

Sept 09 - SUMMARY – Into Africa

by Martin Dugard

Eventually we were a group of 22 at the Tattered Cover and most were eager and ready to discuss the famous meeting of Stanley and Livingstone in Africa. Four new people joined us including Lora, Martha, Beverly and Alan. We hope you liked what you saw and plan to come back.

Eleven people indicated that they had finished the book and considered themselves fans while 5 of us indicated we had not finished the book.

David, Phyllis and Paula, in true form, arrived with outside research, pictures, map and antique books about the subject. Check out the end of the summary for the list of books, etc.

Before he could relay the story of Livingstone and Stanley and the line that we all knew “Dr. Livingstone, I presume”, Mr. Dugard shared the history of the story of the century – the quest for the source of the Nile.

The group discussed the lives of these “extreme adventurers” who left family, safety and perhaps at times, sanity behind to be the ONE that discovered the source of the Nile. The readers were told of Burton and Speke in the 1800’s and even farther back to Herodotus who foresaw the possibility of both the Fountains of Hercules (not a reality) and the mountains of the moon (a reality) in an area of Africa that was not surveyed until the 19th century.

As Mr. Dugard shaped his tale, the reader could begin to understand the level of commitment of these men to not only find the source, but to be the first. We learned of the various players (guards, porters, financiers, suppliers) that were necessary for these treks into the wilderness. Explorers of all ages unless they were incredibly rich have always needed and sought the support of a large religious, scientific or commercial agency. For Livingstone it was the Royal Geographic Society. For Stanley it was the sponsorship of James Gordon Bennett, the major newspaper mogul of the New York Herald.

Livingstone and Stanley had much in common, but in other ways, could not have been more different.

David Livingstone was a Scot, a missionary, family man, explorer and humanitarian who unsuccessfully tried to stop the slave trade in Africa. He started his final quest into Africa in his mid 50’s due to (1) the need to secure financial resources to support his four remaining children but equally as much (2) wanting to be named the one to find the source of the Nile. Livingstone treated his staff and porters with kindness and sympathy. Livingstone ended up building a home in Africa and at least one son but perhaps several children with local women.

Henry Stanley was from Wales and yet seemed to be able to pass himself off as an American until the end of his life. One of our members summarized him as the “Forrest Gump” of his times; if something big was going on, Stanley seemed to be in the right place at the right time. He had been a reporter for the Rocky Mountain News and he had served on both sides during the Civil war. For all his apparent confidence and bluster, he seemed very insecure about his place in the world and constantly looked for adventure and public acclaim to prove his worth. Due to his upbringing and perhaps his insecurity, he dealt with people with a heavy hand and brutal tendencies.

Yet for all their difference and approaches to life, it is clear that both respected and admired each other and upon meeting, became friends. Phyllis felt that meeting Livingstone inspired and softened Stanley’s personality, but others felt he reverted to his true self in the last years of his life.

Our group marveled at these men's constitutions and at times incredible good luck. Malaria, near starvation, cheated and misled, multiple fevers, theft of most if not all of their supplies, attacked by bandits, beaten and yet they persevered.

We discussed what drove these men. Yes, they were after the story of the century and the acclaim that might carry them for years. Yet we all had the feeling that both of them preferred the rough life and the constant challenge and would have literally died of boredom had they returned to a quiet life at home.

Many of the readers commented on the discussion of the slave trade that was rampant in Africa even into the 1900's. Most were surprised that the slave trade was coordinated by Arabs who supplied both coasts of Africa with slaves for different markets.

When asked to name the Livingstone and Stanley's of 2009, there was not one name that rose to the top. Considering our wealth of news and information, we decided that there are so many and they are so specialized, that perhaps only people in that field truly understand them. Plus on a global scale, there is not one topic that has galvanized the world recently. *Anyone who would like to put forth names of recent and currently Livingstone and Stanleyesque candidates, please let me know and I will forward them to the members.*

Thank you Mr. Dugard.

Related books, CD's or UTubes suggested during the meeting

In Darkest Africa – Stanley (1894)

Heartless Darkness (1857) - rare book – David Van Truen has copies

Ship of Gold - Kinder

Web based article – Expedition Africa-History.com

Movie – Mountains of the Moon (1990)

A PERSONAL REFLECTION

When asked by the group why I had not finished the book, I could not lie. My preference is for travel stories of recent travels and travelers because I am constantly looking for my next adventure and volunteer vacation.

In my mind, there is no denying that Mr. Dugard is an excellent writer, researcher and storyteller. Because of Mr. Dugard's writing talents, I could hear, smell, feel, see, and even at times taste what the people in the book were experiencing. The heat, humidity, bugs, bad water, sweat, crippling diseases, and cruelty seemed never ending. The story was compelling, but I kept getting a barrel full of physical sensations that did not encourage me to continue.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Below is the list of books for the remainder of the year.

Just a reminder - Five copies of the books for the club are ordered two months in advance and are placed at the reserve desk at the Colfax Tattered Cover the month prior to the book discussion. *The Unheard by Swiller is on reserve at the Colfax Tattered Cover with three copies left as of yesterday. If they are out, I am sure they will order a copy for you ASAP!*

If you need to have a book ordered at the Tattered Cover, please let me know. If enough people continue to want to buy the book, I will increase the order above 5 for subsequent books.

The November book, *Baghdad Without a Map* by Horwitz should be available for pick up at the October meeting.

	Book	by	lead by
Oct 12	The Unheard	Swiller	Willie **
Nov 9	Baghdad Without Map	Horwitz	Susan
Dec 14	Black Wave	Silverwood	Richard

**** I WILL BEGIN COLLECTING TITLES FOR CONSIDERATION FOR JAN – JUNE 2010 BOOKS AT THE OCTOBER MEETING. Bring your suggestions and please be ready to give me the information in writing including - title, author, country discussed, range of dates of the trip in the book, date of publication, available in print in paperback and also available at the libraries. Voting will end November 1 and the results will be sent to the TLBC list and also posted on my website.**

Having problems finding a book that you would like to lead? Check out WWW.LONGITUDEBOOKS.COM. On the site is a map of the world. Highlight a country and check out the list of available books.

UPCOMING TRAVEL RELATED EVENTS

THURSDAY, SEPT 24 – 6:00–7:30 PM the Budget Treasurers Travel Club at the Ross UHills Library www.budgettreasurerstravelclub.com - This month the presentation will be with David from our book club discussing his trip to Antarctica.

EVERY TUESDAY - CHANGES IN LATITUDE - in Boulder offers lectures on various travel topics. www.cil.com

IF YOU COME ACROSS ANY TRAVEL RELATED EVENTS THAT WILL HAPPEN BETWEEN NOW AND THE NEXT MEETING, PLEASE LET ME KNOW AND I WILL FORWARD THEM TO THE GROUP.

Thank you for your continued support and interest.

I look forward to seeing each of you at our next meeting. Until then, travel in safety!

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