

# FRANK BUCK BRING 'EM BACK ALIVE!

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By: Jillian Pallone

# THE EARLY YEARS OF FRANK BUCK

- ❖ Frank Howard Buck was born on March 17, 1884, in Gainesville, Texas. Throughout most of his childhood he lived in Dallas with his parents, who were pioneers. Although he seemed to be a very bright and motivated young man, he did not excel in school and failed most of his classes, except for one: geography.
- ❖ After giving up on school after completing 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Buck worked at an assortment of trades, such as cow punching (a term used in Texas to refer to an animal herder who tends cattle on ranches in North America) and selling songs to vaudeville singers.
- ❖ Besides trying a number of jobs, Buck's true passion throughout his childhood was collecting small animals and birds, along with working on the farm. Little did he know that this would set a precedent for his future career.



# A STROKE OF LUCK

During Buck's late teens, he made the decision to leave Dallas and accompany a cattle car on the way to the Chicago stockyards. During his time there, he picked up a temporary job as the Captain of Bellhops at the Virginia Hotel.

Although Buck had not gained a true sense of the direction his life would take him, in **1911** he encountered a stroke of luck that would help lead him to his true calling.

That year, Buck won \$3500 in a poker game and decided to use his new fortune on a trip to Brazil to satisfy his old pastime of collecting animals, focusing on birds during this specific trip.

Once Buck completed his visit to Brazil, he brought back many exotic birds to New York and was shocked by the profit he made by selling them.

Impressed with his income, he decided to make another trip to South America in search of more rare birds.

Upon returning from his second South American trip, he decided to sell half of his private collection of birds and found the deal so profitable that he resolved to participate in animal collecting on a large scale.



A rare image of Frank Buck in his youth.

# LEARNING THE TRADE

- 1911 marked the year that Buck embarked on what would prove to be his life's work: trekking into the world's jungles to collect wild animals, birds, and reptiles for the nation's zoos and circuses.
- Although Buck was confident in his work and choice of career, animal collecting was no easy vocation. It required patience, caution, and practice.
- In an age before tranquilizer darts, he learned to build traps and snares to catch animals safely and humanely.
- Once his "wild cargo" was assembled, Buck would personally accompany it back to America onboard a ship to insure that the animals were all well treated and cared for.
- Buck became known for transporting animals back to America safely and he coined the catch phrase:  
"Bring Em' Back Alive!"



# FRANK BUCK'S AMAZING ANIMAL COLLECTING ADVENTURES IN ASIA

- Although Buck had been all over the world in his search for animal, he specialized in the fauna of Asia and even maintained his headquarters in Singapore, the capital of the Strait Settlements.
- Overall, he had crossed the Pacific forty times, circumnavigated the world five times, and gained an international reputation for having brought back to America an amazingly large number of “firsts” or unique specimens.
- Throughout his career, Buck collected and documented a plethora of stories that told the tales of his interactions with animals and his business.
- Buck’s diary entries hold some of the most inspiring, exciting, perilous, and eccentric experiences that he had during his career,



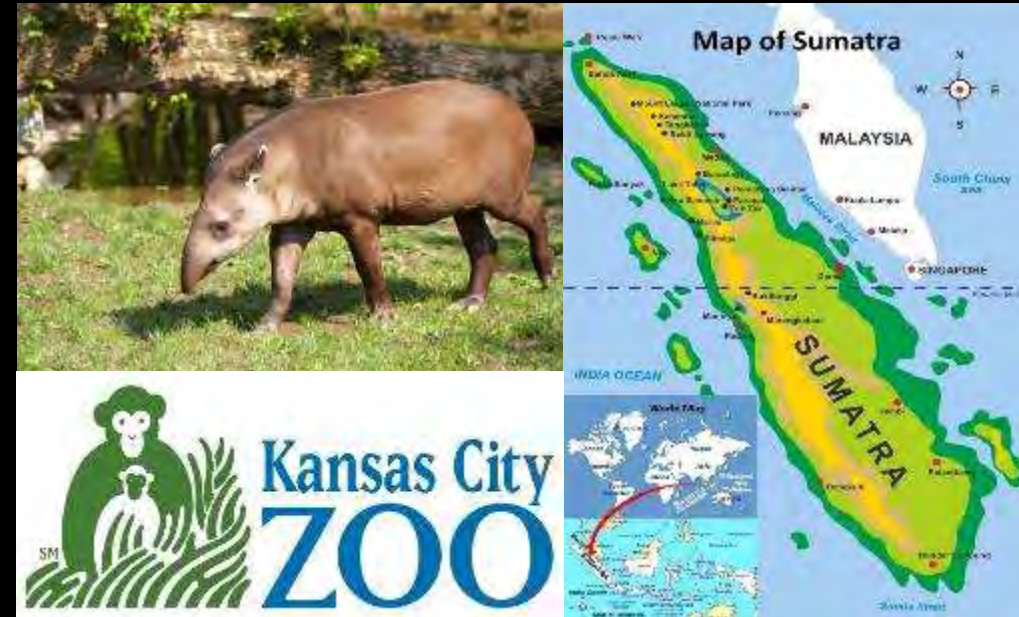
FRANK BUCK—At His Most Civilized

# TAPIR ON A RAMPAGE

## Lesson Learned

- In 1926, Buck went to Sumatra, a large island that is a part of Indonesia, in search of a group of animals, including a tapir—the meekest of animals—for the Kansas City Zoo.
- This small, clawless, vegetarian, who was untouched by evolution, was captured with ease by Buck. All seemed to be well but upon closer inspection, the tapir's skin on its spine was badly injured.
- Understanding that the zoo wanted nothing less than a perfectly healthy animal, Buck slapped some ointment onto the tapir's back without anticipating any trouble.
- Little did Buck know that he was in for one of the most fearsome fights of his life: “The tapir had me painfully pinned down. I could feel his breath on my face. Not a sound came from him, except his heavy breathing. His eyes had a look that made my flesh creep.”
- It took over fifteen minutes for one of Buck's helpers to notice the tapir dragging him on the ground but, ultimately, Buck was rescued.
- The tapir calmed down once he was cured of his ailment and shipped to the Kansas City Zoo. There he proved to be as easy to handle as a kitten.
- Buck would learn a very important lesson from this horrible experience....

“The experience proved to me all over again how foolish it is to generalize about animals. It isn't much less intelligent to generalize about animals than it is to generalize about people. One finds almost as much variety in animal character as one does in human character. Perhaps the nearest generalization is to say that most animals are dangerous when they think they're in danger.”



# TIGER REVENGE



- While visiting his friend Jim Wendell in Calcutta, India, Buck was invited to attend one of the Hindu Prince's "shows."
- The prince (aka the Maharajah) was known for hosting malicious shows that had no true value in a fair fight between animals. The Maharajah, bored with the tameness of palace routine, sought a thrill in watching animal combat.
- Countless spectacles were established by the Maharajah for his royal court to witness wild animals kill one another for pure entertainment.
- Although there were many shows that the Maharajah enjoyed, one was specifically memorable.
- Buck and Wendell were invited to see how the animals were prepared to enter the show. Buck observed The Royal Bengal Tiger, which was scheduled to fight a group of wild dogs, have all of his claws pulled out one by one, and his mouth stitched together with just one tooth left for combat. The wild dogs, in return, were starved for days to act out more aggressively.
- Disgusted by the preparations for the fight, Buck did not want to go at first, but Wendell convinced him to attend, despite the cruelty the animals endured.
- At the beginning of the show, the tiger, as tired and weak as it seemed, still managed to fight off the dogs, ripping one's belly wide open.
- However, the tiger, in an attempt to escape, ran past the dogs to the exit, where the prince's four-year-old son and heir, stood.
- With his last breath and only one fang, the Royal Bengal Tiger dug his tooth into the helpless boy's neck, eye, and heart.
- As Frank Buck quoted, "It was all pretty rough on the Maharajah's little boy; but who says there is no justice.....now and then?"

# JUNGLE LAUNDRESS

- During one of Buck's collecting trips, he stumbled upon one of his most favorite animals, an orangutan named Gladys.
- Their first experience together would spark a certain sense of curiosity in Buck about Gladys and create a life-long friendship.
- While Buck was installing all of the newly purchased primates into his compound in Katong, Singapore, Gladys had decided to give him a friendly greeting and stuck her arm out through the cage to gently touch him. Amused by her actions, Buck experimented with Gladys and allowed her to be released from her cage. With the utmost "lady-like" manner, she waited for her invitation to be released from her cage after he opened the door and proved to be the most tame of all the animals he had ever come across.
- Soon enough, Gladys was installed in the basement of Buck's house, despite her tendencies of giving the servants a friendly hello in the wee hours of the night.

## SOME OF GLADYS'S PASTIMES AND SKILLS

- Making her straw bed every morning to perfection.
- Unfastening her collar no matter how tight Buck would make it.
- Attempting to read books by picking them up and staring at them for an hour straight.
- Washing clothes and wringing them out to dry.
- Accompanying Buck on car rides through Singapore.
- And sitting back, relaxing, and enjoying a small glass of beer and, on occasion, tea.





