

AFRICAN HISTORIES AND MODERNITIES

VICTORIA FALLS AND COLONIAL IMAGINATION IN BRITISH SOUTHERN AFRICA

Turning Water into Gold

Andrea L. Arrington-Sirois



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Andrea L. Arrington-Sirois

Victoria Falls and Colonial Imagination in British Southern Africa

Turning Water into Gold

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*For Tom,
I finally present to you my “little book.” Thank you for making it possible.*

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Arrington and Karla and Craig Kennedy for being so supportive and for all the laughs we shared over the past several years. My mother Kristi and her husband Conul Hussein have been incredibly kind and helpful in ways that contributed to the completion of this book, so I thank both of them for all they have done. My father Rick Arrington and his wife Donna supported my work in countless ways and have shown deep compassion and care for my family over the last several years. Without my father's encouragement, I would not have finished graduate school or this book. I am especially grateful to him for his unending support.

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Victoria Falls and surrounding region. *Source:* Copyright Andrea L. Arrington-Sirois



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Introduction: Toward a Transcolonial History of Victoria Falls

“Half a century hence Livingstone is supposed to cover 30 square miles, and we all hope the writer will prove a true prophet.”¹

L.F. Moore, the editor of the lively newspaper printed in Livingstone, North Western Rhodesia was also one of the frontier town’s strongest supporters. Moore was a resident of North Western Rhodesia in its earliest days, when the territory was still growing into its status as a new British South Africa Company (BSACo) holding.² He first lived on the northern bank of the Zambezi at Old Drift, the original white settlement near Victoria Falls, and then resettled in Livingstone, North Western Rhodesia. Moore, like his fellow Old Drifters and Livingstonians, was drawn to Victoria Falls because he believed the site was destined to be a premier tourism destination and he hoped to capitalize on what he expected to be explosive development around the Falls. Less than a decade after his

¹“Livingstone Going Ahead,” *South Africa*, January 4, 1908, p. 45.

²North Western Rhodesia was first defined as a geographical place in 1890–1891 when the Lozi’s Chief Lewanika and the BSACo signed the Lochner Concession and then the BSACo administered it as a charter colony. Its solidification as a BSACo protectorate occurred when a series of tighter concessions and agreements were signed in the late 1890s. North Western Rhodesia was often conflated with Lewanika’s territory known as Barotseland (other spellings include Barotziland, Loziland, and Barotsiland), but in fact, the borders of North Western Rhodesia did not simply conform to Barotseland’s borders (as elusive as they were). For a contemporary point of reference, the Western Province of Zambia is roughly the same area formerly known as North Western Rhodesia.

arrival to the banks of the Zambezi, L.F. Moore became one of the loudest critics of BSACo rule in North Western Rhodesia. In 1907, Moore wrote a description of how he envisioned Livingstone in the mid-twentieth century. He predicted:

The new capital of North-Western Rhodesia is going ahead...Half a century hence Livingstone is supposed to cover 30 square miles, and we all hope the writer will prove a true prophet. The Zambezi is covered with every description of craft, and travellers and tourists from America, Europe, Australia, and the East promenade or drive or shop in the grand esplanades by the river. The visitor is able to go up and down the Gorge below the Falls in lifts, while the Gorge is lined with mills, factories, and workshops of mammoth proportions.”³

By the time he wrote his vision of Livingstone’s future as a tourism and industrial hub, Moore had already engaged in tense public debates with the BSACo and was clearly concerned about the colonial administration’s goals for its new holding. Despite an increasingly hostile relationship with the BSACo, Moore’s grand hopes for Livingstone’s development demonstrates that Moore never swayed from the vision he had for his beloved town and he remained optimistic about Livingstone’s prospects.

Tellingly, Moore’s hopes for Livingstone focused on Victoria Falls as the central feature of life not just in Livingstone, but also North Western Rhodesia. Victoria Falls compelled many white settlers to move to this African frontier. That push by white entrepreneurs into this frontier landscape accelerated the colonization process and influenced the discourse about colonial goals and policies in the region. The Falls inspired enthusiasm and ambition among these would-be entrepreneurs who hoped to build a modern tourist destination as an oasis of western civilization in what they perceived to be an untamed frontier. Moore and his fellow pioneers were not the first, nor would they be the last to be drawn to Victoria Falls and this unique geographical feature symbolized the high expectations for British expansion into this part of Africa shared by explorers, traders, missionaries, colonial administrators, investors, industrialists, journalists, white settlers, African leaders, African workers, and members of the British public. In many ways and for many people, Victoria Falls became an icon of the British Empire in southern and central Africa.

³“Livingstone Going Ahead,” South Africa, January 4, 1908, p. 45.

This book focuses on Victoria Falls and the symbolism imagined and attached to the site as the British Empire expanded into the African frontier in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Falls simultaneously represented the end to the beginning, as a demarcation of the most remote interior borders of British possessions already claimed by the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the end, as it marked the opening of the last sections of southern and central Africa available for British expansion in the early twentieth century. There is thus a provocative juxtaposition in the colonial imagination, as Britons and other Europeans associated Victoria Falls with the untamed frontier in deepest, darkest Africa while also considering it the launching pad for a bigger, more modern British South Africa. The geographical delineation itself was a problem, as Victoria Falls marked the ephemeral space where southern Africa gave way to central Africa and where the Middle Zambezi Valley blurred into the Upper Zambezi Valley. Local African populations made competing claims of guardianship and spiritual utilization of the cataract, inscribing their own mixed messages about the Falls into the increasingly discordant vision of the site. Victoria Falls was situated squarely and multi-dimensionally in a contested terrain and as a remarkable feature of that uniquely contradictory landscape the Falls embodied and inspired imperial discourse and ambitions.

The consequences of these competing visions and interpretations of Victoria Falls were conflicting agendas and oppositional ideas on how best to proceed with British expansion at and north of the Zambezi. In 1898, an article lauding the commercial prospects of the region declared, "...now that the territory has been ceded to the British South Africa Company... there is reason to suppose that...the newly-acquired territory will be the scene of considerable activity on the part of the new owners."⁴ Yet just a year later the Duke of Abercorn, then president of the BSACo used more measured and less clear language when he proclaimed, "The British flag must for ever hereafter float from Capetown to the Zambesi,"⁵ suggesting the Zambezi (and Victoria Falls) as an endpoint of British activities in the region. The mixed messages and occasional lack of enthusiasm for British expansion north of the Zambezi influenced historians to overlook

⁴"British Central Africa. Commercial Possibilities of Barotseland," *Aberdeen Journal*, November 9, 1898, p. 7.

⁵"The British South Africa Company. Meeting in London," *Manchester Evening News*, December 14, 1899, p. 3.

the significance of Victoria Falls. One historian of the BSACo dismissed the significance of the company's activities at and beyond Victoria Falls, stating "[H]eavy expenditures in Mashonaland made it impossible for the company to spend much money north of the Zambezi."⁶ Lack of financial resources did not however mean that North Western Rhodesia was off the radar of the BSACo and industrialists and by the turn of the twentieth century, the BSACo and private investors raised a huge amount of capital to begin developing Victoria Falls into a hydroelectric power source. This study challenges the region's historiographical lack of attention to Victoria Falls' power and demonstrates why the site be considered more than simply a geographical point of interest.

Historians have overlooked the scholarly contributions made possible by a closer and more critical analysis of Victoria Falls and its relationship to development in North Western Rhodesia. In his study on the Tonga Plateau economy during British rule, Kenneth P. Vickery includes significant mention of the town of Livingstone and its white settlers, but aside from identifying the Falls to indicate a physical location he offers no consideration on the symbolic and physical importance of the site.⁷ Even L.H. Gann, an authority on Northern Rhodesia's history, failed to contextualize Victoria Falls beyond a mark on the map. His characterization of the town of Livingstone was markedly different from the portrayal of the town in my work. He described, "Livingstone was small, forlorn, and with an atrocious climate in the hot season...; it possessed few means of entertainment and no attraction beyond the Zambezi and the magnificent Victoria Falls a few miles away."⁸ While it may be true there was not much that could compete aesthetically with Victoria Falls, the white settlers and African migrants in the town created within a very short period of time a vibrant rural cosmopolitan environment in this frontier space.⁹ Most of

⁶ John S. Galbraith, *Crown and Charter: The Early Years of the British South Africa Company* (Berkeley, CA, and London: University of California Press, 1974), p. 204.

⁷ Kenneth P. Vickery, *Black and White in Southern Zambia: The Tonga Plateau Economy and British Imperialism, 1890–1939* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986).

⁸ L.H. Gann, *The Birth of a Plural Society: Northern Rhodesia 1894–1914* (Manchester and New York: University of Manchester Press, 1958), p. 165.

⁹ It is worth noting that in a subsequent study, Gann gives a bit more credit to Livingstone's livability and atmosphere, conceding, "Livingstone was the only settlement in Northern Rhodesia which could boast of a permanent newspaper, and was the centre of whatever European political activity was going on. As in all other Rhodesian townships, a large variety of different voluntary societies sprang up to cater for sporting and social purposes...As far as entertainment was concerned, Livingstonians were thrown on their own resources; there was

the earliest white settlers saw great promise in Victoria Falls' future as a modern tourist destination. Industrialists who followed with their grand schemes for the extension of the railway and establishment of a hydroelectric station were not as quick to dismiss this area's potential.

This study places Victoria Falls as a central focus of analysis, which allows for a close examination of the transcolonial process of British expansion that often centered on this fixed geographical site. Perhaps better than any other sub-Saharan landscape feature, Victoria Falls serves as a clear example of why colonial African history cannot be simplified into a colony-by-colony historical approach. Even after the BSACo formally acquired territory north of the Zambezi, the Falls continued to be contested terrain as it served as a natural border between North Western Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia. It is impossible to write the history of this important site as only a part of North Western Rhodesia's history, or as a component solely in Southern Rhodesia's past. Indeed, I argue that to analyze the history of colonial development around Victoria Falls is to analyze the history of British Southern Africa. This special place in the African landscape reflected and stimulated numerous interests of multiple colonial actors from within and outside of that particular territory and cannot be limited to being analyzed as part of only one colony's history.

Furthermore, this transcolonial analytical approach illuminates the need for an expanded consideration of Africa's colonial history. As transnational approaches to historical studies become increasingly popular, historians of Africa's colonial period may do well to think beyond colonial borders to better understand localized policies, ideologies, and realities.¹⁰ The British in

of course plenty of sport... there was drink and politics, and there were home-made variety shows." L.H. Gann, *A History of Northern Rhodesia: Early Days to 1953* (New York: Humanities Press, 1969), p. 140.

¹⁰Of course, some historians argue that the trend toward global history or transnational history minimizes the importance of nation-state history in the postcolonial African context, to the detriment of individual African countries. Toyin Falola, for example, argues "global history, as a narrative of Western power and its expansion, provincializes history, turning the national history of one great power into the metanarrative of global history. National histories of Africa represent one of the powerful counters to the attempts to provincialize history." Toyin Falola, "Writing and teaching national history in Africa in an era of global history," *Africa Spectrum* 40, no. 3 (2005), 500. I would argue that in the case of Africa's colonial history, it is of crucial importance that historians understand how the local fit into the regional or imperial goals of the colonizers. A territory like North Western Rhodesia, as this book demonstrates, was viewed by some as a backwater dead end, while many others (administrators, farmers, settlers, industrialists, traders, African leaders, and African laborers) consid-

southern Africa were intent on establishing authority territory by territory, but also had much more ambitious goals for the British Empire in Africa. Thus, each colonial holding or territory served as one piece in a larger, more complex and ambitious puzzle. This was an evolutionary process; a close examination of the twists and turns in the development at and around Victoria Falls reveals the dynamic nature of colonial expansion, reminding us that vision and plans were never static or complete. Often, colonial history is analyzed in a vacuum, where the local is the most important point of reference. This study on the importance of Victoria Falls, a celebrated anomaly in the African frontier's landscape, to the larger aspirations of the many actors involved in making the British Empire in southern and central Africa offers compelling evidence that a transcolonial approach expands our understanding of the colonization process. In their recent book on the Cahora Bassa Dam on the Zambezi in Mozambique, Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman develop a compelling case of how the damming activities in Mozambique in the late colonial, early postcolonial era utilized local resources to open up exportable resources (in this case, electricity) to meet the needs of the greater southern African region.¹¹ Transcolonial and transnational development out of the Zambezi did not start in the late colonial era; the processes and disruptions affecting local environments and communities along the Zambezi started much earlier, as formal colonial rule spread to the banks and beyond of the river. In this sense, *Turning Water into Gold* offers a prequel to the development described at the Cahora Bassa and other like projects along the Zambezi that filtered resources to the south.

By looking beyond the borders of North Western Rhodesia, we learn more about how this seemingly inconsequential BSACo holding actually provoked hot debates about the future of the territory, but also over the trajectory of the British Empire in south central Africa. Victoria Falls, as part of the much-referenced Zambezi River, was undoubtedly the most popular and provocative feature of North Western Rhodesia's landscape. This book demonstrates that Victoria Falls inspired discourse about industrialization, tourism development, land conservation, urbanization, African leadership, native rights, white settlers' rights, and African labor,

ered North Western Rhodesia as a critical addition to British South Africa and understood the provincial territory to be part of a bigger system of colonial development.

¹¹Allen F. Isaacman and Barbara S. Isaacman, *Dams, Displacement and the Delusion of Development: Cahora Bassa and Its Legacies in Mozambique, 1965–2007* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013).

not just in a localized context but as regional concerns. Development in North Western Rhodesia for many years occurred as a natural consequence of increased tourist traffic and white settlement around Victoria Falls, thus ideas about the potential of North Western Rhodesia cannot be disentangled from the inspiration and aspiration sparked by the magnitude and perceived beauty of the waterfalls.

The periodization of the study, roughly 1855 to 1912, is reflective of my desire to capture the energy and fluidity of early colonialism and is supported by a rich collection of primary sources collected in archives in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and England and through ethnographic inquiries via oral interviews in Zambia and Zimbabwe.¹² With a site as provocative as Victoria Falls, there is much to contemplate about the dynamic and multi-layered visions for simultaneously preserving this magnificent feature of the landscape while also using it to spearhead a push for modernity and industrialization in the African frontier. The strongest focus is on the ten years before and after the turn of the twentieth century, when the Cape-to-Cairo dream dominated the imperial imagination and influenced BSACo strategic planning.¹³ The sources employed are varied, from colonial periodicals, British newspapers, and South Africa-based magazines to engineering reports published in trade journals; explorers' travelogues, memoirs, and artwork to internal BSACo memos between London, South Africa, and North Western Rhodesia (and many stops in between); accounts from missionaries to letters written by and to Chief Lewanika; interviews with Tonga "old-timers" living near Victoria Falls to recent online discussions about hydroelectric power exports. A large part of the data is comprised of BSACo correspondence documents, in which administrative discourse about colonial expansion at and north of Victoria Falls abound, and *The Livingstone Mail* and British-based newspapers, where the British public and whites living in southern Africa aired their hopes and concerns about the future of British Southern Africa.

¹²Field work for this project was executed in 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2008. The consulted archives include the National Archives of Zambia, Livingstone Museum Archives, National Heritage Conservation Commission Archives (Zambia), National Archives of Zimbabwe, and the Public Records Office in London, England.

¹³As Thomas Pankenham asserts, "in short, the Cape to Cairo idea was not simply a pipe-dream...By 1888 it was seriously entertained by Salisbury as a way of meeting Britain's strategic imperatives at the Canal and at the Cape." Thomas Pankenham, *The Scramble for Africa: White Man's Conquest of the Dark Continent from 1876 to 1912* (New York: Avon Books, 1991), p. 341.

“SO STRANGE IT IS, THIS FAR AWAY HEART OF AFRICA:”¹⁴
LANDSCAPE AND COLONIAL IMAGINATION

There are few European discoveries in Africa that garnered as much publicity as David Livingstone’s heavily discussed visit to the grand waterfalls on the Zambezi River. On November 17, 1855, Livingstone reached the Falls and set into effect an intense enthrallment Britons and other Europeans developed for this unique element of the African landscape. Livingstone and the explorers who followed him portrayed through their writings, lectures, and artwork a vision of Victoria Falls as an exotic but significant center of Africa. It was imagined and depicted as the frontier; the place where Africa was most “African.” African expeditions contributed to the growing European curiosity about unknown lands and peoples and the public response to accounts of journeys to Victoria Falls exemplified the ever-entangling relationships between travel, mass publishing, and empire building. As William Beinart and Lotte Hughes explain, “From the mid-eighteenth century a particular kind of traveller did more than most to promote the natural potential of empire: those who combined touring with botany and other scientific, or quasi-scientific, enquiries... Since European expansion coincided with the development of print... the production and publication of texts became a by-product of travel.”¹⁵ Certainly, visits to Victoria Falls spurred the growth of a large body of travelogues, as the site was often represented as the primary destination or apex of expeditions. Readers of these travel accounts were provided a seemingly unending stream of Victoria Falls imagery, and hype and the result was an increased fascination and interest in not only the waterfalls but also the frontier landscape beyond it.

Explorers, adventure sportsmen, missionaries, traders, and scientists provided some of the earliest published works that referenced Victoria Falls and these texts are what first brought the Falls to life in the British (and Western) imagination.¹⁶ Each account offered detailed reports of the

¹⁴ “Victoria Falls and the Cape to Cairo Railway,” *Nottingham Evening Post*, September 12, 1905, p. 3.

¹⁵ William Beinart and Lotte Hughes, *Environment and Empire* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 76–77.

¹⁶ Just a few examples of these mid- to late-nineteenth century narratives include David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa: Including a Sketch of Sixteen Years’ Residence in the Interior of Africa* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1858); Francois Coillard, *On the Threshold of Central Africa: A Record of Twenty Years’ Pioneering Among the Barotsi of the Upper Zambezi*, 3rd ed. (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1971); William Charles Baldwin, *African Hunting and Adventure from Natal to the Zambezi* (London:

physical attributes of the Falls, but even more importantly, the writers produced flowery, and often rambling, descriptions of the landscape around the waterfalls in hopes of representing the scenery to an audience that, for the most part, would likely never get to see the site for themselves. The steady flow of early European visitors to Victoria Falls firmly entrenched the site as a fantastical and captivating component of popular British imagination.¹⁷ Although the first European visitors debated the potential usefulness of the Falls, the common theme in the writing produced about the waterfalls was that a grander sight could not be found in Africa and that it was one of the most breathtaking and evocative sites one could imagine.¹⁸ It is no wonder that such writing helped stimulate interest in British northward expansion to the Zambezi and beyond.

Despite a rich history of travel writing, there is a dearth of scholarly studies focused on Victoria Falls. This is surprising, given how important Victoria Falls was and continues to be as a center of urbanization, economic development, industrialization, and political activity. For many

Richard Bentley and Son, 1894); Alfred Bertrand, *The Kingdom of the Barotsi, Upper Zambezia: A Voyage of Explorations in Africa Returning by the Victoria Falls, Matabeleland, the Transvaal, Natal, and the Cape*, trans. A.B. Miall (Cape Town, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, and Stellenbosch: J.C. Juta & Co., 1899); James Chapman, *Travels in the Interior of South Africa 1849–1863: Hunting and Trading Journeys from Natal to Walvis Bay & Visits to Lake Ngami & Victoria Falls*, Vol. 2 (Cape Town: A.A. Belkema, 1971); A. St. Hill Gibbons, *Africa from South to North Through Marotseland*, Vol. 1 (London and New York: John Lane and The Bodley Head, 1904); D.W. Stirke, *Barotseland: Eight Years among the Barotse* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969); and John Kirk, *The Zambezi Journal and Letters of Doctor John Kirk, 1858–63*, Vol. 2, ed. R. Foskett (Edinburgh and London: Oliver & Boyd, 1965).

¹⁷Visitors to Victoria Falls in the mid- to late-nineteenth century seemed intent on publicizing their travels and the site itself to a captive European audience. Art exhibits displaying sketches and photographs of the Falls toured around Great Britain and other parts of Europe. Travel accounts were published by the handful, and newspapers reprinted excerpts and reviews that were eagerly read by an increasingly intrigued audience. The Royal Geographical Society in particular popularized Victoria Falls by sponsoring public lectures, art and model exhibits, and publications about the waterfalls. Newspaper announcements of events like the June 1874 ‘conversazione,’ hosted by the president of the society, were common. This particular event, for example, included “a model of the Victoria Falls of the Zambesi...Near to this was a miniature of Livingstone, and the instruments he had carried with him on his last journey.” Clearly, Victoria Falls occupied a special place in the British imperial imagination. “Sir Bartle Frere’s Conversazione,” *Edinburgh Evening News*, June 11, 1874, p. 2.

¹⁸David Livingstone, for example. In *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* Livingstone extolls the beauty of the landscape at Victoria Falls. For other examples of nineteenth century travel writing that emphasizes the beauty of Victoria Falls and its environs, see footnote 16.

years around the turn of the twentieth century, Victoria Falls was at the center of discussions about the future of the British Empire in Africa, yet the site earns few mentions in historical studies. The historical studies that do exist were often published as sponsored projects by various government entities, such as *The Victoria Falls: A Handbook to the Victoria Falls, the Batoka Gorge and Part of the Upper Zambezi River*, edited by B.M. Fagan and published in 1964 by Northern Rhodesia's Commission for the Preservation of Natural and Historical Monuments and Relics. This narrative provides a survey of the land and information about the local African populations, along with numerous illustrations. D.W. Phillipson's edited collection *Mosi-oa-Tunya: A Handbook to the Victoria Falls Region*, first published in 1975, offers a rich overview of many aspects of the waterfalls: from the geographical and geological formation of the site to the archaeology around the Falls and the area during the Stone Age and Iron Age, as well as short essays on early European exploration and settlement at Livingstone. The collection extends into botany and zoology as well, with chapters about the flora and fauna around Victoria Falls, and it ends with a discussion of how to conserve the environment around the Falls. There are also other studies written by geologists and geographers about the Falls, but lacking in the literature is an in-depth consideration about the historical significance of Victoria Falls.

Until recently, Victoria Falls served as little more than an occasional footnote in the Zambian and Zimbabwean historical literature and even less frequently in southern African studies. The 2009 publication of JoAnn McGregor's seminal text *Crossing the Zambezi: The Politics of Landscape on a Central African Frontier* definitively places Victoria Falls for the first time as an analytically important component of the region's history. Her study examines African and European appropriation of the Zambezi over the past 150 years, with a focus on the river from Victoria Falls to Lake Kariba, with special focus on the claims of "river people" (local African populations) within the changing political landscape.¹⁹ McGregor considers the various, and often, competing political uses of the river in this African frontier as a source of ongoing discourse and stimulus for African

¹⁹ McGregor's study, which also uses Victoria Falls as an important marker in the frontier, focuses on the riparian communities and activities that flow downstream from Victoria Falls in an east/northeast trajectory, into what she identifies as the "mid-Zambezi." My study, however, focuses on Victoria Falls and the Upper Zambezi Valley, or what was known as Barotseland during the early colonial period and is now the Western Province of Zambia.

resistance during the colonial period and extends her study into the post-colonial era to analyze the significance of the Zambezi as a national border claimed by both Zambia and Zimbabwe. With Victoria Falls as one of the sites used to define her study, McGregor's text emphasizes the significance of this geographical marker in migration and settlement patterns.

In her chapter on science and colonization, McGregor writes that Victoria Falls "...became a focal point—a 'site of memory'—in the naturalization and legitimation of British imperial expansion and rule over the Rhodesias and of white settlement. The new political uses of the landscape at the Victoria Falls popularized a genealogy for Europeans in central Africa...."²⁰ *Crossing the Zambezi* offers the strongest critical examination of Victoria Falls to date and uncovers fertile ground for further analysis on the importance of this "site of memory." Building on this, my work places Victoria Falls even more to the center of the colonial discourse: using a different data set, I argue that Victoria Falls became a symbol of British Southern Africa's aspirations and helped solidify an agenda of how northward expansion was crucial to fulfilling the Cape-to-Cairo dream and the answer to several problems already plaguing British holdings south of the Zambezi.²¹

McGregor's work is one of a few recent entries in the southern African historiography that uses landscape as an analytical lens. Scholars increasingly understand the need to account for how the landscape inspired imperial agendas and dictated colonial machinations in the region. Jeremy Foster's inspired text *Washed with Sun: Landscape and the Making of White South Africa* opens with his observation that "the nation of South Africa has become known for its turbulent political history as well as the distinctiveness of its landscapes, yet relatively little attention has been paid to

²⁰ JoAnn McGregor, *Crossing the Zambezi: The Politics of Landscape on a Central African Frontier* (Suffolk, UK and Avondale, Harare, Zimbabwe: James Currey and Weaver Press, 2009), p. 82.

²¹ In particular, Victoria Falls marked the opening of a region that was seen as a possible answer to labor shortages and industrial power needs, and opened up the possibility of further profits through commercial farming and mining. Although in the early days of colonial expansion, the BSACo was reluctant to pursue a strong presence north of the Zambezi, white settlement at Victoria Falls and Lewanika's insistence to bring the British flag to Barotseland necessitated increasing BSACo activities in the area. By the early twentieth century, the BSACo indicated high expectations of how North Western Rhodesia could serve the British Empire in southern Africa.

how these two factors might have been connected.”²² This brilliantly obvious critique of South African historiography extends beyond South Africa. Land and landscape and its perceived value, so often the motivating force behind precolonial and colonial migration and settlement patterns, are often pushed to the periphery or are left unexplored altogether in historical studies. It would seem then that Foster’s deduction that “[W]herever history and mythology are used to construct a common past, landscape has the potential to stand for an imaginary shared space in which the great story of nationhood has unfolded, rendering it timeless and indisputable”²³ can also be applied to colonial claims to landscape. As white settlers made proprietary claims to Victoria Falls, invoking, as McGregor suggests, a historical genealogy based on European explorers’ history at the site, we clearly see how history and mythology were used to justify and propel the European appropriation of this feature of the African landscape.

Such claims to land were intensely important to the making of British Southern Africa. Foster’s book offers a compelling case for how imagined ownership of land and the subsequent appropriation of the land created a distinct aspect of the white South African experience and personality. Anthropologist David McDermott Hughes explores the extent of how important white claims to land are to the colonization process in *Whiteness in Zimbabwe: Race, Landscape, and the Problem of Belonging*. Hughes convincingly argues that colonization is not just about usurping African claims and connections to land, but rather relies upon the ability of white settlers to “convince themselves of their fit with the landscape of settlement.”²⁴ Like Foster and McGregor, Hughes also emphasizes the imaginative quality of this process. Whites had to convince themselves of the legitimacy of their presence in Africa. In this regard, Hughes asserts “[T]he savannah pushed whites’ imagination to its limits and beyond...Since they could belong comfortably to African society, such whites sought to belong to African ecology.”²⁵ In order to completely buy into their own agenda, whites at Victoria Falls had to imagine a historical precedent for their appropriation of the site and convince themselves that they had as much justification in

²² Jeremy Foster, *Washed with Sun: Landscape and the Making of White South Africa* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008), p. 1.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²⁴ David McDermott Hughes, *Whiteness in Zimbabwe: Race, Landscape, and the Problem of Belonging* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

claiming the waterfalls as anyone else. White settlers created a sense of belonging based on their connection to the land, not to the people.

Both Hughes and McGregor focus their analyses on the Zambezi River as a place, though of course rivers are more than one fixed place and constantly in flux. Though the emphasis of my study is on Victoria Falls as an important point in the southern African landscape, it is worth contemplating why the Zambezi and other rivers earn such concentrated analytical attention. Meredith McKittrick suggests that in precolonial southern Africa, rivers, as important sources of water, transportation, communication, and trade, had incalculable value attached to them; thus rivers were at the core of political, cultural, and economic activities. It is then unsurprising that Europeans would also attach such value to river systems. Access to water was a priority in places where the floodplains of riparian systems gave way to semiarid land.²⁶ This description of the extreme value of rivers applies to Zambezi and its banks, where water security and navigability was of utmost importance. But McKittrick's concept of riparian "value" can be pushed even further. As my study shows, Victoria Falls and the Zambezi were valuable resources not only in physical terms, but also symbolically to Africans and Europeans alike. Different parties promoting various agendas asserted guardianship of the Falls and the river near the Falls during the early colonization process. White settlers and the Lozi aristocracy, perhaps the least justified in their claims to the Falls, viewed the appropriation of this part of the riparian system as an important component to emerging dominant in the transitioning political landscape.

McGregor posits that landscape itself was changed through colonial projects, inscribing new symbolism and materiality determined according to European cultural, technological, and political values.²⁷ Jocelyn Alexander's *The Unsettled Land: State-making & the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe 1893–2003* employs the concept of "unsettled land" as a metaphor for the various conceptualizations of landscape and the upheavals and disruptions provoked by colonial land policies. The concept of land as both place and symbol provides an opening into understanding Zimbabwe in the last century, and it becomes clear through her analysis that in this context, "[S]ettling the land was fundamentally about building and legitimis-

²⁶Meredith McKittrick, "Colonial Backwater: International Boundaries and Political Identities on the Kavongo River," Unpublished paper circulated at Emory University Seminar in African History, Culture, and Society, October 13, 2005, p. 2.

²⁷McGregor 2009, p. 2.

ing the state, and its successes and failures profoundly shaped Zimbabwe's political allegiances, identities and social relations."²⁸ Both of these scholars establish a strong case for analyzing landscape as more than just the backdrop to history and demonstrate through their studies how landscape activates change and is changed in both physical and metaphorical ways.

The African landscape is much more than a neutral setting where history unfolded. In southern Africa particularly, land can be examined as an historical actor: landscape is dynamic and multi-dimensional, and it evoked numerous and often competing responses and inspires disparate visions of past claims and future usage. Victoria Falls at the turn of the twentieth century represented much more than a singular geographic anomaly. Instead, it was a site that generated enthusiasm for British expansion to and beyond the cataract among explorers, missionaries, traders, white entrepreneurs, BSACo and government administrators, industrialists, commercial farmers, scientists, and a captivated British audience in the metropole. Africans too were drawn to Victoria Falls, long before any European ever laid eyes on it. Various local populations in the Middle Zambezi Valley used the site to meet their physical and spiritual needs. The site inspired Lozi chief Lewanika and African laborers to imagine new claims and uses for the Falls to fit into the transforming political economy of the early twentieth century. The fact that this one site inspired so many divergent groups to develop multiple visions for the future of British Southern Africa at and beyond the Falls is testament to its iconic status and to the need to give the site proper consideration in a transcolonial context. Although this study focuses on Victoria Falls as a stimulus for varying colonial agendas and as a contested site, in a broader sense, it joins the push of previous scholarship to give landscape more than a cursory glance.

