searching for an answer. Maybe it is a mystical affinity for Africa. The Continent fascinates and rejuvenates me. At the end of every Safari I leave a part of myself in Africa, and bring a little piece of Africa back with me. If they cut out my heart when I die, I'm sure it will be in the shape of Africa.

"If you've ever been on Safari this book is a must have. If not, it's the next best thing."

— Gary's Mom



Stranded in Samburu with the Wajukuu!

Gary K. Clarke

In November of 1974 I had my largest group ever on Safari: 24 people (never again!). In June 2001 I had one of my smallest groups: just three. But they were my three oldest grandchildren (or Wajukuu in KiSwahili), ages 10, 11 and 11. Never again! (Just kidding.)

Actually, they kept me as busy as a group of 24, or even 12, but in a different way. They were ready, they were excited and they knew too much from the start. However, that was my fault.

All of my ten grandchildren want to go on a Safari sometime and I usually do not take youngsters unless they are at least twelve years old. Yet, if it is your grandkids, you make an exception. Nonetheless, I felt it was important they be properly prepared for this once-in-a-lifetime experience. So, I devised a course of study I called *Safari 101* and a series of *Indabas* (a Zulu term from South Africa meaning "a matter for discussion"). Assignments included: African geography, African wildlife, cultures, KiSwahili, maps studies, geography flash cards, and wildlife videos. Additionally, I structured a series of "field trips" to area Museums and Zoos so they could hone their mammal and bird spotting skills, use of binoculars and cameras, and maintain a Journal and Wildlife Checklist.

The first order of business was to assign a KiSwahili name to each grandchild, based on their favorite (or appropriate) animal. Kyle (age 11) is *Twiga Mtoto* (giraffe child), Courtney (age 11) is *Duma Mtoto* (cheetah child), and Drew (10) is *Nyati Mtoto* (Cape Buffalo child). The weekly *Indaba* sessions began a year and a half before our scheduled departure date.

Sometimes we had them at Main Camp, or my library/study at home, or outside under a tree. Our field trips took us to Zoos in Topeka, Manhattan, Salina, and Wichita, Kansas; Kansas City, Missouri (& their IMAX theatre); the Martin & Osa Johnson Safari Museum in Chanute, Kansas; as well as numerous area bird watching sessions. And we took a round trip flight from Kansas City to Chicago so they could learn the nuances (and frustrations) of air travel.

I'll have to say that the grandkids were eager and enthusiastic (sometimes even correcting my KiSwahili). In fact, their parents often lamented that they wished the grandkids would work this hard on their regular school studies! While she was not old enough to actually go on Safari just now, we included Kyle's younger sister Becca (8) in the activities, and she did very well.

At long last the big day arrived and the journey began from Kansas to New York and then the 14 1/2 hour flight directly to Johannesburg, South Africa. After an overnight in Joburg, we had a flight up the continent to Kenya.

There were many highlights from our adventures in Kenya, Zimbabwe (Victoria Falls), and South Africa. Still, one stands

Who Has the Map?

Nancy Cherry

We're in Angola. *ANGOLA?* Yes, said Gary, we are in Angola. Even without one of his maps we knew he was right.

But we *didn't have* visas for Angola and it *wasn't included* in the trip — I know because I wrote the itinerary. Angola is not Safari country. So how did we end up in Angola — and on the last day of our Safari? Even stranger was the unexpected eventuality that touched our souls in getting there. One that could happen only in Africa.

Our camp was on a bluff overlooking the Kunene River which is the border between Namibia on the south and Angola to the north. We were on a flying Safari (in 5 passenger Cessna 210s with retractable landing gear) along the Skeleton Coast with flights over flocks of flamingos and shipwrecks; 4WD vehicle drives in the Namib Desert; an initially scary slide (on our bottoms) down a 130 foot high sand dune; and one night in our camp along the dry Hoarusib River two rare desert elephant came ambling in eating their way through the middle of the camp. (Believe me, everyone woke up for that!)

We had camped in a new place every night, and our finale at this camp was a promised boat ride on the Kunene. After miles and miles of sand and picnics on the beach next to the cold, loud, vicious surf of the Atlantic Ocean off the Skeleton Coast, we were

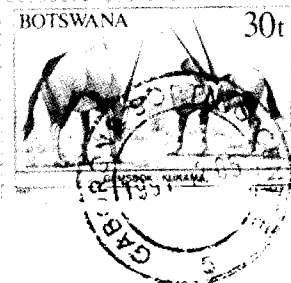
..... COWABUNGA!
of Safaris to yo
at a

out in my mind, and that of the Wajukuu as well.

