

CAPE BUFFALO

with a Lever Action Rifle

– LARRY’S SHORT STORIES #4 –



Any mature buffalo bull is a trophy and over 40" in width is very special. This Winchester 1895 is 42" end to end.

My rifle was what Teddy Roosevelt referred to as “the medicine gun for lions” – a Winchester Model 1895 chambered in 405 Winchester. Teddy hunted Africa in 1909 and wrote up his adventures in *African Game Trails*. Now, I was in Africa, a century later, hunting cape buffalo with a similar gun.

We cut the track of a single bull, near a dry creek bed, and off we went. There were two



Hunting is very traditional and, for me at least, a classic gun makes it even more so. My rifle on this hunt was a Winchester Model 1895, produced in 1902 and chambered in 405 Winchester.

trackers, then the professional hunter (PH) and myself, followed by a third tracker (carrying water) and the game scout – six of us in total. We were walking quietly through open bush, going slightly downhill alongside the creek.

It was a quick stalk, barely ten minutes, when the PH spotted the bull bedded about a hundred and fifty yards out – good eyes!

The bull’s head was just behind a tree that blocked his view of us. He was headed uphill, with his head to our left, and we could only see his left horn protruding from behind the tree. The PH and I proceeded on alone.

One quiet step after another we advanced, stopping behind a small bush about 40 yards from the bull.

Now, it was decision time – wait till he stands up, so we can see the other horn or take a chance and shoot him right there. We waited; but after only five minutes we got bored and decided to shoot.

Taking careful aim I fired. In one smooth motion, the bull came to his feet, turned 180 degrees and headed downhill. My thoughts came quickly: “He shouldn’t have gotten up; this is a repeater; shoot him again.” Levering in another round I put a second Woodleigh bullet into his shoulder – again, nothing happened. My third shot was high on the shoulder, hitting his spine, and he went down like a sack of potatoes. Three shots in about four seconds; the trackers were impressed with such firepower. So that’s my story of hunting cape buffalo with a lever action rifle.

“Three shots
in about four
seconds...”



Larry Potterfield
Luwele Camp
Selous Game Reserve
Tanzania, Africa
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President Theodore Roosevelt and Buffalo Skulls in Africa 1909. Also pictured are R.J. Cunninghame, Kermit Roosevelt, Edmund Heller and Hugh H. Heatley.