“ALL ABOARD FOR THE VICTORIA FALLS!”²⁹ IMAGINING BRITISH SOUTHERN AFRICA

In 1929, a South Africa Travel Bureau advertisement published in *National Geographic* declared that tourists would discover that “South Africa is one of the most modern and progressive sections of the world...”³⁰ Interestingly, the choice of the word “section” rather than the less precise term “country,” or

²⁸ Jocelyn Alexander, *The Unsettled Land: State-making & the Politics of Land in Zimbabwe, 1893–2003*, p. 2.

²⁹ “Cape Town to the Victoria Falls: Incidents on the Luxurious Railway Journey,” *South Africa*, January 20, 1906, p. 174.

³⁰ “Native South Africa,” South Africa Travel Bureau ad. *National Geographic*.

even “union” or “dominion” indicates that the travel agency looked beyond formal borders when trying to draw visitors to South Africa. Indeed, the advertisement continued with its promotion of a transborder travel experience, informing would-be visitors that although there was much to see within South Africa proper, it was all “within easy access for the tourist, as are all the other matchless wonders of South Africa...great Victoria Falls, the ancient Ruins of Zimbabwe...”³¹ Even as late as 1929, when the Southern Rhodesian side of the Falls had all but claimed victory in capitalizing on tourist traffic to Victoria Falls, the South Africa Travel Bureau appropriated the site as a way to draw more tourists to this part of the world. The borders between Southern and Northern Rhodesia and South Africa faded into the landscape, and a more blurred and undefined regional connectivity emerged. The advertisement exemplifies the transborder or transcolonial nature of British Southern Africa.

This study situates Victoria Falls as a dynamic site—not just as a fixed place in the riparian border between Southern Rhodesia and North Western Rhodesia, but as an important symbol in the greater British Southern Africa imagination. Of course, there was no singular image or vision for British Southern Africa, so there were often competing ideas of what the goal for British colonial expansion should be and how the final product should look. This analysis examines multiple imagined possibilities for British Southern Africa, with the understanding that administrators, entrepreneurs, African leaders, African laborers, missionaries, and travelers all had different visions of British colonization in the region. Throughout the course of this book, Victoria Falls serves as the center of analysis in multiple historical dimensions of imperial and colonial expansion in this region of the continent. Chapter 2 establishes the precolonial context of the waterfalls with an overview of how African populations utilized the Falls as part of their physical, political, and spiritual activities. It also examines responses of early European visitors who were responsible for not only publicizing the existence of the site but also helped imprint Victoria Falls in the imperial psyche of the British public. Although it was unclear to the early visitors how the waterfalls would be used in British expansion efforts, it became clear that it was a part of the landscape worthy of British appropriation and exploitation. Chapter 3 reinterprets the actions and motivations of Chief Lewanika of Barotseland, as he invoked Lozi claims to the people and resources at and near Victoria Falls as a way to fulfill his alliance-building ambitions of bringing the British north of

³¹ Ibid.

the Zambezi. Both chapters 2 and 3 illuminate the significance of Victoria Falls as a physical demarcation in the process of British expansion in the region and as a site that stimulated visions of British activity at and beyond the Zambezi.

Chapter 4 marks the transition into the early colonial phase of development at and around Victoria Falls. This chapter focuses specifically on the evolution of white settlement at the Falls, first on the banks of the Zambezi at Old Drift and then with the establishment of Livingstone town. Although the early days of white settlement at Victoria Falls were characterized by the high hopes and frenetic energy of enthusiastic entrepreneurs, there was also evidence that as the BSACo further entrenched an administration in North Western Rhodesia, its goals began deviating from the settler agenda to build a modern tourist destination. Chapter 5 continues with the evolution of urban life at the Falls with an examination of how African laborers experienced the emerging cosmopolitan frontier town. Drawn to Livingstone because of the emerging tourism industry and increasing number of white settlers in need of domestic and commercial African labor, these urbanizing Africans from Tonga (and to a lesser degree, Lozi) communities also found inspiration as they carved out a space for a new social identity. It is evident that just as white settlers had impressive expectations for the town they imagined so too did African laborers who embraced their own visions of what life could be for them at Livingstone.

Unfortunately, the dynamism and loose structure of Livingstone in its early days was quickly subsumed by BSACo priorities that overshadowed the interests of white settlers and the typically amenable Chief Lewanika. Chapter 6 examines how the solidifying BSACo agenda in North Western Rhodesia caused dispute and discontent among white settlers who felt the colonial administration was more committed to Native Rights than to helping white settlers fulfill their own visions for commercial success at and north of Victoria Falls. Likewise, Lewanika was forced to face the fact that his dream of a partnership with the British was not to become reality. The BSACo's activities in the first decade of the twentieth century severely undercut the hopes of achieving the potential that white settlers and the Lozi chief imagined for their lives in North Western Rhodesia. It was during this decade that the BSACo most intensely demonstrated how North Western Rhodesia factored into a transcolonial vision of a British Southern African empire. While Victoria Falls inspired the continued efforts of entrepreneurs on the north banks of the Zambezi, the BSACo began encouraging development of tourism on the south banks, in Southern Rhodesia.

It also focused labor recruitment efforts to export African workers from North Western Rhodesia to combat the growing labor shortage crisis in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. As the BSACo grew more confident in its plans for fitting North Western Rhodesia into its plans for expansion into the copper fields of North Eastern Rhodesia, Lewanika's friends British hip was increasingly less crucial to maintain and the autonomy of the Lozi aristocracy deteriorated under new BSACo policies.

Chapter 7 explores the transition of North Western Rhodesia's status from frontier territory to industrial hub when the BSACo and South African industrialists pushed their transcolonial agenda into a more technological phase. The ambitions of white entrepreneurs to develop tourism on the north banks of Victoria Falls are seemingly minor compared to the growing enthusiasm for turning the Falls into a source of hydroelectric power generation. The BSACo and private industrialists set perhaps the highest expectations of the potential of Victoria Falls when they developed plans to use hydroelectric power produced at the site to electrify mines in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. One of the most pressing concerns of British Southern Africa in the early twentieth century was the question of how to continue to cheaply and consistently power the established mines and urban centers to the south, while also developing a possible source of power for copper mining to the northeast. Victoria Falls was considered the best solution for that problem, and the first decade of the twentieth century marked the site's transformation from an aesthetically pleasing geographical feature to the epicenter of the entire region's industrialization through cheap electricity production. It is in these plans that the transcolonial approach to administering North Western Rhodesia is most emphatic. Victoria Falls was no longer a local asset—by the early twentieth century it was considered one of the most important resources in all of British Southern Africa.

This book makes a case for a critical reading of Victoria Falls as much more than a localized geographical wonder. Europeans with multiple and often competing agendas, as well as African leaders and laborers were brought into contact with one another at Victoria Falls. Their visions of the past and hopes for the future shared Victoria Falls as a common point of inspiration. Victoria Falls sparked the imaginations of a locality, a transcolonial region, and even an empire, and as such, the Falls became a historical actor in its own right. A close examination of Victoria Falls allows a more critical understanding of the colonization process from the sometimes overlapping, often times conflicting perspectives of Africans, white settlers, industrialists, and colonial administration.

“A Cataract on the Zambezi”: The Waterfalls in Precolonial Context

When David Livingstone “discovered” Victoria Falls in 1855, he was part of a larger British mission to explore the parts of Africa still unknown to Europeans. British explorers were responsible for bringing Africa into the British public’s imagination and helped create a discourse about the future of the British Empire in Africa. Victoria Falls was a hugely significant find, in part because it was the renowned David Livingstone who identified and named it, but also because of the way early visitors described the Falls. To readers in South Africa and throughout Britain, Victoria Falls represented a place deemed mysterious, remote, and awe-inspiring. American and European readers too were enthralled with the site, made famous first by David Livingstone and the many others who followed. The writings, photographs, paintings, and sketches of the waterfalls produced by early travelers to the site stimulated and sustained mid-nineteenth-century enthusiasm for this notable feature of the south-central African landscape. Victoria Falls captured the attention and imagination of Britons and inspired British interest in African imperial expansion. There was enthusiasm to chart the unmapped sections of Africa and this activity was connected to a sense of British superiority. As one writer in 1864 surmised,

“A Cataract on the Zambezi,” *Westmorland Gazette*, January 2, 1858, p. 8.

The last twenty or thirty years, however, have filled in a great extent of this ‘*terra incognita*,’ and though the blank space still occupies the centre of the chart [map of Africa], it slowly diminishes. Barth from the north, Galton and Andersen from the south-west, Burton, Speke, and Grant from the east, and Livingstone from the south east, have in turn attacked the mysterious region, and pierced it with paths which let in light...And one observation may be made of all these recent discoveries—namely, that for the most part, instead of disclosing to us tracts of barren sand and fierce heats, untenanted except by venomous reptiles and wild animals, they have all added the knowledge of fertile and lovely lands to geography...they bring back to us...tales of rich fields, and industrious although rude peoples.¹

The stories, knowledge, and art generated from the first European visitors to Victoria Falls added to the growing body of knowledge on Africa, but also created a growing fascination with the uniqueness and magnitude of Victoria Falls, deemed to be “beautiful in the extreme.”² The word “extreme” is useful as we consider the ways that Britons responded to exploration around Victoria Falls. The journey to get to this remote site was recounted as extreme; the breadth of the cataract and volume of water cascading over a sheer cliff was described as extreme; the ability to maneuver around the difficult terrain with environmental threats to health was written about as extreme; and the position of travelers to negotiate among the local population and its dynamic political landscape was also explained as extreme.

It is this focus on the travel challenges and the enormity and inimitable quality of Victoria Falls that captivated the British public and placed the site firmly in a burgeoning collective imperial psyche. From David Livingstone’s first publicized trip to Victoria Falls, the site provoked the British imagination and a fascination with the waterfalls was born. This chapter provides an overview of Victoria Falls when it served as a sacred space and was a utilitarian feature of the landscape to local populations.³ It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive narrative or analysis of local claims to the Falls. During research trips to the area, I did conduct

¹“Peopling the Map of Africa” (first published in the *Daily Telegraph*), *Belfast Morning News*, June 24, 1864, p. 3.

² *Ibid.*

³The bulk of this discussion is based on European sources, which is, of course, problematic. The written evidence about precolonial African claims to the Falls are scarce and for the purposes of this project, the collection of oral data on precolonial attitudes about the Falls was extremely limited.

interviews with elders in the Tonga community to discuss the Falls and their memories of Livingstone town. None of the interviewees reflected heavily on long-term claims to the Falls and instead focused on stories about the town’s history. It would certainly be an important project to collect oral data on Tonga and Lozi claims to the Falls to better understand and assess the precolonial history of the region, but for the purposes of this study, such data collection was not possible. There is, undoubtedly, a rich history to still be uncovered and analyzed.⁴

This chapter also covers the transformation of the site when it went from being identified in local names to being considered one of the greatest British discoveries in Africa of all time. Much of the chapter highlights the importance of early British visitors to building up a public interest in Victoria Falls. Though not yet the colonial era, these first travelers to the Falls laid the groundwork in placing value on the waterfalls and opened it up as an important British landmark within the African frontier. Starting quickly after Livingstone’s discovery of the site, Victoria Falls came to occupy a secure space in the British imperial imagination.

MOSI-OA-TUNYA IN THE PRECOLONIAL CONTEXT

Around 1850, while on one of his many treks into the interior of south-central Africa, David Livingstone heard about a magnificent waterfall fueled by the waters of the Zambezi River. African leaders and porters long regaled the explorer with descriptions of the amazing sight. Makololo Chief Sebitwane reportedly asked of him, “have you smoke that sounds in your country?”⁵ In fact, Livingstone was not as interested in the Falls as some may expect and it seems the prospect of being the first European to see the sight accounted for his decision to finally venture toward the location. On November 17, 1855, Livingstone reached the waterfalls known by the Lozi as Mosi-oa-Tunya and baptized it with the name Victoria

⁴The interviews were organized by Chief Mukuni. He selected some of the oldest members of his community to meet with me and discuss their lives in the vicinity of the Falls. The data that was collected reflected heavily on memories and stories of Livingstone Town’s early days and did not end up covering issues of oral traditions relating to the Falls. Due to family considerations, I was not able to return to the site to undertake interviews to collect oral traditions specifically about the Falls. This is a weakness of the text that could not be avoided, but my hope is that at some point the project is picked up by another scholar to collect oral data. Such material would be informative and important to this discussion.

⁵Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 557.

Falls, the only English name he ever gave to an African site. This “discovery” is remembered through a much repeated description made famous in Livingstone’s *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*. He wrote, “it had never been seen before by European eyes; but scenes so lovely must have been gazed upon by angels in their flight.”⁶ He continued with a physical description of the Falls and surrounding landscape, offering detailed imagery of the area.

His account of Victoria Falls was widely read, and interest in the interior of Africa increased. European imagination was sparked and Victoria Falls symbolized the wild and exotic offerings to be explored in Africa. In fact, Livingstone and future entrepreneurs who profited from Victoria Falls owe a debt to Livingstone’s publisher. His original report on his first impressions of the Falls was noticeably sterile and lacked adjectives to describe the landscape. His publisher suggested he embellish his description for the publication.⁷ The Falls had no use in Livingstone’s opinion and disappointingly served as further proof of the impossibility of his plan to use the Zambezi to connect the west and east coasts.

Despite Livingstone’s lack of genuine interest in the Falls, the European audience received his *Missionary’s Travels* with great enthusiasm. Eventually whites living in South Africa and Europe would have expanded European interests and holdings into this region, but there is little doubt that Livingstone’s influence stimulated interest in the land north of the Zambezi.⁸ The waterfalls became a fascination for Europeans, emblematic of the extreme landscape attributed to Africa. Additionally, Livingstone identified the neighboring region, particularly Barotseland,

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 558.

⁷ Judith Listowel, *The Other Livingstone* (Sussex: Julian Friedmann Publishers, Ltd., 1974), pp. 149–151.

⁸ Indeed, Livingstone himself provoked imagination and ambition among his readers, so it is unsurprising that his travel exploits inspired British plans for Africa. One writer in 1857 suggested that Livingstone demonstrated the potential mobility of working class people, proclaiming “Nor is it a mean stimulus to the worthy ambition of young aspirants, cramped by narrow circumstances, when they see the possibility of a poor Scotch factory boy emerging from obscurity and the borders of want, and standing before the world as one of its greatest men, hailed as a benefactor to his race, and honoured by all those whose acclamations are most esteemed... the little David Livingstone...now the renowned African explorer—is a most worthy example to all the honest youth of our country of what is possible for the diligent, truth-loving, and well-intentioned to become.” “Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa [review],” *Dundee, Perth, and Cupar Advertiser*, November 17, 1857, p. 4.

as a place where “if not untoward event interferes, a vigorous trade will certainly be established.”⁹ This site came to represent not only the frontier of British South Africa, but also the potential for expanded commerce and empire building beyond that frontier. From this early period in European expansion in the area, Victoria Falls became a powerful symbol of British optimism for profit and power in Africa. Just a few years after the publication of the travel journal, English Lord Palmerton wrote to a fellow Englishman, “what a triumph for the N---- over the Yankee to have a waterfall so much finer than Niagara.”¹⁰ This feature of the African landscape was highly prized. It was not long before African ownership of the Falls was contested by Europeans who made their own claims to the Falls and stewardship of these “fine” waterfalls came into question.

The British were not the only ones with an interest in Victoria Falls, nor were they the only ones actively planning for the future of this part of British South Africa. In the precolonial context, proximity to the Falls in some ways defined Barotseland, and eventually North Western Rhodesia. Barotseland was and still is a place of blurred boundaries. The Falls themselves mark a natural border as well as a colonial border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. This particular section of the Zambezi represents a meeting place in terms of both local and regional peoples. It was the precolonial meeting point of groups located on either side of the river; it was a site where people interacted and exchanged from the countries now known as Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, and Angola, and it is a borderland between the modern distinctions of Zambia’s Western Province and Southern Province. While the British were embarking on their expansion efforts into the region, Chief Lewanika of the Lozi was also working hard to secure, and in some cases, extend his own power in the region of Victoria Falls and north of the waterfalls. It seems Lewanika did not consider the British a direct threat to his own power and in fact, the chief found ways to use his relationship with the British to enhance his position in the region. Victoria Falls sparked British imagination, as administrators, entrepreneurs, and settlers contemplated possible involvement in the area and that imagination helped stimulate Lewanika’s vision of himself, his regime, and his subjects within the changing political and economic landscape of early colonial expansion.

⁹Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 56.

¹⁰Letter from Lord Palmerton dated April 12, 1861 (CO 30/22/2, Public Records Office, Kew).

The Falls, while clearly a dramatic natural landmark that represent nature and imagination simultaneously, came to symbolize the exoticism Europeans applied to “darkest” Africa. The site became the center of a messy struggle for power as Africans and Europeans alike laid claim to it, which intensified as the fight over the landmark instigated more fights over regional authority and control over labor. Local claims existed long before David Livingstone’s visit sparked international interest in the site. Just as the area experienced a joust for control over economic activities and resources, Africans in Barotseland and its periphery also fought for access to the waterfalls. The Falls represented power in an ethereal sense and “local populations used a number of inlets near the Victoria Falls as spots for worshipping the unknown through their ancestral spirits.”¹¹ With such significance attached to the site, it is easy to imagine why communities in the region made ownership claims. Control over a spiritually powerful landmark represented the potential for power in the earthly realm.

In order to understand precolonial claims to the Falls, it is important to understand the political landscape of the area. There was significant mobility of Africans in this region prior to the mid-nineteenth century, which along with the abundant resources in the area created ripe ground for political dynamism and fluidity. The relationship between the Lozi and the Tonga (and their close neighbors, the Ila) is particularly important when considering precolonial claims to the Falls. Dating back to the seventeenth century, the Lozi were settled in the upper floodplain of the Zambezi River. The flood plain is approximately 120 miles long and 25 miles wide and has outlying areas hospitable to agricultural production.¹² The Lozi considered the floodplain the heart of their state¹³ but increasingly looked to expand their control over land and resources throughout the greater region. According to Lozi oral tradition, it was during Chief Mulambwa’s reign from about 1780 until 1830 that the Lozi successfully organized a centralized state, achieved in part by incorporating outside communities

¹¹ “Sun-International Proposed Development at Victoria Falls, Zambia,” Specialist Report—*Archaeology and Cultural History*, November 1998 (Livingstone Museum Archives).

¹² Elizabeth Colson and Max Gluckman, eds., *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* (London, New York, and Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 1.

¹³ Mutumba Mainga, *Bulozi Under the Luyana Kings: Political Evolution and State Formation in Pre-colonial Zambia* (London: Longman Press, 1973), p. 4.



Fig. 2.1 The Tonga Plateau looking over the Zambezi. Photograph by Andrea L. Arrington-Sirois, 2006.

into the consolidated kingdom.¹⁴ The Batoka (Tonga) was one of the groups incorporated in the Lozi state. Settled on the banks of the Zambezi east of the Falls and on the Tonga Plateau, the Tonga were an important component of the Lozi’s expansion efforts because of the abundant natural resources and relatively large population from which to extract tribute and labor (Fig. 2.1).¹⁵

Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, the Tonga lived in a decentralized political system, but there was enough connectivity to support the development of a distinguishable Tonga culture. Their settlement along the

¹⁴ Gerald L. Caplan, *The Elites of Barotseland 1878–1969: A Political History of Zambia’s Western Province* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), p. 2.

¹⁵ Alfred Bertrand, *The Kingdom of the Barotsi, Upper Zambezia; A Voyage of Explorations in Africa Returning by the Victoria Falls, Matabeleland, the Transvaal, Natal, and the Cape*, trans. A.B. Miall (Cape Town, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, and Stellensbosch: J.C. Juta & Co., 1899), p. 272.

banks of the Zambezi and on the Tonga Plateau afforded them a comfortable existence. Despite a relatively dense population among Tonga communities, agricultural activities sustained the area and allowed for surplus production for trade.¹⁶ The land was able to also support large herds of cattle, adding to the wealth of the Tonga communities.¹⁷ Accounts given by travelers to the region in the mid eighteenth century suggest that the Tonga lived peacefully with one another, sharing resources, and developing a unified culture, but remained in a decentralized political structure.¹⁸

The Tonga were unable to organize strong resistance to Lozi encroachment. Former Native Commissioner of Northern Rhodesia D.W. Stirke surmised that Lozi “successes over people like the...Batonga [Tonga] were nearly always gained by treachery, superior numbers, superior weapons, or else by internal dissensions amongst the people they raided.”¹⁹ As the Lozi state strengthened and expanded, many of the threatened populations, including Tonga communities, chose not to fight against the Lozi in order to avoid violence and harsh punishments, such as heavy tributes. This allowed them to remain semiautonomous, though they were certainly integrated into the Lozi political and economic systems.²⁰ The Tonga not only felt pressure from their Lozi neighbors but also faced threats from populations to the north, northeast, and south also looking to expand. The early nineteenth century was a period of great tumult in the region, and it is likely that the Tonga expected that their incorporation into the Lozi state would afford them protection against other threats, while still allowing some autonomy.²¹

¹⁶ Kenneth P. Vickery, *Black and White in Southern Zambia: The Tonga Plateau Economy and British Imperialism, 1890–1939* (New York, Westport, and London: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 13.

¹⁷ Bayard Taylor, *Travels in South Africa* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1881), p. 241.

¹⁸ Charles Livingstone, “On the Batoka Country; Kongoni Mouth of the Zambesi, January 14, 1861,” in *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, VI, I-V, Session 1861–62, eds. F. Galton and W. Spottiswoode (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1862), p. 33.

¹⁹ D.W. Stirke, *Barotseland: Eight Years among the Barotse* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 39.

²⁰ Edward C. Tabler, “Introduction,” in George Westbeech and Norman MacLeod, *Trade and Travel in Early Barotseland: The Diaries of George Westbeech 1885–1888 and Captain Norman MacLeod 1875–1876*, ed. Edward C. Tabler (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), p. 2.

²¹ For more on this precarious balance, see Andrea Arrington, “Power, Culture, and Colonial Development around Victoria Falls, 1880–1910” (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 2007), pp. 28–31.

During the 1830s, the Tonga Plateau and Barotseland experienced major political upheaval. Under the leadership of Sebitwane, the Makololo people from the Transorangia region of South Africa pushed north across the Zambezi River, disrupting the still embryonic centralized Lozi state.²² Despite their association with the militarized Lozi state, the Tonga were easily overtaken by the Makololo, who displaced several communities and laid claim to the large cattle herds, leaving the Tonga population in disarray.²³ As the Makololo moved further north into Lozi territory, Barotseland was already in upheaval due to a succession struggle after the death of Mulambwa, rendering the Lozi leadership distracted. Sebitwane viewed the Lozi as an important ally against the Ndebele that the Makololo were also fighting against, and thus decided to bring several of Lozi leaders into his political structure. In particular, Sebitwane identified Mulambwa’s sons Sepopa and Sibeso as important potential allies, even as they were asserting their claims to the Lozi chieftaincy.²⁴ There was mixed response to the Makololo presence in Barotseland; some of the Lozi elite stayed to work with Sebitwane while others fled north, reorganizing and waiting, hoping to gather support for claims to the Lozi chieftaincy, once the Makololo threat was over. Among those who stayed under Sebitwane’s occupation, there was agreement that Sebitwane was “a good and great hearted man and a wise ruler.”²⁵ Those that stayed and showed support for Sebitwane were treated well, many enjoying the return of their stolen cattle from the Makololo raiders and some being given administrative positions in the new hierarchy.²⁶

In 1851 Sebitwane died and his death came at a time when the Makololo state was already struggling to maintain its power against the Ndebele. The relatively small minority of Makololo residing in Barotseland along with the weakened Makololo state under Sebitwane’s

²² Caplan, *Elites of Barotseland*, p. 10.

²³ For descriptions of the post-Makololo status of Tonga settlements, see Charles Livingstone, “On the Batoka Country,” p. 33; Bayard Taylor, “Travels,” p. 241; and Friedrich Ratzel, *The History of Mankind*, trans. A.J. Butler (London and New York: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1897), p. 551.

²⁴ Caplan, *Elites of Barotseland*, p. 10.

²⁵ Adolphe Jall, *The History of the Barotse Nation* (typed, unpublished manuscript, 1932), p. 51. English translation of Adolphe Jalla, *Litaba za Sichaba Sa Malozi* (London: for use by the Colonial Office, 1909. Livingstone Museum Archives).

²⁶ Kabunda Kayongo, *Reciprocity and Interdependence: The Rise and Fall of the Lololo Empire in Southern Africa in the 19th Century* (Lund, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1987), p. 101.

son Sekeletu allowed some of the Lozi elites who had fled north to start planning their return to Barotseland. In 1863 Sekeletu died, setting off infighting among the Makololo leadership. Sepopa, one of Mulambwa's sons²⁷ made his move to restore his family to the chieftaincy of Barotseland. Originally pegged as a potential ally and friend of the Makololo, Sepopa had eventually fled the Makololo-occupied Barotseland to start planning for his rise to power. Sepopa was able to easily defeat the Makololo in Barotseland in 1864, effectively ending any Makololo claim to authority over the Lozi people.²⁸ After Sepopa's death in 1876, one of Mulambwa's grandsons rose to power, but his tenure was brief and in 1878 King Lewanika was unanimously voted into the position.²⁹ Lewanika changed his name from Lubosi, which meant "the escaped one," to Lewanika, which meant "the conqueror" or "to join, to add together," a clear indication of his plans for not only restoring but also expanding Lozi authority and influence in the greater region.³⁰ As will be explained in subsequent chapters, Lewanika had ambitious plans for Barotseland that included expanding its authority south to the famous waterfalls. The relationship between the Tonga and Lozi would undergo another transformation in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. As part of the territory affected by Lozi expansion efforts, the guardianship of Victoria Falls would become increasingly less clear to interested European parties.

PROXIMITY AND POWER: DISPUTED CLAIMS OVER THE FALLS

The Tonga people, in particular the people of the Bene-Mukuni Kingdom (often identified as part of the Leya subgroup of the Tonga), lived closest to the Falls on the eve of colonization. The Tonga referred to the Falls as "Nsyungu Namutitima" meaning the "heavy fog that thunders." An official publication of the Bene-Mukuni Kingdom states that "the Victoria

²⁷ Most historians refer to Sepopa (also spelled Sipopa) as one of Mulambwa's sons, but some scholars believe he may actually have been the grandson of Mulambwa. See Kayongo, *Reciprocity*, 145 for more on that discussion.

²⁸ Vincent W. Turner, *The Lozi Peoples of North-Western Rhodesia* (London: International African Institute, 1952), p. 13.

²⁹ Gervas Clay, *Your Friend, Lewanika: the life and times of Lubosi Lewanika, Litunga of Barotseland 1842 to 1916* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1968), pp. 19–20.

³⁰ Caplan, "Barotseland's Scramble," p. 278; Mainga, *Bulozi under the Luyana*, p. 128.

Falls have been holy ground and place of ancient worship to the Baleya people...The Victoria Falls had three holy shrine sites for the Baleya people: Katola Buseka: The place of a cheerful giver or offertory; Acipusyo: The place where holy water is drawn for rainmaking prayer rituals and blessings for the thatching of the Mamunaki & Namilangu Royal Huts; Nsamba Dwazi: The disease cleansing site.”³¹ Although it is wise to consider that the Tonga now market Victoria Falls to tourists and may exaggerate local symbolism to impress their visitors, it is clear that local people attached special meaning to the Falls, and accessed the site for symbolic or spiritual purposes.

In my interviews with three Tonga elders, my informants substantiated claims that the waterfalls historically fall under Tonga guardianship. Interestingly, there was not sustained discussion about this topic; it seemed almost a non-issue to the interviewees, who asserted clarity on the point that the Falls belong to the Leya, a subgroup of the Tonga that historically lived in settlements closest to the Falls. Mr. Wingrey Balengu Siloka, reiterated the proper name of the waterfalls, telling me, “[W]e called the falls “Nsyungu na Mutitima.”³² He then explained that “the traditionalists used to get rainfall from the Falls,”³³ referring to the spray that was thought to have especially strong powers. Mr. Siloka ended his discussion of the topic saying that he felt by proximity alone, the Leya rightfully possess ownership of the Falls.³⁴ I asked him if anyone else tried to make historical claims to the Falls and he replied that the Lozi had tried to and that he thought their claims got consideration by outsiders (presumably

³¹ Mukuni Development Trust, “The Bene-Mukuni Kingdom. The People of the Victoria Falls: A Fascinating Story” (Africana Finance & Investments and African Wildlife Foundation, 2005), p. 1.

³² Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansandu, and Dorica Makole, July 2006. Chief Mukuni arranged for me to meet with these three members of his community at one of his properties. He identified them as three of the oldest members in the area who had a long history at Livingstone. Mr. Siloka, Mr. Siansandu, and Mrs. Makole generously indulged my questions about their childhood memories of Livingstone but also offered some insights into the issue of ownership and the Falls.

³³ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansandu, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

³⁴ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansandu, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

European settlers) because they were more educated and that education allowed them more credibility with outsiders.³⁵

Mr. Siansandu also offered insight into the question of guardianship of the Falls. After listening to Mr. Siloka's response about the Lozi making claims to the Falls, Mr. Siansandu added, "[T]he Leya are unhappy because they were not consulted about the Falls. When the Lozi gave the Falls the name Mosi-oa-tunya they were explaining it in their own language. It never belonged to them." Mosi-oa-tunya is commonly referred to as the "local" name for the Falls but as Mr. Siansandu rightly notes, it is not a name given by any of the groups in closest proximity to the Falls. To him, the name Mosi-oa-tunya is as misplaced as the name Victoria Falls. He identifies that name as reflective of the Lozi making claims on something that was not actually theirs. Mrs. Makole also engaged in this conversation, picking up where Mr. Siansandu ended. She explained that when Europeans first got to the area, "there were tribal wars and people were trying to get all the land,"³⁶ likely referring to the Lozi pushing back into Tonga territory, and she was clear about who she believed was still the rightful authority of the land around the Falls. She said, "[W]hen the white man came this belonged to the Leya people. They found the Leya people here."³⁷ Even if the Lozi were trying to make a power play in the Tonga region, Mrs. Makole asserted that there was no dispute who the land belonged to and what the majority group was at the time.

