

CURRICULUM VITAE

As of June, 2010

ABOUT ALEX SHOUMATOFF

Alex Shoumatoff was born in Mt. Kisco, New York, on November 4, 1946. After graduating from Harvard College in 1968, he worked on the Washington Post, as a singer-songwriter, and as the resident naturalist at a wildlife sanctuary in Westchester County. His first book, *Florida Ramble*, was published in 1974 (Harper and Row, Vintage paperback). In the fall of 1976 he spent nine months in the Amazon researching a Sierra Club book, *The Rivers Amazon* (Sierra Club 1978, hard and soft), which has been compared to the classics of Roosevelt and Bates. His next book, *Westchester : Portrait of a County* (Coward, McCann, and Geoghegan, 1979, Vintage paperback), was excerpted in the New Yorker, for whom Shoumatoff became a staff writer in 1979. There, under Robert Bingham, the editor of John McPhee and Peter Mathiessen, and later under John Bennet, he wrote long fact pieces that were then developed as books : *The Capital of Hope* (Coward McCann, and Geoghegan, 1980, Vintage paperback, about the building of Brasilia), *Russian Blood* (Coward, McCann, and Geoghegan, 1982, Vintage paperback, a chronicle of his own family from the dawn of Russian history through the October Revolution and emigration to the United States), *The Mountain of Names* (Simon and Schuster, 1984, Touchstone, Vintage, and Kodansha paperbacks, a profile of the Mormons' Genealogical Society of Utah that became a history of the human family), *In Southern Light* (Simon and Schuster, 1986, Touchstone and Vintage paperbacks, about a two-month journey in Zaire and a trip up the remote Amazonian tributary where the Amazon women are supposed to have lived). He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1985.

In 1986 Shoumatoff wrote a profile of Dian Fossey for the newly resurrected Vanity Fair that was made into the movie, *Gorillas in the Mist* and was collected in *African Madness* (Knopf 1988, Vintage paperback, also containing pieces on Emperor Bokassa, the natural history of Madagascar, and AIDS in Africa). He covered ousted dictators for Vanity Fair (Stroessner, Mengistu, Mobutu) and wrote a seminal piece on Tibet and the Dalai Lama. His 1989 piece about Chico Mendes, the murdered leader of the Amazon's rubber tappers, was optioned by Robert Redford and expanded into *The World is Burning* (Little Brown, 1990, Avon paperback, published in ten languages). In 1995 he became a contributing editor for Vanity Fair. Recent pieces include Uma Thurman, the Panchen Lama, the Weld-Kerry Senate race, the Great Camps of the Adirondacks, a profile of Bedford, New York, the race to find the winter grounds of the monarch butterfly. His latest book, *Legends of the American Desert*, (Knopf, 1997, a 500-page portrait of the American Southwest), was glowingly front-paged by the New York Times Book Review and was both Time Magazine's and the New York Post's second-best non-fiction book of the year. He has delivered a 560-page manuscript on Tibetan Buddhism to Houghton Mifflin and is 300 pages into a history of his wife's family from the dawn of Rwandan history through the 1994 genocide to present-day North America. Shoumatoff divides his time between the Adirondacks and Montreal. The father of five sons ranging from seven to twenty-five years old, he is married to the former Rosette Rwigamba.

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Born Mt. Kisco, New York, November 4, 1946

Married to the former Rosette Rwigamba

children : Andre Luis, b. 1978
Nicholas Neto, b. 1980
Oliver Shema, b. 1993
Zachary Shyaka, b. 1995
Edgar Manzi, b. 1997

BOOKS:

What If It Had Not Happened ? The Saga of the Karambisi Family of Rwanda, in the works

To Each His Karmapa : Confessions of a Sometime Buddhist, in the works

Legends of the American Desert : Sojourns in the Greater Southwest, Knopf, 1997
(cover New York Times and San Francisco Chronicle book reviews, New York Times notable book of 1997, Time Magazine and New York Post's top ten books of 1997, Mountain and Plains Booksellers' Association best non-fiction book of 1997)

