



# My father walked around the world

By HELEN ROBINSON  
nee CONSTANTINO

DEMETRIOUS Hadji Constantinou was my father, an enigma, a strong European of unknown age, charismatic, charming and polished but aloof to me.

He was an entity unto himself. People always showed him great respect; he spoke many languages unlike the fathers of my friends. As I got older I learnt he was Greek but spoke pure English unlike other Greeks I knew.

At around the age of 15 I discovered a lot more: Demetrious Hadji Constantinou was born on the island of Lesvos, Greece. My father

was born around the turn of the century making him about 50+ years old when I was born.

He had fled Lesvos in the early 1900s and departed to New York. My father worked for the New York Herald Tribune as a photographer for 10 years. I have no idea why he started his amazing journey, we never spoke of it.

He walked the whole way and subsidised his trip with presentations, photographs back to the New York Herald Tribune and on-radio broadcasts around the globe between 1930 and 1940.

My father did continue his travels from Perth to Broome and across to

Cairns and up to Kuranda. His last journal entry is 1940. He locked everything away, never mentioned anything and passed away in

My only memories of him come from his photos, glass slides and his journals with 1400 signatures and newspaper clippings.

I envy the people travelling the fantastic National Trail, how they can share their stories instantly, they are intrepid and determined, they inspire others and how their adventure shapes their own future.

I thank each and every one of them because they bring into focus what my Father achieved, something I knew nothing about.



Across the Nullabor.

AFTER working for the American Army for 2 years I was attached to a leading newspaper "the New York Herald Tribune" as a photographer. Finding insufficient excitement I decided on a world tour by foot having been inspired by the explorations of Captain Byrd who later became an Admiral of the American Navy.

In May 1930 I relinquished my position on the paper and started to travel round the world and record my experiences. I started with 15 dollars in my pocket. Starting from New York I covered a distance of 4,500 miles to San Francisco, the trip occupied 18 months, from there I left for Japan. I spent 13 months there and from Japan I proceeded to China through Manchuria, but I was

advised by the Greek Consul not to proceed farther, owing to the trouble there. I returned to America and from there took a boat, continuing my trip by proceeding to France, arriving at Cannes, from there via Monte Carlo to Paris.

I spent 6 months in France then to Spain through Madrid before the revolution. It took me 8 months to cover Spain and from Spain by way of the Canary Islands, I proceeded to Africa, through the Spanish Morocco then French Morocco, Algeria, Tunis and through the Italian Colony, Libya and through the Libyan Desert a distance of 1,800 miles which took me 75 days to cover and reach Saloum which is on the border of Egypt.

Then through Alexandria to Cairo, Port Said and Suez, crossing the Canal to Arabia, where I visited the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai of which I have some excellent slides that will be shown on the screen.

As you all know the Monastery was the home of the world's oldest bible the Codex Sinaiticus which was purchased by the British Museum in 1935.

After spending 25 days in the Monastery visiting many historical points of interest I returned to Egypt and walked from Cairo to Assuan, following the banks of the Nile a distance of 805 miles I reached Shellal the border of Sudan.

From there crossing the desert 450 miles, I proceeded to Sudan, visiting Khartoum, which is the capital of Sudan and from there to Port Sudan a distance of 500 miles. I travelled Port Sudan to Eldo border of the Italian Colony, Asmara, from there to Abyssinia. I was in Addis Abba at the time General Grazzini took possession of the city, after spending 15 days in Addis Abba and witnessing the shocking treatment meted out by the Italians I returned to Sudan by order of General Grazzini.

From Khartoum following the Nile I reach Juba a distance of 1100 miles passing through jungles and little known places. From Juba, which is the border of the Belgian Congo, I crossed the Belgian Congo and passed through principal cities such as Stanley Ville, Albertville, and Elizabethville which are the capital cities. Also Ruanda Urundy which was a German Colony located at the bend at Lake Tanganyika.

From Elizabethville I proceed to Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Mozambique the Portuguese Territory and through Lorenzo Markez into the Union of South Africa where I visited the famous gold city of Johannesburg. Then on my way to Cape Town I visited Kimberlin the famous Diamond fields, reaching Cape Town and from there following the coast I arrived in Durban.

From there by boat to India, visiting Calcutta where I was prevent

from completing the Indian tour on account of an epidemic of a serious nature. From there I travelled by train to Colombo in the Island of Ceylon and then by boat to Sydney arriving on the 4th August 1938.

As far as my African tour I always had native bearers to carry ample supplies of food and water. One of great consolations during my travels and more specially a great moral encouragement was the splendid way I was received everywhere and the keen interest shown to me by everybody I met and now here in this happy and great country of Australia.

I keep a diary for keeping a proper record of my travels which will help me later when I commence writing my book. I also have a book for each and every country I visited where government and municipal authorities as well as prominent citizens have affixed their signatures and seals. I have also had the pleasure of meeting many famous people on my way such as the Emperor of Japan, General Gratsiani and many Governors and Mayors of different states not forgetting the President of the French Republic, Monsieur Lebrun and the Duchess of Kent, the charming wife of the Duke of Kent.

On the 7th October 1938 I started to cover the distance through the Hume Highway and arrived in Melbourne on the 23rd November a distance of 393 miles. From Mel-

bourne I covered the distance on my way to Adelaide through Mildura and Renmark arriving in Adelaide after 38 days. From Adelaide through Port Pirie to Port Augusta on the 3rd of April and covered a distance of 170 miles and reached Condumbo Station where I obtained two Camels to carry my food and water supplies. I had the services of two native boys who soon tired of it and left me after we had only covered 100 miles.

From Tarcoola I engaged a young white boy who was supposed to be experience in the handling of camels, but neither of us knew anything about the animals. It took me 58 days from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie including 10 days delay for bad weather an average of 24 miles per day. From Kalgoorlie I experienced shocking weather arriving in Perth on the wettest day on record on the 8th July arriving at the GPO at 3 p.m. The Camels that helped me through the Nullarbor Plain I presented to the Zoo to be kept for the children of Western Australia.

So far I have covered about 68,000 miles to Sydney and worn out 54 odd pairs of shoes, not forgetting that I keep them in constant repair. I have been travelling now for 9 years and I expect to spend another couple of years on the road.

DEMETRIOUS HADJI  
CONSTANTINOU 1938