

# MEMBER LIBRARY

## GEORGE KRUCK CHERRIE: Naturalist, Ornithologist, Explorer



Theodore J. Holsten  
EMERITUS MEMBER  
Boone and Crockett Club

Bleeding from his fall into a pool of deadly piranhas, George Cherrie wrote, "My whole instinct was to strike out instantly for the shore. Even a poor swimmer would

have made it in a dozen strokes. But I retained enough of my reason to know that my one chance of escape lay in keeping the fish at bay before they became crazed with the taste of blood. So not only did I strike out for the shore, but I set up a violent motion of twisting and rolling and splashing with my arms and legs. Even then I felt a blow and a sharp pain in my shoulder that told me one of the fish had struck. All I could do was to continue my furious splashing. Luckily I succeeded in reaching the

shore although badly bitten before I dragged myself out of the water." This was but one of the life-threatening events during Cherrie's 40 expeditions to the jungles of Central and South America. Shoot outs with renegades, encounters with crocodiles and snakes, and many bouts with malaria, were all part of his work as a collecting naturalist for the American Museum of Natural History, the Field Museum, and other institutions.

Cherrie was born in Iowa in 1865 of Scotch-Irish ancestry. At age 12 he spent 14 hours a day toiling in the local woolen mills. Working his way through college, he met and was inspired by Carl Akeley, W.T. Hornaday, Frederick Lucas, and other leaders in museum development. What followed was his lifetime of travel.

When Theodore Roosevelt planned his famous trip to Brazil in 1913-1914, Cherrie was recommended to accompany him as expedition naturalist. The Brazilian authorities indicated The River of Doubt had never been explored, and Roosevelt saw this as a worthy challenge. What ensued was a journey of death and terrible privation during which Roosevelt nearly died. Cherrie was one of the pillars of strength in the struggle to survive. He developed a close association with T.R. and with Kermit Roosevelt. Years later, Cherrie accompanied Kermit and Theodore Jr. on their famous expedition to Central Asia, exploring and hunting for Marco Polo sheep.

Undoubtedly because of his close association with the Roosevelts, George Cherrie became a member of the Boone and Crockett Club. He reminisced, "Death is still a mystery; mankind, frail but worthy; money an inconsequential convenience; friends a profound rarity; work a superior tonic and sedative; leisure, well used, pure gold." Hopefully he enjoyed his last years when he finally retired to his farm in Vermont.

He died in 1948. ■

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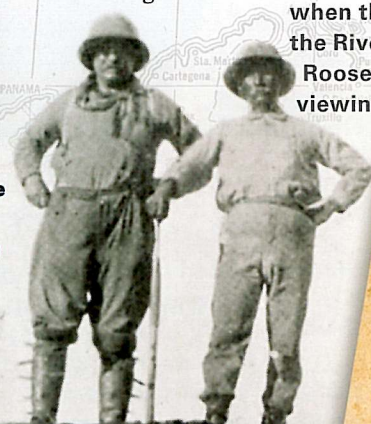


Book by George K. Cherrie  
*Dark Trails* (1930)

### Images from *Dark Trails*

– Clockwise from top left:

Portrait of Cherrie; Cherrie and his mule, companions in many a trail; A tribute to Cherrie from Roosevelt; Kermit Roosevelt when they were starting down the River of Doubt; and Colonel Roosevelt and Colonel Rondon viewing the falls of Navaité.



A Tribute from  
Ex-President Roosevelt:  
To George K. Cherrie,  
as good an American  
as ever walked the  
soil of the United  
States, from his  
fellow American  
Theodore Roosevelt.  
Dec 6 1917