The World is Burning, Little Brown, 1990; Avon paperback; published in ten languages
African Madness, Knopf, 1988; Vintage paperback

In Southern Light, Simon and Schuster, 1986; Vintage paperback

The Mountain of Names, Simon and Schuster, 1984; Vintage paperback; Kodansha paperback (1995)

Russian Blood, Coward, McCann, and Geoghegan, 1982; Vintage paperback

The Capital of Hope, Coward, McCann, and Geoghegan, 1980; Vintage paperback

Westchester : Portrait of a County, Coward, McCann, and Geoghegan, 1979; Vintage paperback

The Rivers Amazon, Sierra Club Books, 1978; Sierra Club paperback

Florida Ramble, Harper and Row, 1974; Vintage paperback

MAGAZINE WORK

2007-; 1995-2001 : contributing editor, Vanity Fair; contributor since 1986
2008-, contributing editor, Travel + Leisure, 1999-present : contributor,
2004-present : contributing editor, onearth magazine
1978-present : contributor, The New Yorker; staff writer, 1980-1990
1992-4 : contributing editor, golf columnist, Esquire
1988-92 : contributing editor, Conde Nast Traveler
1995-present : contributor, Golf Digest
1995-present : contributor, Adirondack Life
1978-present : contributor, Outside Magazine; contributing editor, 1979-81
1989-present : contributor, The New York Times Magazine

MOVIE WORK :

Rights to "Murder in the Rain Forest" (Vanity Fair) acquired, and author hired as consultant, by Twentieth Century Fox for movie with Robert Redford producing and starring, 1989

Rights to the "The Fatal Obsession of Dian Fossey" (Vanity Fair) acquired, and author hired as consultant, by Universal Pictures for movie, "Gorillas in the Mist," 1986

Rights to *The Mountain of Names* acquired by Alan Berliner for documentary film, "Nobody's Business"

NEWSPAPER WORK :

1968-69 reporter, Washington Post
1967 intern reporter, The New York Daily News

articles, book reviews, and editorials in the New York Times, Washington Post, New York Daily News, Village Voice, Book World, Newsday, Patent Trader, etc.

ENVIRONMENTAL WORK

2001-, founder, editor and roving correspondent, DispatchesFromTheVanishingWorld.com

1972-4 : Middle School Science Teacher, Rippowam-Cisqua School, Bedford, New York (focus on the local flora and fauna and land-use history of Westchester County)

1972-80 : Resident Naturalist and Executive Director, Marsh Memorial Sanctuary, Mount Kisco, New York

1972-80 : editor, Bedford Audubon Bulletin

MUSIC WORK

2007 : : cd of original songs, "Suitcase on the Loose," producer Kate McGarrigle, in production

1971 : rights to twenty young-Dylan-esque songs acquired by Manny Greenhill (manager of Joan Baez, Joni Mitchell, Muddy Waters, Reverend Gary Davis, et al.)

LECTURES AND APPEARANCES

2007, participant in four round-tables at the Blue Metropolis Literary Festival

2004, judge for the Quebec Writers' Association's Mavis Gallant Prize for Non-Fiction

November 2000, speaks on the state of the four World Heritage Site national parks of civil-war-torn eastern Congo to the United Nations Foundation, which commissioned his site report

winter 2000, workshop at Genocide Studies Institute of Concordia College, Montreal

spring 1999, guest lecturer, University of Vermont Department of English;

February, 1998, Barnes Speaker and two days of seminars, Avon Old Farms School

August, 1997, Lake Placid Institute

July, 1996, Sightings

June, 1996 : graduation address, National Sports Academy, Lake Placid, N.Y.

