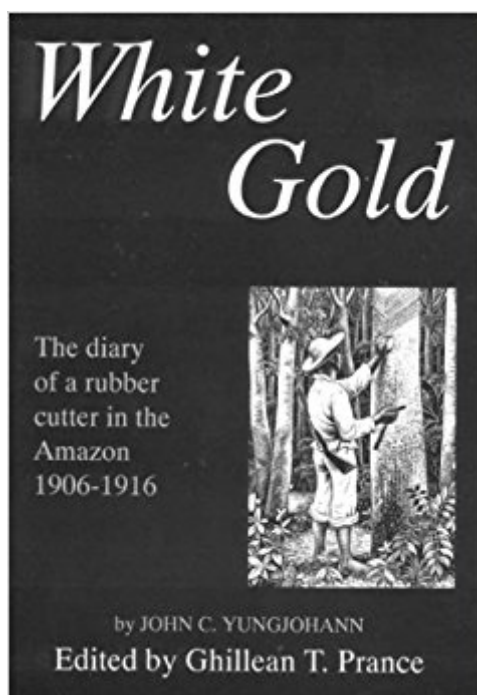


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White Gold: The Diary Of A Rubber Cutter In The Amazon 1906-1916



Synopsis

The crisis of the rainforest began a century ago when it was discovered to be a source of rubber. This brought commercial interests into collision with this complex ecology - its plants, its animals and its peoples. At the height of the rubber boom in the early years of this century, a young American, John Yungjohan, struggled for survival as a rubber cutter. The diaries he kept have recently come to light and have been edited by Sir Ghillean Prance of the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, England, one of the foremost botanical gardens in the world. Dr. Prance is a leading expert on the rainforest. The diaries are especially poignant now since the rubber cutters are fighting to preserve something of the original forest against the ravages of the indiscriminate destruction which still ignores the true wealth of the region - its almost incomprehensible variety of species. It is a tale of humanity and the natural order working together in the midst of greed and ignorance. Ghillean Prance enhances the text with his own contemporary photographs and identifies the fungi, plants and animals which are mentioned in the pages of the diaries.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"White Gold--like the Colombian classid La Voragine--sets forth the depravity of ruthless men who stop at nothing to exploit their fellows, heedless of their sufferings and deaths in the unfamiliar jungle environment where they hoped to earn a living..." Dr. Richard Evans Schultes "...an extremely interesting look at one man's experiences and adventures as a rubber trapper in the Brazilian during the rubber boom. The same life and death dramas are being played out today throughout the Valley..." Dr. Michael J. Balick Philecology Curator of Economic Botany

author of *White Gold: The Diary of a Rubber Cutter in the 1906-1916* Former Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, UK, Dr. Prance is a leading figure in the ecology, taxonomy and ethnobotany of the Basin. From 1981 to 1988, he served as the Vice-President for Science at the New York Botanical Garden and as Founding-Director of the New York Botanical Garden's Institute of Economic Botany. He is a Fellow of the Linnean Society of London and the Explorers Club, a Member of the Royal Danish Academy of Science and Letters, and a Corresponding Member of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences.

One can only marvel at the biome into which Yungjohann thrust himself to make a living. We will never be able to experience the as he did a century ago, no matter how much of an adventure we may wish to have. Yungjohann could hardly move in the forest without bumping into wildlife. Of course it was also a tremendous ordeal for him, without the comforts of modern gear and medicines. The diary reveals great tenacity and courage in an ordinary yet remarkable man who walked the extra mile and came to understand the ferocious and breathtaking nature of nature.

The story is not real. The story is a dream and fantasy. Probably based in a real Rubber Cutter but writing under a sick and with fever condition. Perutz

How Yungjohann got to So. America is a mystery. But he worked on a coffee plantation from 1896-1906 and had set his eyes on cutting rubber to make some money. Going up the in a steam boat he finally arrived at the mouth of the Xapuri and hooks up with seven men to cut rubber on contract. A month longer up the river, in a canoe, with a guide, finds the group on the banks of the Rio Acre trying to hack out a piece of jungle to make a home. They cut rubber trees, bleeding them, as a fever began to decimate their ranks. In two months Yungjohann is alone having buried all his compadres. He struggles on, fighting animals and disease--He would find 18 foot boas sleeping on his chest when he awoke in the morning, which screamed like cats when he moved...But did he make money? No. his supplies cost him more than he made. He went out again for eight months, with new men, who also died. For ten years he persevered in the wilds of the . The men he met, what he learned in the jungle and camps makes for reading found in no other book. This is the man's diary. IT'S TOO SHORT!

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