

EXCERPT FROM  
RECORDS OF NORTH AMERICAN BIG GAME, 14<sup>TH</sup> EDITION  
VOLUME I

# NOTEWORTHY GUNS: FOCUS ON GRANCEL FITZ

BY ELDON L. "BUCK" BUCKNER  
BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB Vice President of Big Game Records

Photography by Mark Mesenko | Intro and collage styling by Julie L. Tripp

Firearms hold a special place when it comes to telling the history of both hunting and conservation. A special chapter in volume I of *Records of North American Big Game* 14th Edition showcases several firearms—some recently acquired through the help and generosity of gun enthusiast and long-time Boone and Crockett member, Buck Buckner.



Along with Fitz's rifle, the Boone and Crockett Club also owns numerous pieces of memorabilia, photographs, correspondence, and manuscripts of Fitz's that were donated by his family over the years. One of Fitz's hunting knives, on loan from B&C member Richard T. Hale, is also shown. The knife was handed down to Hale from B&C member Arthur C. Popham, who was close friends of Grancel and Betty Fitz.

*I had known the first thing... unusually precise English... "less than a... hundred cattle before... But I've... I learned more about Willie... he was very young. His father... object, had been expelled in a... game. After that, Willie... about his first... Willie... he was very keen to... other chance, he jumped at it... path to the millah... lay.*

**Meal has the flavor of real beef!**

Get your dog better beef nourishment and real beef taste.

**NEW GAINES MEAL**—the "hunger primer of his" dog food

*Get your dog better beef nourishment and real beef taste.*

**The Spectacular Tiger**

By GRANCEL FITZ

The man who's hunted all North American big game takes tiger lessons

**W**HEN GRANCEL FITZ first took to the jungle... he was very keen to... other chance, he jumped at it... path to the millah... lay.

*The most thing the tree selected for the meadow is an... by the hollows into which broad through the jungle... trampled into crossing the road to reach some dense cover, and the tree above... him before he comes out that for... In a dense park-like, the tiger must always think that he can slip away... when he has half some of them in sight to mangle... pattern, with the meadow in the middle of the open end... about what danger from above. He will lay on natural camouflage in the... that nobody should be on the ground for at least 50 yards on either side of the tree in which it... may be seen under P. The sides of the drosses are being along the east bank, the 100-yard... get for, who are stationed in the tree branches... from the road to where the actual hunting line is formed... Show, of course, is well beyond when the tiger is taking her nap, but the best... deflected when the hunter takes their starting position, not much more than 20... the meadow... To me, the most surprising part of the above was that such a large... he retreated in a couple of hours. I hadn't realized that they were... jungle habitat, or that the hunters would be so... with many... (P. 11)*

TIGERS AND WILLIS GARDNER

BY

Grancel Fitz  
5 Tudor City Place  
New York 17, New York

Sept 23

Dear Grancel,  
Thanks for sending me a copy  
of your "hep" which is very  
well presented. I recently send  
you a copy which I wrote  
some time ago. So do  
how in the Dept. of the Gods.

WANT A TROPHY DEER HEAD?

Grancel Fitz

WANT A TROPHY DEER HEAD?

by

Grancel Fitz  
5 Tudor City Place  
New York 17, New York

**and SOPHIES**

Illustrated

**Fitz**

Revisions by Betty Sample Fitz

Method Used by: Pope and Young Club Chart for All 26 Species



Following is an excerpt from that chapter...

Many sportsmen are also familiar with the name Grancel Fitz. He and his wife Betty oversaw the Club's big game records program from their New York City loft for years. If you look closely, you'll still see their names on many of the historic score charts throughout this book. Although he was integral in the development of the Club's

time. When Pacific walrus became legal, he added that species to his other successes which included record-class heads of 13 different species. Many of his experiences were related in his book *North American Head Hunting* published in 1957 by Oxford University Press, Inc.

However, it was through Grancel's extensive interest in devising a better big game trophy scoring system that he was most involved

taxidermists, noted hunters and scientists to critique. The result was the Boone and Crockett Official Scoring System adopted in 1950 and first used to rank trophies for the 1950-1951 Competition. Grancel's wife Betty served as secretary for the Records Committee and continued to do so for many years.

Grancel Fitz was an active member of the Campfire Club of America in New York and continued hunting and writing for many sporting magazines. One sheep hunting story, published in the April 1948 issue of *True* was titled "A Grand Slam in Rams" and started the use of that term for the taking of all four North American wild sheep.

The 1952, 1958, and 1964 records books all featured dust jacket and individual trophy photos taken by Grancel as well as his usual stories behind the World's Records. He served as a judge on B&C Awards Panels three times (the maximum allowed); twice as chair.

One of Grancel's lifelong goals was to publish an affordable book on the measuring and scoring of North American big game trophies. He wrote the book and arranged for *Outdoor Life* to publish it. He died from heart failure as the book's final editing was being done in May of 1963.

**FITZ'S WINCHESTER  
MODEL 70 .375 H&H  
MAGNUM NO. 384,755**

Though Fitz was an international hunter of great experience, he was not a gun enthusiast as such. He took all 25 species of (then) legal North

American big game with the same rifle—a Remington Model 305 bolt-action .30-06—custom stocked by Griffin & Howe of New York with an early Hensoldt 2- $\frac{3}{4}$ x scope sight.

In the spring of 1958, Grancel made his first overseas hunt in India on assignment from *Outdoor Life*. His son gave him the Model 70 .375 in case he encountered elephants or wild cattle in Indochina later in the trip. A tiger was the primary game he sought, and he missed a difficult shot with his old .30-06 on the first tiger seen. On a subsequent drive, Grancel had the .375 in hand and made a running shot on a tiger that measured 8 feet 7 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches in length. The hunt story appeared in the February 1959 issue of *Outdoor Life*.

In 1962, Grancel made his first and only trip to Africa while on another *Outdoor Life* assignment, this time after lion and Cape buffalo in Tanganyika (now Tanzania). Although he never found a good lion to shoot, he used the .375 to bag a heavy-bossed old bull toward the end of the hunt.

The story "Grancel Fitz's Lost Trophy" was published in the September 1963 issue of *Outdoor Life*. Grancel's rifle is still in pristine original condition. It is standard grade, made in 1956, equipped with a receiver sight and a flat-topped gold-faced post front sight replacement for the original bead. A small gold shield is inlaid in the toe of the stock inscribed "Grancel Fitz New York." A base for G&H side mount for scope has been added. ■



Grancel Fitz with Frank Miller (left) and the impressive Maswa Cape buffalo Fitz dropped with his .375 Magnum in 1962.

current scoring system and very involved with records keeping, he was never a Boone and Crockett Club member. Fitz's gun of choice was a .30-06; however, he had been given a Winchester Model 70 in .375 H&H by his son for his first hunting trip to China. Buckner purchased this rifle and donated it to the Boone and Crockett Club in 2015.

Although Grancel Fitz's profession was photographic illustrator, his avocation was big game trophy hunting and big game records keeping. He lived and worked in New York City, but from 1926 through 1955 made 38 hunting trips in his quest to bag all (then) 24 legal species of North American big game. Thus he became the first man to hunt all the species, but had not succeeded in taking a jaguar at that

with Boone and Crockett Club. At the time the 1932 and 1939 B&C records books were published, only beam lengths or spread data was used to rank heads. Everyone knew there had to be a better system. In 1935 Dr. James L. Clark, a Club member, originated and copyrighted one system, followed in 1938 by another published in *Field and Stream* by Grancel Fitz. His system, with detailed discussion and score charts, was also published in the 1939 B&C book *North American Big Game*. In 1949, Boone and Crockett appointed an independent six-person committee, which included both Fitz and Clark, to design a system. Samuel B. Webb chaired the committee, which combined features of both proposed systems, and sent proposed charts to 250 guides,

---

**This is just one of the many stories of guns and owners featured in *Records of North American Big Game*. Don't miss looking over the photographs and reading details about the rest of the firearms as well as the stories about the men who used them. See page 42 for details about ordering a Collector's Edition of the new records book.**