Yet, despite the clarity that the Tonga have regarding claims to the Falls, it was not the Tonga who ceded away the rights of the land that included the site. Instead, it was Lewanika who was approached by the British South Africa Company (BSACo) about the area. One of the Tonga chiefs at the time, Chief Monze, tried to establish himself as the recognized leader of the lands of which the BSACo was seeking access. As scholars Dan O'Brien and Carolyn O'Brien explain, despite a strong show of authority, "[T]he [BSACo] officials were not able, however, to accept that a person such as Monze Ncete, whose particular kind of religious leadership they did not comprehend, could also be a valuable political ally...The company was ill at ease with the concept of dealing with a

³⁵ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansandu, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

³⁶ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansandu, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

³⁷ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansandu, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

religio-political leader, who in their terms was really a ‘witchdoctor’.”³⁸ This point is important in two ways; first, the Chief known as “Monze” is reflective of the leadership of the Monze cult or shrine, which is directly responsible for the popular, biannual Lwiindi rainmaking ceremony. With rainmaking closely linked to ceremonies and rituals at the Falls as a sacred site, it would make sense that the Monze leadership would feel responsible for the Falls. It is also significant as it relates to the information shared by Mrs. Makole during my interview when she mentioned that “stronger tribes were taking advantage of the weaker tribes.”³⁹ As will be shown later, the Lozi were not interested in ascribing any power to the Tonga; Lewanika promoted himself to the BSACo as the leader of this group and presented himself as the appropriate leader to consult on matters concerning the area around the Falls. He would not have conceded to the Monze leadership in such matters. The BSACo was much more comfortable with a leader like Lewanika than with a figure like Monze who straddled both the religious and political realms of the Tonga community, and thus the Tonga leadership was removed from the picture.⁴⁰

It would be hard to suggest that the Tonga do not have a historically legitimate claim to being at least stewards of the waterfalls. It is not surprising that they who lived in such close proximity to the Falls placed high significance to the natural wonder or that they make strong claims as guardians of the site. The Falls served important purposes in terms of both physical and ethereal terms. There had been plenty of time for the Tonga and its subgroups to weave the waterfalls into their earthly and spiritual lives; they were believed to have settled in the region as early as the

³⁸ Dan O’Brien and Carolyn O’Brien, “The Monze Rain Festival: The History of Change in a Religious Cult in Zambia” (Boston: *The International Journal of African Historical Studies Center* 29, no. 3, 1997), 521.

³⁹ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansandu, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

⁴⁰ Interestingly, in a move to demonstrate authority, the Monze chief collected taxes from Tonga communities under his religious and political authority to present to the BSACo. His hope was that the BSACo would recognize that he was viewed by those communities as the leader rather than Lewanika, who did not collect BSACo taxes among those groups. The plan backfired though, and Monze was actually arrested and imprisoned for collecting taxes under false pretenses. For more about this case, see Dan O’Brien, “Chiefs of Rain, Chiefs of Ruling: A Reinterpretation of Pre-Colonial Tonga Social and Political Structure” (Cambridge, England: *Journal of the International African Institute* 53, no. 4, 1983), 23–42.

seventeenth century.⁴¹ Organized in a moderately decentralized structure with multiple small communities, the Tonga were extremely vulnerable to external pressure presented by the Lozi to the north and the Ndebele in the south.⁴² Indeed, during periods of Lozi imperial activities the Tonga were at times thought (at least by the Lozi) to be part of Barotseland. Both the Lozi and the Ndebele extracted tribute from these various Tonga groups and the Tonga were often subjected to raids from both sides. Additionally, the precariousness of the Tonga's position was exacerbated by being located in between the two powerful groups which often staged attacks on one another. The instability this created disrupted the activities of the rather unfortunately located Tonga. The Zambezi River near the Falls functioned as protection as

these small groups living around the Falls were able to use and exploit their geographical niche to maintain a degree of independence from the Lozi and Ndebele states. They could do so due to their command of crossing points on the river and close knowledge of the landscape. The Zambezi in this section was a formidable barrier to those who did not know it intimately... An unskilled boatsman risked being swept over the edge of the waterfall.⁴³

Likewise, islands in the Zambezi near the Falls offered ideal hiding spots for the Tonga whose familiarity with the landscape and canoeing skill allowed them to utilize the river for protection.

The Tonga regarded the Falls as a sacred site and as such, several ceremonies were commonly performed around the site. Upon his first visit to the Falls in 1855 Livingstone recorded that "at three spots near these falls, one of them the island in the middle, on which we were, three Batoka chiefs offered up prayers and sacrifices... They chose their places of prayer with the sound of the roar of the cataract... Fear may have induced the selection. The river itself is to them mysterious."⁴⁴ Francois Coillard, the first missionary to settle in the area, confirmed this idea that the Falls were

⁴¹R.A. Heath, "Victoria Falls—The Growth of a Rhodesian Village," in *Geographical Association of Rhodesia: Proceedings of 1976/77*, No. 10 (Salisbury: Rhodesia, 1977), p. 15.

⁴²For a thorough analysis of the tenuous position of the Tonga and Leya people in this area, see: Joann McGregor, *Crossing the Zambezi: The Politics of Landscape on a Central African Frontier* (Suffolk, UK and Harare: James Currey and Weaver Press, 2009).

⁴³McGregor, JoAnn, "The Victoria Falls 1900–1940: Landscape, Tourism, and the Geographical Imagination," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29, no. 3 (September 2003), 720.

⁴⁴Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 562.

not only revered but also feared. He suggested that “the natives believe it [the Falls] is haunted by a malevolent and cruel divinity, and they make it offerings to conciliate its favour, a bead necklace, a bracelet, or some other object, which they fling into the abyss, bursting into lugubrious incantations, quite in harmony with their dread and horror.”⁴⁵ The Falls in this context were interpreted as manifestations of an intangible power that was taken seriously by local communities.

Alternatively, many sources do not imply a sense of fear of the spiritual power of the Falls. Asked to assess the potential impact of a development scheme around the Falls, sociologist Kingsley Munyima conducted interviews with the people of Mukuni village and asked about the historical and spiritual significance of the Falls. An elderly woman narrated a story to demonstrate the sacredness of the site to the Mukuni kingdom. She explained that her uncle was once walking near the Falls when he saw black sheep. Considering himself blessed he rushed toward the sheep to herd them and bring them back to his kraal. He moved too quickly and scared the sheep who fell over the side into the Falls. According to the village elders, “the sheep he had seen were people, their ancestors who died a long time ago and were now living under the Victoria Falls water. It is also believed that at certain times, drums would be heard sounding from the falls. This is believed to be the time when the ancestors are happy and they are dancing.”⁴⁶ Munyima’s research suggests that there was not necessarily a sense of fear regarding the Falls.

Another explanation for the beating sound produced by the Falls reflects on the history of conflict in the area. Chiefs Mukuni and Sekute were two of the more powerful chiefs in the area, and they often fought for greater dominance and influence among the Tonga. One legend suggests that “chief Sekute’s chiefly drum fell over the edge of the waterfall in battles between Sekute and Mukuni and lodged itself under the water at the foot of the gorge such that the falling water beats down upon it, making it sound like a beaten drum.”⁴⁷ The site offered a physical reminder of the tug of war for local power.

⁴⁵ Coillard, *On the Threshold*, p. 55.

⁴⁶ Kingsley M. Munyima, *Victoria Falls Area Residents—Their Dependence on the Area and the Likely Rehabilitation Project Impact on Them. A Report on an Impact Study Carried out on the Victoria Falls Residents and the Mukuni People in General*, Ministry of Tourism, 1991, p. 20.

⁴⁷ McGregor, “The Victoria Falls,” p. 721.

In an unpublished draft of a paper detailing the cultural heritage of the Bene Mukuni people, Shadreck Mabote Mwendambeli, the Realm Premier of the Bene Mukuni, describes one of the most important ceremonies that incorporated the Falls. First he explains the significance of the Lwiindi ceremony, also known as the Cultural Feast of the Spray Ceremony of the Victoria Falls, as the following: “Lwiindi is ideologically important in terms of legitimizing the Munokalya Mukuni’s Kingship, as is the case in all Kingships where the King provides the earthly link between the living and the long line of spiritual ancestors living in the world hereafter.”⁴⁸ The ceremony was meant to address three particular aspects of community concern—rain for good harvests and healthy cattle, community bonding and the preservation of cultural heritage, and strong traditional governance.⁴⁹

The ancestors thought to be living under the Falls were also accessible to people pursuing good health. By honoring their ancestors through rituals performed near the Falls with water from the base of the waterfalls, “people who suffered from scabies also used to go to the same place to pray and ask their spirits to have them cured.”⁵⁰ Indeed, cleansing powers were often attributed to the Falls. A pool that formed above the Falls was a place where “the diseased and afflicted jumped...in a cleansing ritual in which they allowed their clothing to be washed away over the waterfall, carrying infection and ill health with it.”⁵¹ Female fertility and female authority was also connected to the waterfalls, further demonstrating the curative strength of Falls-related ritual.

Shrines constructed in close proximity to the Falls served as locations to perform specialized offerings and sacrifices. One such shrine was Chizabingo which when used called for adequate rainmaking. Mwendambeli states, “[H]ere ritual warriors, Basilombelombe, smear their bodies with ‘Mphemba’—Limestone Clay and dress up in leaves to symbolize their having become one with nature and as such they are supposed to take up responsibility henceforth to live in harmony with and not harm the natural environment.”⁵² Another account of the Basilombelombe discusses the importance of water in the ritual. The young men perform-

⁴⁸ Shadreck Mabote Mwendambeli, Unpublished, untitled document on the cultural heritage of the Bene Mukuni (Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 8.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Munyima, *Victoria Falls Area Residents*, p. 30.

⁵¹ McGregor, “The Victoria Falls,” p. 722.

⁵² Mwendambeli (untitled), p. 9.

ing the ritual “would be sent on an errand to draw some water from the falls. Apparently they have to draw the water only from a certain particular point specially known to the local people as Chisamuchilikumbete, which means, a tree which looks like a person whose arms are folded up together.”⁵³ Under the rule of Le-Dyango, a powerful Chieftainess, after the rains came the Tonga showed gratitude to ancestor spirits in a thanksgiving ceremony. “A black he-goat was slaughtered at the Victoria Falls. After the goat had been roasted and before eating, Le-Dyango mentioned all the names of the dead Chiefs in praise.”⁵⁴ The site was a critical component of some local populations’ ceremonies and was thus given revered status. As one outside observer noted, “The falls have always played an important part in the life of the peoples living along the banks of the Zambezi. The Tonga, who arrived in the area about 1500 AD, regarded some of the islands near the lip of the falls as sacred, and sacrificed there to their gods.”⁵⁵

It is obvious then that the Falls played an important role in Tonga defense strategies and cosmology.⁵⁶ The power of the falling water, the water itself, and the alleged ancestors in residence all contributed to making this site meaningful in multiple regards. The powers attributed to the Falls also inform this chapter’s discussion of regional negotiations for power over production and the environment. Many of the ceremonies related back to issues regarding productivity. Rain was a constant concern because “[T]he Toka Leya were mainly agriculturalists engaged in crop production for the subsistence [and tribute payments]. Therefore adequate rainfall was vital to their existence.”⁵⁷ Likewise, the health of the population related to the capabilities of the workers. To be productive they had to be healthy. The ritual of sacrifice and praise served to keep the ancestor spirits placated and that achievement ensured blessings and prosperity to the people. For the Tonga, who occupied a tenuous space

⁵³ Munyima, *Victoria Falls Area Residents*, p. 30.

⁵⁴ Jackie Shisholeka, Title unknown, article in *The Livingstone Mail*, January 6, 1967.

⁵⁵ “Victoria Falls in Retreat,” *Horizon*, January 1965 (National Archives of Zimbabwe), pp. 14–18.

⁵⁶ For more on the ways local populations used the waterfalls in religious ceremonies, see McGregor, *Crossing the Zambezi*, pp. 35–37.

⁵⁷ Flexon M. Mizinga, “Zambian Traditional Ceremonies, with Special Reference to the Lwiindi Ceremony of the Toka Leya of Mukuni Chieftaincy of Kalomo District,” Research conducted by the Livingstone Museum and Humanities and Social Science Department (University of Zambia), 1990.

between the Lozi and the Ndebele, the Falls represented power in the spiritual realm. Many of the challenges the Tonga encountered could be rebuffed by accessing the physical and spiritual powers of the Falls.⁵⁸ Even if their reality remained the same they were confident that their spirituality was untouched.

The Tonga took their attachment to the Falls seriously and considered themselves the protector of the site. Their status as subjects of the Lozi failed to weaken their resolve to guard this revered landmark. The Mukuni believed they were ordained to do so because when the Mukuni people migrated to the site under the leadership of Mukuni N’gombe, De-Nyango welcomed them and named their leader a coruler alongside her. In doing so, De-Nyango “invested him with the Lion insignia... who ruled the area. It was through this ritual that Mukuni N’gombe was designated the Munokalya Muchelewa of Nsyungu or the Lion King of Victoria Falls to defend, protect this natural wonder and very important tribal shrine against degradation or defilement.”⁵⁹ Although powerless in some regards, the subjected people refused to drop their claims to the Falls.

The most popular indigenous nomenclature of the Falls is “Musi-o-Tunya” or “Mosi-oa-Tunya.”⁶⁰ The Lozi called the waterfalls Musi-o-Tunya, or “the smoke that rises,” which David Livingstone misspelled (hence Mosi-oa-Tunya) and mistranslated (the smoke that thunders). The Lozi did not live nearly as close to the Falls, and because of this lack of proximity their relationship with the Falls was much more circumscribed. When Livingstone first visited the Falls he was in the company of some Lozi men, including Chief Sebitwane. Livingstone wrote that “[T]hey [his Lozi travel companions] did not go near enough to examine them [the Falls], but, viewing them with awe at a distance, said, in reference to the vapor and noise, “Mosi oa tunya” (smoke does sound

⁵⁸The Tonga used the Zambezi and Victoria Falls to their advantage by employing the landscape and waterscape to serve as barriers whenever possible. For more on the ways the Tonga used the river and Falls to their benefit, see McGregor 2009, pp. 28–30.

⁵⁹Chief Mukuni to President Mwanawasa, “Confidential Letter from Munokalya Muchelewa Siloka III Mukuni XIX to the President of Zambia, 15 February 2002” (Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 2.

⁶⁰This is the name referenced earlier; one of my interviewees felt the name should not be used because it was the name that Lozi outsiders to the area gave the site and was not its authentic name.

there.)”⁶¹ This distance did not keep the Lozi from laying claim to the geographical wonder. Their regional hegemony relied on multiple assertions of power, thus the stewardship of the Falls was something worth claiming, especially as the threat of colonization put increasing pressure on the Lozi to somehow retain as much regional hegemony as possible.

The Lozi lived along the Zambezi River and it is through this riparian connection that they justified their relationship to the Falls. From the conversation recorded in Livingstone’s travelogue it is evident that in the mid-nineteenth century, the Lozi were in awe of the landmark, but there is not a strong sense of ownership. It is difficult to determine what type of power, if any, was ascribed to the Falls and it is easy to suspect that in fact, beyond being aware of the presence and magnitude of the waterfalls, the Lozi had a negligible connection to the site. Interestingly, it seems the Lozi did recognize the rainmaking abilities of the Monze cult. There is a report, for instance, that in 1903 “Lewanika had come to him [Monze] when the Lozi were short of rain,”⁶² indicating that the Lozi turned to the Monze cult and its rainmakers to respond to drought in Barotseland. It would seem then that the Lozi themselves did not incorporate the Falls or the shrines adjacent to the Falls into rainmaking activities, but did request help from the Monze cult to access those resources to help bring rain to Barotseland.

In her article on the European commercialization of the Falls, McGregor states that “new symbolic appropriations of the river in the early twentieth century depended on the mutual admiration of colonial administrators and Lozi royalty, and their mutual disregard for the Leya.”⁶³ In other words, the Lozi claims to the Falls were constructed during the transition to colonialism and were accepted by the colonial administrators because of an amiable preexisting relationship with the Lozi aristocracy. The Lozi laid claim to the Falls merely to challenge more local attachments to the site and asserted their power in yet another way. There was no strong evidence the Lozi could provide the BSACo proving their jurisdiction over the Falls, but it was certainly easier for the BSACo to work with Lewanika, a proven connection who eased the way to formal colonization north of the Zambezi.

⁶¹ Livingstone, *Missionary Travels*, p. 557.

⁶² O’Brien and O’Brien, “Monze Rain Festival,” p. 523.

⁶³ McGregor, p. 719.

EARLY EUROPEAN VISITORS

While the political landscape was in flux north of the Zambezi, the region also experienced an increasingly steady flow of European visitors to the area. After David Livingstone's descriptions of the Falls became public, Europeans from Europe and South Africa began trickling into the area to see the site. During the last half of the 1860s dozens of Europeans ventured to Victoria Falls, which at that time was a landmark synonymous with the African frontier, and by the middle of the 1870s, around fifty Europeans visited the area around Victoria Falls.⁶⁴ The European and more specifically, British, activity in the area pushed the Falls and neighboring region as a focal point in British discourse on Africa and their plans for empire expansion. David Livingstone sparked the imagination of his fellow countrymen with his "discovery" of Victoria Falls and by bestowing an English name on the site marked the beginning of British claims of the waterfalls. Subsequent European visitors helped sustain interest in the Falls and the distracted leadership of the area made it increasingly easier for the British to envision Victoria Falls as part of the Empire. Lozi Chief Sepopa was at the time preoccupied with internal conflicts and threats to his power which meant that Europeans were not strictly monitored and enjoyed general freedom as they moved throughout Barotseland.

The four decades after Livingstone's self-proclaimed discovery of the waterfalls saw an increasing number of European adventurers and sportsmen visiting this part of the Zambezi in order to see the Falls themselves. What resulted was a prolific travel writing collection with strong attention to Victoria Falls. The fascination for the site that Livingstone helped manufacture was sustained and expanded by the writing of other visitors to the waterfalls. Though these visitors were not representatives of a colonial administration their exploits in the region and focus on the Falls helped embed Victoria Falls as an icon in the British imagination.

Livingstone's first description of the Falls, written in *Missionary's Travels*, were significant in that the book helped publicize this important "discovery" of the site, but it was not until his second visit to the Falls that Livingstone produced a more compelling description. It was the first in a long series of evocative travelogue writing that attempted to convey the beauty and magnitude of Victoria Falls. Several British newspapers published Livingstone's secondary reflections of the waterfalls that were

⁶⁴ Phillipson, *Mosi-oo-Tunya*, p. 82.

presumably sent to the press for dissemination. Livingstone reported to his enthralled audience,

After a second visit, I am inclined to believe that the Victoria Falls are the most wonderful in the world. It is the only grand sight the gentle Africans have to show. I tried to get them taken by an artist, but, to my regret, I failed. The breadth is not one thousand yards, as I conjectured, but between one statute and one geographical mile—we say eighteen hundred and sixty yards...Then the river of this breadth leaps down, not one hundred feet, but three hundred and ten feet, i.e., if my memory deceives me not, double the width of Niagara...Nothing but several oil paintings could have given an idea of the wonderful scene, and it was sorely against my will that I had to forego this, which would have been a feather in the cap of our expedition, and a good thing for our artist as well...Come when you may, you will not be disappointed by the falls of Victoria.⁶⁵

Livingstone appeared to be rethinking and further emphasizing the greatness of what many viewed his most significant African discovery and this new account of the Falls promised his readers that the waterfalls deserved admiration. Particularly compelling is the last line of the citation; Livingstone’s promise that Victoria Falls would not disappoint, regardless of season and water volume subtly implied a sense that there would be more visitors to the site. Whether that comment was flip or a harbinger of things to come, Livingstone’s endorsement of this feature of the African landscape proved to spark further interest in the site. His brother Charles Livingstone was also along for this 1861 trip to Victoria Falls and shared his own thoughts on the site. In one of his letters, C. Livingstone shared his own dramatic interpretation of the scenery, portraying the Falls as something almost otherworldly when he gushed “[A]fter a descent of some twenty feet, the white waters become as it were animated. Comets, with heads resembling stars of the first magnitude, spring into existence, and leap out like living things, three, eight, or a dozen score at once, till the whole Fall seems like a mass of salient comets, each having a distinct and beautiful train of pure white vapour...If Niagara has any such phenomenon, I failed to observe it, and never saw anything of the kind in any

⁶⁵ “The Victoria Falls in Africa” (account written by David Livingstone), *Dublin Evening Mail*, June 5, 1861, p. 1. This was just one of several British newspapers that carried this excerpted piece.

other waterfall.”⁶⁶ This description elevated Victoria Falls into an ethereal realm while dismissing Niagara Falls and other waterfalls as unworthy of comparison. Truly, Victoria Falls was placed on a pedestal and the Livingstone brothers brought this feature of the African landscape to an eager British audience. Such descriptions of the Falls ignited British interest and imagination in a site most would never get to visit.

Following closely behind Livingstone was William Charles Baldwin, a hunter and adventurer who went to the Zambezi Valley seeking to meet the legendary Livingstone. Baldwin’s journey was recounted as harrowing, something many writers emphasized in their reports on Baldwin’s adventure to the Falls. One British newspaper published an article first circulated in the Cape Town press that represented the style of travel writing and reporting that caught readers’ attention. The piece highlighted the spirit of adventure travel, extolling Baldwin who “after a most eventful and successful hunt...left his waggons [sic]...and his people having refused to accompany him, he gallantly started, unaccompanied, on foot, with that steadfast friend- his gun, and a pocket compass; he struck for the Victoria Falls, he had no guide but a map, and Dr. Livingstone’s descriptions. After much distress, owing to the scarcity of water and ignorance of the country, interruption from wild animals, &c, he, to his own great astonishment at the river not three miles above the Falls he was obliged to remain by the river two days before any Kaffirs would come over in their canoes.”⁶⁷ It is evident from the eager retelling of the obstacles Baldwin encountered that Victoria Falls set the stage for stories of grand adventure and tenacious adventurers. Part of the fascination with Victoria Falls was the issue of accessibility and the challenges visitors faced to reach this remote and incredible destination.

Upon reaching this area near the Falls a lesser Tonga chief, Masipootana, detained Baldwin and his party despite Baldwin’s attempts to “gift” his way out of the predicament.⁶⁸ It was after Livingstone and Sekelutu’s intervention that Baldwin’s party was able to move on, and this exchange marked an important moment in African-European interactions in this region. Livingstone discovered the Falls for a European

⁶⁶ “The Livingstone Expedition” (published letter written by Charles Livingstone), *Reading Mercury*, April 27, 1861, p. 2.

⁶⁷ “Travels in South Africa,” *Morpeth Herald*, April 6, 1861, p. 7.

⁶⁸ William Charles Baldwin, *African Hunting and Adventure from Natal to the Zambezi* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1894), p. 380.

audience, but perhaps more importantly, Baldwin’s appearance at the site served as evidence that more Europeans would be following in Livingstone’s footsteps. Europeans and Africans alike were going to need to determine the nature of their relationships and the appropriate behavior of both sides based on an increasing number of European visitors to the region. Interestingly, Baldwin conceded that although Livingstone’s intervention helped him avoid a true crisis at Victoria Falls, he and his party “were entirely in their [African] power.”⁶⁹ It is worth considering that perhaps if Sekelutu had not been influenced to negotiate Baldwin’s release from Masipootana, the trajectory of European activities around Victoria Falls may have been curtailed or delayed by inhospitable African policies toward European visitors.⁷⁰ In fact though, Sekelutu went one step further than just smoothing the way for Baldwin’s party; in an effort to prove to Europeans that they were welcome in the region and could expect a hospitable reception, Sekelutu gave Livingstone a letter addressed to Queen Victoria inviting her to send her white people to the Upper Zambezi Valley. In the letter, he assured her that her people would be given access to land on the Tonga Plateau.⁷¹ Sekelutu was taking a bold step as he established his position on welcoming the British to the Upper Zambezi Valley.

In 1861 a small group of Boer hunters traveled north of the Zambezi in the region of Victoria Falls. Unfortunately for these hunters, malaria killed all but one member of the party, Martinus Swartz.⁷² Following this group

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

⁷⁰ Unsurprisingly, as Sekelutu and then Lewanika used their growing friendships with the British to further their own political power, the Tonga became more wary of the increasing European traffic around the Falls. Although not as powerful as Makololo or Lozi chiefs, Tonga leaders in a historically vulnerable position at this part of the Zambezi Valley were savvy enough to understand that British expansion into the Falls region was going to cause major disruptions for the local population, thus the Tonga were less hospitable. As more Europeans entered the region, the Tonga, once reported by Charles Livingstone as great hosts to outsiders (see Charles Livingstone, “On the Batoka Country,” p. 34) altered their treatment of Europeans. It would appear that as more outsiders showed up, they imagined dire consequences, and as such, “their attitude towards Livingstone and later travellers [sic], down to the incoming of the British South Africa Company, was hostile” (Stirke, *Barotseland*, p. 18).

⁷¹ Brian Fagan, *A Short History of Zambia: From the earliest times until A.D. 1900* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 141.

⁷² D.W. Phillipson, *Mosi-Oa-Tunya: Handbook to the Victoria Falls Region* (Prentice Hall Press, 1976), p. 81.

of hunters were two visitors who proved important in further publicizing and promoting Victoria Falls as a place of serious British interest. James Chapman and Thomas Baines arrived at the Falls in 1862. Chapman, an adventurer and hunter, had been in the vicinity of the waterfalls in 1853, even before Livingstone, but he had not actually made his way to the site yet. In fact, his inability to reach the Falls was because at the time, Sekelutu was wary of this British visitor and decided to thwart Chapman's visit to see the waterfalls, forcing Chapman to "forgo the honour of being the first to visit them."⁷³ After Livingstone's visit paved the way for more Europeans to enter the region, Chapman returned to the area to see the Falls accompanied by Baines, a Cape artist intent on capturing the beauty of Victoria Falls and the surrounding landscape in his artwork. Baines and Chapman embarked on this trip with photography equipment to produce the first still images of the Falls. These men were held in high esteem, and Baines was described in one newspaper article as an artist "who has produced so many excellent views of South African scenes," while Chapman earned accolades as "a trader and sportsman, and equally successful in both pursuits" whose "book has many special merits..."⁷⁴ Together, these men garnered respect and generated excitement with their art and writing that made the African landscape and adventure travel accessible to a British and European audience.

In a provocative note in his travel writing Chapman, suspicious of Sekelutu after his earlier interaction with him, was pleased to report that "Sekeletu has left there [at the Falls] some of the Makololo...who can distinguish between Englishmen and Boers. Englishmen are to be received favourably, Boers are to be destroyed."⁷⁵ This tidbit indicates two important developments. First, this Makololo chief was inserting his own

⁷³ "The Victoria Falls of the Zambezi" (excerpt of a paper written by Thomas Baines), *Bradford Observer*, September 14, 1865, p. 6. It is unclear why Sekelutu decided not to allow Chapman to proceed to the Falls, only to allow Livingstone access a mere two years later. It is possible that Chapman's presence as a newcomer to the region took Sekelutu by surprise, leaving him unprepared to offer permission for travel to the Falls. By the time Livingstone arrived, Sekelutu may have been more confident in deciding how to interact with British visitors.

⁷⁴ "Literature, Science, and Art: Chapman's Sports in South Africa," *Birmingham Journal*, May 9, 1868, p. 10.

⁷⁵ James Chapman, *Travels in the Interior of South Africa 1849-1863: Hunting and Trading Journeys from Natal to Walvis Bay & Visits to Lake Ngami & Victoria Falls*, Vol. 2 (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1971), p. 57.

people at the Falls, suggesting that he wanted to show a presence at the site and that he did not want European visitors to be mistreated by the Tonga when visiting the site. He felt comfortable putting his own people in positions of guardianship over the waterfalls and one can only wonder how the political and religious leaders of the Tonga felt about this increased Makololo presence. Sekelutu’s vision of himself as a Makololo leader was evolving in terms of where he imagined his jurisdiction to extend and in terms of whom he would allow into his jurisdiction. It also demonstrates that Sekelutu was adopting a pro-British position as he was now happy to welcome British visitors but not Boers, who at the time were of course on less than friendly terms with the British in South Africa. Perhaps it also offers insight into Sekelutu’s evolving imagination of what he could gain from increasing his interactions with British visitors.

Despite Chapman’s approving note that Sekelutu had representatives in place to greet the British, Chapman’s account of his time at the Falls also suggests that the Makololo were aware that there was something to be gained by assuming guardianship of the Falls and European visitors to the site. Chapman was irritated by his contact with Madzakaza, the Makololo subchief he interacted with at Victoria Falls. Burdened by the photography equipment they carried to various vantage points around the Falls, progress was already slow for the two men. Chapman believed that Madzakaza was taking advantage of his visitors, explaining that

the chief [Madzakaza] wished for everything and at length begged for all he saw. I gave him 4 pounds of beads and determined to give him no more. When he reached home he sent over a man to say he wanted for himself the gun which I was at first going to send Sekeletu, and I was to send it to him. I then made up my mind he would get nothing. Next day, when Baines and I had gone to the Falls, he came with a small basket of groundnuts and had the impudence to send 2 miles for me, when I was working with my apparatus. I treated him with indifference, as he had done me.⁷⁶

These interactions occurred at an interesting point in political developments near the Falls and offer evidence of a subtly evolving relationship between European visitors and Africans at the site. After all, these visits to Victoria Falls by British travelers did not occur in a vacuum; the site itself

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

was at the center of a contested site, the place where the Upper Zambezi Valley and Middle Zambezi Valley converged and where kingdoms and chieftaincies had more to consider than the trickle of white visitors. As mentioned above, Sekelutu asserted Makololo guardianship over the Falls in a meaningful way by placing one of his sub-chiefs at Victoria Falls and Europeans encountered an increasingly organized protocol on how to gain access to the Falls. But even as he was establishing Victoria Falls as part of his jurisdiction the Makololo chief was only about two years away from losing power in Barotseland and Batoka land. Sekelutu's steps to entrench his power within the region would soon prove to be unsuccessful, and Chapman's attitude toward his hosts may have led to his realization that the Makololo were not as powerful as they might wish to appear. Chapman clearly did not take great pains to ingratiate himself with his hosts but he was successful in his mission to the Falls this time around. Sekelutu was too preoccupied by his localized political challenges to go to great pains to monitor the movement of his most recent visitors to the Falls or to oversee the way that Madzakaza treated those visitors.

Chapman minced no words when he offered his opinion on the future of Makololo rule, writing that Sekeletu used "the same trickery and mean devices of old, to entice traders across the river with their goods; when there, compel them to sell on their own terms or refuse to put them back on the south side... Sekeletu... is in a bad and incurable state. His demise will no doubt result in good if a more intelligent individual gets the command."⁷⁷ He then suggested that Sekeletu's right to succession was in question, as many believed he was not the biological son of Sebitwane. Finally, Chapman opined that Sekeletu inflated the significance of Livingstone and that in fact "he gained considerable importance by attaching himself to that mysterious parsonage the white doctor (Livingstone) and by buying guns from the white men who followed him. By the terror of his guns and the exaggerated idea of the influence of the Doctor... he made havoc amongst Sebetwane's friends."⁷⁸ Sekeletu's embellished concept of the value of his friendship with Livingstone created a false sense of security for the leader who was steadily losing authority.

