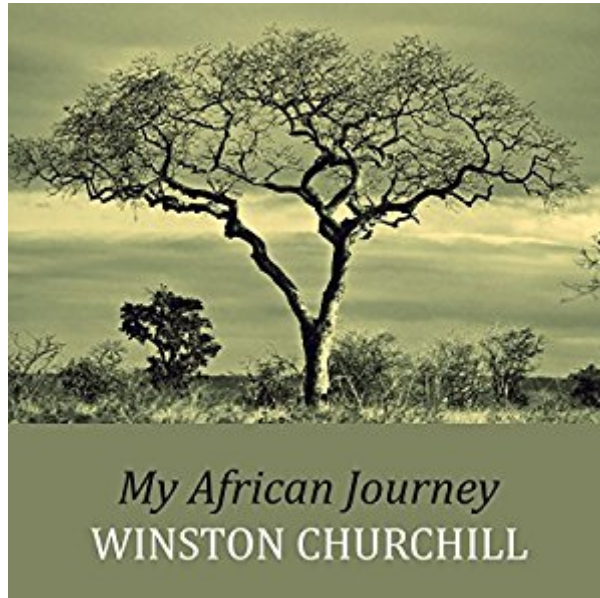




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My African Journey



Synopsis

As Under Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1907, Winston S. Churchill toured Britain's territories in East Africa. *My African Journey*, first published in 1908, documents his travels and the people he met; he waxes lyrical on the natural beauty of Uganda and goes on to explore Egypt and Sudan via the White Nile. More than a travelogue however, Churchill, now in his 30s, turns his attention towards issues of government and development, suggesting that the best way to tap the latent wealth of East Africa was the development of the railway system. His thoughts on settlement, race and government provide an intriguing insight into contemporary imperialism and African history and fascinating listening for both Churchill enthusiasts and those interested in the historical relationship between Britain and its colonies towards the end of the British Empire.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Churchill was a very fine writer and since I live in East Africa, I was especially interested to read his descriptions of early 20th century wildlife and ecology and landscapes and societies. It is rather frustrating to me 110 years later to wade through the British colonial attitudes that were entrenched in his time: his low expectations of Africans and their societies, his assumption that most of the big game was meant to be hunted and most of the resources were meant to be exploited -- how tragic that so much of what he wished came true, in many ways. It is a window into the British power mindset and 19th century ideas about unbridled industrialism. I almost wanted to cry when he described Kampala and the Kwampaka because it was so beautiful (not quite the description I'd give today!) It's interesting to contrast his writing with Isabella Bird's, who, even though she traveled

40 years earlier, was far less burdened with being white and British.

Great book on African adventure. If you like this book you will want to read the following 99 cent classics of African travels:1.Â Alone Among the Zulus: The Narrative of a Journey Through the Zulu Country, South Africa (1866)2.Â First Footsteps in East Africa or, An Exploration of Harar [Illustrated] (1856)3.Â Tropical Africa (1889)4.Â A Camera Actress in the Wilds of Togoland (1915)5.Â The Life and Exploits of Hugh Clapperton the Distinguished Voyager, Adventurer, and Discoverer (1840)6.Â Scouting for Stanley in East Africa (1890)7.Â Through the Kalahari Desert (1886)8.Â Lassoing Wild Animals in Africa (Illustrated) (1911)9.Â Stories of the Gorilla Country (1870)10.Â The Unknown Horn of Africa (1888) (With active table of contents)

This book, written in the first decade of the 1900s, captures - for good and for ill - the attitude of an English colonialist toward the East African English colonies and their inhabitants. As with all Churchill's writings, his prose is highly readable. The story he tells, tho, is less compelling than other of his works. The tale recounts his journey from the Kenyan coast, to the central lakes region, then down the Nile to Egypt. While the tale of his journey is only mildly interesting, the depiction of the colonialist's outlook is far more noteworthy. As a kid studying history, I never fully grasped what was meant by "the white man's burden". This volume brings that phrase to life, unconsciously depicting the presumptions and self-interests behind it. Some will condemn Churchill as racist, others will see him merely as a product of his time and place in the social order of the day. One last note: the pictures in this Kindle edition are fuzzy and don't reveal much. However, if you do a Google search on many of the places referenced in the book (e.g. Murchison Falls) you will find some spectacular images online.

Churchill's "My African Journey" is an interesting salad of observations from an East African journey more than a century ago: eloquent descriptions of landscape, astute observations of colonials and native peoples, crisp accounts of hunting--including, alas, a white rhino--and enthusiastic, boosterish pitches for damming gorges and laying railroad tracks. Some respectful and complimentary remarks on local peoples and their leaders may surprise readers who imagine that Churchill was an unnuanced, condescending imperialist. A small assortment of decent photos helps set the scene. Chapters vary in interest and polish, but overall this small book is worthwhile.

Not bad but it is just a trip along the British railroad during its heyday.

Interesting insight into Churchill' early active and athletic life and his attitude re: "British Empire" building regardless of rights and sovereignty of native populations. Allso, lack of appreciation for conservation of wild life -- stories of massive wanton killing of lions and other wild life just for the sake of "sport".

I liked the book. The history is dated but that is acceptable. I wanted to know Winston Churchill's observations to better understand the man. This is but one piece of the puzzle of the life of a great person. This was for me a good read.

Bought recently because interested in re-reading description of how it was to walk into the Southern Sudan from Uganda a hundred plus years ago. Good descriptive writing shows how the climate changes as the walk proceeds.

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