# JUNGLE LAUNDRESS CONTINUATION

- Although Buck never knew where Gladys had originally been raised, he soon was able to figure out her past-life. One day, while he was holding a basket of laundry, Gladys took it from him and began soaking, washing, and wringing the clothes out like a professional washerwoman, or a *Jungle Laundress*.
- Because Gladys had all the motions of an Asiatic woman washing clothes, Buck realized she most likely grew up in a native village right beside a family and assisted the mother in washing clothes along a river bank, as well as performing a number of other tasks.
- “My parting with Gladys was the saddest animal farewell I’ve ever known.” Although he was unhappy that he had to give her away to the Municipal Zoo in Madison, Wisconsin, Buck always cherished the time he spent with Gladys and the experiences they had together.



# BABY BOO

- While Buck was in Singapore on a collecting trip, an animal dealer in Los Angeles cabled him to ask if he could find for him a female baby elephant under three feet in height for film work. This proved to be harder than it sounded. Buck was being asked to produce an elephant shorter in stature than any other in the whole U.S.!
- After countless unsuccessful searches for this midget elephant, Buck turned his attention to his other animal orders.
- In Sumatra, where Buck was on a quest to fill orders for pythons, gibbons, and other animals, he came across a shikari (Asiatic trader) who asked if he was interested in a small elephant. Buck remembered the order from the man in Los Angeles and asked the animal's height. The shikari, obviously over-exaggerating, claimed the elephant was just above 10 inches.
- Buck knew the shikari was lying but became interested when he was told that the small elephant was a female and that she had hair all over her body, an indicator that she was bound to be a fairly recent calf and under three feet.
- Taking a chance, Buck decided to travel fifteen miles outside of Sumatra to a native village where the elephant was located.



# BABY BOO CONTINUATION



- After a journey of over **four hours**, Buck arrived at the destination. He was taken to a tapioca garden in the back of a shack. There, with a rope around its neck, looking terribly thin and emaciated, stood the smallest baby elephant he had ever seen.
- Measuring at just under three feet, the little baby, who was ripped away from her mother, seemed to be barely supporting itself, and its shivering and starved appearance showed that its owners certainly were not feeding it properly. Feeding a baby elephant that had suddenly been taken away from its mother is usually very difficult.
- Although Buck wanted the elephant despite its bad condition, he did not feel like taking so great a financial risk. If Buck could not get the elephant to eat within the next day, he was sure it would die. "It was as frail as a Christmas tree ornament and about as valuable unless I could devise some means of making it eat."
- After much negotiation with the shikari, Buck was able to purchase this half-dead baby elephant. Although his long **journey** seemed like it had come to an end, it had really just begun.... Buck now had to face feeding the baby to prevent it from starving, a task much easier said than done!

# BABY BOO CONTINUATION

- After trying six unsuccessful plans to feed the small elephant, Buck had almost lost hope. Then he got an idea.
- Buck experimented by creating a feeding tube made out of bamboo and leaves and filled it with a nutritious mix of rice and goat's milk. At first the elephant stubbornly refused to eat from the feeding tube, but after several attempts Buck was finally able to nurse her back to health.
- As soon as Buck reached Singapore, he cabled the Los Angeles dealer with news that he had a female baby elephant under three feet, which could be purchased for \$2,000. The dealer promptly accepted.
- Buck arrived in San Francisco with his delivery and the dealer was delighted with his purchase of the smallest elephant in the United States. Buck then instructed him on how to use the feeding tubes properly.
- In time, this once small and frail elephant became a movie queen under the name of Baby Boo!

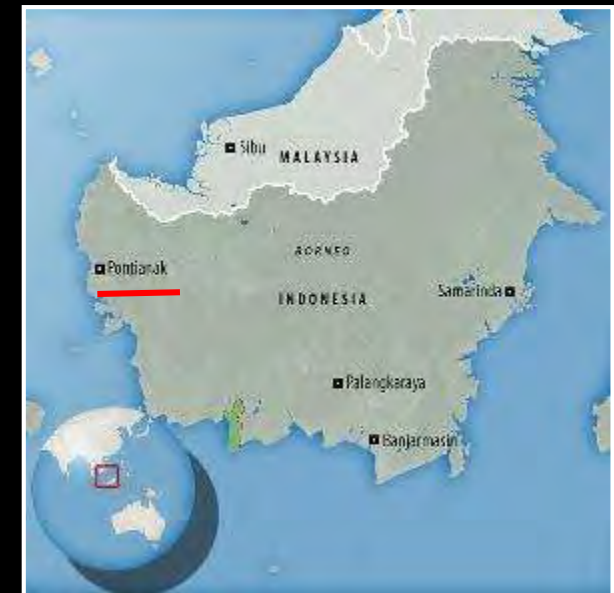
## LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

One day, while Baby Boo was being filmed, it was necessary for the cameraman to catch the little elephant on the run. Baby Boo, however, had decided that she was in no mood to run, just as she once decided she did not want to eat. The cameraman was frantic and the director was in a frenzy to think of something they could do to coerce Baby Boo to run. However, when Baby Boo had been delivered she also came with a magic wand that could make her do just about anything: the bamboo feeding tube! As soon as the feeding tube was shown to Baby Boo, she automatically started running and the movie producers were able to get a shot of her running on camera! "Once more the tiniest elephant I have ever brought back to America was under the spell of the bit of bamboo that had saved her life."



# MONKEY MOTHERS

- There is no bigger thrill in the game than bringing back rare “firsts.”
- During a spontaneous trip to Pontianak, Dutch Borneo, the capital of the Indonesian province of West Kalimantan, Buck stumbled upon the rarest simians that had ever been seen: Proboscis Monkeys. They were the first Buck had seen in his life and the first to be brought to the U.S.
- The male was about three feet high and his nose stuck out about two and a half inches from his face. The female was somewhat smaller in size but also had very prominent features. Both flaunted a tannish brown color and were quite the sight to be seen.
- Buck gladly purchased these monkeys for a reasonable price from a Malay trader and brought back the two monkeys to Calcutta.
- When back at his compound, Buck made sure to make all the appropriate accommodations for these two rare monkeys by making sure they had a steady, palatable diet to replace the thick, waxy leaves they were accustomed to.
- A couple of weeks after the two monkeys settled into their new surroundings, a baby proboscis was born.



# MONKEY MOTHERS CONTINUATION

- All seemed to go well until, unexpectedly, the male died.
- The female was affected by the loss of her mate but her baby kept her so busy and filled her life so completely that she had no difficulty in maintaining a healthy interest in life. Spry and energetic, she fussed over her little one with a great deal of pride.
- While on the journey back to the U.S to sell the female and baby, all of the passengers and crew on the boat fell in love with them. The female, who given the name Lady Cyrano, was moved by the demonstrations of affection showered on her.

“I have seen a great many monkey mothers, -(good ones too)- but never have I seen one nurse her little one with such tender solicitude as my Pontianak purchase displayed.”



# MONKEY MOTHERS CONTINUATION

- One morning onboard, Buck noticed that most of the cages in the monkey sector, including the one that housed the Proboscis, were water-soaked.
- After Buck saw the monkeys, he became enraged. Both were shivering from having been soaked with a hose.
- Although Buck complained to the captain about the boatswain who had done his job so catastrophically, it was too late. That night, the baby proboscis died.
- The mother of the dead infant began to pine for her baby. It was the saddest animal tragedy Buck had ever witnessed.
- Lady Cyrano lost interest in everything, including food. However, once Buck did a physical examination of her when he docked in San Francisco, curiously enough, he found that she was in good physical condition. He then force-fed her through her depression. It had proved to him that it was not her body that was sick, but her mind from the loss of her baby.
- But this monkey never got over the loss of her child. Lady Cyrano died within an hour of the time Buck received an offer from the Bronx Zoo, for what would have been a hefty price.
- “This is the only instance I have ever encountered in all my years as a collector, of an animal dying of a broken heart.”



# END OF 1920S BENCH MARK & ENTERTAINMENT CAREER

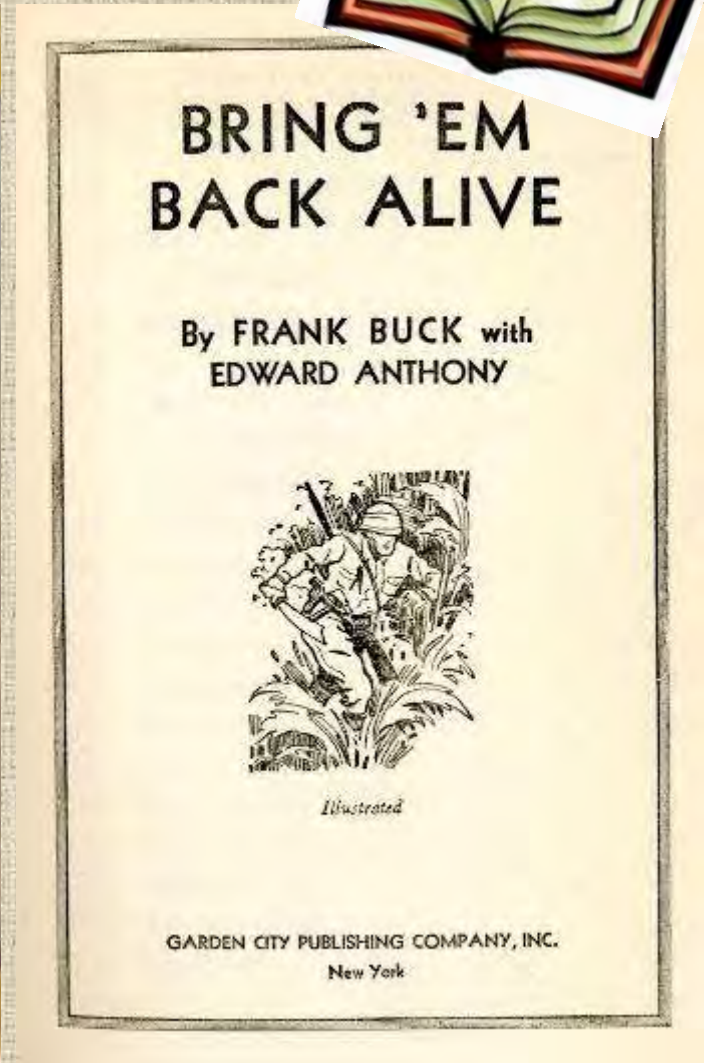
- 🎬 After a staggering number of collecting trips, by the end of the 1920s, Buck was the world's leading supplier of wild animals.
- 🎬 Despite his great achievements, the Stock Market Crash of 1929 left him penniless and unable to continue his trips.
- 🎬 In order to help Buck recover from his bankruptcy, a friend suggested that he should write about his animal collecting trips in order to sell his stories and make a profit from his past adventures.
- 🎬 Little did Buck know that this idea would ignite a career in the entertainment world and that countless numbers of Americans would fall in love with his action-packed and awe-inspiring life with animals.