Chapman had obvious disdain for Sekeletu which likely reflected his rivalry with Livingstone who had beat him to claiming one of the greatest European discoveries in Africa. Still, there is merit to Chapman's assessment

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

of Sekeletu's deterioration as a leader. By 1860, a visit to Linyanti (a Makololo capital) prompted Livingstone to write that Sebitwane's state was in serious decline under Sekelutu and that Makololo's subjects were rising up against their rulers and claiming independence from the authority that was forced on them decades earlier.⁷⁹ Sekeletu's death in 1863 marked the final deterioration of Makololo hegemony in North Western Rhodesia and Barotseland. The Lozi and Tonga then engaged in skirmishes to determine which group would ascend to the region's leadership. The Lozi ruling class, who enjoyed the dominant position before the Makololo invasion, was divided which created further challenges as they struggled to gain ultimate authority. Thus, it is evident that at the moment when European interest in the Zambezi and beyond intensified, the local political landscape was in a period of upheaval and transition. For the Lozi and Tonga this was a crucial time in determining the trajectory of politics, economics, and culture around Victoria Falls and in the Upper Zambezi Valley. The British were not the only ones imagining a future in this region, and the Tonga and Lozi had even more at stake as they imagined the potential of gaining or losing power and what might be the consequences of expanded European commerce in their land.

The end of Makololo rule resulted in a new period of interactions between Africans and Europeans as the Lozi who rose to power, namely Sepopa and Lewanika, devised their own policies on how to engage with European visitors. They focused on the reconstruction of the Lozi state which facilitated an increase in European traffic north of the Zambezie. Sepopa especially was too distracted by his political activities to pay close attention to visiting Europeans. His volatile and extremely violent reign indicates that he conceived of power as a product of rather more internal activities. During the last half of the 1860s, dozens more Europeans ventured to Victoria Falls, which at that time was a landmark synonymous with the African frontier, and by the middle of the 1870s, a couple of years before Sepopa's assassination, around fifty Europeans visited the area around Victoria Falls.⁸⁰ Sepopa's preoccupation with local concerns meant that Europeans were not as strictly monitored and enjoyed greater freedom as they moved throughout Barotseland.

The visit of Baines and Chapman in many ways intensified the attention of prospective travelers and armchair adventurers. Both men produced

⁷⁹ Livingstone and Livingstone, *Narratives of an Expedition*, pp. 290–291.

⁸⁰ Phillipson, *Mosi-oo-Tunya*, p. 82.

travelogues that offered new entries into the small but popular body of writing featuring Victoria Falls. Livingstone's own description, though exciting as the recorded discovery of this site, only whetted the appetites of a British and European audience intrigued and anxious to learn more about the African interior. These new descriptions of the Falls and the photographs and Baines' paintings brought to life the site so many Britons had read about, and the images helped stimulate further interest in Victoria Falls. In particular, Baines, perhaps because of his artistic eye, wrote an especially compelling account of the journey to the Falls. Baines' description of his arrival at Victoria Falls managed to elevate the site as still very much part of an untamed frontier and painted a romanticized picture of his journey to access the site. He described the approach to the Falls in detail and produced a grandiose image for his readers, writing

...we saw the water of the broad Zambesi glancing like a mirror beyond a long perspective of hill and valley, while from below it clouds of spray and mist nearly a mile in extent rose out of the chasm into which the water fell. The central five or six of these clouds or columns were the largest, but in all we counted ten, rising more like the cloud of spray thrown up by a cannon ball... A light easterly wind just swayed their soft vapoury tops; the sun, still low, shed its softened light over the sides exposed to it. The warm grey hills beyond faded gradually into the distance, and the deep valley before us, winding for six miles between us and the falls, showed every form of rough brown rock, and every tint of green or autumnal foliage, presenting to the eye, long wearied of sere and yellow mopanie leaves, dry rocks, burnt grass, and desolated country, the most lovely and refreshing *coup d'oeil* the soul of artist could imagine. Willingly could I have feasted my eye upon this distant vision for the day, but our wearied and thirsty men were heavy laden and pressing for water.⁸¹

This particular excerpt is a strong example of the types of writing that captured the attention of British readers and helped stimulate interest in colonial expansion in southern Africa. The landscape evoked a sense of mystery, as terrain shifted and one exotic environment transformed into something even more foreign and unexpected. Baines' account also speaks to a perceived hierarchy in the ability to appreciate this landscape—the beauty is particularly striking to an educated, western artist, but for the African porters, burdened by their loads, who forced the party to move

⁸¹ Thomas Baines, *Explorations in South West Africa*, p. 483.

on from admiring this scene. The writing was not unique to the genre of British travel writing during this time period; rather, it served British imperial interests in Africa by providing details of an exotic land that sparked intrigue and imagination as Britons pondered their role in taming this frontier.

In a review of Baines' travel writing, the reviewer focused on the accounts of Victoria Falls, emphasizing again the remoteness and grandeur of the waterfalls. While seemingly unimpressed by much of the text, the reviewer was drawn into the section on Baines' visits to the Falls and he shared that imagery with the readers of his review, focusing on the significance of Baines' trek to this obscure landscape, describing

...Mr. Baines approached the desired Victoria Falls. Leaving vehicles, horses, oxen, dogs, and attended by a few Makalaka natives, marched on foot across the tsetse-stricken red sand district, leading to the fresh and grassy country supplied with plentiful moisture from the waters of the magnificent cataract...The reader sitting by his fireside, languidly picking out the salient points of an expedition persevered in at such cost of time, patience, and endurance, can hardly estimate the feelings of the traveler who has attained the aim and end of his desire.⁸²

Indeed, this reviewer's note on how the fireside reader can hardly understand the magnitude of this vision is part of why Victoria Falls resonated so strongly in the British imagination at this time. Many early visitors to the Falls conveyed an Eden-like environment, a place where the semiarid landscape gave way to a lush forest supported by a wondrously dramatic cataract. It was depicted as a fantastical place and for those not seeing it firsthand these accounts were important in helping sustain popular support for an increasing British presence in Africa even at a time when the government itself was unsure how much more to invest in colonial activities on the continent.

Baines' artwork and the Chapman-Baines photographs were also crucial in generating further interest in this African frontier. The British audience was able to move beyond written descriptions to images that helped implant this landscape feature in their collective psyche. Two hundred of Baines' sketches and paintings, including those inspired by Victoria Falls, went on tour throughout Britain soon after his visit to the

⁸² "Literary Notices: Explorations in South West Africa," *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, February 4, 1865, p. 3.

Falls, and then eventually went to the Royal Geographic Society.⁸³ *The London Standard* included notice of the arrival of a ship carrying twelve of Baines' oil paintings depicting Victoria Falls, which Baines presented to the Royal Geographical Society.⁸⁴ These paintings and other pieces by Baines were subsequently exhibited in art halls and meeting venues, allowing an increasing number of Britons to see some of the first professional images of the Falls. While there was a growing body of travel writing that included descriptions and reflections on Victoria Falls, Baines' paintings in particular served to bring a visual aid to Britons and other Europeans interested in grasping the magnitude of the Falls. Certainly these images helped solidify the place of Victoria Falls in the imagination of Britons as they pondered the expansion of empire into the African interior.

BRITISH "RESIDENTS" AND TRUST BUILDING

Visitor traffic around Victoria Falls increased in the 1870s as more European adventurers, scientists, and sportsmen decided they wanted to experience the grandeur of the site in person. Although by this decade the Falls had been identified and visited for fifteen years, the number of Europeans was still miniscule and the travelers to the area in the 1870s wrote about the challenging journey to the region and the awesomeness of the waterfalls in a style similar to the earlier travelogues. A German who visited the Falls in early 1871 used the familiar dramatic tone as he described his trip. He recalled that he "attained the object [seeing Victoria Falls]...for which I had made so many sacrifices, after innumerable difficulties and endless trials of patience. To proceed any farther—an undertaking which I had often contemplated—was unfortunately impossible; the negroes could not be persuaded by any means to go beyond the waterfall; my clothes were torn to pieces, my provisions greatly reduced, and I had not powder enough for eight days..."⁸⁵ His description of the Falls themselves mixed technical details with more subjective considerations, and it is clear he felt the journey worth the hardships. Although visitors to Victoria Falls dur-

⁸³ "Interesting Expedition of Pictures," *Bury and Norwich Post*, November 17, 1863, p. 7.

⁸⁴ "Cape of Good Hope" (compiled by Reuter's Express), *London Standard*, April 25, 1864, p. 3.

⁸⁵ "The Victoria Falls" [excerpted from essay written by Herr Mohr], *Fife Herald*, July 13, 1871, p. 4.

ing this decade continued to pepper their accounts with references to the remoteness and difficulties of the journey, this was also a period when a couple of Europeans embedded themselves firmly in the region, not just physically but also politically as they formed relationships with African leaders. Visitors may have felt the trip to get to the Falls was challenging but the emerging relationships between the permanent European settlers and African leaders would slowly ease the way for future visitors, and more significantly, for future colonizers.

By the 1870s the area around Victoria Falls entered a new phase of African-European relationships when a few Europeans decided to establish a permanent presence in the region. Up until this point whites were visitors but there had not been a move by any European to create a long-term presence. However, the changing African political landscape in the 1870s allowed for more flexibility for Europeans in the area. Sepopa's successor Chief Lewanika took a decidedly more proactive approach to the increased European foot traffic generated by visits to Victoria Falls that expanded into his Barotseland. The 1870s and 1880s proved to be an important period in the region's history, not only because of the internal activities of the Lozi state, but also because of outside influences. George Westbeeck, a merchant and hunter who enjoyed a fruitful relationship with the Lozi ruling class and Francois Coillard, the French missionary, both arrived in the area during this time and profoundly affected the trajectory of European intervention in the territory. While the previous visitors, particularly Livingstone, were obviously instrumental in opening this area for future colonization, Westbeeck and Coillard's activities served as tangible evidence that Europeans were developing a long-term interest in the area. Lewanika took both men and their work seriously; he knew that his interactions with these men were critical to his success as a leader. It is at this point that the colonial ambitions of the British began to merge with Lewanika's own aspirations.

Westbeeck focused on trade and Coillard on mission work, two crucial activities that preceded colonial administration. Both men sustained their work for long periods of time, unlike previous Europeans who only stayed in Barotseland temporarily. Although neither man formally worked for the British government or BSACo, their presence in the area and intimate relationships with local leaders and peasants made it easier for formal colonization to occur. Lewanika trusted these men and valued their opinions and he extended this faith in their motives and practices to other Europeans.

Long before the arrival of Westbeech, Portuguese, Arab, and Luso-African merchants saw the potential for trade in the Upper Zambezi Valley. Livingstone expounded the potential for the development of legitimate commerce around Barotseland but it was Westbeech who demonstrated the profitability of a long-term trade relationship with Africans north of the Zambezi during his seventeen years in the area. He established himself as a trustworthy trader in Barotseland starting in the early 1870s and was befriended by African leaders throughout the region. Westbeech is regarded by many as the man who opened the door for colonization in the area. His friendships with Sepopa and Lewanika resulted in relaxed rules and expectations for the traders to follow. Lewanika in particular trusted Westbeech's judgment and turned to him for advice on which Europeans to allow in to the region.⁸⁶ Lewanika also valued Westbeech as a mediator between himself and the Ndebele rulers whose close proximity left the Lozi king constantly on guard.⁸⁷

Westbeech's extraordinary success must be attributed to the relationships he formed and the favor he garnered through the chiefs who befriended him. He was so well-liked in fact that he served as an adviser on the Barotse tribal council which secured him an active role in political decision-making. It was well known that he was considered "an induna or headman of the [Lozi] nation."⁸⁸ Why was such kindness afforded to this man when just fifteen years earlier European visitors were at the mercy of leaders who exerted as much authority as possible?⁸⁹ For the new Lozi leadership, Westbeech was an important ally to keep happy. His camaraderie and familiarity with Europeans served as a guide for Lewanika who cautiously approached his relationships with outsiders. He was also friendly with the Ndebele and Lewanika viewed that as an advantage, rather than as a conflict of interest. Westbeech was frank and the Lozi king counted on that to help gauge the mood of his powerful neighbors. Finally, as a trader, Westbeech had much to offer Lewanika. Although the Lozi's diversified productive activities left them wanting for little, there were items that Lewanika needed and desired. Westbeech provided the king with guns, ammunition, and the English suits favored by the Lozi ruler.

⁸⁶ Hugh Macmillan, *An African Trading Empire: The Story of Susman Brothers & Wulfsohn, 1901–2005* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), pp. 3–4.

⁸⁷ Prins, *Hidden Hippopotamus*, p. 212.

⁸⁸ *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. XVII (London: The Royal Geographical Society, January–June 1901), p. 584.

⁸⁹ Arrington dissertation, chapter 1.

Westbeeche was well respected by Sepopa, the Barotseland chief and regional ruler he first encountered in 1871/72. Before allowing Westbeeche into the country, Sepopa ordered his medicine men to do a poison test on chickens; when no chickens died, it was determined that Westbeeche should be allowed into the country and would bring no harm.⁹⁰ From this first encounter Westbeeche was considered well vetted and he and Sepopa formed a bond that translated into economic success for Westbeeche and expanded trade power for Sepopa. Westbeeche's entry into the region in 1871 via the confluence of the Chobe and Zambezi looked from the outset like a possible disaster. Sepopa, the unpredictable Lozi chief, took the goods transported by Westbeeche and his partner George Blockley into the region and when Westbeeche went in search of his items, Sepopa made him stay in his town for over a year. Strangely, the men formed a friendship during that time and when Westbeeche left, it was with wagons full of £12,000 worth of ivory provided by Sepopa.⁹¹

It is not surprising that Lozi chiefs Sepopa and Lewanika held him in such high regard. Westbeeche was remembered as a gregarious and friendly man who endeared himself to most people he met. His personality and courageous spirit attracted African leaders, as did his fluency in several local languages.⁹² Whereas earlier travelers such as Helmore, Price, and Chapman were considered weak or abrasive in their dealings with local populations, Westbeeche was naturally at ease and warm to all the people he encountered. One traveler recalled upon meeting Westbeeche that the friendly trader negotiated hard but was affable, cheerful, and ultimately willing to help travelers as much as he could.⁹³ No doubt his personality made it possible for him to create his long-term and highly profitable trade.

His friendships with rulers also facilitated the safe passage of numerous European visitors into what was then considered the ends of the earth, or at least, the extreme outskirts of British expansion in southern Africa. These travelers in the region around Victoria Falls claimed attachment to Westbeeche and were subsequently treated as guests or agents of Sepopa's

⁹⁰ Clay, *Your Friend, Lewanika*, p. 16.

⁹¹ Tabler, "Introduction," pp. 5–6.

⁹² A.J. Wills, *An Introduction to the History of Central Africa: Zambia, Malawi, and Zimbabwe* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 117.

⁹³ James McCabe, *Our Young Folks in Africa: The Adventures of a Party of Young Americans in Algeria, and in South Central Africa* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1883), pp. 269–270.

most treasured European confidante.⁹⁴ Although formally Westbeech and Blockley were the only Europeans granted free and unmonitored access to Barotseland,⁹⁵ Westbeech's high standing opened doors for many other Europeans. He was the first "travel agent" operating around the Falls because in addition to his commercial activities he arranged adventure and hunting safaris for visiting sportsmen.⁹⁶ Two British travelers on an expedition in the early 1880s met Westbeech at Panda-ma-tenga, his trading post, and Westbeech "rendered them much valuable assistance and practically became their banker. To him also they are indebted for the history of the tribes inhabiting the Barotse valley..."⁹⁷ Although David Livingstone introduced the British to Victoria Falls and the surrounding area, it was Westbeech who opened the door to European travel in the region.

Europeans who ignored the influence Westbeech had over local chiefs were generally unsuccessful in penetrating Barotseland and the lands of Lozi subjects. A group of Jesuit missionaries made several attempts to establish stations in Barotseland and Batokaland, but each of their efforts ended in failure. Despite having abundant resources and superb organization, they could not gain a foothold north of the Zambezi. Perhaps the most significant cause of their failure was their lack of support from Westbeech. Although Westbeech claimed that the Jesuits offered him a large bribe to support their bid for entry, Westbeech did not endorse the missionaries because of his alliance with Coillard as discussed in detail in the next section.⁹⁸ Despite first settling at Panda-ma-tenga, where Westbeech was headquartered, the Jesuits did not win over the man whose endorsement they required.

⁹⁴ Connections to the British men known by African rulers in the region were important to travelers even before the 1870s. In 1860, Baldwin, a British sportsman and adventure traveler headed north from South Africa to explore the Zambezi. Upon reaching Victoria Falls, he was asked how he reached the Falls (he was believed to be only the second European to see them). The Tonga who asked him was not satisfied when he explained that he used a compass to find the Falls, but when he mentioned that he relied on directions from David Livingstone, the Africans "showed much interest." He was subsequently taken as a prisoner, as the Tonga determined how to deal with this uninvited visitor, but much in Baldwin's favor, Livingstone happened to pass through the area heading to Tete and he was able to help resolve the issue. "Travels in South Africa," *Morpeth Herald*, Morpeth, UK, April 6, 1861.

⁹⁵ John Indawakwa, *Expansion of British Rule in the interior of Central Africa, 1890–1924: A Study of British Imperial Expansion into Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi* (University Press of America, 1977), p. 19.

⁹⁶ Phillipson, *Mosi-oo-Tunya*, p. 82.

⁹⁷ "The New Africa," *Morning Post*, September 16, 1897, p. 2.

⁹⁸ Gwyn Prins, *The Hidden Hippopotamus: Reappraisal in African History: The Early Colonial Experience in Western Zambia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1980), p. 187.

It is difficult to overstate the significance of the close relationships Westbeeche had with African leaders in terms of opening up Barotseland to European visitors and settlement. It is also important to note that although local power had shifted and continued to transform during the 1870s and 1880s, the kindness of the chiefs toward Europeans, especially traders and missionaries, was an important, and notably consistent, characteristic of Lozi rule. The Lozi leaders who reigned after Sekeletu's death shared with their Makololo predecessors the knowledge that their power was in part solidified by their treatment of outsiders. Although Sepopa appeared less concerned with this particular aspect of political diplomacy, Lewanika understood it quite well. This speaks to the longevity of a common approach to the increasing British presence, passed from leader to leader during the last half of the nineteenth century. Starting with Sebitwane the rulers of North Western Rhodesia shared a common strategy that was based on what they envisioned to be the potential benefits they might enjoy under an expanded European presence. The gains procured from their relationships with Europeans would, in their mind, reify their regional authority as long as they maintained the upper hand in negotiations with the outsiders. To do this, they remained friendly but firm in their dealings with Europeans. The situation was ideal for the Europeans willing to defer to local authority figures. African leaders imagined a prosperous future, which at this point was not a threat to the success and well-being of Europeans in North Western Rhodesia. In the long term though, these relationships that were friendly and symbiotic allowed for a slowly increasing British presence that helped generate enthusiasm and ambitions for colonial expansion into the Victoria Falls area and further north of the Zambezi. This period of relationship building and exploration of the Zambezi valley was a precursor to the Cape to Cairo dream of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Westbeeche built up the trade so many before him predicted would be successful while he simultaneously managed to build a trusting relationship with Lozi rulers. The sense of loyalty that he created was most notably exploited to help establish a permanent mission in Barotseland. Francois Coillard first gained entry into the region and developed a friendly relationship with Lewanika because of Westbeeche's all-important endorsement. Coillard was a representative of the Paris Evangelical Mission, and though he was a Frenchman, he was widely portrayed as an Anglophile. His marriage to a Scottish woman only further cemented his commitment to the British Crown and he proved to be the main force behind

the concessions that placed the Lozi and their subject tribes under British rule. The missionary's respect for the British was reciprocated; in 1888 he was awarded the Royal Geographical Society's Silver Medal "in consideration of his journey in the region north of the Zambesi."⁹⁹ Only a year later, Coillard wrote on behalf of Lewanika to the BSACo inquiring about the possibility of obtaining British protection for the territory. As a missionary Coillard imagined turning the Lozi and Tonga population into devout Christians; as an Anglophile, Coillard dreamed of a territory where western education, clothing, and practices was the norm. He devoted over twenty years of his life trying to realize those goals. However, the more he was involved in administrative negotiations, the more he struggled as the liaison between his friend Lewanika and the British Crown he so admired.

Coillard started his work as a missionary for a PEM/ Basutoland Native Church and was tasked with establishing a mission in Mashonaland. The venture failed because Mashonaland's Ndebele neighbors did not want a mission station within their sphere of influence, nor did they want the Sotho evangelists in their territory. Ndebele Chief Lobengula banished the party from his country and Coillard and his group turned to Barotseland as their next possible settlement, mainly because they spoke Sesuto, a language understood in the region because of the Makololo presence. Khama, the chief of Bamangwato, where the party stayed after being turned out of Mashonaland supported their plans to head north into Barotseland.¹⁰⁰ Coillard and his company thus entered Barotseland with Khama's recommendation and, even more importantly, Westbeech's endorsement. Lewanika, in his new position of Lozi king, agreed to the proposal in 1879. They left the area to go back to Paris to raise funds for the project. Their withdrawal was well timed, as Barotseland entered a period of civil unrest and Lewanika temporarily lost his claim to leadership. Coillard's mission returned to Barotseland and established their first station in 1885 in Sesheke, an important Lozi town, shortly after Lewanika regained the title of king. The mission's first years among the Barotse were incredibly challenging. One account reported that "the existence of the mission has often been extremely precarious. Twenty-two members (including 12 children) have fallen victims to the climate. The frequent losses of cattle and of goods in transit up the river, the difficulty

⁹⁹ *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography*, Vol. X (London: Edward Stanford, 1888), p. 471.

¹⁰⁰ Gann, *Early Days*, p. 44.

of procuring supplies, the opposition of the principal chiefs, and the lawless condition of the country, owing to the weakness of the central government, have all hindered the work.”¹⁰¹ Despite the difficulties the Sesheke mission gained a following and Coillard moved on to Sefula near the capital of Lealui and opened another station.

The Sefula mission was founded at the end of 1886. Coillard’s location near the capital proved to be an important move as it marked the beginning of a close relationship between the missionary and King Lewanika. After Westbeech’s death in 1888, Coillard became Lewanika’s trusted adviser. The timing was especially momentous as Coillard became an important intermediary between Lewanika and the British when the process of formal colonization occurred. Coillard noticed that his move to Sefula altered his relationship with Lewanika from the start. He wrote

Our relations with the king are most agreeable up to the present. Two days after our arrival, he hastened to visit us, accompanied by his headmen on horseback, and by numerous attendants on foot. He seemed really pleased to see us, and went away without having begged, and without his followers having robbed us of a single thing. That is saying not a little. After that, I spent Sunday with him, and had good audiences...Lewanika would gladly overwhelm us with apprentices, grown-up men, whom he would like to see learning in a couple of months or so to accomplish every possible handicraft of the whites.¹⁰²

Coillard became Lewanika’s right hand man at a crucial time for the Lozi king. He had just been restored to power and there was still infighting among the Lozi and their subject tribes. He divided his energy over three major concerns: strengthening his authority over Barotseland and its subjects, keeping the Ndebele from expanding into his territory, and deciding on a policy to deal with the question of British colonization. He enlisted the aid of Coillard, a European who shared his sense of loyalty and camaraderie and who he could trust. It was added luck that Coillard was an affable man who forged friendly relationships with would-be administrators. Lewanika knew that his interactions with Europeans, particularly potential colonial administrators, were necessary to his continued reign over Barotseland. He did not see a relationship with a colonial administration

¹⁰¹ Anonymous, undated Photostat, c1900 (Box CI/1/26-C2/3 BSACo. Lane Poole Report. CI/11 Acc. No. 3688, Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 148.

¹⁰² Coillard, *On the Threshold*, pp. 261–262.

as potentially damaging to his claims of authority and in fact viewed it as a potential asset in his quest to strengthen and expand Lozi rule. In early 1892, Coillard was pleased to report an emerging and, in from his perspective, amenable relationship between the BSACo and Lewanika. He wrote,

Despatches [sic] have lately come from Sir H. Loch, the High Commissioner, assuring Lewanika of the British Government's protection. The British South Africa Company also have started a monthly post between Palapya, Old Maagwate, and Sefula. It is announced also by Sir Henry that Mr Johnston has been appointed as the Queen's Commissioner in Barotsi Land, and that he will come to his post as soon as he has completed his arrangements. The news has been received by the King with satisfaction.¹⁰³

Despite this news being relayed in a letter that also announced his wife's death, Coillard showed optimism about the future of relations between the Lozi and the British. Although he was a missionary first and foremost, Coillard ended up being an important diplomat in Lozi/British negotiations. Indeed, it was with Coillard's help that Lewanika was able to make such a large claim of power and jurisdiction. In his negotiations with the British, Lewanika claimed empire over virtually 200,000 square miles. His claims had the validation of a map drawn up by Francois Coillard who lived near his court; but Coillard's map depended on Lewanika's testimony and is therefore highly questionable. It included twenty-five tribes which Lewanika said owed him tribute. This map was accepted by the BSACo as evidence of the extent of Lewanika's rule since it suited their administration to deal with one apparently strong king. However, the company admitted officially that Lewanika's jurisdiction was tenuous in the extreme.¹⁰⁴

Undoubtedly, had Coillard not drawn up the map and validated its claims, the BSACo might not have accepted Lewanika's self-proclaimed jurisdictions. Coillard's presence in the Upper Zambezi valley at a critical time for both Lewanika and the British helped facilitate a relationship that would eventually allow the British to gain colonial control of Victoria Falls and land north of the Zambezi.

¹⁰³ "News from Central Africa: Letter from Rev. Francois Coillard," *Glasgow Herald*, January 23, 1892, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴ O'Brien, "Chiefs of Rain, Chiefs of Ruling," p. 26.

CONCLUSION

Without a doubt, these early visitors to Victoria Falls were crucial to popularizing the landscape and even African chiefs and local populations in what was then considered the deep, remote central African interior. David Livingstone’s “discovery” of Victoria Falls opened up a new space for the British in a physical sense by accessing a previously untraveled section of the central African frontier. It also unlocked a space in the British imperial imaginary, as the fascination with Victoria Falls and the landscape around it helped stimulate a burgeoning interest in pushing empire further into Africa. Subsequent British and European visitors around Victoria Falls pushed that interest further by offering more accounts of the waterfalls and land. Instead of growing bored by Victoria Falls, Britons embraced the site as a capstone to British exploration. The establishment of Westbeech’s trading posts and Coillard’s mission station created permanent commercial and religious stakes in the area, thus making Victoria Falls more accessible by outsiders. Although up into the early 1880s most of these visitors were more interested in the adventure of traveling to the Falls, the ever-increasing number of Europeans was crucial in keeping this African frontier in the forefront of the British colonial imagination. It was not only the British who were designing a future for this frontier though; as Chap. 3 demonstrates, Lewanika was imagining his own future as a leader in the region.

One review of Thomas Baines’ *Explorations of South West Africa* exemplified the phenomenon of travel writing popularizing and expanding British interest in Africa by bringing that frontier to the readers and it also pointed to the reality that an increasing number of travelers would follow Baines and the others who already visited Victoria Falls. The reviewer wrote:

One would have almost imagined that by this time, after so many explorations, Southern and Western Africa were pretty well ‘opened up,’ ...to ordinary travelers; but Mr. Baines here proves to us that a journey of any length is as full of interest, adventure, hardship, and pleasure, if not of actual peril, as it was ten years ago. The work of civilisation along the outer border of the inhospitable and often impenetrable waste, has, indeed, done somewhat to smooth the outset of the way, by showing the traveler how best to meet and overcome the difficulties that beset him...wild beasts and still wilder savages, the treachery and ignorance of guides, the frightful scarcity of water, and the utter absence of anything like a beaten track through the jungle render

the work of exploration an enterprise demanding an amount of hardihood, pluck, good sense, and resolution, rarely found united.¹⁰⁵

There is an interesting tension here; Africa was at once already explored and the process of “civilization” was already underway, but there was also acknowledgement that there were still places where European visitors would be challenged. Although the writer demarcated this interior as an “inhospitable and often impenetrable waste,” he knew that Europeans had already made their presence known and later in the review acknowledged that white men would follow. He deemed the Baines text useful and satisfying and believed “to the intending traveller it will be invaluable, as it really touches on all the points which to the white man setting out into the desert for the first time must be absolutely unknown.”¹⁰⁶ This frontier was in fact not impenetrable as he first suggested and travelers such as Livingstone and Baines helped ensure that more British visitors would follow and that Victoria Falls and the area around it would stay firmly entrenched in the British colonial imagination.

¹⁰⁵ “Literature: *Explorations of South West Africa*,” *London Standard*, June 20, 1865, p. 6.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

Lewanika's Scramble for Africa: Barotseland and the British South Africa Company

The relationship between the British (specifically the BSACo) and Chief Lewanika represents the complicated, yet somewhat symbiotic relationship that developed between some African leaders and their regions' colonial administrations. Lewanika's friendships with Westbeeche and Coillard established a solid foundation for Lewanika and the BSACo to build on as British interest on Victoria Falls and the Upper Zambezi Valley intensified. For the BSACo, it would appear through company papers that though they were at times annoyed by Lewanika, they ultimately considered him a compliant chief to work with and felt he did a commendable job maintaining the BSACo's interests in the emerging colonial order. One newspaper correspondent based in Africa (presumably South Africa) described Lewanika as an "enlightened monarch," who, under the positive influence and guidance of Coillard, was an asset to the BSACo and the British colonial project in the region. The writer applauded Lewanika's rule, under which "bad whites' were kept out of Barotsiland, while travelers like Major St. Hill Gibbons and Captain Bertrand [representatives of the BSACo] received a cordial welcome," and stated that "Lewanika is in favour of British control, and the agent of the Chartered Company, Mr. R.T. Coryndon...has by his tact and patience earned the confidence of the King."¹ By 1900, the BSACo felt secure in its relationship with Lewanika.

¹"The Barotseland Protectorate," *Pall Mall Gazette*, October 18, 1900, p. 2.

It felt they could trust Lewanika to help assert British power and influence. The Lozi chief was often praised, as seen in one piece that focused on Lewanika and the BSACo's expanded rule in Barotseland which introduced him to the British public in the following terms: "King Lewanika, though not yet professedly a Christian, has learned to read, and of his own accord has given up honey-beer drinking and other heathen habits. He manfully wages war against drunkenness, the slave trade, and witchcraft, and the horrid practices by the latter is tried and punished."² Even ten years later, after some tense moments in the evolving relationship between Lewanika and the BSACo, the Lozi chief still earned positive characterization in the British press. As he prepared for a trip to London for King Edward's coronation, Lewanika was described as the most enlightened chief in Africa, which clearly stemmed at least in part from the pleasure the British took in noting facets of Lewanika's westernized behavior. Praise followed his adoption of British culture and "[T]hough a pagan and unable to speak English he always dresses in European clothes, and his house, which is built of choice native words, contains English furniture. Lunch is often served in his dining-room in European style."³ His death was noted with formal fanfare by the Royal African Society, again demonstrating the high regard he was held in by many Britons. In its announcement of Lewanika's death, the Royal African Society wrote that he "stood for civilisation"⁴ and was remembered thusly:

In 1890, on the advice of Coillard, Lewanika sought to place himself under the protection of the Chartered Company of Rhodesia. Nothing definite was done until 1897. By 1892, however, Lewanika had completely given up making warlike raids on his neighbours. In 1906, with the help of the British Protectorate officers, he abolished the status of slavery. Of his own initiative he greatly encouraged the work of the schools; lawlessness and open violence he so successfully put down that to-day the traveller [*sic*] may pass unarmed up and down his vast territory, only needing to protect himself against wild beasts; and, like Khama, he has stringently suppressed excessive drinking, himself becoming a total abstainer.⁵

²"The Barotsi Valley, Upper Zambesi," *The Graphic*, October 17, 1891, p. 17.