January, 1996, evocation of life and work of Alexandra Tolstoy, Tolstoy Foundation dinner at Metropolitan Club, New York City;

January, 1996; interviewed about *The Mountain of Names* on NPR's "Talk of the Nation"

May, 1996, lecture on magazine writing at Bennington College

November, 1995, interviewed about Uma Thurman, *Entertainment Tonight*,

August, 1995, interviewed about OJ Simpson the Golfer, *Extra* and *American Journal*

1988, NPR's "All Things Considered," interviewed on *African Madness*

1978, *Today Show* on the Amazon,

lectures on the Amazon delivered at scores of venues, including American Museum of Natural History, Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Harvard Club, Princeton Club, Explorer's Club, New York Botanical Garden

April, 1992 : Earth Day address, University of New Mexico

March, 1991, keynote address, Critical Issues Symposium on "Lifeboat Earth," Hope College.

October, 1990, keynote address at conference on Environment and Development in Africa and Latin America, Michigan State University.

CONSULTANCIES

2005-6, The Wildlife Conservation Society, for a baseline ethnography of the vanishing mountain culture of the Adirondacks.

The J.M. Kaplan Fund, 2001-2, for reports on the philanthropic possibilities of Cuba, particularly restoring the Cuba Moderne Architecture in Havana and protecting the island's biodiversity; on the

Ukrainian prairie churches of Manitoba and Saskatchewan; on the creation of marine protected reserves in the Gulf of Maine; and on the world's largest extant prairie dog town, in Chihuahua, New Mexico.

The J.M. Kaplan Family Foundation, January 2001, recommendations on worthy candidates for grants

The United Nations Foundation, summer 2000, site report on 4 World Heritage Site national parks in eastern Congo

EDUCATION :

B.A., magna cum laude in English and ancient Greek literature, Harvard College, 1968; senior thesis, "The Heroic Language of Chapman's Homer," summa cum laude

high school diploma, magna cum laude, with honors in English, French, Latin and Greek, St.Paul's School, Concord, New Hampshire, 1964

elementary education at Bedford Rippowam School. 1956-60, and Bedford Elementary School, 1951-56

AWARDS :

2005 : "Blues Traveler," in the December, 2004 Travel + Leisure, wins the Silver Medal in the Cultural Tourism category of the Society of American Travel Writers Foundation's Lowell Thomas Travel Journalism Competition.

2004 : "The Tennessee Tree Massacre" wins the Southern Environmental Law Center's Phillip D. Reed Memorial Award for Outstanding Writing on the Southern Environment in the journalism category

1997 : "Legend of the American Desert" wins the Mountains and Plains Booksellers' Association's award for the best non-fiction book of 1997

1996 : "Sun Without Moon" nominated for SAIS-Novartis prize for excellence in international journalism

1995 : "Golf in Seven Courses," silver medal, International Regional Magazine Association

1995 : "The Warlord Speaks" nominated for Overseas Press Club Award

1988 : "AIDS in Africa" nominated for National Magazine Award

1987 : "Bokassa" nominated for National Magazine Award

1985 : John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, for book on cultural ecology in the tropics

1968 : Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, for graduate study in English literature

1964 : highest college board score for Homeric Greek in nation

1963 : highest college board score for Attic Greek in nation

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

visiting scholar, Department of Communications. University of New Mexico, 1991-2

instructor in French and director of language lab, New England College, 1970-71

LANGUAGES

English, French, Portuguese, Homeric and Attic Greek-- fluent

Spanish, Russian-- nearly fluent

German, Italian, modern Greek, Kiswahili-- serviceable

Kinyawranda, Kirundi, Ruganda, Cayapo-- rudimentary

MILITARY SERVICE

United State Marines Corps Intelligence Reserves, trained at Defense Language Institute, Monterey, California, 1969; honorably discharged as a minister (4-D, the D standing for divinity), 1971

SPORTS AND HOBBIES.