# BRING EM' BACK ALIVE!



- ❖ Buck and journalist Edward Anthony collaborated to coauthor his diary, that detailed many of his animal-collecting adventures in 1930.
- ❖ This book proved to be a best seller and earned him the nickname “Frank *Bring Em’ Back Alive* Buck.”
- ❖ “The book can be recommended to anybody who likes being made to sit on the edge of his chair and gasp for breath as his eyes eat up the print to see what happens next,” wrote the New York Times Book Review.
- ❖ All of the previous stories are based on Buck’s diary.\*\*\*



# BRING EM' BACK ALIVE- THE FILM!

- ❖ After the book proved to be a success, not to mention a best-seller, Buck arranged for a movie crew to accompany him on his next animal-collecting expedition to the Far East in 1932.
- ❖ *Bring Em' Back Alive* the movie is a series of adventures in bagging big beasts and reptiles.
- ❖ Although there is no story plot, it took Buck; Clyde Elliot, the director of the film; Nick Calvaliere; Carl Berger, the cameraman; and scores of natives eight months of patient work, as well as \$100,000, to produce the film!
- ❖ It might have appeared to viewers that the several fierce fights between beasts and between beasts and reptiles were staged by Buck, but this was not so.
- ❖ Watchful waiting, as well as scoping out certain areas where beasts might be lurking, was necessary for Buck and his crew to capture extensive and exciting footage.
- ❖ Among the animals taking part in the thrilling brawls are: a python and a tiger, a black leopard and a tiger, as well as a python and a crocodile.
- ❖ Even though it was Buck's aim to bring animals back alive, he was always armed with a pistol and rifle when he was in the jungle.



Left to right: Cameramen Nicholas Calvaliere, cinematographer Carl Berger, director Clyde E. Elliott, and star Frank Buck ready to leave for the Far East to film *Bring 'Em Back Alive*.

# THE PROCESS OF FILMING BRING EM' BACK ALIVE

- ❖ Buck and his crew filmed the movie deep in the mysterious jungles of the Far East. As expected, whenever filming in an outdoor area, especially a jungle, the conditions were unpredictable.
- ❖ Lighting was extremely important for the cameraman to take note of: “I was told I would have great difficulty in getting good quality in my photography after three o’ clock in the afternoon due to the lack of sunlight.”
- ❖ Working in intense heat during the tropical mid-day sun made conditions even harder and more draining for the crew.
- ❖ The danger of being attacked by animals also had to be taken into consideration when filming, “In our photogenic operations we worked from behind blinds which were erected whenever possible against the wind in order to prevent our scent from reaching the animals.”
- ❖ Humidity often altered the camera, “Humidity has a doubly bad effect in that it obscures the lighting and also rusts the iron parts of the camera, which had to be oiled every day.”
- ❖ The wild animals did a good deal of their fighting where there was enough light to photograph them, but some of the fiercest bouts continued in the jungle growth where it was not possible to take a picture. Often Buck, Director Elliott, and the cameramen had to run for their lives when animals were too close for comfort.



# THE MOVIE IS A SUCCESS!

After unsuccessfully attempting to interest the main Hollywood motion picture companies to finance his trips to make a series of short films, Buck turned to Amede Van Beuren, whose studio only made cartoons and live-action subjects released through RKO Studios.

Van Beuren agreed to Buck's conditions that he finance all expenses of Buck's expedition, pay Buck with a share of the profits, and not view any of the footage sent back until Buck was present, as Buck was unsure of how the images would actually look on film. Van Beuren kept his word and when viewing the footage they both realized they had enough film of high quality to make the movie.

Van Beuren was pleased with the final outcome and scheduled the first viewing date to be August 19, 1932, at the Mayfair in Times Square, which brought in an extremely large crowd.

The film earned an estimated profit of over \$155,000 and inspired a radio series that aired on NBC from October 30 - December 18, 1932, as a promotion for the film.

Clearly all the work Buck and his crew put into the film paid off.



"I shall never forget the premiere of the picture," Buck later recalled about the New York opening. "The R.K.O. officials had decided it was so good that they would give it a tremendous ballyhoo, take a private theatre (the Mayfair on Times Square) and do the job in Hollywood style. On the day of the opening there was a line of people four deep and a block long, fighting to get into the theatre. On the big marquee were full-sized papier-mâché elephants and tigers that actually moved and waved their trunks and snapped their jaws. I made personal appearances, and for the first time people saw the face of the man who had brought to zoos and menageries of America the animals they had marveled at for so many years."

# WILD CARGO!

Once Buck observed the success his book and movie had made him, he felt confident that he could certainly produce more and that they would serve him just as well.

The follow-up book to *Bring Em Back Alive* was *Wild Cargo*, which was coauthored by Buck and Edward Anthony once again. It elaborated on many more of Buck's experiences working with jungle creatures.

This book also proved to be a best-seller and was adapted into a film in 1934.

Critic's Response: "Enough legitimate action and suspense to make a dozen average jungle motion picture films."

-RL Duffus. All of the Inhabitants of Noah's Ark. New York Times. May 29, 1932.



Frank Buck (right) & Edward Anthony (left) signing copies of Wild Cargo.



# WILD CARGO - THE FILM!



- Airing on April 6, 1934, “Wild Cargo” depicted many animal interactions Buck and his crew experienced, similar to “Bring Em’ Back Alive.”
- Armand Denis, the director of the film, collaborated with Buck and traveled to the Island of Bali, as well as to Singapore, in search of material to use for the motion picture.
- Behind the camera during this production, there were certainly many dangerous and life-threatening instances that did not occur in Buck’s first movie, such as when cameraman Leroy Phelps was nearly crippled by an infection he acquired after scratching himself on a poisonous renahus plant. Buck and Phelps were also almost trampled by a herd of stampeding water buffalo; they were spared only when the animals changed direction at the last moment.
- Despite Buck and his crew’s hard work, the movie was not received well at box offices and cost over \$100,000.
- Criticism: “Although it may seem as though several incidents in the screen work were prearranged, they are nevertheless quite thrilling.”

- -New York Times



Director Armand Denis (seated right) with RKO exhibitors and poster for *Wild Cargo* (ca. 1934)

# LAWSUIT BETWEEN BUCK AND ANTHONY

- ❖ Although Edward Anthony, co-author of the book “Bring Em’ Back Alive,” did not take part in creating the film, he was dissatisfied that he did not receive any of the profit when the movie was released.
- ❖ Anthony was a talented writer who brought life and excitement to Buck’s narratives during his animal collecting trips, which is why he believed he should have earned partial credit toward the success of the film.
- ❖ In reaction, he filed a lawsuit against Buck in the Supreme Court of Brooklyn in 1933, in order to recover 2 percent of the motion picture’s profits.
- ❖ This effectively ended their collaboration.



# IMPACT OF BUCK'S ACTING AND PRODUCING CAREER

❖ After Buck starred in a number of movies and co-authored multiple books, his prestige in the entertainment industry certainly increased, giving him the title “world famous.” The list to the right displays Buck’s accomplishments in literature and film:



Buck (left) with Ferrin Fraser, who co-authored five of his eight books.



