

Latin America Odyssey Ended—

Wandering Dan Returns to Sand Hills Ranch

By Tom Allan

World-Herald Staff Member

Niobrara, Neb.—Danny Liska came home Wednesday.

His 20-month stranger-than-fiction, 95-thousand-mile odyssey through the jungles, mountains and plains of 17 Central and South American countries ended on the porch of his Diamond Horseshoe Ranch in the arms of his surprised wife, Arlene.

Ended was another chapter in the life of Nebraska's wandering adventurer, philosopher, diplomat on a motorcycle, photographer, movie star and World-Herald correspondent.

The big rancher, whose wanderlust has given him the urge to fulfill the dormant desire in most men's souls "to see what's on the other side of the mountain," may be the first person to travel from the northern tip of Alaska to the southernmost tip of South America.

Readers of The World-Herald's Magazine of the Midlands have followed his photos and stories of such fantastic adventures as his trial for life by primitive jungle Indians and being attacked by vampire bats.

He'll conclude his series in future issues of the magazine.

But for the next few days Wandering Dan, minus 34 pounds and with a shaven pate instead of his usual shock of black hair, will be "collecting thoughts" while replanting his roots in the rolling hills of home.

Danhy was supposed to be still in South America Tuesday when he walked into The World-Herald news room. As old friends gasped in astonishment at his shaven head Danny explained:

"I've been the action double for Yul Brynner in a picture, "Taras Bulba" United Artists has been filming in Argentina."

Danny had wandered on the set, got a job as an extra and then with his Nebraska-style horsemanship beat out the storied gauchos of the Pampas to be the star's double in the Sixteenth Century story of the Cossacks.

"They don't want to risk a high priced star, so I had to do all the battle scenes and dangerous riding parts. It was a job that took lots of guts or ignorance. I was able to eliminate intelligence from my mind."

All Danny lost was his hair.

With the picture finished, there was the lure of home accentuated by the illness of his father. He'd hoped to surprise his family for Christmas but was balked by transportation delays.

A cargo plane that had taken a load of goats to Lima, Peru, returned to Miami New Year's Eve with a load of tropical fish—and Danny. He took a bus to Omaha.

"Biggest trouble I had the whole trip was trying to understand the people in Louisiana and Alabama," he said.

Danny, who'd floated down a jungle stream in a dugout with a witch doctor, put his life for the last lap of his trip home in the hands of a World-Herald roving reporter.

Mrs. Liska, who had last seen Danny a year ago when she joined him for a month to skid across Costa Rica on his motorcycle during the rainy season, was still unaware of Danny's arrival.

During the four-hour trip the wanderer talked of his love of people in many lands, of their needs, and the need for better understanding among nations. His mind was still a thousand miles away in the thatched



What happened Danny? . . . Arlene discovers Brynner pate.



Hills of home . . . "The land remains the same."

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Story below.

—World-Herald Photo.

Jiggs defends homestead . . . "Damn it, he's forgotten."

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huts and palatial homes in which he had lived in his quest to understand.

Then came the hills of home and the glow that all homeward-bound men know filled his heart and mind.

"Please go slower," he said, "I want to look, to feel."

Then standing high on Three Rivers Hill overlooking his ranch and the Missouri, Verdigre and Niobrara Rivers, he mused:

"Cities change so quickly. The land is better. It never changes."

There was a disappointment as he walked up the walk to his home. An old black dog charged out barking and brisling.

"Damn it, Jiggs. Don't you know me?"

Then Arlene, gasping in momentary disbelief, rushed into his arms. She stepped back to look.

"It's you. It's you."

Slipping out of her coat, she grabbed him again, accidentally knocking off his sombrero.

Arlene gasped as his head gleamed in the sun.

"What happened, Danny?" she gasped, and then fought back an attack of giggles. Moments later as she fed him his favorite chicken, she timidly reached up and caressed the hairless expanse.

Then impulsively she jumped up and gave it a tender kiss.

"You can have Yul Brynner. I'll take my Danny Liska any time."

Danny was home.