³"An Enlightened Pagan," *Nottingham Evening Post*, April 19, 1902, p. 2.

⁴"The Death of Lewanika," *Journal of the Royal African Society* 16, no. 62 (January 1917), Oxford University Press, on behalf of The Royal African Society, 149.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 150. As will be explained, the comparison with Khama, the chief of the Bamangwato in Bechuanaland is not coincidental.

As far as African chiefs were concerned, Lewanika was held in high esteem by the BSACo and British observers. He is remembered as a chief who fell in line with the British colonial agenda and supported the cause of the “civilizing” mission.

What these referenced sources do not address is Lewanika’s own perspective on the relationship that developed between himself and the BSACo. For the BSACo, securing this friendly connection with Lewanika ensured a smooth transition to colonial rule in a territory deemed strategically important.⁶ It was a coup to so easily identify and work with a friendly chief willing to help with the BSACo agenda. What the BSACo may have underestimated though was what Lewanika stood to gain from his friendship with the BSACo. This chapter explores Lewanika’s motivations for working with the British and his own imagined potential as a partner in British colonial expansion.⁷ As will be evident, Lewanika capitalized on the increased British traffic around Victoria Falls and north into the Upper Zambezi Valley to expand his own power while also securing continued authority over Barotseland. This “enlightened monarch,”⁸ as

⁶The Upper Zambezi Valley was a strategic addition to the BSACo’s African holdings for a variety of reasons, including the ability to continue with the Cape to Cairo dream, access to the hydroelectric power potential of Victoria Falls and the copper fields to the northeast, the labor pool for use in mines and on farms south of the Zambezi, and to hold off expansion by the Portuguese to the west.

⁷In order to best represent Lewanika’s perspective and position in this phase of early British colonial expansion, the geographical and political identification of “North Western Rhodesia” is avoided. Lewanika, though in close contact with the BSACo as it gained claims to this territory, did not think of the region as North Western Rhodesia. His primary focus was on Barotseland; he wanted to preserve his autonomy over Barotseland proper while also enlarging his sphere of influence in the Upper Zambezi Valley. To that end, it would be misleading to refer to North Western Rhodesia as part of Lewanika’s experiences during this period. Lewanika was not building North Western Rhodesia; he was protecting Barotseland. Thus his participation in colonial expansion had a different focus than that held by the BSACo as it endeavored to create North Western Rhodesia.

⁸There was at least one point of contention between Lewanika and the BSACo and other Europeans: the issue of slavery. Although some observers noted Lewanika’s commitment to ending slavery in his territory, there seemed to be a disconnect between what Lewanika considered the appropriate and inappropriate enslavement of people he considered enemies. In 1893, Coillard wrote to the *Journal des Missions Evangeliques* about the persistent problem of slavery in Barotseland. He offered a detailed account of his observations at a slave market. The slaves came from a Lozi raid of a nearby group, the Balubale, “whose incessant attacks upon their neighbours compromised the public security.” This suggests that perhaps Lewanika, in his eagerness to appear in control of a well-organized kingdom resorted to violence to entrench his authority. To Coillard’s disgust, the prisoners of war were women

he was so often described, was savvy in his dealings with the BSACo and managed to focus on his own ambitions despite the BSACo's push into his terrain. The British were not the only ones to develop a colonial imaginary; Lewanika had his own dreams of how to turn the British presence in the Upper Zambezi Valley to his favor.

Given the time period in which he came to power and, more importantly, the context of emerging European-African relationships around southern Africa, it is important to consider Lewanika's actions as part of a broader narrative. Relationships between the British, usually facilitated by the BSACo, and African chiefs around southern Africa were evolving as the British became more interested in the region. Lewanika would have been well aware of developments south of the Zambezi; as a careful and ambitious leader, he would have weighed his options carefully as he worked to expand his own power at a time when many African leaders were finding their authority increasingly circumscribed via their relationships with Europeans. At the same time that he was navigating his emerging relationship with the British, his neighbors in Bechuanaland and Matabeleland were also moving toward formal relationships with the British. Lewanika sought advice beyond that of his friend Coillard and elicited guidance from a fellow African leader. As Clay explains, Lewanika

was in a very difficult position. He knew that white men were coming up from the south and becoming more and more importunate with the Matabele. He also feared the raids of the Matabele, and later on the incursions of the Portuguese, but most of all he was afraid of the rebellious tendencies of his own contumacious subjects. He realised that what his country needed more than anything else was some years of peace and an opportunity to get to know the white man and his ways.⁹

To that end, Lewanika was methodical and comprehensive in his considerations of how to deal with the multidimensional pressures encroaching on his territory. With the dust still settling after the Makololo occupation of Barotseland, the tensions among his Matabele neighbors, and growing

and children, and Lewanika himself presided over the slave market where these prisoners were distributed. Eventually, Lewanika did take steps to publicly end slavery in his territory, but this did not happen until many years after the BSACo entered the scene. See "Slave Market on the Upper Zambesi: Scenes at a Sale" (published letter written by Coillard), *Newcastle Courant*, July 1, 1893, p. 2.

⁹Gervas Clay, *Your Friend, Lewanika: The Life and Times of Lubosi Lewanika, Litunga of Barotseland 1842 to 1916*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1968), p. 59.

European interest north of the Zambezi, the Lozi chief wrote to Chief Khama III of Bechuanaland to seek advice. Lewanika knew that Khama fell under a protective order and wanted to learn more about what it meant in practical terms.

The concept and practice of British protection was something many African leaders sought and attained. As Louis W. Truschel explained, “[I]n so doing they viewed the new colonial relationship from the standpoint of the maintenance of their own authority within their traditional political systems and against new threats posed by European settlers on the borders of their territory.”¹⁰ In the case of Khama of Bechuanaland, the representatives of the British administration who worked with him felt he fit nicely into their plans to implement indirect rule and he was remembered, as was Lewanika, as being a cooperative, collaborative leader. The Royal African Society noted Khama’s death, recalling him in the following terms:

Khama...was the last and greatest of the great native chiefs—Moshesh, Cetewayo, Lobengula, Lewanika—who bulked so largely in South African history of the last century. He was best known to the average man as a notable Christian...He has, in fact, principally because of his rigid prohibition of the drink traffic within his territory, been condemned as a puppet of the missionaries. But he was no puppet. His Christianity was consistent... Though the Bamangwato have a higher standard of indigenous culture than their neighbours, they are less warlike, yet Khama was warrior enough to hearten his people against the aggression of the Matabele and to take the field himself...But he is more notable as a statesmen than as warrior.¹¹

The admiration and fondness in this memorialization belie the much more contested relationship between Khama and the British colonial administration. In truth, Khama was not easily swayed by the British representatives he met with and cautiously negotiated his emerging relationship, carefully weighing the options put before him, and designing his own vision when he disliked the terms set forth by the British.

Khama faced pressure from the encroaching Boer population and was constantly facing conflict with his Ndebele, Tswana, and Griqua

¹⁰Louis W. Truschel, “Political Survival in Colonial Botswana: The Preservation of Khama’s State and Growth of the Ngwato Monarchy,” Nairobi: *Transafrican Journal of History* 4, no. 1/2 (1974), 71.

¹¹“Editorial Notes,” *Journal of the Royal African Society* 22, no. 87 (April 1923), Oxford University Press on behalf of The Royal African Society, 250–251.

neighbors. Additionally, he also struggled with controlling the expansion of British-driven commerce and settlement and the increasing traffic from other Europeans in Bechuanaland. He ultimately decided he favored a working relationship with the British over the Boers, but he did not make this decision lightly or enter the relationship without extreme caution. For many years leading up to 1885, the British were indifferent to the requests made by missionaries and some of the Bechuanaland chiefs who requested a formalized relationship between the British and the territory. The Boers were raiding communities in Bechuanaland with no repercussions from the Transvaal government under which they fell. It was the “defeat of the British in the Anglo-Boer War of 1881 and the arrival of Germany in the Southern African region”¹² that spurred the British into securing a stronger position in the area. In addition to asserting themselves strategically in Bechuanaland against the Boers and Germans, the British also wanted to secure a “friendly controller of the labour-migration route from ‘Zambesia’ to the diamond fields of Kimberley. This route was also assuming greater importance for ‘English’ trade...becoming known to the British as the ‘Road to the North’ or as the (L.M.S.) ‘Missionary Road’.”¹³ From the early days of contact and deliberation then, it is clear that Khama’s decision to work with the British was not based on an alignment of the same goals. They were not collaborating on a shared vision for the region. Khama was likely concerned about the increased European traffic that would come with formalized relationships between the British and the Bamangwato, but he felt more secure in pursuing that affiliation than trying to stave off the Boers and other African groups pushing into his territory. In 1885, a formalized protectorate status was bestowed on Bechuanaland.

Khama was a devout Christian, converting around 1860 after being introduced to the religion by German missionaries. He was outspoken about his concern that European “values” would negatively affect the morality of his people. Once in power, he not only established reforms “banishing witch-doctors and prohibiting circumcision ceremonies in his territories” but also instituted prohibitions on “the brewing of kaffir

¹² Monageng Mogalakwe, “How Britain Underdeveloped Bechuanaland Protectorate: A Brief Critique of the Political Economy of Colonial Botswana,” *Africa Development* 31, no. 1 (2006), 71.

¹³ Q.N. Parsons, “The ‘Image’ of Khama the Great—1868 to 1970,” *Botswana Notes and Records* 3 (1971), 42–43.

beer- —the sowens-like, yet partly alcoholic, soupy decoction brewed of fermented Kaffir- corn meal.”¹⁴ It was not just local practices though that Khama was concerned about; much to the dismay of traders in the area he also clamped down on the European alcohol trade. Khama was determined not to let unsavory aspects of European civilization corrupt his population, declaring in front of a European audience in 1876 that he would rule with his laws as long as he was king and questioned why the British were so interested in his land if they were so disdainful of the people living there. Neil Parsons emphasizes this example as an important one because it contradicts the idea that “Khama was a weak-kneed *collaborateur* rather than a visionary in bending (not breaking) before Imperialism.”¹⁵ Even as he courted an official relationship with the British, Khama was clear about his concerns and misgivings. In 1885, a formal agreement was written that placed Bechuanaland “under the direct protection of the British Crown.”¹⁶

Khama took his relationship with the British seriously but he also asserted his authority after formalizing the protectorate relationship. As British interest deeper into the southern African region intensified, Khama became concerned about the fate of his territory and his authority. In 1895 he traveled with two other chiefs to Britain to make a case for being left as a separate entity from Rhodesia. The British administration had tentative plans to incorporate Bechuanaland into Rhodesia but Khama was strongly opposed to this move. He argued his case to multiple audiences in Britain and was able to keep his country from being absorbed into Rhodesia. His appearance in Britain earned him notoriety and great respect, despite the fact that he was there to argue against the British administration. In this regard, he showed his ability to maintain authority even under a formal relationship with the British and even swayed British popular opinion his way.¹⁷

¹⁴ Solomon T. Plaatje, “Chief Khama of the Bamangwato,” *English in Africa* 3, no. 2 (September 1976), 21.

¹⁵ Parsons, “The Image of Khama the Great,” p. 43.

¹⁶ “Editorial Notes,” p. 251.

¹⁷ In “The ‘Image’ of Khama the Great,” Parsons describes Khama’s popularity and the “enthusiastic clapping and cheering” (p. 41) of his British audiences as he argued his case. Khama was directly opposing Cecil Rhodes’ vision for British Southern Africa, so it is interesting to consider that Khama was able to win so much support that contradicted the powerful and influential Rhodes.

It is little wonder that Lewanika knew about Khama and sought out his advice. Although Lewanika's first inquiry to Khama about protectorate status preceded Khama's trip to Britain, Lewanika knew that Khama had pushed for and obtained a formal agreement with the British even after the British showed years of indifference for the idea. Both leaders also viewed the Ndebele as problematic neighbors and were hoping to block the Ndebele from encroaching on their own territories. Lewanika wanted the advice of someone who had firsthand experience of how the British operated within the protectorate relationship and who understood his particular concerns about European expansion and African competition. In his letter to Khama in 1887, Lewanika wrote:

I understand that you are now under the protection of the great English Queen. I do not know what it means. But they say there are soldiers living at your place, and some headmen sent by the Queen to take great care of you and protect you from the Matabele. Tell me all as a friend. Are you happy and quite satisfied? Tell me all. I am anxious that you should tell me very plainly, your friend, because I have a great desire to be received like you under the protection of so great a ruler as the Queen of England.¹⁸

It is clear from the letter that Lewanika was feeling pressed about the decision. Like Khama, he was not looking to sign away his own power or authority, but he also understood that an alliance with the British may be necessary and in some ways even advantageous.

Khama's response to Lewanika was likely reassuring to Lewanika, though it also emphasized the need for each individual chief to weigh the idea on his own. Khama took some time to respond, writing back in 1889:

Concerning the word you ask me about the Government of the English, I can only say it is a thing for each Chief to do for himself. I rejoice in it, but I cannot advise you; you are Chief, and must do for yourself what you desire. I have the people of the Great Queen with me, and I am glad to have them. I live in peace with them, and I have no fear of the Matabele or the Boers any longer attacking me; that is the thing which I know and can tell you.¹⁹

This exchange between the two chiefs is particularly interesting because the letters do not reveal a strong desire to align their goals with that

¹⁸ Clay, *Your Friend, Lewanika*, p. 58.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

of the British. Both men seem most concerned about the threat from Matabeleland; they are not discussing the advantages that might come with increased commerce or the strategic positioning that the British achieved. In this sense, these men are not discussing a collaborative relationship with the British. Instead, they are determining what they will gain or have gained that responds to their own needs under a formalized relationship with the British. It would be wrong to assume that the appeals by Khama and Lewanika for protectorate status was based on a shared vision with the British for their respective regions. Rather, it seems both men considered how they would benefit from the British by conceding access to them under the protectorate status. Undoubtedly, Khama's experience further bolstered Lewanika's desire to seek a formal relationship with the British.

LEWANIKA AND THE UPPER ZAMBEZI VALLEY

The trajectory of British expansion into this frontier land was not solely determined by the BSACo or by European traders, sportsmen, and missionaries who were drawn to the region because of the Zambezi and Victoria Falls and all that this land had to offer. As discussed above, Lewanika actively participated, and, to the best of his ability, manipulated the process of formal colonial expansion. He was a smart and calculating leader and the relationships he formed with men like Westbeech and Coillard were only the beginning of his push to extend his own authority during a time when so many African chiefs were seeing their power deteriorate. For Lewanika, the British agenda in the Upper Zambezi Valley was not an obstacle to his own ambitions. As British enthusiasm for colonial expansion into this region intensified, Lewanika imagined increasing opportunities for his own power to expand. This set Lewanika apart, as he was the first chief who seemed to see the value in British interest in Victoria Falls. For example, to Chief Sekeletu, the potential of Victoria Falls was not the site itself, but the possibility of altering that part of the landscape, which he imagined to be a hindrance to increased exchange with Europeans. David and Charles Livingstone remembered with amusement that

Sekeletu was well pleased with the various articles we brought for him and inquired if a ship could not bring his sugar-mill and the other goods we had been obliged to leave behind at Tette. On hearing that there was a possibility of a powerful steamer ascending as far as Sinamane's, but never above the

Grand Victoria Falls, he asked, with charming simplicity if a cannon could not blow away the Falls so as to allow the vessel to come up to Sesheke.²⁰

Of course, this plan was never entertained, but it is interesting that one of the first records of how an African leader responded to European interest in the area shows that to at least Sekeletu, the Falls was imagined as a challenge to expanding commercial interactions.

It seems Lewanika was perhaps the chief who best understood the future north of the Zambezi imagined by early European visitors. Unlike Sekeletu, Lewanika did not see the cataract as an obstacle to opening up trade around Victoria Falls, and more significantly to him, Lewanika did not see the waterfalls as a barrier to the British expanding commercial activities north of the Falls into Barotseland. Likewise, Lewanika did not let it trouble him that the Falls were not, in the pre-colonial context, under the guardianship or jurisdiction of the Lozi. Lewanika benefited from the interest the Falls generated among the British and other Europeans in that it gave him more opportunities to develop his relationship with the British. He knew he would need a powerful ally to fulfill his own ambitions and the British seemed a good option for that. Lewanika did not think the goals of the British were the same as his own goals, so the risks inherent with a formalized relationship and an increased European presence were worth taking as he developed his own vision for the future of Barotseland and his regime. There were challenges to implementing his agenda though. The Barotseland Lewanika inherited in the 1880s suffered from an unstable political structure and a civil crisis sparked by a succession dispute. Following the defeat of the Makololo in 1864, Lozi chief Sepopa established himself as a merciless tyrant, and his reign was one characterized by brutality and violence.²¹ In 1877 Sepopa was assassinated and his nephew claimed the chieftaincy. The new chief was as tyrannical as Sepopa, and in less than a year he fled Barotseland to avoid the same fate as his uncle. Lewanika, another nephew of Sepopa was then named the king. His rise to power was also marred with conflict and he suffered a coup by another relative, but by 1885, Lewanika sat solidly in the position

²⁰ David Livingstone and Charles Livingstone, *Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambezi and its Tributaries: And of the Discovery of the Lakes Shiwra and Nyassa, 1858–1864* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1866), p. 299.

²¹ A. St. Hill Gibbons, *Africa from South to North through Marotseland*, Vol. 1 (London and New York: John Lane and The Bodley Head, 1904), p. 151.

of Barotseland's king.²² Lewanika was an ambitious and far-sighted leader and the future he projected for himself and the Lozi was one of expanded power.

It would be inaccurate to suggest that Lewanika's ambitions were solely stimulated by what he imagined he could do under a formal relationship with the British, but it is clear that he was able to align his agenda within the changing political landscape as the British pushed into the region in ways that did not contradict British plans. In order to facilitate the growth of the Lozi state Lewanika strengthened internal systems that bolstered his power and regional productivity, but he also turned to outsiders for help. Unlike many leaders before him, Lewanika clearly saw Europeans as potential allies in his quest to secure his authority and expand his rule. The Lozi king aspired to turn the state into an empire, and he devised a policy that utilized both internal and external factors in complementary ways as he struggled to create a Lozi empire. The increasing British presence around Victoria Falls ushered in new opportunities for him to expand his authority while also developing strong political and economic ties with the British.

Lewanika developed a strategy to compel the British to agree to a formalized relationship. According to Gwyn Prins, "[T]he Lozi task was to conform outwardly as much as possible to their understanding of what the Europeans expected. This expectation was shaped by Indirect Rule, that hybrid compound of formal, bureaucratic power above and of orderly and cooperative traditional power below. The colonial authority, thus satisfied, would not pry into areas where, hidden from European eyes, Lozi power expressed in different terms and including power over unaware Europeans, could be exercised.²³ In other words, Lewanika understood that in working with the British, he could meet their expectations, earn their trust, and thus be left to tend to his own affairs. Lewanika hoped that his formalized agreements with the British would afford him the ability and space to continue with his own power building, as long as it did not clash with the British activities underway in his territory. Although this was an imperfect arrangement, it was one that leaders such as Lewanika in Barotseland, Khama in Bechuanaland, and Lobengula in Matabeleland

²² Bertrand, *Kingdom of the Barotsi*, p. 271.

²³ Gwyn Prins, "The Battle for Control of the Camera in Late Nineteenth Century Western Zambia," *African Affairs* 89, no. 354 (January 1990), 97–98.

pursued in hopes that it would allow them to protect their own authority even as they allowed the British access to their territories.

Imperial or colonial imagination was not limited to the British in this region. Lewanika saw Barotseland as an empire-in-the-making; he had broad ambitions and in his visions for the future, his power and success was directly linked to the British. He also saw the challenges he faced in developing his state into the bigger and stronger entity that he dreamed of and he took those challenges seriously. Unlike Sepopa, or even the highly powerful Sebitwane, Lewanika methodically worked on strengthening his rule. He saw the necessity of focusing on both the internal and external dynamics that had the ability to make Barotseland fail or succeed. Prins described Lewanika at the 1897 signing of a BSACo concession as “visibly a king in control of his kingdom, able to mobilise quite a substantial display of his formal power and of the assent of the nation’s councilors when it was required. This did not look like an unpopular tyrant seeking the support of alien forces to bolster a narrowly based and precarious regime.”²⁴ Looks can, of course, be deceiving and it is easy for historians to look back to that moment and see both the façade of power and the face of authority represented by one man standing in the shadow of the most powerful empire in the world.

Lewanika’s strategy was a comprehensive and ambitious one. He sought to use both internal structures and external opportunities to further consolidate the region into a larger and more powerful state. His anticipations and expectations reflected an understanding of the changing process of asserting authority in the transforming political, economic, and cultural terrain that marked this period in African history. Lewanika, like other African leaders during the late nineteenth century, faced new and complex challenges as they aimed to maintain or even expand their authority within a local context, while simultaneously securing their position and influence with the Europeans they encountered. It may seem ironic that he actively pursued intimate and dynamic relationships with Europeans, the very people who posed a serious threat to his position of power, but Lewanika was securing himself a formative role in the conceptualization and construction of boundaries between Barotseland and Europeans. At a time when Europeans, and Britons specifically, were increasingly fascinated with Victoria Falls and the Upper Zambezi, Lewanika capitalized on that interest and his amenable relationship with the BSACo to secure

²⁴ Prins, *Hidden Hippopotamus*, p. 235.

a formal relationship with the British that not only helped him maintain authority over his own people but also expand it.

COLONIZER AND COLONIZED: DIPLOMACY AND LEWANIKA'S SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA, 1884–1898

Much like Coillard, his trusted adviser, Lewanika openly admired British culture and showed much enthusiasm about working with the British.²⁵ He was interested in developing a relationship specifically with the British and the future he imagined for himself and Barotseland was very much influenced by his pro-British stance. In 1884, during his first short-term reign, Lewanika invited the representatives of the British government to negotiate terms for establishing Barotseland as a protectorate but he was overthrown and exiled before that agreement was signed. When he came back as chief in 1885 he quickly resumed his quest to solidify his relationship with the British. By this time the BSACo showed interest in negotiating the terms of its relationship with Lewanika and Barotseland to secure the cooperation of this strategically important territory. Lewanika's admiration for the British was not completely unreciprocated. During the last fifteen years of the nineteenth century, representatives of the BSACo as well as other whites in the region developed the opinion that Lewanika was "courteous and hospitable," but even more significantly the BSACo deemed the Lozi population under this chief "as far ahead of other natives."²⁶ Patronizing tone aside, the BSACo begrudgingly praised the Lozi as being favorable to interact with compared to other populations in the region.

The British could officially enter Barotseland in 1885, but it took five years for the BSACo to establish a noticeable and consistent presence, much to Lewanika's dismay. In fact, the company was so slow in formalizing its

²⁵ Despite tensions between Lewanika and the BSACo, Lewanika remained a devoted supporter of the British Empire. In 1897, after the bruising of his ego from his dealings with the BSACo, Lewanika still showed his loyalty to the British. When Captain Gibbons of the BSACo entered Barotseland in 1895, Gibbons recalled his favorable treatment at the hands of the Lozi, sharing "the natives received him well and with a degree of courtesy in many instances such as he had never before experienced from African natives, and in the satisfaction which invariably followed his answer to the question, 'Are you an Englishman?'" "The Marutse Country," *Morning Post*, January 5, 1897, p. 2.

²⁶ "British Rule in Africa: A Great Extension," *Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser*, October 5, 1898, p. 8.

control over the area that they lost the first concession signed by Chief Lewanika. Harry Ware approached the Lozi king in 1889. Ware, a minerals prospector, was interested in exploring the region to determine its mining potential. Lewanika agreed to Ware's request, although the agreement was hardly robust for the Lozi, with compensation of just £ 200 per year, plus a 4 % royalty on any profits garnered from the mineral extraction. Lewanika showed he was just as shrewd as Ware, as the land he ceded was fully Tonga land. Thus, Lewanika did not actually open up his land for mineral exploitation, but he still stood to gain from the agreement. In this move it is clear that Lewanika viewed a relationship with the British as the way for him to expand his own authority in the region. Lewanika imagined a larger territory under his control and he knew that his agreements with prospectors and eventually the BSACo would allow him to claim lands not truly under his rule. Ware benefitted by finding an agreeable chief who would allow him to survey the land for potential mineral exploitation and Lewanika wrote himself into the agreement as the chief over lands not truly under his authority.

To outsiders, the full range of Lewanika's rule was somewhat fluid; the British were not exactly sure how much land he controlled, crediting him as the "King of the Barotse Nation, whose power extends over an enormous tract of country north of Bechuanaland..."²⁷ In terms of the people he ruled, there was still only a vague sense of the extent of Lewanika's authority. One writer estimated that "some twenty to twenty-five tribes are scattered over this immense territory, but it would be a mistake to infer that the country is well populated, or that all these tribes form one homogeneous nation."²⁸ Because there was no specific knowledge of which land and people he controlled and where his rule was questionable, Lewanika was able to negotiate and thus formalize his authority over places that did not consider him their chief. His increasing authority throughout the region from 1890 to the early 1900s was demonstrated in the protocols he followed when actually signing concessions during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Mutumba Bull explained:

²⁷ Untitled publication of the BSACo's first report to shareholders, detailing activities from its incorporation by Royal Charter in October 1889 to March 31, 1891, *Aberdeen Journal*, December 21, 1891, p. 4.

²⁸ "The Barotsi Valley, Upper Zambesi," *The Graphic*, p. 17.

It is interesting to compare the circumstances surrounding the signing of the 1890 and 1900 treaties. The procedures for obtaining Lozi assent differed widely. In 1890 it was found necessary to summon all the national representatives from the capital and the provinces and, when their assent was obtained, the document itself was signed by no less than thirty-nine indunas [advisors or headmen], excluding Lewanika and his son Litia. In 1900 only twenty-seven indunas of the capital were present, while the actual concessions were signed by eight people only, excluding the witnesses...An examination of the political situation in the country as a whole suggests that Lewanika was in a far stronger position in 1898 and 1900 than he was in 1890, and could then deal with the whites as the master in his own house.²⁹

Lewanika was expanding his authority during the 1890s and was able to do so in part because of his relationship with the British. While the individual villages and political entities might not have agreed with the codification of his power, Lewanika realized that he would have British support in any subsequent claims of leadership.

For the BSACo, which “was not so much concerned with the Bechuanaland Protectorate as with territories farther north,”³⁰ it was more important to find friendly African chiefs to work with than it was to worry about the specific boundaries of those leaders’ rule. Doubtless the BSACo was none too pleased by this usurpation by Ware given the importance of establishing strong relationships with African chiefs in this region; they wanted the rights to this land as well, and soon thereafter “[T]erms were made for the purchase of this concession [by the BSACo]; and the Company’s mission was able to arrange with the King that it should be merged into a larger mineral and trading concession over the whole of the Barotse land.”³¹ With Ware out of the way, the BSACo began the process of officially claiming land and resources at Victoria Falls and north of the Zambezi. Cecil Rhodes and the BSACo acted in the capacity of the Crown government of agreements with the government that allowed the BSACo to serve as a representative of the British Empire.³² With the power of the

²⁹ Mutumba W. Bull, “Lewanika’s Achievement,” *The Journal of African History* 13, no. 3 (1972), 464.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ BSACo, “Report on the Company’s Proceedings and the Condition of the Territories within the Sphere of its Operations. 1889–1892” (Box CI/8-CI/1/25 BSACo Board of Directors’ Report, Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 17.

³² Christopher Paulin, *White Man’s Dreams, Black Men’s Blood: African Labor and British Expansionism in Southern Africa, 1877–1895* (Trenton, NJ and Asmara, Africa World Press, Inc., 2001), p. 12.

British Crown behind it, the BSACo was virtually limitless in power. In practical terms, the BSACo enjoyed the freedom to operate as it saw fit, only limited by some vague regulations that had little effect on BSACo activities. Lewanika was actually under the impression that he was negotiating with the Queen of England herself, rather than with a subsidiary of the Crown government and was quite disgusted to discover that that was not the full story. The BSACo did little to suggest otherwise and this non-disclosure caused Lewanika much distress when he realized the truth.³³

Lewanika spent years initiating contact with the British, so he was pleased when Frank Lochner, a BSACo representative, finally came to the negotiating table in the late 1880s. Lochner was the first agent of the BSACo who negotiated with Lewanika and he approached Lewanika with confidence because he knew that Lewanika was “desirous to come under the protection of Great Britain.”³⁴ In fact, it may have been Lewanika’s letter to Khama that pushed the British to explore possible connections in Barotseland. The Foreign Office was notified about the correspondence between Lewanika and Khama via Lord Gifford who wrote, “As the Chief on the northern bank of the Zambezi opposite to Chief Khama of Bechuanaland desires protection, and has sent to Khama to ask how he gets along with us, and how this protection can be obtained [sic]. It is a valuable tract of country, and I am advising now on the request, and am quite prepared to get capital put into the country if the authorities desire it.”³⁵ His letter to Khama caught the attention of the British and opened the door to negotiations.

Lewanika did conceptualize the British as a protective entity. A history of conflict with the Ndebele, coupled with his experience of being dethroned and exiled by his own people, left Lewanika with the knowledge that his reign north of the Zambezi was precarious. In fact, some interested whites

³³ Lawrence S. Flint summarizes Lewanika’s disappointment, writing “Lewanika’s early encounters with the emissaries of British colonialism were not what he had hoped for. Having signed up to what he thought was the protection of the ‘Great White Queen,’ Victoria, via various treaties and concessions in 1889, 1890, and 1900, Lewanika found himself and his kingdom actually in the clutches of a commercial company.” From “State Building in Central Southern Africa: Citizenship and Subjectivity in Barotseland and Caprivi,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 36, no. 2 (2003), 411.

³⁴ BSACo, “Report on the Company’s Proceedings and the Condition of the Territories within the Sphere of its Operations,” 1889–1892, p. 17.