Buck (right) with Duncan Renaldo in *Tiger Fangs* (1943)

## Bibliography

- 1) [\*Bring 'Em Back Alive\*](#) (1930), co-authored with [Edward Anthony](#)
- 2) [\*Wild Cargo\*](#) (1932), co-authored with Anthony
- 3) [\*Fang and Claw\*](#) (1935), co-authored with [Ferrin Fraser](#)
- 4) [\*Tim Thompson in the Jungle\*](#) (1935), co-authored with Fraser
- 5) [\*On Jungle Trails\*](#) (1936), co-authored with Fraser
- 6) [\*Animals Are Like That\*](#) (1939), co-authored with Carol Weld
- 7) [\*All in a Lifetime\*](#) (1941), co-authored with Fraser
- 8) [\*Jungle Animals\*](#) (1945), co-authored with Fraser

## Filmography

- 1) [\*Bring 'Em Back Alive\*](#) (1932) – actor and narrator
- 2) [\*Wild Cargo\*](#) (1934) – actor, narrator, and producer
- 3) [\*Fang and Claw\*](#) (1935) – actor and director
- 4) [\*Jungle Menace\*](#) (1937) – actor
- 5) [\*Jungle Cavalcade\*](#) (1941) – narrator
- 6) [\*Jacaré\*](#) (1942) – actor
- 7) [\*Tiger Fangs\*](#) (1943) – actor
- 8) [\*Africa Screams\*](#) (1949) – actor



# FRANK BUCK'S JUNGLE CAMP

- ❖ Throughout the 1920s-1940s, Frank Buck became a common household name on Long Island, New York, and the entire country.
- ❖ In 1933, Buck furnished a wild animal exhibit called Frank Buck's Jungle Camp, for Chicago's Century of Progress exhibition.
- ❖ More than two million people visited Buck's reproduction of the camp he and his native assistants lived in while collecting animals in British Malaysia.
- ❖ After the fair closed, the camp was moved to a compound Buck maintained at Massapequa, Long Island.

**SEE!** "BRING 'EM BACK ALIVE"  
**Frank Buck**



**AND HIS SPECTACULAR JUNGLE CAMP**  
**A Wild Cargo of Rare Animals, Birds and Reptiles**  
**A CENTURY OF PROGRESS**  
CONSULT BACK PAGE FOR EXACT LOCATION

# FRANK BUCK'S JUNGLE CAMP

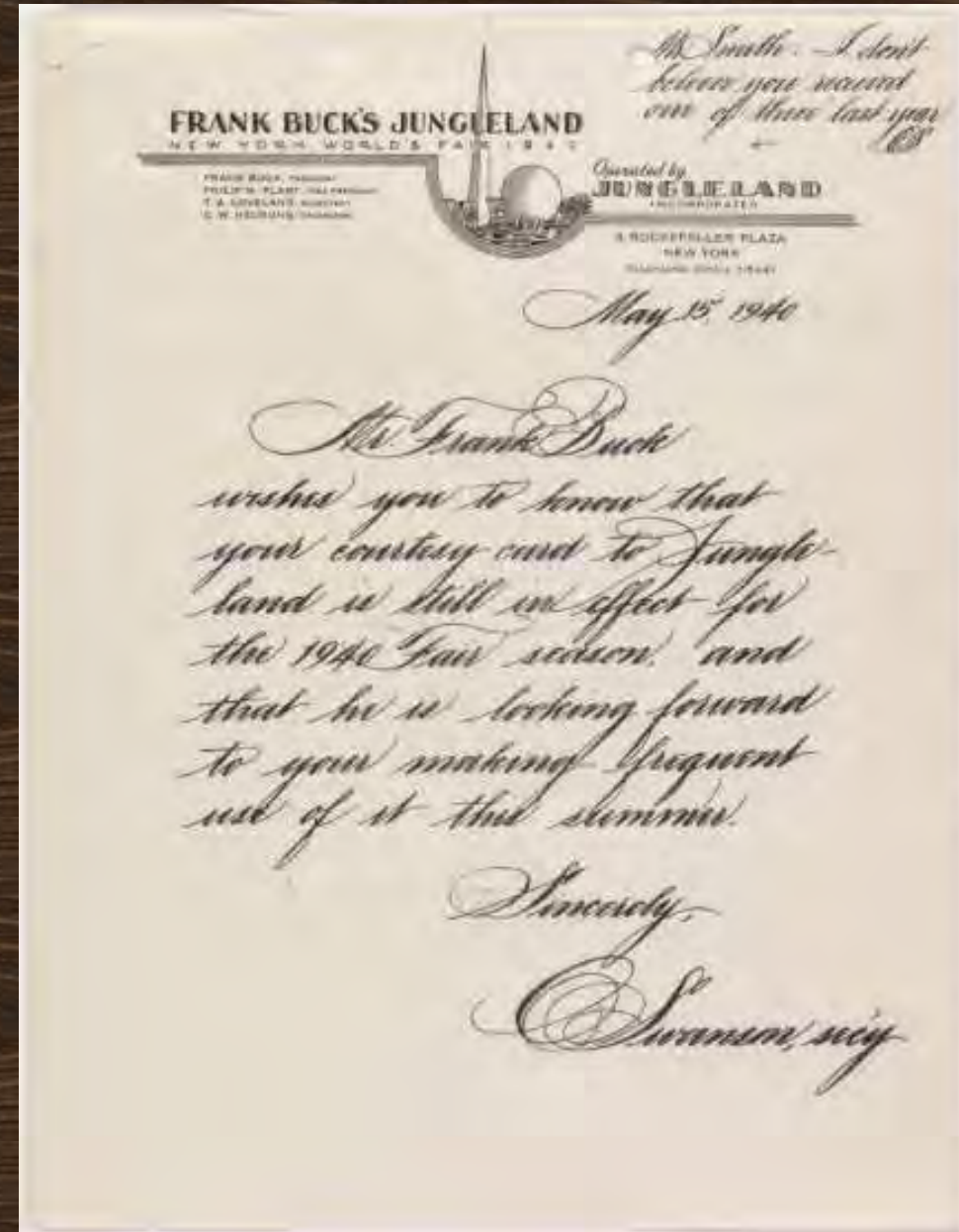
- ❖ The new location of his Jungle Camp boasted 40 acres in size, and contained multiple buildings on the property including a three-story Tudor Style building--the Frank Buck Hotel--as well as other restaurants and stores.
- ❖ Above all, Buck's Jungle Camp housed hundreds of exotic animals including lions, tigers, elephants, monkeys, and reptiles, among others.
- ❖ The Camp's animals became an important feature of the community and live animals like elephants were brought to galas and society events in nearby towns to help boost publicity and ticket sales.
- ❖ In addition to functioning as a zoo and amusement center, the Camp served as a holding center for exotic animals coming into New York from Buck's expeditions before being sent to other zoos and circuses.
- ❖ The Camp was a hit with the press and often was written about in newspapers such as the *New York Times*, which discussed all different types of topics, such as new arrivals and animal births in the compound.



# HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS OF PHOTOGRAPHS

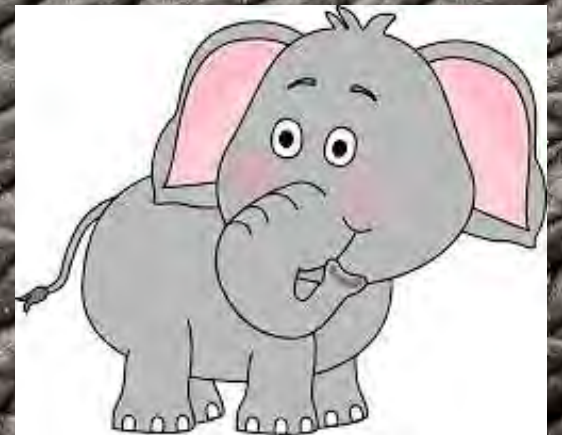
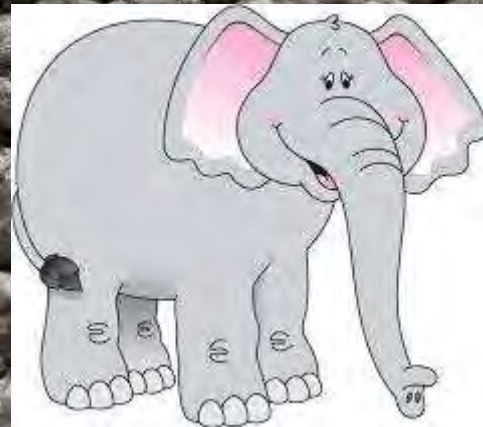
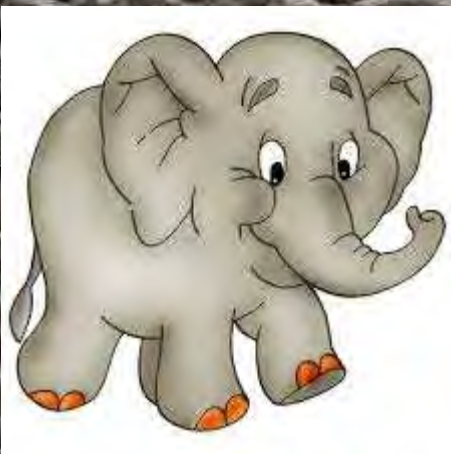
- Throughout the years, Hofstra University has collected a number of photographs displaying Buck's amazing career while running his Jungle Camp in Massapequa, New York, in 1939. This portion of the project serves to fully immerse one in the visual aspect of Buck's career at the Jungle Camp and capture the impact he and his establishment had on Long Islanders through photographs!

"A picture is worth a thousand words!"