Captain of Squash Team, St. Paul's School, 1963-4; Harvard Varsity Squash Team, 1965-8 (national champions junior and senior year); squash champion of Zaire, 1981

mountaineering : youngest person (ae. 11) to climb Mönch, Switzerland, 1958; young person (ae. 12) to climb Exum Ridge of Grand Teton, Wyoming, 1959. hiking, trekking, canoing, whitewater rafting in Adirondacks, Amazon, Zaire, Rwanda, Uganda, Nepal, Manitoba, Quebec

guitar : bossa nova, samba, rumba Zairois, Malian, sufi, jazz, swing, country blues, ragtime, gospel (student of Reverend Gary Davis), and other styles

golf : handicap 12, special fondness for former colonial and developing-world courses.

CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS (all memberships lapsed)

Golf Writers' Association of America

Advisory Board, Lake Placid Institute

Montreal Badminton and Squash Club

Keene Valley Country Club

Benefit Committee, Tibet House Carnegie Hall Concert

Harvard Club of New York

The Century Association

Keene Volunteer Fire Department

Katonah Volunteer Fire Department

MAGAZINE PIECES (111 as of 6/2010)

"Bohemian Legacy," Vanity Fair, British edition, June, 2010
"Bohemian Tragedy," Vanity Fair, May, 2009
"The Thistle and the Bee," Vanity Fair, May, 2008
"The Scramble for the Arctic, Vanity Fair, May, 2008
"The Mystery Suicides of Bridgend County," VanityFair.com, February, 2009
"Waiting For the Plague," Vanity Fair, December, 2007
"Traveling Light," Travel + Leisure, November, 2007
"The Lazarus Effect," Vanity Fair, July, 2007
"A Russian Tragedy," Walrus, June, 2007
"The Gagging Forest," Vanity Fair, May, 2007
"An Eco-system of One's Own," Vanity Fair, May, 2007
"Pilgrimage to Russia," Travel + Leisure, January 2007
"Brotherhood of the Mountain," Vanity Fair, British edition, October, 2006
"The Samba of Golf," Travel + Leisure Golf, October, 2006
"Peru : Last Resort," Audubon, July-August 2006
"A Private School Affair," Vanity Fair, January, 2006
"Madame Butterfly," Audubon, September-October 2005
"Mystic River," Travel + Leisure, July 2005
"Impressions of Mizoram," Chapchar Kut 2005 Souvenir
"Who Owns This River ?" onearth, spring 2005
"Blues Traveler," Travel & Leisure, December, 2004
"The Tennessee Tree Massacre," onearth, Winter 2004
"The Greatest Show on Earth," Audubon, September-October 2004
"I'm a Suitcase," Maisonneuve, July, 2004
"The Alcoholic Monkeys of St. Kitts," Maisonneuve, Fall 2003
"Driving : Touring the Endangered Ukrainian Churches of Saskatchewan," Travel & Leisure, August 2003
"Inside Brazil's Wild Wetland," Travel & Leisure, March 2003
"Artbeat : The Continent Finally Wakes Up to the Splendor of African Art," Travel & Leisure, May 2002
review of Isabel Hilton's "The Search for the Panchen Lama," Tricycle, fall 2000
"The Years of Golfing Dangerously," Travel and Leisure Golf Magazine, May-June 2000
"The Story of Eau," Travel and Leisure, May 2000
"Flight of the Monarchs," Vanity Fair, November 1999
"One Happy Island," Travel & Leisure Family, fall/winter 1999
"Montreal's World Beat," Travel & Leisure, July, 1999
"And So to Bedford," Vanity Fair, February, 1999
"The Navajo Way," Men's Journal, November, 1998
"Hall of Fame : Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.," Vanity Fair, October, 1998
"The Final Round of Golf," Adirondack Life, July-August 1998
"From Russia with Love," Polo, May/June 1998
"The Search for Bill Murray," Golf Digest, February 1998