³⁵ Clay, *Your Friend, Lewanika*, p. 59.

keeping a close eye on Matabeleland substantiated Lewanika's concerns about potential conflict with the Ndebele. One writer confirmed "The opinion held by so many experts in South African affairs that the eventual move of the Matabele will be to abandon Rhodesia to the white man and make for themselves a new kingdom north of the Zambezi seems to rest upon solid grounds...To occupy this country [the Upper and Middle Zambezi Valley] has always been part of the Matabele scheme."³⁶ Both Lewanika and the BSACo were concerned by this possibility and that shared unease helped bring the two parties together.

In addition to his unease about the Ndebele to the south, Lewanika was also concerned about the Portuguese and German presence close to his territory. It was with these concerns in mind that in 1888 the king publicly suggested the potential benefits of British protection. Coillard attended a *pitso*, or public meeting during which Lewanika opened up discourse on the topic. Coillard wrote that the chief's speech was a plea for consent from his people to pursue becoming a

...protectorate of 'Satory'—Queen Victoria of England! In his exile, Lewanika had heard it talked about; he imagined that there he would find the panacea of all his ills. We had often talked it over together...I had resisted his entreaties, and many times refused to write to the authorities on the subject...I had counseled him to address himself first to the chief Khama, to take his ministers...into his confidence, and then to treat of the matter in a council of the great chiefs of the nation.³⁷

The meeting erupted in discussion, with no final verdict handed down. The seed was planted though and Lewanika exposed his predilection toward the British. Coillard eventually succumbed to Lewanika's request to write to the British Deputy Commissioner in South Africa to inquire about the possibility of becoming a British protectorate at around the same time the BSACo had already decided to send Lochner in to discuss an arrangement.

He preferred to form an alliance with the British because he believed they had the most to offer him in terms of protection. "He placed his country" explained Major Gibbons, "under our protection on the sole condition that we should keep it intact in the face of foreign encroachment."³⁸

³⁶ "Beyond Zambesi," *Pall Mall Gazette*, August 10, 1896, p. 3.

³⁷ Coillard, p. 331.

³⁸ Gibbons, *South to North*, p. 123.

Gibbons was only half correct in his assessment though. While administrators and scholars alike consider protection as the foundation of Lewanika's explicit desire to invite the British to assume an administrative role north of the Zambezi, there is more strategy in this bid for British protection. As Lewanika observed an increasing British interest in the Upper Zambezi Valley, he calculated the possible benefits he could enjoy with formal colonial expansion. Under agreements with the British, which allowed him to retain, at least theoretically, authority, Lewanika was able to officially extend and sustain his influence over an immense region that he always hoped to absorb into his own empire. R.T. Coryndon, one of the first permanent administrators assigned to North Western Rhodesia stated that the Lozi, under Lewanika's lead, tended to exaggerate the size of their land and influence because they wished "for strong reasons to make the Barotse as large as possible."³⁹ British assistance granted the Lozi leader the opportunity to make formal claims to the land and people throughout the area. Indeed, within just a few years of cooperating with the British, Lewanika "restored order and regained ascendancy over the subject tribes and extended his rule until he governed an area larger than France."⁴⁰ It was Lewanika's clear intent to make sure he did not lose this influence and rather than seeing the British as adversaries, he believed a relationship between the two could actually bolster his claims to regional power (Fig. 3.1).

When Lewanika and Lochner sat down to discuss the terms of the relationship between Barotseland and the BSACo, both sides imagined there was much to gain and little to lose. They went into the meetings on friendly terms, with Lewanika particularly anxious to establish a formal relationship. Still, the agreement took months to complete, but eventually the men agreed on the terms of the concession which granted the BSACo exclusive mining rights over the whole of Barotseland.⁴¹ This agreement was open enough to allow Lewanika to determine for himself which peoples and land were his subjects and dependents. From Lewanika's standpoint, this was a desirable position to be in because he could define his power as he wished. His relationship with the BSACo gave him the ability to effectively colonize other communities throughout the region via paperwork⁴² and was able to extend his power over groups on the periph-

³⁹ R.T. Coryndon, "Barotseland" (C 1/12, Acc. No. 3689 Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 116.

⁴⁰ Tabler, "Introduction," pp. 8–9.

⁴¹ Galbraith, *Crown and Charter*, p. 217.

⁴² Lewanika was not alone in his manipulation of colonial bureaucracy. In the Lower Tchiri Valley, Makololo leaders signed treaties that gave the British sovereignty over the Mang'anja

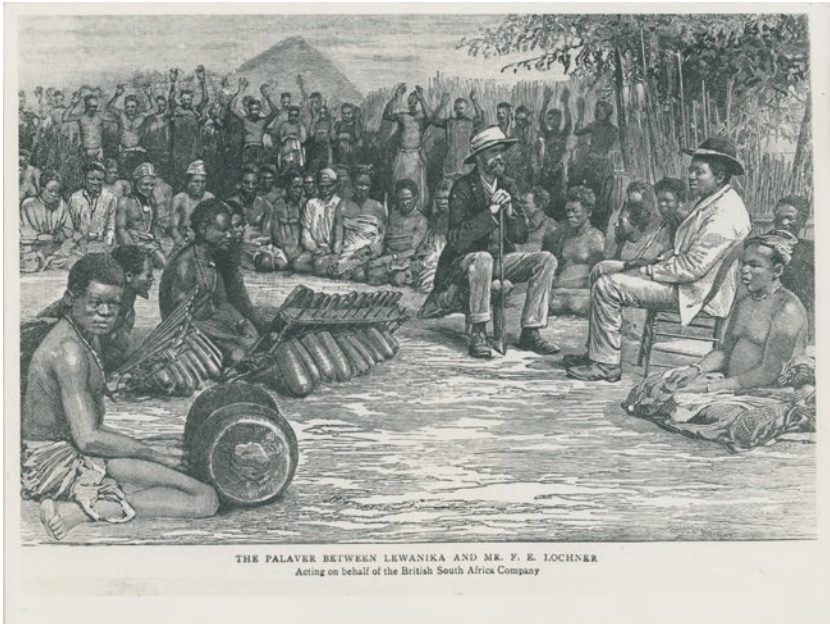


Fig. 3.1 The Palaver between Lewanika and F.E. Lochner; illustration for *The Graphic*, October 17, 1891. Image provided by the Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

ery of his sphere of influence. The British also benefited from this clause because they were able to negotiate their claims over considerable land, resources, and labor with Lewanika, an amenable and cooperative king.

Lewanika believed that the BSACo could help him preserve his authority. The king imagined a system that allowed his Lozi state to exist in equal partnership with colonial state. Despite his high hopes though, Lewanika was ultimately disappointed by the Lochner Concession and its aftermath. There was no discernible British presence for seven years and he felt the BSACo tricked him into signing the agreement by pretending to represent

without any input from the Mang'anja themselves. See Elias C. Mandala, *Work and Control in a Peasant Economy: A History of the Lower Tchiri Valley in Malawi, 1859–1960* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), p. 101.

the Queen. As an aristocrat with no shortage of self-worth, he believed as a king he would naturally only enter agreements with other monarchs. With the backing of a monarch he considered his peer, Lewanika was confident that his strength would only increase. Lewanika's advisers also viewed the agreement as a step forward in asserting Lozi power in the region. He had extremely high expectations of what a relationship with the British might produce, and he was anxious to start seeing the results.

Lochner was not the only one who helped perpetrate this fraud. Lewanika's trusted adviser Coillard, and A.J. Jalla, another missionary he turned to for guidance, "seriously misunderstood the relationship between the British Government and the Chartered Company, with critical consequences for the future of Barotseland."⁴³ Jalla told Lewanika that Lochner served as an agent of the Crown government. Coillard confirmed this idea by telling Lewanika that an agreement with the BSACo was synonymous to an agreement with the Crown. The missionaries, both friendly with Lewanika, were not purposefully misleading. The BSACo was an entity they knew nothing about before the arrival of Lochner and they could not know the relationship between the company and the British government.

Lochner, and the BSACo in general, had a much different interpretation of the agreement. While the king felt his authority was secure in this new relationship, the BSACo certainly did not consider the Lozi king an equal to their queen. It is unlikely that the king and his advisory council would have agreed to the concession if they had known they were not dealing with the British Crown directly.⁴⁴ The negotiations were prolonged and contested even as Lewanika believed he was sparring with fellow nobility. The success of the concession hinged in a large part on Lewanika's (false) sense of security that it was being written between two monarchs. Thus, the Lochner Concession represented to the BSACo the opening of a new opportunity to continue with the Cape to Cairo dream with the added benefit of seizing ownership of potentially lucrative mineral resources.⁴⁵

Almost twenty years later, the breach of trust he experienced in his first treaty with the British still disturbed Lewanika. In a series of letters

⁴³ Caplan, "Barotseland's Scramble," p. 289.

⁴⁴ Choolwe Beyani, "Labour Capital and the State in Colonial Zambia: The Development of Commercial Agriculture, 1900–1948" (Ph.D., Columbia University, 2000), pp. 59–60.

⁴⁵ It was certainly not uncommon for there to be misunderstandings of the agreements signed between the British and African leaders. Lobengula of Matabeleland, for example, believed that the Rudd Concession of 1888 was an agreement to the BSACo to mine gold, when in fact it was designed to make full claims on what became known as Rhodesia.

to High Commissioner Selborne in early 1908, he raised the issue again. Lewanika wrote an inquiry to Selborne about the possibility of working with King Edward to renegotiate the terms of the formal relationship between Barotseland and the British Crown. Selborne's response was that he discussed the issue with King Edward, and that the

answer has now come, and the words of the Great King on this matter are that He does not think fit to change the present form of administering your country. His Majesty has been graciously pleased to direct me to remind you, my friend, of the fact that the order which provided, and provides, for the government of all North Western Rhodesia, including Barotseland, in His own Order....The King has given this direction because he thinks well of the work which the British South Africa Company has done, because he knows that this great Company has done its duty by him, and has kept faith with you, and because he thinks it has deserved his confidence and yours and that of your people.⁴⁶

This ambiguous language represented the semantics used by the BSACo and Colonial Office administrators. Selborne conveyed a virtual inseparability between the Crown and the BSACo, but he also maintained the definition according to the official charter. In the letter he implied that the king told him directly to pass along the message to the chief, but of course it is unknown whether or not King Edward relayed the answer, or even knew about the issue. Lewanika had little recourse, particularly as this struggle between semantics and reality had a long history behind it. In his response to Selborne, Lewanika conceded that the Lozi were "expecting, through Your Excellency, the answer of King Edward to our demand to be directly under his Government. It has come at last and not such as we had wished for. We are sorry our petition has not been granted, but we submit to the decision of the Great King."⁴⁷

This incident offers interesting fodder in the consideration of negotiations for power during this time period and about the shortcomings of Lewanika's imagined future as the African leader of a protectorate within the British Empire. Clearly, Lewanika felt it was his aristocratic right to negotiate for Barotseland as an equal to the Queen and King of England.

⁴⁶Lord Selborne, "Letter from Selborne to Lewanika, March 3, 1908" (A1/2/10, National Archives of Zambia), pp. 110–111.

⁴⁷Lewanika, "Letter from Lewanika to Selborne" (A1/2/10, National Archives of Zambia), p. 112.

His expectation of such a courtesy lends great insight into his mindset. Even in his disappointment, Lewanika did not feel he was losing authority; rather, he believed he was forming an alliance that only strengthened his position and expanded his opportunities for Lozi rule over a larger territory. In fact, his power did gain new dimension from his agreements with the BSACo, but he was jolted by the realization that he was not entering into a relationship based on a common nobility and monarchical power.

The Lochner Concession did not have the immediate effect Lewanika expected and the Lozi chief never felt the concession met his expectations. The terms of the agreement

conceded the mining rights of the whole country to the Company exclusively, reserving over the whole Batoka territory 4 per cent annually of the total output of the mines in favour of Lewanika and his successors. The country, which was opened to all the Company's employees, and to traders, was nevertheless to be closed to emigrants. The Company, extending its protectorate over it, engages to defend it from outside attacks; it respects the rights of the king and chiefs over their subjects, and does not interfere between them. It recognises the king's exclusive right to hunt large game and elephants, and assures to him, and to his successors in perpetuity, an annuity of £ 2,000...⁴⁸

Noteworthy in this concession is that Lewanika ceded Tonga land (including Victoria Falls) to the BSACo, while still leaving Lewanika primary control over Barotseland. He would benefit financially from the activities in the Tonga land while still keeping the land in Barotseland for himself and his people.

It was, of course, risky for Lewanika to use British colonial paperwork to grant the BSACo land and resources not necessarily his to grant. So upon signing this agreement, Lewanika was most concerned with the quick establishment of an obvious British presence. He needed the BSACo and other interested British parties to be on the ground to help legitimize his rule. Because he understood the agreement to be an amalgamation of two royal powers, he was not at all concerned with sharing space with the British, particularly because the terms of the agreement preserved so much of his chiefly privileges. Seven years after the concession there was still no permanent British posting. In fact, "in the years that followed the company managed to renege, temporarily or permanently, on nearly

⁴⁸ Coillard, *Threshold*, p. 387.

every commitment it made: the powers of both the king and the Kuta [Lozi advisory council] were severely circumscribed, no payment was made for the first seven years, no school or industrial establishment was ever financed by the company, and its Resident only arrived in 1897, with a tiny and unimpressive escort, while he soon moved his headquarters far from the Barotse Valley.”⁴⁹ Lewanika repudiated the agreement and the BSACo’s disregard for the concession’s terms resulted in a troubled beginning for colonial rule.

Just as Lewanika was confused by the realities of the concession, the BSACo sought to fully clarify its role in the creation of North Western Rhodesia. The BSACo followed up on the Lochner Concession with the Orders in Council of 1891. This document explained and solidified the relationship between the BSACo and the British government. It allowed for the assignment of High Commissioners of the British government to serve over land acquired through the BSACo charters in southern Africa, including along the Chobe and Zambezi Rivers. One draft of the order stated that “the High Commissioner may, amongst other things, from time to time by proclamation provide for the administration of justice, the raising of revenue, and generally for the peace, order, and good government of all persons within the limits of this Order, including the prohibition and punishment of acts lending to disturb the public peace.”⁵⁰ The ambiguous nature of the language used in the orders demonstrated the fluidity of the contract and thus the possibilities that opened up under the ambiguous terms. The BSACo left space to impose new policies at undisclosed times as they determined them necessary and advantageous. Even as there was confusion over how British authority and BSACo rule was defined in the region, there was a sense that it was a crucial region in the expanding British African Empire. As one article boldly stated, “The British public cannot fail to be interested in the region of the Sefula Barotsi Valley, on the Upper Zambesi, now that the British South Africa Company has drawn attention to it.”⁵¹ As later chapters will show, the strategic importance of Victoria Falls (as the border into the Upper Zambezi Valley) and Barotse land figured critically into ambitions for British Africa. Even at this early stage in colonial expansion it was evident that BSACo’s

⁴⁹ Caplan, “Barotse land,” p. 293.

⁵⁰ “Orders in Council 1891” (Box AI/I- A 7 Government Publications (U.K.), A 2/3 Acc. No. 4, Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 7.

⁵¹ “The Barotsi Valley, Upper Zambesi,” *The Graphic*, p. 17.

control of this region was a crucial component to fulfilling the larger goals of the empire.

This edict was followed with a document that reiterated the respective roles of the BSACo and British government in North Western Rhodesia. The BSACo presented its “Papers Respecting the British Sphere North of the Zambezi, and Agreements with British South Africa Company” to the British Parliament and Queen Victoria in 1895. This memorandum explicated the regulations under which the BSACo worked, and outlined the expectations of British officials involved in the colonial administration. In particular it addressed the financial responsibilities of the BSACo. The document ordered that “All expenses connected with the administration in the Chartered territory shall be borne by the Company either by fixed payment, or by liquidation of accounts rendered by the Commissioner, but no expense beyond the before-mentioned 10,000*L.*, except for travelling expenses of the Commissioner and his agents, shall be incurred without the previous sanction of the Company.”⁵² It was no wonder that Lewanika was unsure who he was actually negotiating with during these early days, nor is it surprising that British settlers in the area felt misrepresented by both administrative bodies. It took several years for the BSACo and British government to clarify the responsibilities of each party and the confusion had a long-lasting effect on the colonization process. Indeed, the early days of colonization north of the Zambezi proved to be a messy process for all parties involved, this despite the fact that the BSACo was dealing with an eager chief who himself requested British protection.

The first venture between Barotseland and the British government, vis-à-vis the BSACo, proved ultimately disappointing to Lewanika and his advisers. They were tricked, through vague language, into thinking the nature of the agreement was on equal terms. Despite this sour beginning, “both Lewanika and the Company had a common interest in coming to terms once again. Lewanika’s long-standing fear of the Ndebele began to subside after their defeat in 1893, but he shared with the Company a growing concern at signs of Portuguese expansion from the west.”⁵³ Even as he struggled to understand the terms of his agreements with the BSACo

⁵² “Papers Respecting the British Sphere North of Zambezi, and Agreements with British South Africa Company,” Dated February 1895 (Box A I/I- A 7 Government Publications (U.K.). A I/6 Acc. No. 7198. Africa. No. 2, Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 2.

⁵³ Andrew Roberts, *A History of Zambia* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1976), p. 165.

and reached disappointing conclusions about how he was treated in the process, Lewanika continued to show the British his allegiance. In late 1893, for example, Lewanika “regretting hearing of the Matabele war” sent “a strong force to Lesikili, below the falls, to prevent Matabele crossing the Zambesi.”⁵⁴ In doing so, he assured his loyalty to the BSACo and the British public who read about his help with the Matabele. He was not ready to give up on his dream of a British-Lozi alliance.

Interestingly, some British observers pushed for more transparency and collaboration between the BSACo and Lewanika, not on the grounds of fairness, but out of concern that this friendly African chief could experience a change in attitude and become another problem for the British in southern Africa. James Johnston, a medical doctor by training, traveled around south central Africa in the early 1890s, unattached to any missionary or government body. His goal was to see this part of Africa for himself, with a focus on further developing his theories on the labor of Africans and people of African descent and to determine what resources were available in this part of the world. Johnston spent a great deal of time with Lewanika and, as evident from his writing, developed a sympathetic affinity for the chief. Lewanika reportedly shared with Johnston some of his frustrations that revealed the cracks in what he imagined would come out of his relationship with the BSACo. According to Johnston, Lewanika said he “longs for light and knowledge, and wonders why more missionaries do not come to teach him and his people...he wants teachers to instruct his people how to read and write, but especially to train them as carpenters, cabinet-makers, blacksmiths, and for other trades...he has a great idea of the ability of the Marotsi to learn the various arts and become wise like Europeans.”⁵⁵ This conversation offers insight into what Lewanika was hoping to gain from the British beyond protection and the expansion of his authority. His vision for the future of his people was heavily influenced by what he thought they could gain from interaction with the British, and he was disappointed that his ambitions had not come to fruition.

Johnston then addressed the issue of how Lewanika perceived his treatment by the BSACo, which, according to Johnston, the Lozi chief considered “bad treatment he has received at the hands of the British South Africa

⁵⁴ “Waning Hope of Major Wilson’s Safety,” *Leamington Spa Courier*, January 13, 1894, p. 8.

⁵⁵ James Johnston, *Reality versus Romance in South Central Africa* (New York and Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1893), p. 142.

Company.”⁵⁶ It would appear that Lewanika spent much time lamenting his mistreatment at the hands of the BSACo and that his experience left him feeling betrayed and confused. The Lozi chief spoke extensively about the misrepresentation of whom he was negotiating with and he clearly was still upset that he was not actually entering agreements directly with the British monarch. A literary review of Johnston’s book indicated that the reviewer was struck by the discussion of Lewanika’s interactions with the BSACo and it would seem the author also sympathized with the Lozi chief. The reviewer argued that “[T]he book is certain to awaken a good deal of controversy...The conduct of the British South Africa Company toward Lewanika...as described in these pages, calls especially for a searching investigation, because such treatment cannot fail to awaken in the native mind settled mistrust, if not open hostility.”⁵⁷ While Johnston was more concerned on a personal level with the mistreatment of Lewanika, there were also implications that such interactions with African chiefs could lead to larger problems in colonial endeavors. This focus on Lewanika’s perspective on how he was handled by the BSACo served as a reality check for Lewanika and interested observers that what was hoped for or imagined as possible during this period of early colonial expansion was not a shared vision.

With a growing sense of unease between Lewanika and the BSACo, the two parties negotiated a series of new concessions starting in 1897 meant to revise and affirm the terms of their relationship. Seasoned by his previous experience, Lewanika entered these talks with much more caution and gave special attention to the language used in the agreements. He also went into these discussions with a renewed premonition of great possibilities for himself and the Lozi people. The chief returned to his personality that had helped him gain allies and sympathizers in the past. Lewanika was popular with the early settlers north of the Zambezi and Westbeech and Coillard especially admired the chief. Johnston also spoke highly of the chief and Lewanika was equally charming to many of the administrators and settlers who visited him in the beginning phase of colonization.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 144. Johnston believed, as did Coillard, that the BSACo purposely misrepresented itself to Lewanika. He included copies of letters from Lewanika and Coillard in which the men are trying to better understand the exact relationship between the BSACo and British monarchy. Lewanika, Coillard, and Johnston remained skeptical and unsatisfied with the answers provided by the BSACo, and if Johnston’s account of Lewanika’s feelings about the situation are accurate, it is clear that Lewanika felt tricked and disrespected.

⁵⁷ “Literary Arrivals,” *Leeds Mercury*, December 26, 1893, p. 8.

Major Gibbons, the leader of a surveying expedition, offered a succinct description of the general European impression of the Lozi king when he recalled “[H]is natural courtesy, his address, and his tactful hospitality were a revelation to me. I did not expect all these qualities in the ruler of a barbarian state.”⁵⁸ Despite his resentment toward the BSACo, Lewanika surprised Gibbons with his cordial treatment and Gibbons was pleased to note that Lewanika and the Lozi in general were courteous and enthusiastic about his visit.⁵⁹ BSACo officials were won over by the chief’s composure and had faith that their negotiations with such a dignified, congenial man would result in agreeable terms.

At the end of the 1890s, Captain Arthur Lawley, a representative of the BSACo, called on Lewanika with the purpose of clarifying points from the failed Lochner Concession between the Lozi and the Company and, more importantly, to re-establish Lewanika’s faith and cooperation after the disappointing realities of the Lochner Concession. Lawley was joined by Major R.T. Coryndon as negotiations got underway. By October of 1898, the BSACo felt confident in proclaiming that Lewanika “expressed readiness to concede to the Chartered Company administrative powers over the whole of his country.”⁶⁰ In fact, Lewanika’s eagerness to enter into formal protectorate status likely contributed to the lack of expediency the BSACo showed in their dealings with the Lozi chief.

It is important to note that despite the apparent lack of urgency demonstrated by the BSACo when dealing with Lewanika, it was crucial to the British South African colonial agenda to assert control over this region. This particular concession significantly expanded administrative powers to the BSACo “to the borders of the Congo Free State and the German and Portuguese West African possessions,”⁶¹ while also granting some administrative rights within Barotseland proper. Up until this concession, the BSACo had mineral and trading rights in Barotseland, but this agreement allowed them to start developing a more administrative presence in Barotseland. The BSACo understood the strategic significance of securing this relationship in the Upper Zambezi Valley, but also showed

⁵⁸ A. St. Hill Gibbons, *Africa from South to North Through Marotseland*, Vol. I (London and New York: John Lane, 1904), p. 124.

⁵⁹ “The Marutse Country,” *Morning Post*, January 5, 1897, p. 2.

⁶⁰ “The Chartered Company’s Administrative Powers,” *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, October 1, 1898, p. 6.

⁶¹ “British Advance in Africa: Barotseland Ceded to the Chartered Company,” *Western Mail*, October 1, 1898, p. 5.

little concern for reciprocating Lewanika's enthusiasm. The BSACo was extremely confident in their position in this dynamic relationship, with Lewanika "recognised for some time past that he was bound to accept the protection of one or other of the European powers with whom he was in contact. These powers are Great Britain and Portugal, and there has never been the slightest doubt as to the direction in which Lewanika's personal sympathies lay."⁶² It would seem that Lewanika's frequent proclamations about his admiration for the British and his desires to form an alliance with them made his negotiations more difficult because the BSACo took his eagerness for granted. In fact, both parties left the table without complete satisfaction and the first decade of the twentieth century ushered in several more agreements between the two parties.

Lewanika impressed Lawley, particularly because of the formality the king demanded from his subjects, advisers, and son. Lawley wrote that "[T]he King's personal dignity is remarkable; he never unbends or allows anything approaching familiarity."⁶³ Lawley was also struck by the intelligence and courteousness of both Lewanika and his son, and noted that Lewanika, though perhaps a bit shy, never seemed uncomfortable in his interactions with the BSACo representatives.⁶⁴ He admired the generosity of the chief, which was reminiscent of the accommodations Lewanika bestowed on earlier visitors. Lawley recorded that Lewanika was excessively generous when giving gifts and that he received daily presents from the chief including oxen, baskets, mats, fish, and produce. After the negotiations, Lawley reciprocated and Lewanika "was much pleased at being presented with a double-barrelled rifle and two salted horses, and we parted the best of friends."⁶⁵ Lawley also described in detail the pomp and circumstance that followed Lewanika, as the chief's large party of advisers and staff maintained a high level of decorum and drama throughout the proceedings.⁶⁶

⁶² "British Rule in South Africa: Another Important Extension," *Evening Telegraph*, October 1, 1898, p. 2.

⁶³ "From Bulawayo to the Victoria Falls: A Mission to King Lewanika" (Box CI/8-CI/I/25 BSACo Board of Directors' Report. C 1/5 photostat, Acc. 3682, Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 369.

⁶⁴ Arthur Lawley, "King Lewanika" 9 (first published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, December 1898 then reprinted), *Newcastle Courant*, December 10, 1898, p. 2.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

⁶⁶ Lawley, "King Lewanika," p. 2.

Personal dynamics aside, the general tone of the meeting appeared amiable and though the terms of the new concession were not entirely satisfactory to either side, there was confidence among the BSACo and Lozi leadership that the foundation was in place for a reciprocal relationship. The BSACo perspective was that the agreement offered “a favourable modification of the concessions already possessed by the Company in his country, and further declared his readiness to concede to them, with certain reservations, administrative powers over the whole of Barotseland.”⁶⁷ Lawley left with an important advance in the BSACo’s push for colonial rule and Lewanika, perhaps pleased to be back on friendlier and more transparent terms, felt the concession solidified a partnership with the BSACo. It seems Chief Lewanika’s hospitality was beneficial as it helped him gain the friendship and respect of an important administrator of the BSACo—an important step in moving forward with the British. Given the volatile relationship between Lochner and Lewanika, it was probably a surprise to both parties that Lawley and Lewanika were able to form a friendly relationship.

The new concession was an important step forward for Lewanika. When Lawley arrived to negotiate the next set of agreements with Lewanika, the Lozi chief had new priorities. Although the Lochner Concession of 1890 ultimately failed to offer him protection from the Ndebele if he needed it, by the time he and Lawley met, the Ndebele threat was all but diffused. Lewanika still shared concerns about the approach of Portuguese and German nationals along his western borders, but his main motivation for renegotiating a relationship with the British derived from his need to expand and maintain his sphere of influence. He also saw the opportunity to benefit from the cash flow starting to trickle into the territory. Thus, he demonstrated renewed eagerness to accommodate his European visitors. It is not surprising that he received Lawley with graciousness and flexibility. Lawley began the meetings with a test for Lewanika. It was standard practice at that time for Europeans to visit Lewanika, with his express permission, in his court. Instead of requesting an audience with Lewanika, Lawley asked that the Chief and his court join him at his camp some 400 miles away from the Lozi capital, instead holding the meetings close to Victoria Falls. This caused quite a stir, as Lawley recorded that

⁶⁷ “British Rule in South Africa: Another Important Extension,” *Evening Telegraph*, October 1, 1898, p. 2.

his (Lewanika's) having undertaken the (to him) unprecedented journey of 400 miles at my bidding was regarded by the whole nation as an event of the greatest importance. The younger of the councilors were very averse to it, as they regarded it as an act of homage to the white man, whose growing ascendancy with the king they look on with disfavour. So, too when the question arise as to whether the king should *first* call on me or *vice versa*, they were strongly opposed to his losing (as the considered it) his prestige by being the first to come and pay his respects. But upon this I insisted.⁶⁸

This BSACo representative sent an obvious message to the Lozi and Lewanika, but rather shrewdly, Lewanika maintained his ground even while giving in to this request. Perhaps Lewanika felt by agreeing to move locations, Lawley would underestimate his strength at the negotiating table. But Lewanika was savvy in political mediation and he was determined to walk away from the meetings satisfied with the new arrangements. Under the new concession, which was first signed in 1898 as the Lawley Concession, Hugh Marshall Hole, a former administrator explained that under the terms,

Lewanika agreed to grant to the Company very wide powers of administration and jurisdiction, and exclusive privileges in respect of mining and commerce within certain defined boundaries. He also undertook to use his best endeavours to suppress slavery and witchcraft. In return Lawley and Coryndon pledged to the Company to assist in the education and civilisation of the chief's subjects, to reserve large specified tracts for the sole use of the Barotse people, and to pay an annual subsidy.⁶⁹

While Lewanika, and to a lesser extent, Barotseland as a whole, were to "benefit" from the promises of educational and cultural programs, and the income generated through subsidies, it is the clause that reserved land for the Lozi that was most significant. In his dealings with the British, Lewanika consistently clung to as much land and autonomy as possible for the Lozi. His bargaining chip was his status as ruler (often many times very loosely defined) over several other groups in the area. In effect, he preserved the position of his own people at the cost of other communities. This benefited him in two ways. First, his power over the Lozi was secured and his people were guaranteed land and a certain degree

⁶⁸ "From Bulawayo to the Victoria Falls: A Mission to King Lewanika," p. 369.

⁶⁹ Hugh Marshall Hole, *The Making of Rhodesia* (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd, 1926), p. 391.

of independence despite the coming of the British. In a clarification of the concession, Lewanika got in writing that a stretch of territory in the heart of Barotseland would be reserved “for the sole and exclusive use of King Lewanika and his people, to prevent prospecting for gold within that area and to exclude gold prospectors from entering upon it [and] provided that traders and travelers approved of by the King or by the High Commissioner shall not be excluded from entering the said area.”⁷⁰ Second, he reified his regional power by determining the fate of subject people, but also groups only loosely under his sphere of influence.