We were in Samburu, along the Uaso Nyiro River, watching elephants in the bush and in the river. In our concentrations we did not realize that eventually we were surrounded by *twenty-four* elephants. There was no danger and the grandchildren were delighted. Even so, John our Driver Guide felt it best to move down the trail a bit. That's when we discovered we were stuck in the sand. Some of the elephants were so close that we dared not get out and push. So John used his two-way radio to call for help.

The only problem was that his frequency was not the same as the nearby Samburu Serena Lodge where we were staying. Hence, he had to radio the 214 miles to the Nairobi office of TransWorld Safaris, asked them to telephone Serena headquarters in Nairobi to have them radio back up to Serena Lodge in Samburu. They received the message and a rescue vehicle was dispatched. In the time it took for the rescuers to arrive on the scene, the elephants moved off and we were able to get out and push ourselves free.

When John radioed Nairobi, that transmission was monitored



looking forward to a leisurely boat trip on a pleasant river, which was especially inviting because of recent beneficial rains. The foliage on the banks was so thick it looked more like a jungle than desert country.

The boat wasn't much to brag about and had planks for seats, but we were all in a jolly mood and ready to set out for another Safari adventure. After we climbed into the boat our Guide asked if we'd mind having passengers. A tall Himba man had approached him and asked for a ride up river as his ailing wife wanted to visit a witch doctor. Of course, we didn't mind.

The husband came down the steep muddy slope followed by his wife in traditional Himba dress with her head down, a small boy about five years old and another older man. The Himba woman's ochre-covered skin was shiny

and she wore only a leather animal skin loosely wrapped around her waist. Her ankles and wrists were covered with metal coil bracelets, probably at least a dozen or more on each ankle and wrist. She was barefoot, as were the others. The young boy carried a large tin (for collecting water?) and wore a small loin cloth. The men were dressed in a variety of shirts and pants and carried their belongings in a blanket. They sat on the floor and said nothing. The boy, nestled between his mother's legs, had large brown eyes and looked very scared.

After 30 minutes our Guide pulled over to a very small bare spot on the bank of the river and tied up the boat. The family climbed out, walked up the slope of the riverbank and disappeared immediately in the jungle-like forest. We got out to look around and could not find any trace of a path. How they knew where

to go was a mystery to us. It was a very peaceful spot, so we sat on old logs or the ground — all of us subdued wondering what the fate of the family would be. That's when Gary told us where we were... on the north bank of the Kunene River — in ANGOLA!

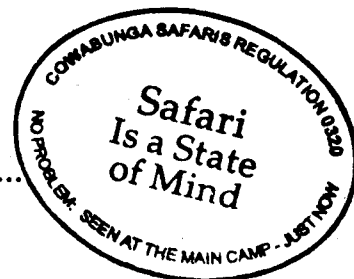
After anxiously looking over our shoulders for passport control officials we decided this spot was far too remote to be a problem for us. This was "one for the Journal", which is Gary's expression upon encountering a new adventure on Safari. We were in Angola for the first and undoubtedly last time in our lives. It was a first for Cowabunga Safaris.

Our group consisted of just nine "old timers" who had been together before on many Safaris. When we see each other now and reminisce about the Skeleton Coast Safari someone always says, "I wonder if the witch doctor helped her".

Bringing the World
a one game drive
time.

We are on the web!
www.cowabungasafaris.com

.....View From The Loo.....



Main Camp Musings

Gary K. Clarke

During the North American spring and summer of 2001, seldom was there a time when the entire Staff (all three of us) of Cowabunga Safaris was at Main Camp together. Made it tough to have Staff Meetings. But it was an exciting and eventful time.

Nancy participated in her 26th Safari when she went to Namibia and South Africa in May with a small group of alumni and me. Otherwise she has been the stalwart for the day to day operations of Main Camp.

Brian was married to Karen Wessel on 9 June, (I missed it as I was on Safari), and they left with a small group to Tanzania three days later. Afterwards they went to Zanzibar and Pemba Island for their honeymoon. Karen returned to Kansas and Brian stayed in Africa to meet a group in Kenya and take them gorilla trekking in Uganda. He was back at Main Camp for part of one afternoon in July and the next day flew off to Zambia with another group.

In August, he became Associate Director of the Leadership Institute at Washburn University in Topeka. (Congratulations, Brian, on the launching

of your academic career.) Not to worry, he still will be leading Safaris for Cowabunga.

Between Safaris to Namibia, Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe and everything associated with each Safari, I spent my "free" time putting the finishing touches on my manuscript.

As if this were not enough, I unexpectedly had the opportunity to participate with a small group from the Explorers Club in New York on retracing the footsteps of Victorian explorers in their search for the source of the Nile. Preparations for this journey were exhausting, particularly the paperwork required for permission to enter the Sudan and its capital, Khartoum, where the White Nile and the Blue Nile converge. For years I've read the accounts of the early explorers, and what a thrill it will be for me to actually see where it all happened. This will take all of September, and in October I'm off with a group to Kenya.

