

Adventures in Nyasaland, by MONTEITH FOTHERINGHAM.

The Africa Year, by CULLEN GOULDSBURY.

A Lady's Letters from Central Africa, by JANE MOIR.

The Making of Rhodesia, by MARSHALL HOLE.

Northern Rhodesia Journals.

The Empire at War, Volume IV, Africa, by SIR CHARLES LUCAS, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.

Romance of the Posts of Rhodesia, by H. C. DANN.

The Birth of a Plural Society, by L. H. GANN.

THE PIONEER TRADERS AND FARMERS OF ABERCORN

We have been trying to get some information about the pioneers of the Abercorn district which at one time held out high hopes that it would become a large centre of European settlement. Eric Clough has had some conversations with Gordon Lobb. He says:

“The names of the early farmers on the northern border are as follows:

“Barnshaw who had Itimbwe. After Barnshaw died it was bought complete with valuable cattle by Maxwell of Mandala for a mere song. Later it was bought by H. O. Gliemann, who liked wrestling with lions.

“Gordon Lobb arrived in Abercorn about 1905, and had a third share in a farm with C. N. Blyth. It was called ‘Mula’ because there appeared to be herds of Sitatunga (I think) which is very unusual, as these animals are normally solitary creatures. I understand that ‘Mula’ was the native name for this game. I think that Blyth afterwards had Jericho Farm. I think he took that name as a sort of joke having been told by someone to go to Jericho.

“The first owners of Barnshaw's farm Itimbwe were two chaps called Irvine and Veriker who came there about 1905. Irvine was the first European killed in the 1914-18 war along the border. I don't know what happened to Veriker. Then another farm was taken by Gerald Morton before the 1914-18 war. He later entered Government service at Abercorn as a clerk and became an Assistant Native Commissioner with the British South Africa Company. You may have heard his history of how he finally became insane and was sent to an institution at Cape Town.

“Gordon Lobb's last farm was Ntingila. Part of it is now owned by Geoffrey Stokes. The rest of the farm is still owned by Lobb. There was another farm owned by Edwin Booth but I am a bit vague about it. I think it was originally owned by Dr. Kinghorn. It was on that farm (I have forgotten the name) that Gliemann was mauled by a lion but, at the time, he was living at Itimbwe. I have an idea that he had acquired Booth's farm and was visiting it when he had his encounter with the lion.”

Miss Hope Gamwell says:

"A man by the name of Dean came up in 1900-1. He was a hunter, started a train of small stores and first opened up Chipandu. A Mr. Irwin was a cattle trader. The agent of the Flotilla Company was a Mr. Chiappini and Tanganyika Concessions was represented by Mr. Faulkner. Mandala was represented by Mr. Gillespie and at Kawimbe Mission were Messrs. Robertson and Walter Draper."

Mr. Geoffrey Stokes adds some more items of interest:

"Ronald Smith, before the first world war, had a farm on the Stevenson Road a few miles east of the Saisi River. It was there that his younger brother Lionel joined him. About the time of the outbreak of the war, all stock was moved several miles (fifteen, I fancy) south of the border on account of rinderpest. Farmers were given fresh land in exchange for their old holdings. I next heard of the Smiths at Itimbwe in the Saisi Valley where they were with a man named Barnshaw who was the owner. Then, finishing with Barnshaw, they went to Nsunzu on the Saisi. At least so I think. In 1928 I found Ronald Smith at Mbeti to the left, as one faces Tanganyika Lake, of Mpulungu. I think he had been trying out cotton, and that that was one of Chesnaye's schemes. At that time also Kamboli Industries, a cotton-growing project, was started by a missionary named Ross who was in charge of Kamboli Mission Station. Whether Ronald owned that land at Mbeti or not, I cannot say. He did own Nsunzu. Unwin Moffat passed through Mpika, where I was at the time, sometime between 1926 and 1929 on his way to Abercorn. I have heard that he had previously or had then some connection with the British Cotton Growers' Association. I did not see Lionel at Mbeti, but by that time the Smiths and Kitchin had already started the motor business. By 1930 Ronald Smith was certainly living at Nsunzu and as a partner in Smith and Kitchin doing something like one trip per week with mail and/or goods from Abercorn to the Chambeshi River south of Kasama.

"Ginger Davison later became the owner of Mbeti; but the place was closed on account of sleeping sickness and he was compensated."