This strategy had significant implications on the colonization of people living under the shadow of Barotseland. As one historian noted, “even though the machinations of the colonial encounter were not directed at or from Batonga per se but Bulozzi (a different society and also empire), the actual colonial process was effected more vigorously later on the Batonga people. In essence Batonga was colonized via Bulozzi.”⁷¹ Other subject groups shared the experience, as much of the land that fell directly under British rule and exploitation was not in Barotseland proper but among the neighboring groups. This proactive move protected the Lozi from complete absorption into the colonial body, but other parts of Barotseland (as defined by Lewanika and the BSACo), particularly the vicinity of the Falls, transformed dramatically during the transition into colonial governance. While Lewanika engaged in manipulative and misleading diplomacy, the Tonga living near Victoria Falls experienced the realities that came with the opening of the frontier north of the Zambezi. They were not involved in the paperwork of colonization, nor were they covered by stipulations to protect them from disruption similar to those granted to Barotseland proper. In this regard, colonization was imposed on less powerful groups like the Tonga and Ila who had very little involvement in the process.

Although the BSACo paid little attention to such groups, there were attempts by the Tonga to assert themselves in the changing political landscape. They too saw the possibilities presented by a relationship with the company but, unfortunately for them, the BSACo viewed Lewanika as the Paramount Chief. For the Tonga, colonization meant the possibility of removing themselves from Lozi subjugation. Just as Lewanika saw the

⁷⁰ Concession “A,” The embodiment agreement between Lewanika and Captain Lawley at Victoria Falls on June 25, 1898. Report submitted by J. Chamberlain, November 23, 1901 (DO 119/522, Public Records Office, London), p. 248.

⁷¹ Beyani, “Labour Capital,” pp. 38–39.

British as potential protection from outsiders, the Tonga believed they could use the BSACo presence to shield themselves from Lewanika's tight grip. Even though they found themselves accountable to concessions dictated by the BSACo and Lewanika, there are indications that some Tonga challenged the agreements. In particular, they tried to prove that although they paid tribute to the Lozi, they considered themselves autonomous of their stronger neighbors. They seemed less concerned with BSACo rule and more irritated that Lewanika was claiming them as part of his kingdom.

In 1899, Colin Harding led a company patrol through Batoka land. He reported that the Tonga still paid Lewanika tribute "very reluctantly, preferring to consider themselves under the direct rule of the B,S,A, Company, Monsa being the most emphatic on this subject, and saying that inasmuch as he and his people work for us in that manner his tribute is accounted for."⁷² Monsa (also spelled Monze, the spelling used when referencing him in Chapter 2), a Tonga headman, preferred submitting his people to the British rather than to Lewanika. A letter to Lewanika from the Acting District Commissioner of Barotse reassured the chief that the BSACo acted swiftly to arrest Monze, who went into Tonga villages and collected taxes under the guise as official tax collector. Monze stated that he planned to use the money to travel to England and that he was the great king of the Tonga people. The BSACo did not take Monze's claim seriously and sentenced him to two years in prison.⁷³ Although the veracity of Monze's story is obscured by the BSACo's clear dismissal of his legitimacy, it is likely Monze represented the angry, silenced Tonga chiefs and headmen who found themselves doubly colonized by Lewanika and the BSACo.

POST-LAWLEY CONCESSION: ANGLO-LOZI RELATIONSHIPS AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

The negotiations with Lawley were not easy to finalize. Lewanika finally consented to the terms of the concession in 1898. Over the next several years, the two parties fine-tuned the agreement through a series of

⁷² Colin Harding, "Letter from Colin Harding to Secretary Administrator Bulawayo. Dec. 22 1899" (A 6/1/2 Location 4007, National Archives of Zambia).

⁷³ Letter from Acting District Commissioner of Barotse District to Lewanika, January 19, 1904 (A 2/3/1, National Archives of Zambia).

amended treaties. Often these edicts actually obscured the authoritative voice of both parties. For example, the Order in Council of 1899 decreed that “[T]he High Commissioner in issuing such Proclamations [related to the administration and revenue collection of North Western Rhodesia] shall respect any native laws or customs by which the civil relations of any native chiefs, tribes, or populations under Her Majesty’s protection are now regulated, except so far as the same may be incompatible with the due exercise of Her Majesty’s power and jurisdiction.”⁷⁴ Equally ambiguous was the British position on allowing African chiefs to maintain power under colonization. In a letter from the Colonial Office to the Foreign Office in 1899, the author wrote that under BSACo administration, the officials would follow a system of “dispensing justice to them [natives] as far as possible in accordance with their own laws and customs, and allowing such native chiefs as exercise jurisdiction, to continue to do so as long as they do not abuse their powers or act in a manner inimical to peace and good government.”⁷⁵

These missives did little to explicate the realities of shared power between colonial administrators and local nobility. The lack of clarity created a sense of freedom though, as both Lewanika and the BSACo felt protected by the vague terms of their agreements. Because so little was strictly defined, there were opportunities to manipulate the ambiguous agreements. Indeed, it was this ambiguity and flexibility that allowed Lewanika to maintain authority even as the British intensified their activities in the region. According to Flint, “due to the inherent strengths of the Lozi polity and the self-imposed limits of colonial administration, Lewanika and the Barotse royal establishment moved into the twentieth century with considerably more sovereignty than other groups in the sub-continent.”⁷⁶ Though he wanted more input from the British in some ways, Lewanika was actually enjoying more freedom in his position that did allow him to pursue his own empire-building activities. It is conceivable that both the BSACo and Lewanika felt they were re-establishing their power over

⁷⁴ “The Barotziland North-Western Rhodesia Order in Council, 1899” (Box AI/I- A 7 Government Publications (U.K.). A 2/8 Acc. No. 9. 1889 Orders in Council [Misdated File Name], Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 8.

⁷⁵ No. 80 Colonial Office to Foreign Office, March 4, 1899 (CO 879/57 Public Records Office, Kew), pp. 148–150.

⁷⁶ Flint, “State-Building in Southern Central Africa,” 412. See also Christopher P. Youé, “The Politics of Collaboration in Buluzi, 1890–1914,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 13 (1985).

colonial operations and it is unclear how a conflict would be resolved under the indistinct language. The inclusion of the clause that stated that actions contrary to British power (and interests) were deemed susceptible to intervention obviously gave the administrators a sense of security that they held ultimate authority.

On the other hand, the terms of the agreement guaranteed Lewanika that the administrators would do their best to follow local codes of behavior. Even more advantageous to the king was the fact that he and his council determined what comprised so-called native laws and customs. They could easily manipulate this position to garner more control and benefits, especially at the expense of other ethnic groups. As the African representatives at the treaty negotiations, the Lozi were often in a position to determine the rules that other groups had to follow. This gave Lewanika further opportunity to protect his own people and formalize his claims of authority over other communities in the area.

Lewanika maximized his strong standing with the BSACo officials, rightly calculating that by remaining a stable and staunch ally, his own ambitions would be easier achieved. His close relationship to administrators enabled him to realize his hopes of expanding his power over local people, even though with the cost of being colonized. It was to his benefit that the administrators considered him the Paramount Chief of the territory they colonized and he often enjoyed both political and economic gains from his friendly relationships with colonial officials. Lewanika found ways to demonstrate to the BSACo his support and confidence in its administration and these actions were recognized and appreciated by the BSACo. In 1900, Coryndon's assistant Ferdinand Aitkens returned to London and reported that Lewanika was closely following news of the Boer War and his "faith in our [Britain] beating the Boers is unbounded."⁷⁷ His interactions and public praise paid off. In 1902, King Edward invited Lewanika to attend his coronation and news stories covering this invitation lauded Lewanika as "the most powerful of the native chiefs who rule in the territory of the British South Africa Company."⁷⁸ In addition to his £ 850 annual subsidy, Lewanika enjoyed plenty of perks as an agreeable and loyal chief.

The late-nineteenth century concessions helped establish Lewanika as a name within British discourse about southern Africa and opened up

⁷⁷ "Rhodesian Natives' Interest," *Morning Post*, March 3, 1900, p. 3.

⁷⁸ "Notes—Mainly Personal," *Evening Telegraph*, April 19, 1902, p. 3.

new opportunities for the chief while the BSACo and other visitors to the region also benefited from this friendly relationship. For example, a correspondent to Major Gibbons' expedition in Barotseland and neighboring regions further investigating the possibility of a route to the Nile credited the extensive travel and protection of members of the expedition, as well as other white travelers "to the old friendship between King Sewanika [*sic*] and Major Gibbons."⁷⁹ At a time when the BSACo and British government was increasingly interested in African expansion, Lewanika's hospitality ensured them safe and productive passage around a region of the continent crucial to transcontinental connections.

Letters between the BSACo and Lewanika offer more evidence of how the British capitalized on their friendship with the Lozi chief when it came to the touchy issue of tax collection. Although the BSACo was cautious about imposing taxes on Barotseland, they were keen to tap into the potential revenue. As late as 1900, the BSACo still refrained from placing a tax on the Lozi, citing that "until the Cape to Cairo Railway reaches the Zambesi, in the neighbourhood of the Victoria Falls, it is hardly likely that there will be any marked change in the condition of Barotsiland [specifically regarding a hut-tax]."⁸⁰ The completion of that rail line was not as far off into the future as some might have predicted though and within just a few years, the railway and taxes were creeping into the Victoria Falls area and Upper Zambezi Valley. In 1904, Coryndon wrote a letter summarizing a series of decisions and events shared by the chief and the BSACo to serve as a record of the agreements. The list included a summary of agreements concerning tax collection among Tonga and Ila communities. Coryndon reminded Lewanika that "I have brought to Lealui [Lewanika's capital] many representative Batoka and Mashukulumbwe [Ila] Chiefs so that you as Paramount Chief can tell them yourself that you and your Council have agreed to the collection of hut tax, and can explain to them all about it and that they must pay it to the Administration."⁸¹ This agreement allowed Lewanika to serve in his desired capacity of Paramount Chief as he asserted control over his Tonga and Ila neighbors. At the same time, it freed BSACo officials from the unenviable task of notification of taxes

⁷⁹ "Nile Route Abandoned: Plans for the Future," *Sheffield Independent*, October 19, 1899, p. 6.

⁸⁰ "The Barotsiland Protectorate," *Pall Mall Gazette*, October 18, 1900, p. 2.

⁸¹ R.T. Coryndon. "Letter from Coryndon to Lewanika," Dated August 17, 1904 (HC 1/2/4, National Archives of Zambia).

and tax collections. Lewanika, not the BSACo, appeared to impose the unwelcome taxes. Both the Lozi chief and administrators found an opportunity in this agreement to extend their power, but in different ways.⁸²

The BSACo willingly, if not enthusiastically, strengthened Lewanika's regional standing because of the opportunities it gave them to more easily colonize and administer North Western Rhodesia. With stern directives to keep expenditures to a minimum in the new colony, the BSACo needed to form relationships with leaders like Lewanika, who proved an excellent ally in this endeavor. The BSACo promised the chief that a tenth of the taxes collected would be set aside as Commission and that of that, £ 1,200 went directly to him as an annual salary for tax collection. They marked the rest of the Commission funds for use within community development, which Lewanika and his advisers would determine.⁸³ Coryndon was also all too happy to promise Lewanika that he "will have five Gardens at different places in Batoka [Tonga land] to show the people that you are their King always"⁸⁴ because the more people placed under Lewanika's rule, the easier it was for the BSACo to expand their control over more land and resources in the territory. Although the Tonga existed as subject groups under the Lozi aristocracy, the BSACo further entrenched their subjugated status through such decisions. Lewanika, who received far less in tax revenue than he originally hoped, was possibly mollified by this

⁸²The imposition of the hut tax in Barotseland occurred a few years later. This was controversial, not among the Lozi elite and BSACo, but among the Lozi population who were financially burdened. Caplan offers a clear overview of the effect of the hut tax. He wrote, "since it was agreed that the King's share was to be distributed among the royal family, all indunas and senior headmen, the entire Lozi elite supported his demand for the largest percentage he could win...As a compromise, the Colonial Office decided that Lewanika's formal share of the hut tax be 10 per cent, of which, however, no more than £ 1,200 would be given directly to him... A large number of (Lozi non-elite) informants singled out the imposition of the hut tax as the most despicable feature of Company rule...The hut tax hit them directly and powerfully." Gerald L. Caplan, *The Elites of Barotseland, 1878-1969: A Political History of Zambia's Western Province* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 86-87.

⁸³Lord Selborne. "Letter from Lord Selborne, Johannesburg, to Lewanika," dated September 21, 1905 (HC 1/2/21, National Archives of Zambia). As Caplan noted though, this arrangement was hardly satisfactory to Lewanika and the Lozi elite. Lewanika initially requested 50 % of the tax revenue, which he was meant to share with his fellow elite. The BSACo squashed that, and the Lozi elite were highly irritated that instead of receiving payments from taxes collected, the money was put into the community development fund. See Caplan's, *The Elites of Barotseland*, pp. 86-88.

⁸⁴Coryndon, "Letter to Lewanika 1904."

caveat that allowed him to continue to assert himself over the Tonga with his British-supported claims of authority.

Lewanika's compulsion to protect the autonomy of Barotseland proper while expanding his so-called sphere of influence was codified under the "Statute Laws of North Western Rhodesia" in 1905. The laws were decreed by the BSACo and represented a move to actually extend its own power. It widened the boundaries of the territory, bringing more land, resources, and people into the colonial state.⁸⁵ The passage of this statute gave the BSACo rights to a large amount of land, but the company was not the only beneficiary of this move. The agreement extended Lewanika's regional claims of rule and he was entitled to a percentage of the taxes collected in these new areas. In some ways, it appeared that the Lozi state propped up the colonial state, while in other ways, the colonial state bolstered the Lozi one. Essentially, two states expanded power over the same territory at the same time. The contradictions of colonial rule manifested in this bizarre but ultimately efficient system.

The relationship between the Lozi chief and BSACo also solidified via the Lewanika Concessions of 1905. The chief took advantage of every opportunity he found to extend his authority and make money in the process. In this agreement, Lewanika gave the BSACo permission to "dispose as they may think fit, all the land within my territory situated within a radius of fifteen miles of the North Bank of the Zambesi River at the Victoria Falls; and...with the advice and consent of my Council...hereby grant to the British South Africa Company such blocks of land... as they may from time to time require for the formation and development of townships in any part of my country on payment to me or my successors of the sum of £ 100 (one hundred pounds) in respect of each block so taken over by the Company."⁸⁶ The Tonga people who occupied the land nearest the Falls must have been quite surprised to find out that the Lozi chief some 400 miles away ceded away their land and stood to make money from the sale of that land.

For two decades, the BSACo gradually acquired the land and resources north of the Zambezi, almost exclusively through arrangements with Lewanika. This was a 20- year sparring match, as both sides sought to gain as much as possible from the agreements. The heart of these negotiations was the struggle for authority in North Western Rhodesia. For Lewanika,

⁸⁵ Gann, *Early Days*, p. 136.

⁸⁶ Lewanika Concessions, March 8, 1905 (Livingstone Museum Archives).

that meant an expansion of his jurisdiction and profitable arrangements with the BSACo. On the other hand, the BSACo took advantage of Lewanika's complicity to extend their claims to the territory's land, resources, and labor. Although both Lewanika and the Company conceded some power to the other, each side had expectations and goals, and the Chief and administrators saw every agreement and law as a chance to strengthen their respective positions. The BSACo felt secure in the terms of the concessions because they continued to expand their power over an ever-growing territory. This was important, because the BSACo was not generating any profit out of their African real estate. The costs of administration proved much greater than the money coming out of the territories, and the appropriation of North Western Rhodesia was particularly burdensome.⁸⁷ Company officials hoped that by gaining more land as part of the same territory, the increased resources would allow them to produce revenue.

Under the same concessions, Lewanika shrewdly maintained and in fact broadened his influence and guaranteed the Lozi position through the agreements he signed. In order to preserve privilege, "one response of the Lozi to the pressures of the Scramble for Africa was to join in it themselves."⁸⁸ Lewanika protected the interests of himself and his people, generally to the cost and detriment of the nearby subjected groups. The resulting "division of the Lozi kingdom into an inner 'reserved area' [Barotseland proper] and a region more open to European enterprise had profound and lasting consequences. Lewanika's motive in requesting a reserved area had simply been to protect the Lozi from the kind of disorder and violence...south of the Zambezi."⁸⁹ The Lawley Concession, which, as mentioned earlier, allowed Lewanika to maintain some mining rights in the event of the discovery of gold, also ensured that he could monitor the influx of Europeans within his political base. He exemplified a self-defence strategy that proved successful, at least for the first few decades of colonization. He and his council "sought to limit the danger to his country by initiating the process of accommodation with the Europeans. He hoped he would be in a stronger position to win a special place for his country in the world of imperialist rivalry."⁹⁰ Indeed, Lewanika spent the last decade

⁸⁷ Gann 1964, p. 136.

⁸⁸ Roberts, *History of Zambia*, p. 166.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁹⁰ Choolwe, "Labour Capital," p. 53.

of the nineteenth century courting the British and the first decade of the twentieth century attempting to expand and maintain his authority while also staying in the BSACo's favor.

In 1909, High Commissioner Selborne, the administrator who in many ways orchestrated the formation of North Western Rhodesia, wrote about the changing terms of agreements with Lewanika. Chief Lewanika showed Selborne the same hospitality as his predecessors. At a series of meetings between Selborne and Lewanika, the Lozi chief not only ensured an audience of "thousands of natives" but also famously "presented Lord Selborne with a tame hippopotamus"⁹¹ as a gift. Selborne was more perceptive about his Lozi counterpart than previous BSACo representatives appeared. He acknowledged that Lewanika's willingness to give up claims to land and resources outside of Barotseland proper was not only an important gain for the BSACo, but also a strategic decision by the Lozi king. He wrote that "In doing this I think that Lewanika has again shown a statesmanlike spirit, and that he has done absolutely the right thing in his own interests and in the interests of his people."⁹² Lewanika's willingness to cooperate with the BSACo stemmed from his ability, within these negotiations, to maintain control over Barotseland. His hospitality cannot be viewed simply as a docile response to encroaching colonial governance, but as an assertion of his authority.

Despite the privilege and respect bestowed on Lewanika by the company, Lewanika still felt slighted by the BSACo, even as his sphere of influence expanded as he convinced the BSACo that he had jurisdiction over his neighbors. In correspondences between different administrators, it is clear that they saw him as a rather malleable chief and there is little evidence to suggest that they ever feared their control over negotiations with Lewanika. Resident Magistrate Charles McKinnon's succinct views of the Lozi king represented the less flattering opinion of many administrators. He wrote that Lewanika "has not the great power I expected him to have, still I consider him a good native chief, and easily guided; his great fault

⁹¹ "Lord Selborne's Little Present," *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, October 5, 1907, p. 6.

⁹² The High Commissioner to the Secretary of State, Received December 27, 1909. From Selborne regarding a memo from L.A. Wallace "on the subject of the proposed amalgamation of the work of Administration in North Eastern and North Western Rhodesia" (No. 244. CO 879/102, Public Records Office, Kew), pp. 320–322.

is his greed for money.”⁹³ While it is true that Lewanika demonstrated a strong desire for money, his actions suggest that his main concern was not actually for material wealth, but for power. Although the British may have read his demands for money as a sign of greed, it was control that Lewanika most craved. Access to money through annual salaries and commissions was an outcome of Lewanika’s maintenance of authority rather than his primary goal.

Many British administrators might not have viewed Lewanika as a worthy adversary, but he did keep them busy as he constantly renegotiated the terms of their agreement to ensure that nothing threatened his power. As colonial rule solidified, Lewanika understood that his relationship with the British was fluid and that it was necessary to find ways to reconfigure his authority within the context of change. High Commissioner Selborne demonstrated obvious admiration for Lewanika in a memo to the Secretary of State regarding an agreement between the BSACo and the chief in 1909. He explained:

The recent agreement between the Administrator and Lewanika amounts to this: that Lewanika henceforward abandons all his old claims and interests in North Western Rhodesia outside Barotseland proper while maintaining Barotseland proper in the most absolute manner possible for the exclusive possession and enjoyment of the Barotse. In this I think that Lewanika has again shown a statesmanlike spirit, and that he has done absolutely the right thing in his own interests and in the interests of his people. As regards those parts of North Western Rhodesia which lie outside of Barotseland proper, it is obvious that Lewanika can henceforth have no objection to the changes in their government... So far from objecting to it, I think that Lewanika would welcome an Order in Council containing such a provision, as giving his people that charter and assurance for the future which he and they desire.⁹⁴

Whether he had the respect or not of the British with whom he negotiated, Lewanika did an extraordinary job of maintaining his power over his core constituency. Through his earlier agreements, which overemphasized

⁹³The British South Africa Company to the Colonial Office. 28 January, 1909. From A.P. Miller, Assistant Secretary to the Secretary of State. Notes from his meeting with BSACo directors. Report by Mr. C. McKinnon, Resident Magistrate, Lealui (CO 870/102. Correspondence no. 16, receipt #3472. Enclosure No. 16, Annexure 8, Public Records Office, Kew), p. 33.

⁹⁴The High Commissioner to the Secretary of State (Received December 27, 1909, Public Records Office, Kew), pp. 320–322.

his sphere of influence, he was able to use exaggerated claims over other African populations to bargain for his continued authority over Barotseland proper. He took advantage of the BSACo's desire to rule indirectly with as little hassle as possible in order to achieve his goal of territorial control.

Although it may appear at first glance that Lewanika continually lost power as the British tightened their grip on the region in these early years of BSACo expansion, a more complex reading of the negotiations reveal that the Lozi chief was calculated in his dealings with the administration and fought hard to gain and maintain the power he desperately desired. Terence Ranger appraised the outcome of the formalized relationship between the Lozi and the BSACo, explaining that "Lozi traditional structure did not remain intact in the colonial period—far from it—but there can be little doubt that Lozi 'accommodation to colonial rule' did result in a much greater survival of institutions and assumptions than was the case elsewhere."⁹⁵ Considering that the years right before the British arrived, Lewanika was temporarily dethroned and was then restored to power at a time when Barotseland was unstable and vulnerable, it is important to recognize Lewanika's accomplishments. As historians seek a more comprehensive understanding of the developments of the nineteenth century, the Lozi case study offers an example of a place where more can be learned about the way that African responses to and during the European Scramble for Africa affected the experiences and outcomes of colonialism.⁹⁶ Historian Mutumba M. Bull emphasizes the significance of Lewanika's consolidation of authority, writing that "[T]hrough a number of reforms, renovations and revivals of old Lozi institutions which had fallen into disuses during the Makololo occupation, Lewanika strengthened the position of the Lozi monarchy and revived and reinforced the Lozi state, extending its influence to its widest limits. For Bulozhi this was Lewanika's greatest achievement."⁹⁷ That such an accomplishment occurred during increasing British expansion is notable and reflects Lewanika's leadership skills and adaptability.

⁹⁵ Terence Ranger, "Nationality and Nationalism: The Case of Barotseland," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* IV, no. 2 (June 1968), 228.

⁹⁶ For more on how historians assess African responses to colonial rule, including internal expansion efforts like that undertaken by Lewanika, see Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, "Resistance and Collaboration in Southern and Central Africa, c. 1850–1920," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 10, no. 1 (1977).

⁹⁷ Bull, "Lewanika's Achievement," pp. 464–465.

CONCLUSION

The Lawley Concession negotiations and signing took place at Victoria Falls, almost 400 miles away from Lewanika's base, upon Lawley's request. This location was not practical for Lewanika, who traveled with a large party of advisers, family, and servants, but he begrudgingly agreed to the venue. Major Coryndon himself traveled all the way from London to Victoria Falls to participate in the signing of this significant agreement between the Lozi chief and the BSACo.⁹⁸ Although much of this chapter focused on the position of Barotseland proper in the evolving colonial political landscape, it is important to consider how Victoria Falls factored into the ways Lewanika and the BSACo representatives approached each other as they formalized the Lozi-British relationship. At the time, Victoria Falls served as the gateway to the Upper Zambezi Valley and beyond. It was both the frontier and the epicenter in terms of British colonial expansion. This was also the place where the geographical distinction of *southern* Africa and *central* Africa gets blurred. Selecting Victoria Falls as the venue for this meeting is a powerful indication of how the site was conceived as the boundary between the end of the established BSACo presence and authority and the beginning of its move further north. Negotiations between Lewanika and the BSACo marked a milestone in British colonial ambitions and the Lozi chief's own hopes of power and security.

As the railway line worked its way closer to the Falls, the BSACo was forced to design a plan on how to proceed once easy access to the area was achieved. As one observer explained, "the rapidity with which the Cape to Cairo Railway is being pushed beyond the Zambesi..."⁹⁹ facilitated fast-paced development and expansion of British influence. In the grand colonial scheme, Victoria Falls was not an endpoint, but it did mark a new phase of British expansion. In order to push beyond the Falls the BSACo had to secure its position at the Falls and, as seen earlier in this chapter, Lewanika was all too ready to usurp local leaders to help the BSACo meet its goal while allowing himself to codify his own authority around the Falls.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸Eric Stokes, "Barotseland: Survival of an African State," in *The Zambesian Past: Studies in Central African History*, eds. Eric Stokes and Richard Brown (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1966), p. 273.

⁹⁹"Abolition of Slavery: Native Question in Barotseland," *Aberdeen Journal*, September 14, 1906, p. 7.

¹⁰⁰This in no way implies that the Tonga population around the Falls truly viewed Lewanika and the Lozi as their Paramount Chief or as having claims to Victoria Falls. However, as super-

Thus, at the turn of the twentieth century, we see Victoria Falls as a central feature of the emerging and evolving colonial imaginary; though the ambitions of the BSACo and Lewanika were often divergent, they were, for a time, complementary enough to allow for an uneasy and imbalanced partnership between the colonial administration and Lozi elite. This site symbolized the future of colonial influence as the BSACo pushed north, while simultaneously representing a fixed point in Lozi claims to authority. Imagination factored significantly in the way the BSACo perceived its activities in the early twentieth century. In an interview with Coryndon in 1906, it is evident that the BSACo was blurring reality with romanticized visions when considering its expansion into the Upper Zambezi Valley. The interviewer shared Coryndon's thoughts on the status of Barotseland and the Lozi chief's sphere of influence, reporting:

The Administrator said that the native question had always been and was to-day in a very sound position. The natives recognised that Lewanika was as much their chief as ever, and had suspicion that their country was being taken from them by the white man. There were thirteen different tribes of different language all owing allegiance to Lewanika... There was not the least sign of disaffection among the Barotsi. The natives are perfectly satisfied with white administration, always pay their taxes without the slightest demur, and realise the value of white help.¹⁰¹

It is not difficult to poke holes in this vision of the situation in the Upper Zambezi Valley. It is clear that the Tonga and other smaller ethnic groups in the area did not willingly or genuinely pledge their allegiance to the Lozi chief. Although it is possible to concede that prior to the imposition of the hut tax, the "power struggle between the Lozi ruling class and the Company's officials barely impinged upon the lives of the mass of Lozi,"¹⁰² the Lozi were made keenly aware of the increasing British presence when they were forced to start paying taxes. Coryndon's comment about the satisfaction among the Lozi and their complicity in paying taxes was false. In a report written just a few years after Coryndon's interview, Resident Magistrate McKinnon's lamented that "there are a good many outstanding taxes, but defaulters are being arrested...(and) the men who

ficial as his claim to the land and people at Victoria Falls may have been, Lewanika successfully manipulated the concession-granting process to formalize his authority in that area.

¹⁰¹ "Future of Rhodesia: Mineral & Farming Prospects; Slaves Freed by Lewanika," *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, September 14, 1906, p. 7.

¹⁰² Caplan, *The Elites of Barotseland*, p. 87.

have evaded in the past must be dealt with severely, otherwise it will be more and more difficult to collect in years to come.”¹⁰³ Coryndon’s interpretation of the status of the Upper Zambezi Valley was clouded by what would have been ideal. His imagination obfuscated reality as he used that interview as a way to garner public support for the BSACo’s activities in southern Africa.

The BSACo was not the only entity with high hopes and fantastical visions of the future of Victoria Falls and the Upper Zambezi Valley. From the 1880s when he first started courting the British into the first decade of the twentieth century, Lewanika created a domestic and foreign policy that reflected his vision of the Lozi future. He used internal political and economic structures to facilitate security and productivity, which simultaneously reified his position of authority, albeit in sometimes circumscribed ways. Although he placed great emphasis on maintaining and even expanding these systems, Lewanika also gave attention to the growing number of Europeans passing through the area. Every movement they made was followed and analysed by the generally outwardly friendly king. His decisions, policies, and activities reveal a well-conceived scheme to push the Lozi state into the twentieth century. At a time when many African chiefs likely imagined doomsday scenarios of lost power and institutional degradation, Lewanika imagined himself and the Lozi at the top of the African hierarchy in this region. He was undaunted by the reshuffling of authority as the BSACo increasingly inserted itself into the local political landscape. Even McKinnon, who was not as enamored with Lewanika as other BSACo officials, admitted that the chief was “a far-seeing native, and has considerable power...”¹⁰⁴ Lewanika’s constant show of pomp and ceremony, and his boldness when stating his demands prove that he imagined himself to be in a powerful position in his interactions with the BSACo. Despite the many disappointments and the chipping away of his power, Lewanika’s vision of the future remained steadfast and grand.

From the twenty-first century, it is easy to look at this moment in history and feel sympathy for the king. Lewanika attempted to build an African empire at a time when colonizers were creeping in on the territory with big plans of their own. His policy of allowing Europeans into Barotseland already set off shockwaves that might not have been detectable in 1897,

¹⁰³ Report by C. McKinnon. Correspondence no. 16, receipt #3472 (CO 870/102, Public Records Office, London), p. 33.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

but were certainly evident just a few years later. The welcome he gave to Europeans threatened to permanently disrupt the internal systems that kept the state strong and him in power. But, in cruel irony, had he not accommodated his white visitors, his state and authority would have been susceptible to a quick demise. Despite this though, Lewanika deserves more than retrospective sympathy. Through heavy-handed leadership he expanded and strengthened his state, perhaps not to empire status, but to its peak of power. Though his subjects showed signs of discontent, there was no outward sign of resistance after he came back to power in the early 1880s. He avoided a violent period of early encounters, and instead helped set the pace for colonialism. To the British at the various concession signing ceremonies, he might have looked pathetic or pitiable. To his subjects he may have appeared a smug and distant character. Despite the odds, Lewanika imagined himself as a ruler who had figured out a way to build an empire while courting another.

Staking Their Claim: White Settlement at Victoria Falls

The five years before and after the turn of the twentieth century marked a period of excitement and trepidation for Africans and Europeans living in newly formed North Western Rhodesia. Expectations ran high as people imagined the possibilities of life in the colony, but there was also anxiety as Africans and Europeans had increasingly frequent interactions with one another and with the colonial state. Optimism and negotiation characterized the period, as individuals and communities experimented with the new political economy. During this period the negotiations between Lewanika and the BSACo resulted in a dynamic tug of war for power that in some ways facilitated the development of a singular process of double state formation. A quasi-symbiotic relationship emerged between the Lozi and colonial states that allowed both sides to feel somewhat secure in their relative positions. Left out of this equation though were European entrepreneurs who felt that their interests were pushed aside by the colonial administration. Nowhere is this more evident than at Victoria Falls, where white entrepreneurs imagined creating a modern tourist destination, with the Falls themselves at the center stage. Although Europeans viewed the early colonial period as one with countless opportunities, it became increasingly clear to those interested in developing a tourism industry that they were engaged in an uphill battle with the colonial state.