Sometime in November, I plan to call a Staff Meeting.

by every other TransWorld Safari vehicle throughout Kenya. And when the Nairobi Serena headquarters radioed their Samburu Lodge, that transmission was monitored by every other Serena Lodge throughout Kenya. And, of course, all the other Drivers and Lodge Staffs told everyone else. Unbeknown to us, word spread quickly through this East African nation that straddles the Equator, and everywhere we went on the rest of the Safari the Kenyans were smiling and laughing and saying, "Oh, Cowabunga; we heard about you getting stranded in Samburu with your wajukuu while surrounded by 24 elephants!"

At first I was a bit embarrassed, but the grandchildren thought it was cool. They were famous in Kenya.

Personally, I like being surrounded by elephants. And if I'm going to be stranded in Samburu, I like being with my wajukuu.



PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
TOPEKA KS
PERMIT NO 824

"I'd rather be on Safari"

Gary K. Clarke (Mzee Shetani)
President for Life
Nancy Cherry (Mama Makora)
Administrative Officer
Brian Hesse (Mzungu Mrefu) Ph.D.
Safari Leader

Address all correspondence to:
Private Bag 4863
Gage Centre Station
Topeka, Kansas 66604-0863 USA
Visit our website: www.cowabungasafaris.com

Phone: 785/272-7604
FAX: 785/272-4746

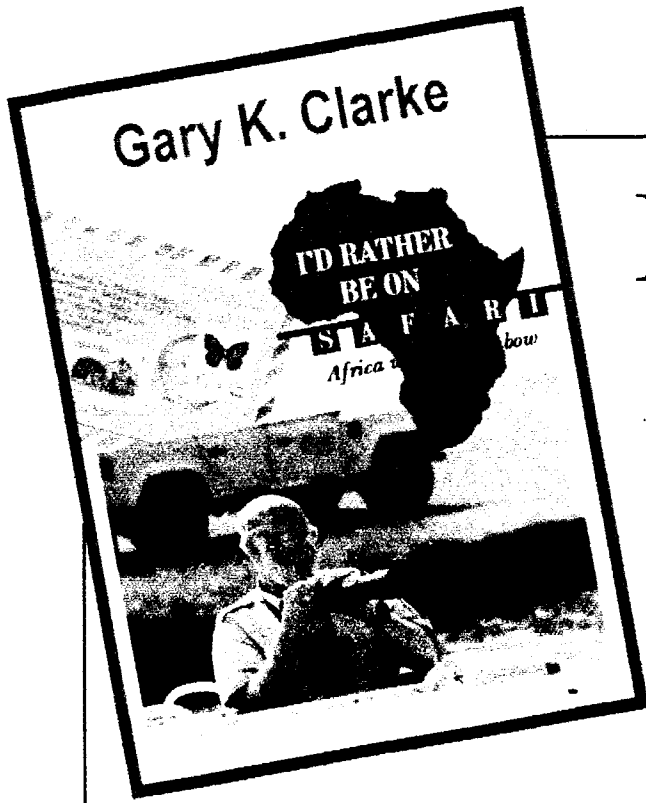
Visit our Main Camp at
Fairlawn Plaza

Copyright 2001 Cowabunga Safaris



Second Edition 2001

Printed on recycled paper.



Gary K. Clarke

I'd Rather Be On Safari

by Gary K. Clarke

In this book Gary writes about many of his adventures and misadventures in over 100 Safaris to Africa. He reflects on Safari life with philosophical musings and humorous accounts of his experiences with wildlife and humans.

Baranski Publishing Company
First Edition
Hardbound
Four color dust jacket
208 pages with maps, illustrations and glossary.
\$26.95

My dream is to someday be on Safari with Gary Clarke.
Jack Hanna, TV star of Jack Hanna's Animal Adventures,
Director Emeritus, Columbus Zoo

ORDER FORM

Limited Prepublication Offer: All prepaid orders received by December 1, 2001, will be discounted to \$24.95 each. For orders of three or more books the price is just \$22.95 each. The publication schedule calls for books to be available by December 1, 2001, for the holidays.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Make checks payable to:
Cowabunga Safaris
P.O. Box 4863
Topeka KS 66604 USA
785-272-7604

Books may be mailed to you or picked up at:
Cowabunga Safaris Main Camp
Fairlawn Plaza Shopping Center
2108 SW Fairlawn Plaza Drive
Topeka KS 66614

KS residents add 6.8% sales tax

TOTAL BOOKS: _____

Postage & handling: \$3.00 first book; \$1.50 each additional

TOTAL PRICE: _____

Gary will be pleased to personally inscribe your book or those copies you wish to present as gifts.

Please have Gary inscribe my book(s) to:
