

## INTRODUCTION

THE BIG TREK is the saga of my life from age 50 to 76! At least. More is to follow. The basis of the saga is centered around the cover painting of myself who trod the Choppy and Swollen High Seas without a motor, oars, or rudder - with only a yellow sail which caught the fleeting wind.

I had always done the right thing, the best I knew, and was happy doing them. But they all soured. Now that I was free of those responsibilities, I was ready for another approach to life.

Curiously, I made it across the High Seas to find myself at strangers' doors; strangers in Tanzania who carried me in their arms to safety when I was comatose; strangers in a Kenya hospital who took two months to patiently nurse me past the 99.99 % first day fatal illness I contracted; to strangers in Ethiopia where I lived three times for a total of seven exhilarating years, at this writing. Ethiopian peoples offered continued hospitality of shared meals, hugs of warmth, informed conversation... and eventually the government offered me its globally prestigious Permanent Resident ID!

The Africa I partook of was vibrant with color, song, and style!

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I knew since age ten that I would live in Africa some day. I was standing beside the Kumquat Tree in my front yard in Miami, Florida, and saw a vision of a child's mistaken view of Africa. My child's mistaken view was barren with red and cracked hard soil. Bare mountains were misplaced to the lower center; there were no people and no vegetation. I said out loud to myself, "When I grow up, get married and have four children" ... there was a long tacit pause pertaining to my upcoming husband, "I will live in Africa."

The reality thickened when I was a teenager and Mother made me a solid green Sunday dress with the fashionable circular peplum hanging from my waist.

Stylish clothes not being my style, I asked Mother if she would change the hem length. With hands on her hips in exasperation of her unappreciated Labor of Love, she exclaimed, "Who do you think you are? The Queen of Sheba?"

At first, I didn't know who the Queen of Sheba was but delving into a dictionary brought her personage to me. She was once the Queen of Ethiopia as described in the King James Old Testament! 3000 years after her reign, my book was written in her country.

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Although many stories are omitted to prevent repetition, every word in THE BIG TREK is the absolute truth except for a couple of name changes and minor sequences which have become hazy. My Big Trek was everything I wanted, including answers to my most inquisitive: "I HAAAVE to know!" Well, it was everything I wanted except for a few heinous events I didn't know about, would not have guessed. Even those became top priority to absorb, exactly like shining up the diamond in the rough. It became "Oh, I see."

I am joyous over my long foreign journey of discovery, compatibility, camaraderie! How compelling and rewarding to meet such awareness, elegance, and liveliness. There are many persons I would miss if I had not met them there; they filled a gaping gap in my soul.

But now... it is time to begin your arm chair journey into old worlds of laughter and beauty of souls.