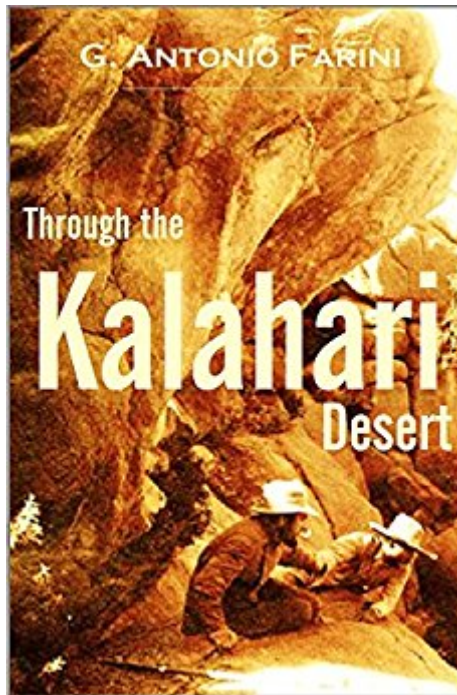




The book was found

Through The Kalahari Desert (1886)



Synopsis

One of the most interesting passages describes curious ruins discovered between Kang Pan and the Nosob river. At the foot of a high mountain was a long line of stone which proved to be the ruins of quite an extensive structure, in some places buried beneath the sand, but in others fully exposed to view. The remains were traced for nearly a mile, mostly a heap of huge stones, but all flat-sided, and here and there with the cement perfect and plainly visible between the layers. The general outline of this wall was in the form of an arc, inside which lay, at intervals of about forty feet apart, a series of heaps of masonry in the shape of an oval or an obtuse ellipse. Some of these heaps were cut out of the solid rock; others formed of more than one piece of stone.

G. Antonio Farini (pen name of William Leonard Hunt), 1838 - 1929, also known by the stage name The Great Farini, was a well-known nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Canadian funambulist, entertainment promoter and inventor, as well as the first known white man to cross the Kalahari Desert on foot and survive. Farini purportedly overcame many obstacles when he traversed the Kalahari Desert on foot during his stay in Africa, allegedly becoming among the first white man to survive the crossing. His adoptive son Lulu Farini was also travelling with him and made sketches and photographs of what they found. He also claimed to have found the famous Lost City of the Kalahari, but his claims have never been verified. He returned to England in August 1885 with many botanical and human samples. He published "Through the Kalahari Desert" about his experiences in 1886. His book detailed his experiences which included descriptions of unusual rock formations which he believed to be ruins of hitherto unknown buildings. Farini subsequently presented a paper to the Royal Geographical Society and photographs taken on the exhibition were publicly exhibited, increasing his notoriety and that of his journey. In his book Farini describes the ruins as

A half-buried ruin - a
huge wreck of stones
On a lone and desolate spot;
A temple - or a tomb for human bones
Left by men to decay and rot.
Rude sculptured blocks from the red sand project,
And shapeless uncouth stones appear,
Some great man's ashes designed to protect,
Buried many a thousand year.
A relic, may be, of a glorious past,
A city once grand and sublime,
Destroyed by earthquake, defaced by the blast,
Swept away by the hand of time.

The legends and the search: At the start of the 20th century, Farini's observation gave birth to a legend throughout South Africa. Some people claimed to have seen an abandoned boat or even a stone quarry in empty desert. Others attempted to explain the presence of this unknown civilization with comparisons to archaeological finds at Great Zimbabwe. From 1932, twenty five expeditions were launched to find the Lost City. They crisscrossed the desert area in the direction of Farini. F. R. Paver and Dr. W. M. Borchers headed out from Uppington to search the desert sands, flying over the area in reconnaissance aircraft and

subsequently suggesting a number of explanations. Mr. Farini gives us a very lively and humorous account of his adventures in the Kalahari so-called Desert, in search of diamonds and cattle ranches, accompanied by his friend "Lulu" of acrobatic fame. They found no diamonds, nor, we believe, did they secure any cattle ranches. But they had good sport and many exciting adventures in a region which has never been fully explored. Mr. Farini understands the art of embellishing a narrative with anecdotes, which we feel assured lose nothing in his handling of them. As an amusing book of adventures this volume is an undoubted success, and likely to win unbounded popularity for its author amongst the readers of the period.

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