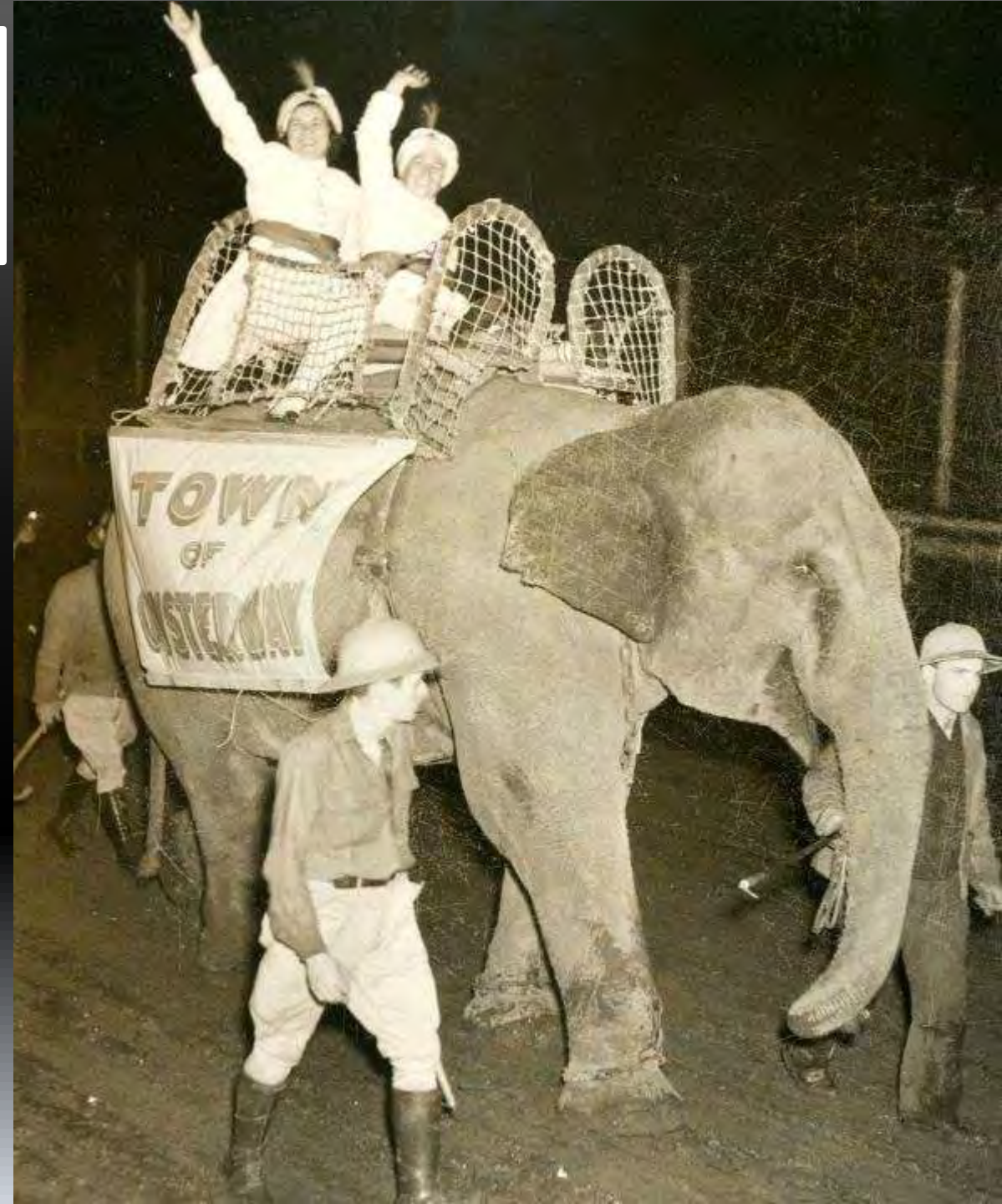
# ELEPHANTS

- Throughout Hofstra's collection, there are multiple photographs that include these adorable, quirky creatures either in Buck's Jungle Camp or being transported inside! The following photographs captured the elephants engaging in all different types of activities while spending time in Massapequa, New York.



# RIDE OR DIE WITH AN ELEPHANT BY YOUR SIDE!

- This photograph displays an unidentified man and woman, both wearing turbans, riding in a basket on top of an elephant wearing a “Town of Oyster Bay” banner. Handlers are walking alongside and behind the elephant.



# ELEPHANTS IN THE WINTER

- Elephants stationed in Frank Buck's Jungle Camp standing in snow. Certainly not the weather they are used to.



# HANDLERS WALKING ELEPHANTS ALONGSIDE A ROAD IN EITHER AMITYVILLE OR MASSAPEQUA.



Handlers guiding two elephants down a ramp, most likely at the Amityville train station.

Handler guiding elephant out of railroad car, most likely at the Amityville train station.





# TRIXIE THE ELEPHANT

- U.S Senator Robert F. Wagner, accompanied by his son Robert F. Wagner Jr., riding in a basket on an elephant named, "Trixie." Not the usual scene for a Senator.



# LINE OF ELEPHANTS

- Frank Buck admiring a group of elephants in a building at the Jungle Camp.



# YAZZO THE ELEPHANT UNDERGOES QUITE THE PECULIAR OPERATION...

- ❖ Yazzo, a 41 year-old elephant that was imported from India, was operated on for twelve minutes by Buck, for the most unusual reason...an in-grown toenail!
- ❖ Buck explained that the in-grown toenail occurred because the only sweat glands in an elephant is right above its toe, making it an easy target for infections.
- ❖ The operation was successful and almost pain-free.
- ❖ Yazzo, who served as one of the prestigious elephants that carried the Maharajah in India, now participated in the Jungle Camp to transport visitors.

John Drennan  
Garden City L.I.N.Y.  
G.C. 7765 or 9870.

World's Fair elephant undergoes operation....

Amityville L.I. N.Y, March ,----- A delicate operation

on what is said to be the most important part of an elephant was performed by Frank Mx "Bring Them Back Alive" Buck on Yazzo, 41-year-old elephant recently imported to this country from the stables of the Maharajah of Mysore, India. The operation was for the removal of an ingrown toe-nail on the front right foot.

Mr. Buck, explained that the <sup>only</sup> sweat pores of an elephant are located just above the toe nails. Shortly after arriving in this country, Yazzo developed an ingrown toe-nail and to prevent infection the operation was performed at Buck's Jungle Camp, here.

Although the elephant herd have great confidence in Mr. Buck, Ethel, a stable mate of Yazzo's stood over the prostrate invalid while Mr. Buck performed the operation. Altho she did not trumpet Ethel kept her trunk raised as if she would bash Mr. Buck's head in if the knife slipped. Mr. Buck didn't mind as Yazzo did not experience any pain during the 12 minute operation. He said later that Yazzo probably felt a slight twinge of pain when the acid was applied to the wound but it was so small he was finished before she re-acted.

Yazzo was brought to this country with a herd of 4 other elephants. The elephants will be used at Buck's Jungle Camp at the World's Fair, to carry passengers. She formerly was used in state ceremonies when she carried the Maharajah in a howda. *list*

Recent arrivals at the jungle camp here are Ashed and Jeshed, two camels that carried tourists to the pyramids in Egypt. They arrived last week and met Mr. Buck ~~formerly~~ for the first time yesterday after he performed the operation. The names were sent with the camels by their former drivers in Egypt.

All are destined for Buck's camp at the N.Y. World's fair.

# Yazzo!

- Frank Buck operating on the Indian elephant Yazzo, who had developed an ingrown toenail.



# **OTHER ANIMALS AT THE JUNGLE CAMP**

- ❖ Similar to other animal-showcasing centers such as zoos, there was a multitude of animals in Buck's Jungle Camp that are mentioned in this project, such as tigers, snakes, owls, and even donkeys!

# TIGER TIME!

- The tiger in this cage is holding its cub in its mouth.



# TIGER TRAP

- Frank Buck standing in front of the duplicate cage used in his movie “Fang and Claw.” The cage was made from extremely strong Malayan Jungle Poles to withstand any blows from ferocious tigers.



# BABY DONKEY!

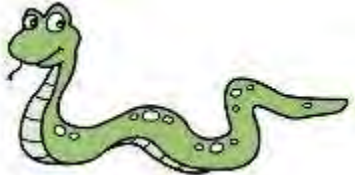
❖ Frank Buck holding a baby donkey inside the Jungle Camp.





# **COTTON MOUTH WATER MOCCASIN**

- This snake is poised in a strike position. While at Buck's Camp, when a worker, Cole Smith, attempted to remove it from a glass cage in the reptile house, he was bitten on the finger by the venomous creature.



# WILD ANIMALS CAUGHT AT VANDERBILT MANSION

- Six baby owls were disturbing residents near the Vanderbilt Mansion by making noise and even biting people.
- Captain Thomas Higgins and Captain Sherman, from Buck's Jungle Camp, caught the owlets and brought them back to the Camp safely.

WILD OWLS CAUGHT at Vanderbilt mansion--  
From J. Drennan so things are quieter now at "Peace Haven" or  
Garden City 9870 or 7755 "Shangra Li"  
Massapequa L.I. June 25.--Dr. No. <sup>PRINT</sup> Shows six baby faced but wild  
owlds caught at the old Vanderbilt mansion at Oakdale, now Peace Haven.  
They are two months old but will getx as big as an eagle. They eat rabbits  
and ~~at~~ mice--their big claws coming inhandy.  
They we caught at midnight. The owlds with their hooting would not  
let anyone in the area sleep and workmen refused to continue work on a 100  
foot water tower until the ~~at~~ birds were done away with. One man had been  
badly bitten by one~~x~~ of them.  
Capt. Thos. Higgins and Capt. Sherman of the ~~at~~ Long Island  
Jungle Camp caught the owls and brought them to the Jungle Camp on Sunrise  
highway here where they were photograph~~ed~~.  
The birds make a loud hissing noise like a ~~swax~~ snake.  
So now things are quiet<sup>e</sup> at "Shangra Li" the former home of the  
former immortal Baby Jean, of Brooklyn.