"Golf in Sacred Lands," Golf Digest, November 1997
"Among the Cowboys," American Heritage, September, 1997
"Mobutu's Final Days," Vanity Fair, August 1997
"Links in the Chain," Adirondack Life, August, 1997
"The Real Adirondacks," Snow Country, Summer 1997
"Camp Life," Vanity Fair, May, 1997
"The Gods Break Through in Uganda," Lapis, Issue Four, spring, 1997
"Battle of the Bluebloods," Vanity Fair, October, 1996
"Nathan Farb : Behind the Scenes," Adirondack Life, September/October, 1996
"Robogolf," Golf Digest, September, 1996
"Par Excellence," Adirondack Life, August 1996
"Sun Without a Moon," Vanity Fair, August, 1996
"Bomb City," USA, Outside, April, 1996
"My Father's Butterfly," Natural History, March, 1996
"Numero Uma," Vanity Fair, January, 1996
"Skeletons On Ice," (with son Andre,), Snow Country, December, 1995
"Clinging to Life," Destination Discovery, November, 1995
"The Golf Verdict on O.J.," Golf Digest, August, 1995
"Golf : the Second Round," Adirondack Life, August, 1995
"Trouble in the Land of Muy Verde," Outside, March, 1995 (excerpted in Utne Reader)
"The Secret Life of Stewart's," Adirondack Life, October, 1994
"Gallic Mischief," Comment, The New Yorker, July 18, 1994
"To the Mountains, mit Four Teen-age Boys," Outside, August, 1994
"Golf on Seven Courses," Adirondack Life, August, 1994
"Annals of Civil War : Flight from Death," The New Yorker, June 20, 1994
"The 'Warlord' Speaks," The Nation, April 4, 1994
"The Coronation of King Ronnie," The New York Times Magazine,
October 17, 1993
"The Silenced Love Song of Pvt. Clayton Lonetree," Esquire, November, 1993
"Big Linkmanship in Clintonville," Esquire, February, 1993
"Rwanda's Aristocratic Guerillas," The New York Times Magazine, December 13, 1992
"Only in the North Country," Adirondack Life, August 1992
"Lhasa Notebook," Tricycle, Spring 1992
"Uganda Rising," Cond, Nast Traveler, April 1992
"Mengistu : The Fall of Ethiopia's Black Stalin," Vanity Fair, November, 1991
"Nepal : the Mountain is Rising," Conde Nast Traveler, August, 1991
"Letter From Lhasa : the Silent Killing of Tibet," Vanity Fair, May 1991
"Foxholes," The New Yorker, November 12, 1990
"The Rainforest : A Close-up Look," [Boston] Museum of Science Magazine, October, 1990
"Letter From the Amazon," Vanity Fair, August, 1990
"The Little Drummer Bird : A Writer Survives the Torments of Spring," Adirondack Life,
May/June 1990
"Forever Wild [the Adirondacks]," Conde Nast Traveler, September, 1989
"The End of the Tyrannosaur [Paraguay's Stroessner]," Vanity Fair, September, 1989
"One More Ski," Adirondack Life, May/June, 1989
"Murder in the Rain Forest," Vanity Fair, April 1989

"Rio : Is the Carnival Over ?" New York Times Magazine, March 10, 1989
"P.S. : A Leap to the Lost Continent [Madagascar]," Conde Nast Traveler, November, 1988
"A Critic At Large (Henry Walter Bates)," The New Yorker, August 22, 1988
"AIDS in Africa : the Search for the Source," Vanity Fair, July 1988
"Our Far-flung Correspondants (Madagascar)," The New Yorker, March 7, 1988
"Bokassa : The Fall of a Savage Emperor," Vanity Fair, June 1987
"A Reporter At Large (Colorado Butterflies)," The New Yorker, December 1, 1986
"The Fatal Obsession of Dian Fossey," Vanity Fair, September 1986
"Youth," The New Yorker, April 14, 1986
"A Reporter At Large (The Amazons)," The New Yorker, March 24, 1986
"The Museum of Money," The New Yorker, February 10, 1986
"Turtle," The New Yorker, December 30, 1985
"A Reporter At Large (Genealogy)," The New Yorker, May 13, 1985
"A Reporter At Large (Zaire)," The New Yorker, February 6, 1984
"Personal History (The Shoumatoff Family)," The New Yorker, April 26 and May 3, 1982
"Profiles (Brasilia)," The New Yorker, November 3, 1980
"First Snow," New York Times editorial, December 23, 1979
"To the Stone Age and Back : Adventure in the Amazon," Reader's Digest, April 1979
"Inside Jamaica," Outside, April/May 1979
"Science takes up the medieval sport of falconry to reintroduce rare peregrine to a natural habitat,"
Smithsonian, December, 1978
"Profiles (Westchester)," The New Yorker, November 13, 1978
"Thirty Days at the Dawn of Time : Amazonia," Outside, July/August, 1978
"The Carville Hansenarium," Saturday Review, October 28, 1972
"An Incredibly Brown Cow : Wheeler's Ranch Commune," Village Voice, June 1, 1972
"The Black Prince of Fingerpickers," Rolling Stone, January 20, 1972
"The Reverend Gary Davis," Rolling Stone, December 23, 1971
"How Was Your Vacation ?," Rolling Stone, October 28, 1971