The Vanderbilt Mansion,  
in Centerport, Long Island,  
where the six baby owls  
were located.



The six owllets that  
were captured and  
placed in Buck's Jungle  
Camp.



# MONKEY MOUNTAIN

- Within Buck's Jungle Camp was a man-made mountain specifically for monkeys to inhabit named, "Monkey Mountain."
- Monkey Mountain was one of the most popular attractions in the Camp, where thousands rushed to visit the little mischievous creatures.
- The Mountain contained many different types of monkeys with no fence, but instead, a moat surrounding it.



# THE ESCAPE

- Although there were numerous incidents that occurred throughout the years at the Jungle Camp, the most famous one of all occurred on August 21, 1935.
- At about noon, 150 of the 570 rhesus monkeys in the seventy-five foot tall Monkey Mountain escaped when a worker accidentally left a wooden plank across the moat, making a bridge for the monkeys to cross.
- Three minutes later, the worker returned only to discover dozens of monkeys making their getaway.
- Staff and visitors watched as the monkeys poured through the camp. Workers were only able to stop a handful; the rest escaped the Camp along Sunrise Highway.



# THE DAMAGE

- The monkeys caused some damage and general surprise in neighborhood.
- About fifty were successful in delaying an eastbound Long Island Railroad train that had just left Massapequa for Seaford, by gathering on the tracks; unfortunately two were electrocuted by the third rail.
- Two other rhesus monkeys climbed a high-tension tower of the Long Island Lighting Company near Hicksville and were electrocuted, causing temporary service interruptions.
- Thirty-five clustered on Seaford Avenue near Merrick Road, causing a local resident to crash into a tree.



- Frank Buck holding a baby rhesus monkey that was returned!

# THE RETURN

The monkeys, ranging from five to ten pounds and valued at around fifty dollars each, were considered harmless.

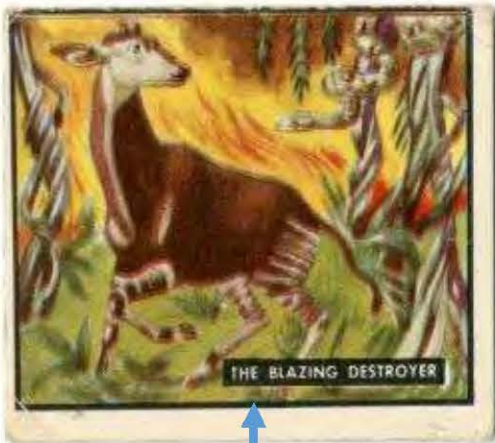
While thirty returned on their own by sunset, over a hundred were still missing the first night.

Most of the monkeys survived and were returned by the police and local residents over the following days.

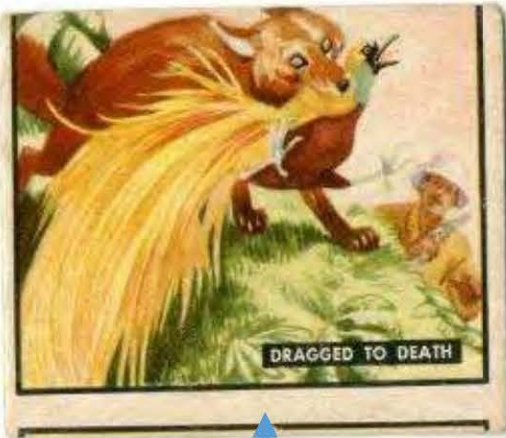
While all of this was going on, Frank Buck was on an expedition in the Orient and had little control of the situation.



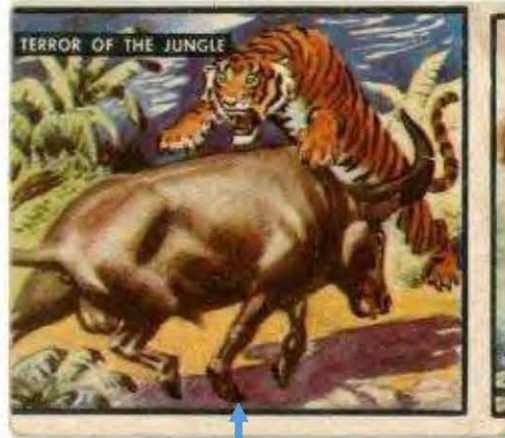
# FRANK BUCK "BRING EM' BACK ALIVE" TOPPS TRADING CARDS



THE BLAZING DESTROYER



DRAGGED TO DEATH



TERROR OF THE JUNGLE



DEATH COMES CLOSE



THE PYTHON'S COILS CRUSH

**7**  
**THE BLAZING DESTROYER**  
 No. 22 in a Series of 32 Cards of  
**DANGEROUS LIVING**  
 The monstrous python had slithered close to the baby okapi that lay huddled in the tall grass. Just as the giant snake was preparing for a feast, the sound of crackling flames caused it to rear its writhing head. It was fire . . . the most feared enemy of the jungle! And now the mother okapi and the python had but one thought . . . escape the onrushing flames!

**BRING EM BACK ALIVE**  
 © T. C. G. PRINTED IN U.S.A.

**24**  
 No. 25 in a Series of 28 Cards of  
**MAN AGAINST BEAST**  
 The explorer went deep into the jungles of New Guinea, hoping to find the Bird of Paradise, the most beautiful of all birds. He turned a bend in the trail just in time to see one of these beautiful creatures being dragged away by a snarling wolf. A lucky shot from his pistol . . . and the bird was free!

**BRING EM BACK ALIVE**  
 © T. C. G. PRINTED IN U.S.A.

**73**  
**TERROR OF THE JUNGLE**  
 No. 17 in a Series of 22 Cards of  
**FIGHTING ANIMALS**  
 The old bull water buffalo stiffened. Toward him stalked the terror of the jungle, a Bengal tiger. Without hesitation, the bull lowered his magnificent head and charged. The tiger met the impact with fangs and claws, but the old bull had footwork, stamina, punch! The tiger had had enough. Snarling, he fled, leaving the herd champion torn, bloody — but victorious.

**BRING EM BACK ALIVE**  
 © T. C. G. PRINTED IN U.S.A.

**58**  
**DEATH COMES CLOSE**  
 No. 5 in a Series of 28 Cards of  
**MAN AGAINST BEAST**  
 A native delivered a rickety box, containing death — a king cobra! Suddenly, he stumbled and I faced a hooded body, rearing for the fatal strike! Tearing off my canvas coat, I hucked it on the snake, clutching for his neck. His bite meant instant death. Yelling, I held him until Ali brought the snake cage. The hooded death had lost.

**BRING EM BACK ALIVE**  
 © T. C. G. PRINTED IN U.S.A.

**80**  
**THE PYTHON'S COILS CRUSH**  
 No. 2 in a Series of 22 Cards of  
**FIGHTING ANIMALS**  
 As the black leopard paddled through the jungle, the giant python struck. Their battle held me spellbound. The coils of the terrible reptile sought to crush the enemy's life. Slashing and twisting, the leopard tried to escape the deadly grasp. Then — one swift snap of the jungle cat's jaws and the snake relaxed, quivering. The black leopard had won.

**BRING EM BACK ALIVE**  
 © T. C. G. PRINTED IN U.S.A.



# FRANK BUCK PINS



# 1939-1940 WORLDS FAIR

- ❖ During 1939, Buck decided to bring his Massapequa Jungle Camp to the New York World's Fair renaming it "Jungle Land."
- ❖ "Jungle Land" offered thousands of rare specimens of birds; reptiles; and wild animals; along with Jiggs, a five-year-old trained orangutan; a trio of performing elephants; an 80-foot "monkey mountain" inhabited by 600 monkeys; and a feature that had proven to be hit at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair: camel rides.

## CAPTURING WILD ELEPHANTS! BY FRANK 'BRING 'EM BACK ALIVE' BUCK



a souvenir of the  
**NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR**  
1939 - 1940



Sketch of the sign in front of Buck's Jungle Land

H. C. SCRIBNER, INC.

Investigations

535 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N. Y.

February 11, 1938

Mr. George F. Smith, Jr.  
Department of Concessions  
Administration Building  
World's Fair  
Flushing Meadows, L. I.

Dear Mr. Smith:-

Preliminary Draft of JUNGLE LAND, Inc.  
a FRANK BUCK EXHIBITION

The Plans: The tentative plan would call for the rental of approximately 80,000 to 120,000 square feet (two to three acres) in the entertainment section of the fair grounds. Some 75 to 100 feet would necessarily front on a thoroughfare. The depth of the entrance and exit area would depend entirely upon the other concessions using the street space. The attached ground plan lists the nature of the exhibits which include a large monkey island, a seal island and wild animal exhibits.

JUNGLE CAMP: Probably the most interesting individual attraction in the exhibit at the New York World's Fair will be an exact duplicate of camp such as Frank Buck uses on his expeditions in the jungles. Materials will be brought all the way from Malaya to construct this camp, which will show exactly how Buck lives while trapping wild animals in the jungle. The camp will be erected with poles out in the jungle, lashed together with rattan, and roofed with thatch thatching exactly as this camp is built by Buck's Malay boys in Johore or other parts of the Malay Peninsula where he sets up a headquarters camp. In fact, Malay boys will be brought here to build this camp and will be kept here throughout the exhibit as attendants, so as to have the real thing in the way of attendants. One end of this camp will be enclosed with expanding metal for sleeping quarters, exactly as Buck does in the jungle, to protect him from night prowlers.