POETRY

"To My Father," Maisonneuve, February-March 2005

INTRODUCTIONS

Keeper's Tale : The Kim Esteve Collection and a Narrative History of Chacara Flora, by Edward Leffingwell

Travelers' Tales Brazil, ed. Annette Haddad and Scott Doggett, Travelers Tales, San Francisco, 1997

Running the Amazon, Joe Kane, the Adventure Library, 1995

The Naturalist on the River Amazons, Henry Walter Bates, Penguin, 1988

COLLABORATIONS

Dare to be True : A History of the Rippowam Cisqua School, 1995

ANTHOLOGIES WITH REPRINTED MAGAZINE WORK

Writing the Critical Essay : AIDS, ed. Laurie S. Friedman, Greenhaven, Detroit, 2010
Adaptation and Climate Change, ed. Sarah Flint Erdreich, Greenhaven, Detroit, 2009
The Reader, ed. Judy Sieg, Pearson, Boston, 2008
Encounter Canada, Patricia Healy et al., Oxford Canada, Don Mills, 2007
Travelers' Tales American Southwest, ed. Sean O'Reilly and James O'Reilly, Travelers Tales, San Francisco, 2001
Travelers' Tales Brazil, ed. Annette Haddad and Scott Doggett, Travelers Tales, San Francisco, 1997
Florida : Past the Present Visions, ed. Vincent P. Betz, Kendall/Hunt, 1996
Tales from the Jungle : A Rainforest Reader, ed. Daniel R. Katz and Miles Chapin, Crown, 1995
Environmental Crises : Africa and Latin America, Centennial Review, Spring 1991
Paths Less Traveled, ed. Richard Bangs and Christian Kallen, Atheneum, 1988
The Sacred Theory of the Earth, ed. Thomas Frick, North Atlantic Books, 1986
The Adventure Book, Sobek International Explorers' Society, 1988

BLURBS

"Shoumatoff is a genuine citizen of the world, at home with people everywhere, and his example serves as an inspiration to all who cherish the ties that unite humankind... In my opinion, he ranks among the very best nature writers of our or any other time"-- Timothy Ferris

"consistently the farthest-flung of the New Yorker's far-flung correspondents"—Edwin McDowell, the New York Times

"admirably protean, encyclopedic, and indefatigable, Shoumatoff has the curiosity of an army of researchers and writes like a house afire"--- Edward Hoagland

"the most engaging and accessible of America's peripatetic explorers"-- Los Angeles Times

"Like a Graham Greene character, Alex Shoumatoff seems drawn to hot, bug-ridden places, tropical backwaters of the third world, where the superficial comforts and rules of the West do not apply... his writing combines a naturalist's precision with a journalist's chatty command of facts"-- Michiko Kakutani, the New York Times

"Shoumatoff is forever drawn to far-off lands"-- Graydon Carter, Vanity Fair

"One of the great prose stylists of this or any century"— Michael Hogan, Vanity Fair

"Shoumatoff the writer has a range not seen since Shakespeare-- if then-- and a heart without borders" – Simon Finn