Monkeys and other small animals will be tethered to poles in and about the camp.

❖ Buck's plans show his entrepreneurial and PR savvy. His proposal for an 80,000 - to 120,000-square-foot Jungleland included a jungle camp duplicating his expedition camps to show "exactly how Buck lives while trapping wild animals in the jungle." The camps would be built by "Malay boys ... kept here throughout the exhibit as atmosphere, so as to have the real thing in the way of attendants." Other planned attractions included a large monkey island, a seal island, rare animal exhibits, animal shows, and food prepared by "a native Malay cook and served in a most attractive way." Buck delivered, but not without various disputes with Fair officials over contractual issues. Only Jungleland, Aquacade, and the Parachute Jump made money at the Fair's first season.

TENTATIVE LIST OF ANIMALS, BIRDS AND REPTILES FOR  
THE FRANK BUCK JUNGLE CAMP EXHIBIT & SHOW  
AT THE NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR 1939

\*\*\*\*

3 Elephants  
2 Camels  
800 Rhesus Monkeys for "Monkey Mountain"  
50 Chimpanzees, Gibbons, Orang-utans,  
Baboons & rare monkeys  
2 pair Tigers  
1 pair Lions  
1 " Black Leopards  
1 " Spotted Leopards  
1 " Clouded Leopards  
1 " Snow Leopards  
1 " Binturongs  
2 Himalayan Pandas  
1 pair Cheetahs  
1 pair Golden Cats  
1 " Ocelots  
4 baby Honey Bears  
1 pair Sloth Bears  
1 pair Russian Brown Bears  
1 Giant Panda, if obtainable  
1 pair Indian Pigmy Donkeys  
1 pair Zebras  
1 Indian Rhino or African Rhino  
Okapi and Songo, if obtainable  
1 Hippopotamus  
3 groups Asiatic Deer  
5 groups Rare Antelope  
2 Water Buffalo  
1 pair Llamas  
20 small mammals, including Mouse-deer, Dik-dik, rare rodents, small cats, etc.  
1 group Kangaroos  
10 Sea Lions  
150 Snakes & Reptiles  
100 Waterfowl (cranes, ducks, geese, etc.) for Waterfowl pool  
2 Cassowaries  
2 Eous  
2 Ostriches  
2 Black-headed Storks  
2 Adjutant Storks  
2 Crowned Cranes  
2 White-necked Cranes  
2 Manchurian Cranes  
200 Perching Birds

# THE ANIMALS

Jungleland contained thousands of spectacles and sights to see. Its “mammoth wild cargo” reported to consist of 30,000 animals, which included giraffes, tigers, snakes, bears, monkeys, exotic birds, and more. Frank Buck showcased his monkeys and, with him perched atop, his elephants, leading parades and celebrations.

Buck was especially proud of his “famous trained orang ‘Jiggs’ ... the most intelligent and best-trained anthropoid ever exhibited.” The five-year-old Jiggs was appointed “Mayor of Jungleland.”

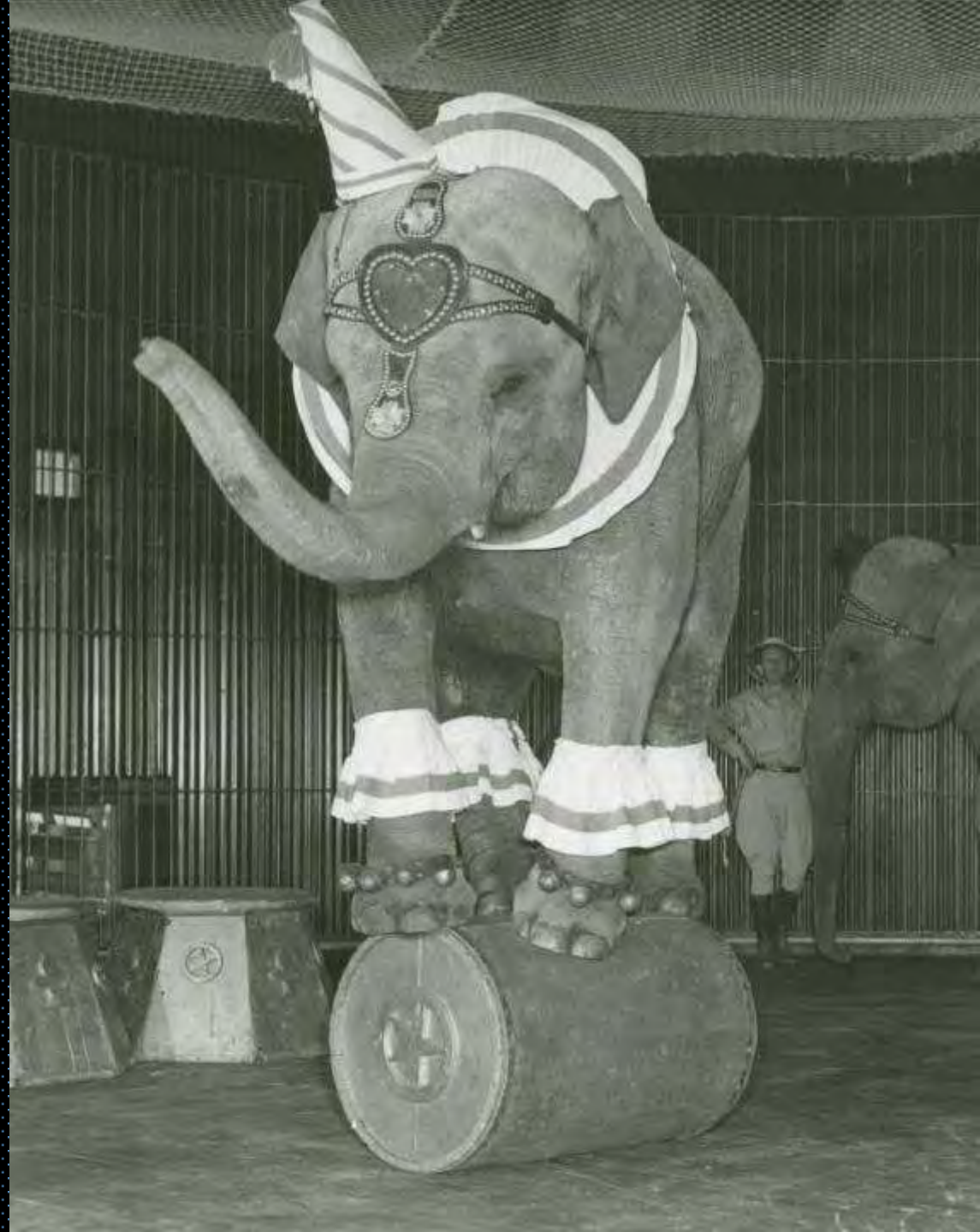
*Life* magazine, in listing Jungleland as one of the Amusement Area’s “high spots,” with its wild animals and “Malay camp in a jungle,” did note one negative aspect of the spectacle: “Defect: animal smells.”



# CAPTURING WILD ELEPHANTS!

“For downright power and savagery, for brutal strength and relentless force, a charging bull elephant is the fiercest of all jungle beasts,” said Frank Buck in his Jungleland brochure. “Strangely enough, once tamed and trained, the savage elephant is the most docile of all the jungle creatures.”

Buck had a trio of performing elephants as well as examples of the “African pigmy species,” and offered rides for a proposed 25 cents. “Everybody wants to ride an elephant,” read the draft for Jungleland. “It is planned to have at least four or five good riding elephants continually going during the show at the New York World's Fair.” The experience would be riding like “hunters do in the Jungle lands of the Far East.” The elephants were a hit with visitors, children, and even the Fair’s showgirls.





- Frank Buck riding on an elephant to the left, and two elephants performing on the right.

# MONKEY MOUNTAIN AT THE WORLD'S FAIR

Monkey Mountain, standing 80 feet tall with hundreds of “chattering simians,” was billed as “Thrilling! Laugh-provoking!” in Buck’s leaflets. His rhesus “Indian monkeys” could be seen “returning stare for stare with the spectators gathered outside the fence.”

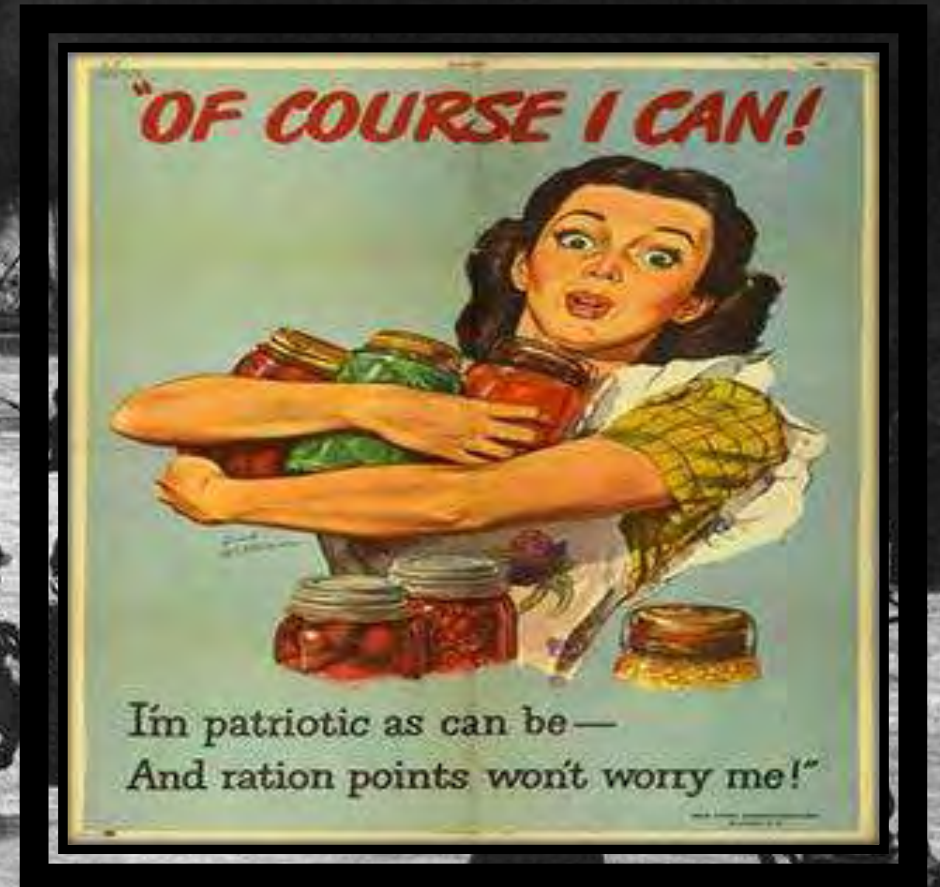
But the monkeys had ups and downs. They repeatedly escaped over the six-foot fence, with the press and public following their colorful escapades. *The New York Times* reported on monkeys “dragged squealing out of the Fair’s big paper refuse baskets.” The following month, others were recaptured after “frolicking along the keys of the huge National Cash Register” building.





# JUNGLE CAMP DURING WORLD WAR II

- Once the World's Fair was over, Buck's Jungle Camp back in Massapequa suffered immensely.
- As World War II approached, the cost of gasoline made it difficult to attract customers, and rationing affected the zoo's ability to acquire bananas for its monkeys, peanuts for its elephants, and high-quality meat for its carnivorous animals.
- *Newsday* published an article claiming that if certain animals looked weak or sick, they were to be meals for larger animals.
- In 1943, the camp was no longer able to sustain itself and Buck shipped the animals to public and private zoos.
- By 1944, the nineteen-acre property was used for packing small-arms ammunition to help the war effort.



# LASTING IMPRESSIONS

- ❖ World War II temporarily halted Buck's expeditions to Asia, but his popularity kept him busy on the lecture circuit and making guest appearances on the radio.
- ❖ During wartime, he continued to publish books and star in films. In 1941 he published an autobiography, *All in a Lifetime*, co-authored by Fraser, and narrated *Jungle Cavalcade*, a compilation of footage from his first three films. He also appeared in *Jacare* (1942) and starred in *Tiger Fangs* (1943). His eighth and final book, *Jungle Animals*, again co-authored by Fraser, was published in 1945 and was intended for schoolchildren grades five to eight.
- ❖ Following the end of World War II, Buck returned to animal collecting, telling *The New Yorker*: "You dig the same old-fashioned pits and use the same old-fashioned knives and come back with the same old-fashioned tigers."



Norman Rockwell painting of Frank Buck



# FINAL DAYS

- ❖ Buck's final film role was an appearance as himself in the 1949 Abbott and Costello comedy "Africa Screams." His last recorded performance was "Tiger," a 1950 children's record adapting two stories from *Bring 'Em Back Alive*.
- ❖ Buck spent his last years in his family home at 324 South Bishop Street in San Angelo, Texas, and died of lung cancer on March 25, 1950, in Houston, aged 66.



# THE GRIMALDI FAMILY

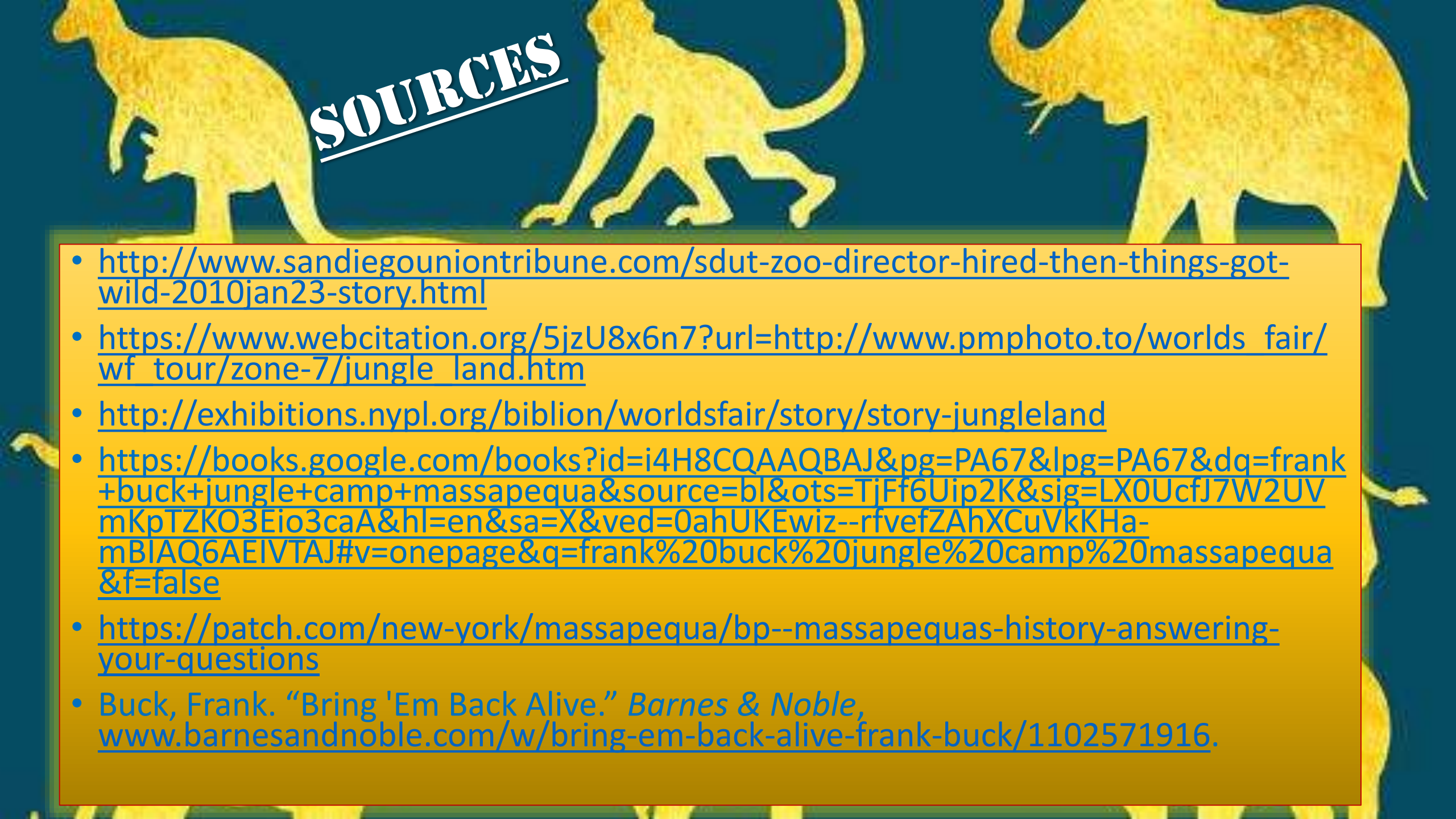
- ❖ Back in the 1950s, the Grimaldi family purchased the remaining property of Frank Buck's Jungle Camp and renamed it Sunrise Kiddie Land and Animal Farms. The Camp was once again renamed The Massapequa Zoo and Kiddie Park a year later.
- ❖ The Zoo was quite a success and used more tame animals that children could play with, such as ponies. However, the zoo still kept Monkey Mountain as a trademark of the Jungle Camp from Frank Buck.
- ❖ In 1965, the Grimaldi family sold the property to a developer to make additional parking space for a shopping center.
- ❖ Local residents can recall that the Massapequa Drive-In was located adjacent to the zoo from 1950 until 1968; before the zoo closed, visitors to the Drive-In purchased their tickets near Monkey Mountain and monkeys could be seen from car windows.



# THE LEGACY OF FRANK BUCK

❖ In 1954, the Gainesville Community Circus in Buck's hometown of Gainesville, Texas, was renamed the Frank Buck Zoo in his honor. Actor Bruce Boxleitner starred as Buck in the 1982–83 television series "Bring Em' Back Alive," which was partially based on Buck's books and adventures. In 2000, writer Steve Lehrer published *Bring 'Em Back Alive: The Best of Frank Buck*, an edited collection of Buck's stories. In 2008, the Frank Buck Zoo opened the Frank Buck Exhibit, showcasing camp tools and media memorabilia that had once belonged to Buck and that were donated by his daughter Barbara.





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