White settlers set to work on building a town to call home and businesses from which they could profit, and many of them saw their potential

profits linked directly or indirectly to tourism. The expectation of European entrepreneurs was that in this frontier town, there would be few limits to their economic activities. The reality though was that as the BSACo increased authority in the region, it had little interest in tourism development or in establishing a significant white settler presence. The BSACo was more concerned with establishing the policies and practices that would distinguish North Western Rhodesia as a functional BSACo territory and its interests were often divergent from those of white settlers around Victoria Falls. To that end, many of their policies seemed contradictory to the need and desires of the European entrepreneurs. In addition to a growing sense of white settlers' resentment toward the BSACo, Africans from the surrounding areas moved into the town center looking for work, which opened up new issues for the settlers, African political leaders, and colonial administration to consider. The exchanges between and among these various interests groups created a dynamic environment of cross-cultural negotiation. Ultimately, concerns over authority and self-determination were at the core of all these complex encounters and exchanges.

Despite the changed relationships that developed as the BSACo tightened control over white settlers and colonial subjects, it is clear that for many European entrepreneurs and local Africans, the early days of North Western Rhodesia held great promise. The fluidity of the embryonic colonial state allowed this period to be marked as one of lively optimism. By late 1899, after the conclusion of the Lawley Concession and some of the subsequent agreements, the BSACo reported the Order in Council for North Western Rhodesia, which was approved by the Queen, indicating that the BSACo was making progress with its expansion and administration plans.¹ This was a moment when the transforming political and social landscape provided individuals and communities the opportunity to experiment with and define the world in which they lived. State control was at a minimum and for a time, Lewanika, white settlers, and African migrants enjoyed some benefits of living in such an open space. They were limited only by their imagination, and this frontier space with Victoria Falls as a focal point inspired white settlers and African migrants to set high expectations for themselves and North Western Rhodesia.

¹“British South Africa Company. Annual General Meeting. Speech by the Duke of Abercorn. The War—and After. Where the British Flag Must Fly. ‘From Cape Town to the Zambesi,’” *London Daily News*, December 15, 1899, p. 9.

NORTH WESTERN RHODESIA DEFINED

As discussed in Chapter 3, the BSACo's push into the Upper Zambezi Valley was a process that took over a decade to solidify. Lewanika, perhaps blinded by his own self-confidence or simply oblivious to the full meaning of the concessions he signed, entered negotiations with the BSACo with the expectations that he was securing an alliance with his British monarchical counterparts and codifying a protective status for Barotseland while also extending his own authority. In this sense, his perspective of the negotiations leading up to the end of the nineteenth century was more about his own state-building and entrenchment of power. Of course, the BSACo viewed this period quite differently: its representatives worked with Lewanika to establish a new colonial territory, known as North Western Rhodesia by its British creators. The North Western Rhodesia the BSACo imagined looked markedly different from the Upper Zambezi Valley/Barotseland that Lewanika envisioned; the BSACo increasingly viewed the potential of North Western Rhodesia as it fit into a larger transcolonial vision of the British Empire in South Africa.

It is worth noting that although the BSACo enjoyed large public support from Britons in South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and England, there were some voices of concern about the power granted to the BSACo, or, as some BSACo opponents might argue, the power taken over by the company. The BSACo had a close relationship with the British Colonial Office, but there were some British observers who felt the BSACo was overreaching and needed to rein in its activities and assertions of power. In a letter to an editor, a Yorkshire resident argued that the annexation of Barotseland was too big a responsibility for the British who were already burdened with South African challenges. He wrote:

It [Barotseland] is a huge territory...a healthy climate, said to have great commercial possibilities, but full of diplomatic risks, as we have for neighbours Germany, Portugal, and the Congo Free State. The future of this huge territory was decided upon secretly, after negotiation between the Chartered Company and the Colonial Office as long ago as November of last year, and the facts are only now leaking out. Parliament was not consulted, nor was the arrangement even submitted to public discussion in the usual way. Barotsiland, or, as it is now to be called, North-Western Rhodesia, is virtually handed over to the Chartered Company, as it will appoint all the officials, only nominally subject to the veto of the High Commissioner... The Chartered Company has complete control over the financial regulations

of Barotsiland; no decision regarding the raising or appropriation of revenue can be taken without its consent...Finally, the Chartered Company is permitted so to adjust its revenue and expenditure that a profit may accrue to the shareholders.²

Not all Britons supported the BSACo, and, as this opponent made clear, there was unease about how much power the BSACo held in southern Africa and the potential gains for its shareholders. There was concern that the activities of a private company would not represent the best interests of the British government or population. Nevertheless, the BSACo's intensified push into the area north of the Zambezi continued in the late nineteenth century, forever changing the colonial and postcolonial maps of this part of Africa and the British Empire.

OLD DRIFT

Early visitors to Victoria Falls were often captivated by the beauty of the site, but not all were convinced that the area could become a tourist-friendly destination. Richard Frewin, who saw Victoria Falls in 1877, believed that he would be one of the few to actually get to visit the waterfalls. He is quoted as saying that, "this part of Africa will never support a railway and the travelling by ox-wagon, its difficulties, troubles, fatigue and endurance will never suit a Cockney or a cotton wool traveler."³ Mr. Frewin was quite off the mark with his prediction: the first passenger train crossed over the Zambezi in 1904 and since then, visitors from all over the world have been able to view Victoria Falls. His comment though serves as a reminder that for the early Europeans, this location seemed to be at the ends of the earth and as far removed as possible from civilized living. Even by the middle of the twentieth century, visitors to Victoria Falls evoked a sense of awe and respect that the area was developed in such an impressive way. Writing a commemoration of Livingstone's "discovery" of the Falls, Tom Northcote wrote in 1955:

For the last hundred years the Victoria Falls have attracted the attention of visitors from all over the world—first a few isolated explorers, then a

²"The Annexation of Barotsiland. To the Editor of the Leeds Mercury," *Leeds Mercury*, October 30, 1900, p. 5.

³A.H. Jack, "Some Early Journals to the Victoria Falls," *British South Africa Annual*, December 1936 (National Archives of Zimbabwe), p. 137.

trickle of adventurous hunters and travellers [*sic*]. Since the railway reached there in 1904, the trickle has become a steady growing flood, until nowadays a visit to the Falls may be a commonplace to the commercial traveller and should be on the itinerary of every globe-trotter. But let those of us who are lucky enough to see them never forget what we owe to those early pioneers, above all to Livingstone himself. Without their courage and perseverance in forcing their way through a barbarous land and revealing it to the civilised world, the development of what has become the great Central African Federation might have fallen to other hands than ours.⁴

Northcote aggressively linked the early entrepreneurs, most focused on developing tourism in North Western Rhodesia, to colonial development. Certainly writing from a romanticized position, Northcote demonstrates that although tourism activities may not seem like a crucial aspect of colonial history, in this case, it was strongly connected to the creation of a colonial state.

While Chief Lewanika and his council kept busy negotiating the terms of formal colonization and (Lozi and colonial) state development with the BSACo, other inhabitants of North Western Rhodesia participated in the emerging new political economy. For both Europeans and Africans living in North Western Rhodesia during the colonial territory's formative years the changes were driven by the development of a basic infrastructure and tourism amenities. A spirit of entrepreneurship enveloped the area, stimulating new opportunities and optimism among those living near Victoria Falls. These activities must be seen as significant in the trajectory of colonial development.

In the late 1890s Europeans established their first settlement a couple of kilometers north of Victoria Falls. This site was called Sekuti's Drift, after Chief Sekuti (also spelled Sekute) who once controlled the movement of people and goods across this point in the river.⁵ For some time, Sekuti was the primary supplier of the canoes used by both the Europeans and Africans who wanted to cross into North Western Rhodesia. The settlement's name was then changed to Old Drift when the European population was resettled further from the river. F.J. Clarke is recorded as

⁴Tom Northcote, "The Smoke that Thunders' A Hundred Years Ago Livingstone Discovered Africa's Greatest Scenic Wonder," *African World*, November 1955 (National Archives of Zimbabwe), p. 8.

⁵Emil Holub, *Travels North of the Zambezi, 1885-6* (Manchester: Published for the Institute for African Studies at the University of Zambia, 1976).

the first white resident of this area and his activities there were numerous. Clarke “worked as a forwarding agent and ran the transport service across the river. He also had a small hotel built of pole and mud, and a bar adjacent.”⁶ Clarke’s frenetic energy set the pace for growth around the Falls, as he was joined by other like-minded entrepreneurs. By the late 1890s, there was a growing population of Europeans, mostly Britons, settling around Old Drift, all with an eye toward economic opportunities (Fig. 4.1).

The BSACo did not originally regard North Western Rhodesia as a place for European settlement and colonial development. By the late nineteenth century a heated debate had emerged between settlers and administrators over the colony’s development. The settlers at Old Drift chose the location because of its proximity to the Falls, as well as the ease in traveling from one side of the Zambezi River to the other. While in



Fig. 4.1 One of the first photographs of Old Drift, ca 1900. Image courtesy of Pete Roberts, with permission from the National Railways of Zimbabwe Museum, Archives in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

⁶Kristin Ese, *An Historical Guide to Livingstone Town* (Harare: CBC Publishing for the Livingstone Tourism Association, 1996), p. 20.

these regards the location was prime real estate, the site also provided the perfect environment for mosquitoes. As a result, those who came first had a rough time, as “The Old Drift was a fever ridden trap... The death rate was extraordinarily high.”⁷ Malaria was common, and black water fever, a complication of malaria, frequently killed settlers. In addition to disease, Old Drifters contended with crocodiles, hippos, and lions. Housing was rudimentary and comforts were scarce.

White men considered the site an unsuitable place for women because of the roughness of both the landscape and the male population, so European women were relatively rare sights during the first few years of settlement in the area. One former resident, L.F. Moore, who did bring his wife with him, recalled that

the Old Drift, however, was a lively spot at times...There were three bars and at night one which became the rendezvous drained the others and their staffs. I have seen roulette, fare, poker, bridge and dice played at different parts of the same bar room, while two or three (male) [source’s parenthetical inclusion] couples solemnly gyrated to the strains of a gramophone.⁸

On the hardships faced by the Old Drifters, the same author wrote that

there were days when the whole settlement succumbed to malaria and others when business was dead. During the rains the settlement became a swamp and snakes were common. One night one fell from the thatched roof and coiled itself under our bed; both my wife and I were too listless with fever to care... A few mornings later a lion eat (*sic*) our sleeping milk-boy.⁹

Moore seemed unfazed by the difficulties of life at Old Drift, and showed a callousness about Africans that is neither surprising nor unique. Moore and his wife went on to become prominent members of the Livingstone population and helped establish the social, economic, and political tone of the white settlement. It was unusual that Mrs. Moore joined her husband before more amenities were available; in many cases men first established themselves in the area and once the environment was more comfortable, they brought their wives to the settlement.

⁷Ibid., p. 21.

⁸Sir Leopold Moore, “Northern Rhodesia” (Box 70/1-G/83 (box 2). G 73/3c, Acc. 161, Livingstone Museum Archives. Typed article October 14, 1927), p. 5.

⁹Ibid.

Interestingly, another source on The Old Drift comes from a woman who spent some time in the settlement. In her diary, Maggie Coisson referred to F.J. Clarke as a “real gentleman; which is not always the case with the Europeans who come here.”¹⁰ Even in the trying conditions, gentlemanly behavior was regarded as an important signifier of propriety. Coisson’s diary also provided information on the interactions between Old Drifters and the local Leya (Tonga) population. She referred to one trader who was frequently drunk and viewed as a troublemaker. According to Coisson, there was a fight between this European trader and Chief Sikute and Chief Mooka.¹¹ As more Europeans entered the area, tensions escalated between the immigrant population and the local African population. Given that the land had been opened up to Europeans not by the local leadership but instead by Chief Lewanika to the north, it is understandable that local chiefs would find themselves at odds with some of the Europeans, particularly those known for causing trouble.

Henry Rangeley, an official appointed as Magistrate to North Western Rhodesia also wrote about the Old Drift settlement in his memoirs. He wrote that it

was a very small settlement of pole and mud buildings, not very far from the bank of the river. It was quite an orderly little place, but the pub kept open all night if there was custom and an American gambler ran a roulette table in the bar... There was a pole-and-mud eating house connected with the bar, run by a man and his wife. She did the cooking, he the waiting.¹²

Rangeley’s tone was markedly different from that of Old Drifters when reporting about the settlement. Although he was not overly critical of the camp, he did not exhibit the same warmth and intimacy present in the recollections of the site’s residents.

White entrepreneurs stubbornly settled themselves along the banks of the Zambezi, with little input or assistance from the BSACo while encountering wariness from their African neighbors. Their hopes of making a living out of the waterfalls overshadowed the difficulties presented by the

¹⁰ *Diary of Maggie Coisson*, February 20, 1900. Cited in: “A Study of African Participation in Urban Politics in Livingstone Zambia, 1905–1966,” by Nina Tanner Robbins (Washington, DC: Howard University, 1977), p. 20.

¹¹ *Ibid.* Coisson likely meant *Cheif Sekute and Chief Mukuni*.

¹² “The Memoirs of Henry Rangeley” (Box G 70/1-G/83. File G75/1 Acc 7548, Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 18.

unfamiliar environment and lack of support. It was not an easy life, where fever constantly threatened the health of the residents, drunkenness and violence was common, and where resources were few. Percy Clark, one of the founding fathers of Old Drift who helped develop tourism around the Falls, never diluted the challenges Old Drifters faced, but despite the obstacles, fondly remembered his time at the camp.¹³ His recollections paint a picture of a lively, hopeful European settlement with inhabitants willing to discard comfort to pursue their dreams of financial success.

Another Old Drifter, William Trayner also portrayed the settlement as a busy, convivial place. At the age of 85, he reminisced on his days in Old Drift and Livingstone. He recalled that the first newspaper of sorts in North West Rhodesia was created as a newsletter for the folks of Old Drift and their visitors and that he served as editor and writer. Of his experience, he said:

The editor's chair will not be in the local museum. It was an empty beer box standing on end, and the editor took his cushion about with him. It had started this way at the Old Drift: I had been in charge of the ferry and had been constantly on the river meeting tourists. At that time there was no railway or telephone, and letters came in only once a month or so; so I was the news bringer and I had to tell the goings-on to the crowd at the bar at night...This was really the beginning, and gradually it all developed. Sometimes a piece of paper would be pinned up in the bar and one would read it then another would read it and we would discuss the proceedings...¹⁴

The settlers were forming a shared identity and creating a social network at Old Drift, and their attachment to the settlement and the territory was solidifying through these connections.

As late as 1909, the administrators of North Western Rhodesia still discussed the issue of white settlement in the colony. From the number of Europeans moving into the territory, it would seem the issue was already decided, but in fact the BSACo was uneasy with the idea of allowing for white settlement in North Western Rhodesia. Lawrence Aubrey Wallace, the Acting Administrator of North Western Rhodesia wrote a letter to

¹³Percy Clark, *The Autobiography of an Old Drifter* (Bulawayo: Books of Rhodesia, 1972; facsimile of 1936 edition).

¹⁴Patrick Barnes, "'The Livingstone Pioneer' as told By William Trayner," *The Northern Rhodesia Journal* V, 1962–1964 (NAZ S/NO71, National Archives of Zimbabwe), pp. 561–562.

High Commissioner Selborne that included his response to the opinion voiced by a fellow administrator against allowing for a large settlement of Europeans. Wallace wrote that “neither would I advocate any general settlement of Europeans...”¹⁵ There were a few reasons the administration was unwilling to open up the colony for mass settlement. First, they were unsure of how viable the land would be in terms of farming. Second, the concessions which placed North Western Rhodesia under British rule explicitly promised protection to Africans in terms of land and “native” rights, therefore limiting the land available for white occupation. Finally, administrators viewed the area north of the Zambezi as a labor source. The early plan was to export as many male African laborers as possible to the mines in Southern Rhodesia. They did not want anything or anyone to detract from that plan and realized that if there was a sizeable European population in the area, some African laborers would be deterred from going south when they could find work among the growing white settlement.

The BSACo and Colonial Office did not conceptualize North Western Rhodesia as a settler colony, but rather an untapped labor pool. The white entrepreneurs who insisted on executing their business ventures just north of the Zambezi were then a constant annoyance to the administrators, which led to intense clashes between the two groups. Despite the official position on white emigration though, European entrepreneurs and farmers wholeheartedly believed that North Western Rhodesia was a land of opportunity that was theirs for the taking. The construction of a railway further reinforced the hopes of white businessmen, many who shared Percy Clark’s “intention...to settle at Victoria Falls as soon as the railway was completed, for I believed that there would be great opportunities for those who got in early at the railhead.”¹⁶ The deliberations among administrators had little bearing on the European migrants who had great hopes for their future in the territory.

The first major altercation between the BSACo and white settlers was over the official site of a European town. By 1903 at least 68 Europeans lived in Old Drift, and though they were small in number, they were vocal in their opinions about development and administration in the area.¹⁷ Already irritated by the presence of Old Drifters, administrators were more

¹⁵No. 126 and enclosure in No. 126 (CO 879/102, Public Records Office, Kew), p. 166.

¹⁶Clark 1972, p. 168.

¹⁷Heath, “Victoria Falls: The Growth of a Rhodesian Village,” p. 16.

concerned with their own agenda and gave little attention to the wishes of the European population. The BSACo underestimated the strength of the connection the white residents on the banks of the Zambezi felt with Victoria Falls. After viewing the waterfalls in one particularly memorable moment, one settler explained that he would not try to describe the Falls because it seemed impossible to capture the extraordinary beauty. He wrote, “to form any idea of their wonderful grandeur it is absolutely necessary to see them several times under their strangely different phases... Those who have rushed up...for a few days have seen them right enough, but they don’t know them; It takes a long time to make their acquaintance and to do so you must first of all learn to love them.”¹⁸ The Falls became an icon to the white settlers; the magnitude of the site represented the great expectations and optimism endemic to the entrepreneurs.

The divisive issue stemmed from two fundamentally different visions of the landscape and the possible uses of the landscape. For the Old Drifters, life was regulated by and reflected in the water of the Zambezi and the Falls. Although it is likely that the administrators too found beauty in the Falls, the extensive documentation left by officials in the area give little attention to the beauty of the waterfalls and the river. Both parties saw the potential to exploit the riparian system but it seems the Old Drifters felt a deep love and appreciation for the Falls that was lacking among the administrators. The entrepreneurs were the people whose imaginations were captured by the writing of David Livingstone and other explorers and the Zambezi and Victoria Falls were tangible proof that there was a “real Africa” for them to access. Opportunities seemed limitless to such people and Victoria Falls and their visions for creating a modern tourist destination there brought white settlers to North Western Rhodesia. To the BSACo though, the Falls represented one piece of a larger British South African puzzle and its visions for Victoria Falls and North Western Rhodesia were influenced by a bigger, transcolonial agenda.¹⁹

The decision to build a railway, though certainly welcomed by the Old Drifters resulted in a discourse that hinted at future squabbles between settlers and the administration. This important decision was just one small

¹⁸F.C. Murray, “Going North: Memories of Transport Drive, Events of 1900–1903” (Box 70/1-G/83 (box 2). Index G 74, Acc 5648, Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 16.

¹⁹In particular, the BSACo came to view the Falls as an extraordinary resource as it explored the possibility of generating hydroelectric power at the site. For more on this scheme, see Chap. 7.

part of Cecil Rhodes' Cape to Cairo dream; it was not built with an eye toward bringing tourists to see the Falls, though that was a consequence of the construction of the railway. The railway construction, as dictated by Rhodes himself, was designed to be situated close enough to the Falls to actually be hit by the spray of the cascading water.²⁰ This was disconcerting to some white settlers and outside observers alike as they imagined the natural beauty of the Falls falling prey to the addition of the bridge and railway. Although the white entrepreneurs wanted to offer modern amenities for tourists and had to concede the railway promised to bring in heavier tourist traffic, they did not want the main draw of those visitors to be desecrated by the building of the bridge. Certainly no voice in that group was loud enough to outweigh Rhodes' and the railway was built within view of the Falls against the wishes of the erstwhile entrepreneurs.²¹ Interestingly, the engineers working on the project were also concerned about the location picked by Rhodes; though they were unconcerned with the aesthetics of building a bridge within view of the Falls, they "favoured a site several kilometres upstream"²² where they felt there was more secure grounding for the structure. Rhodes, who never actually visited Victoria Falls, was insistent that the bridge provide a view of the site for the railway passengers. It is noteworthy that he wanted to highlight the Falls since he was not in favor of large-scale European settlement and was much more focused on development north of the waterfalls.

It is difficult to know how the Tonga living in the area where the railway was built felt about the construction project, but one story persists that demonstrates the response of Chief Mukuni, the leader of the Tonga subgroup living closest to the Falls. As the folklore goes, Tonga chief Mukuni was sure the bridge would be an engineering failure and was a waste of energy and money on the part of those building it. He was allegedly amazed to see a train pass over the bridge without the structure collapsing.²³ Though this story shows up more than once in the archival record, it should not be taken at face value. It is entirely possible that Mukuni was skeptical about the construction of the bridge over the Zambezi, but

²⁰A.H. Jack, "Some Early Journals to the Victoria Falls," *British South Africa Annual*, December 1936 (National Archives of Zimbabwe), p. 139.

²¹See Chap. 7 for more on this debate, as well as a discussion on the issue of preservation and conservation of the Falls.

²²Heath, "Victoria Falls: The Growth of a Rhodesian Village," p. 16.

²³Daphne Harris, *The Victoria Falls: Souvenir Guide in Pictures and Story* (Salisbury: Roundabout Press, 1969) (NAZ GEN-P/HAR, National Archives of Zimbabwe), p. 19.

it is equally possible that his skepticism was used to support the colonial narrative of backward Africans being exposed to and awed by western modernity and technology. Regardless, it is not difficult to imagine the local population being intrigued by the construction of this bridge.

In 1903–1904, around the same time as the railway was built, the BSACo determined that the Old Drift site was too unhealthy for continued European inhabitation. The BSACo had actually opened an administrative post close to Old Drift but abandoned it in 1901 because of the unhealthy environment and the administration decided shortly thereafter that it wanted to relocate that settlement as well.²⁴ In a decision that most likely seemed unproblematic among the BSACo administrators, a forced abandonment of the settlement was planned and two sites were offered as alternative town sites. For the Old Drifters this was a highly contestable decree and sparked the beginning of many conflicts between the settlers and BSACo officials. One alternative location was “close to the Falls and the river,” while the other “was located on a sand-belt some seven miles north.”²⁵ The final decision was left to R.T. Coryndon, the North Western Rhodesia administrator who chose the latter. At a meeting at the Old Drift between settler representatives led by spokesman Clarke, and D. Hawksley, a representative of the BSACo, Clarke argued against the decision. The settlers believed that both sites were unacceptable, especially the chosen location because it was “too far from both the Falls and the river” and the ground was “unsuitable for building and roadmaking, and the approaches being through heavy sand, make transport expensive.”²⁶ The settlers feared that the opportunities afforded by Old Drift were about to be stifled by such a change.

Despite the vocal and written protests against both proposed sites, Coryndon selected the site where the town of Livingstone is now located, about 10 kilometers away from the Falls and Zambezi. By early 1905, the BSACo publicly announced the site selection and made available the township plans, indicating that there was a move to formalize European settlement in the area.²⁷ L.F. Moore’s summary of the exchange was that the Old Drifters “disagreed with the present site. Matter fully finally

²⁴ Heath, “Victoria Falls: The Growth of a Rhodesian Village,” p. 16.

²⁵ Nina Tanner Robbins, “A Study of African Participation in Urban Politics in Livingstone, Zambia, 1905–1966” (Doctoral Thesis, Howard University, 1977), p. 27.

²⁶ “Minutes of a Meeting Held at the Old Drift: 1905” (Box: D1/7-F1/7/3 BSAC. Reports. E 9/4, Acc. 44, Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 1.

²⁷ *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, February 2, 1905, p. 3.

settled without reference to us.”²⁸ These disgruntled white settlers held something in common with the Tonga population around them: decisions were made without any consultation to the people most affected. It was an inauspicious beginning for the town and from the time it was established the people meant to inhabit it were disgruntled.

There was considerable unity among the settlers around Old Drift that they exhibited in their protests against the relocation to Livingstone and that continued once they resettled in Livingstone. This cohesion is particularly notable because of the diversity within the white population. Referring to a 1911 census report that counted 1494 whites in Northern Rhodesia, L.H. Gann wrote, “North-Western Rhodesia...could be described as an extension of South Africa to the ‘Far North.’ Many immigrants were South African born or had lived there before coming to Rhodesia, and a fair proportion were not of British ancestry. Europeans entered this country not only as planters and professional men, but also as petty traders, skilled workers, as non-commissioned officers in the police.”²⁹ Despite varied socio-economic backgrounds, the voices of early settlers at Old Drift and Livingstone were often unified. Gann credits that unity to the isolation and small number of whites living in Northern Rhodesia, most of whom were located in the Livingstone area. He argued the “white community feeling was developed far more strongly in a country where a small white community found itself face-to-face with a huge black majority, and this alone may have helped to reduce the friction amongst Europeans.”³⁰ As will be explained in this and subsequent chapters though, it is also worth considering that in addition to Gann’s explanation for the cohesion among the white population, a general distrust and eventual open disdain for the BSACo also gave the settlers something in common and contributed to the unified front they often displayed. The first test of their unity was the BSACo’s push to relocate the Old Drift settlement to Livingstone. Though it was a battle they ultimately lost, this was an important challenge that helped bring together the white population and set the stage for future disputes that pitted the white population against the administration.

Only a few years later, the settlers revisited the idea of moving the town closer to the river at a place known as Imbault’s Camp. *The Livingstone*

²⁸ Ibid., p. 6.

²⁹ Gann, *The Birth of a Plural Society*, p. 176.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 176.

Mail printed an article regarding the issue stating “the plan most in favour throughout the Territory is the amalgamation of the two townships of Livingstone and Kalomo (a site about 50 miles from Livingstone), on a site in the neighbourhood of Imbault’s Camp. Such a settlement, having permanent officials in residence and the tourist traffic in the season would, it is considered, develop into a prosperous town.”³¹ It is clear the settlers were not willing to give up their dreams of tourism development, especially because so many depended on that industry for their economic livelihood. Simply put, they were afraid the distance to the Falls from the BSACo town-site would keep tourists away. Despite the controversy, once the site was selected, Livingstone became a boom town that had major economic, political, and social significance to the young colony.

The white settlers were at least privileged enough to be involved in the conversation about town sites. Local Africans were not consulted. When Europeans showed up at Old Drift, the site was uninhabited prior to white settlement, but it was certainly used by Tonga-Leya people who took advantage of its location between the waterfalls and a set of rapids further north to safely cross the Zambezi.³² Several Tonga traders did set up African stores in the white settlement,³³ but they did not live in the camp. They seized the opportunity to develop their businesses amidst the growing white population. The BSACo consistently claimed to observe the property rights of local communities, but even the selection of town development sites, like Livingstone, without African *kraals* had significant consequences on local people. The establishment of this white settlement profoundly disrupted African access to water resources, hunting and farming land, and the Falls themselves. The same displacement occurred when the camp relocated to Livingstone. The Leya subgroup of the Tonga lived in close proximity of Livingstone town, and “were dispossessed of much of their land when European settlement in the area began.”³⁴ This

³¹ Imbault’s camp, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 55, Vol. 3, April 13, 1907.

³² Lyn Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology: Fieldwork, Networks, and the Making of Cultural Knowledge in Central Africa* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 52.

³³ Percy Clark, “The Chronicles of Deadrock,” *The Livingstone Mail*, Christmas Edition 1908.

³⁴ Merran McCulloch, *A Social Survey of the African Population of Livingstone* (Manchester: Manchester University Press and the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1956), p. 1.

would obviously prove to be a point of contention as Livingstone grew and squeezed out the Leya from the area.³⁵

BOOM TOWN: LIVINGSTONE'S EARLY YEARS

White Livingstonians focused on building their businesses and appropriated local resources to that end. African employees provided the labor necessary to achieve the development desired by the white entrepreneurs, but the European migrants' goal was to build a safe, comfortable space for whites and they were unwilling to live close to their African workers. From the early days of Livingstone's development, the white settlers unabashedly espoused their views on Africans living among the town's population. As more Europeans moved to the site, "the British settlers advocated the view that the town was essentially theirs [and] the use of urban facilities by Africans was strictly regulated..."³⁶ Even more to the point was a disclaimer that prefaced an article in the newspaper about a famine affecting African populations near the town. Writing on behalf of the newspaper, L.F. Moore boldly proclaimed, "We are not negrophilist. Regular subscribers will admit that we have busied ourselves little with native affairs. The Livingstone Mail is confessedly run in the interests of the white population."³⁷ The fact that this statement preceded an article on Africans starving because the town of Livingstone blocked their access to their own hunting and farming lands indicates just how little concern the white entrepreneurs felt about their African neighbors. Their focus was on achieving their own goals, not on the welfare of the very people they displaced. White entrepreneurs saw the potential in developing Livingstone as a cosmopolitan European haven deep in the interior of Africa and had no plans to share that space with African neighbors.

³⁵ In her dissertation on African political participation around Livingstone, Nina Tanner Robbins raises an interesting point when she wrote "[I]t did not occur to Moore that since the Africans and Europeans suffered from an inferior relationship to the Company, they might share a common goal in attempting to wrest control of the town from the Company" (Tanner Robbins, "A Study of African Participation," p. 33). It is important to note that as much as the white population clashed with the BSACO, including over issues regarding native rights and black labor, they shared the common belief "that the only reason for having Africans in towns was for the labor they could contribute to the economy, and that they had no permanent stake there" (p. 33).

³⁶ Livingstone District Notebook, 1904–1959 (KSC4/1, National Archives of Zambia), p. 42.

³⁷ Not negrophilist, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 136, Vol. 5, October 31, 1908.

Although the newspaper catered to the white population, the publication reveals much about the formation of the town, albeit from a decidedly European perspective. The European settlers had a seemingly contradictory goal of turning Livingstone into both an outpost of “civilization” but also a place where visitors could access “real Africa.” The result was a vibrant and fluid environment that developed with extraordinary energy and inconsistencies. Despite the conflict between early white settlers and the BSACo, tenacious entrepreneurs built the town of Livingstone, determined to create reality out of their dreams for the future of Victoria Falls tourism. In order to create a luxury destination for Europeans, businesses quickly produced a rudimentary tourism infrastructure. In its earliest days, Livingstone seemed as difficult to inhabit as Old Drift. The town’s location in a sand belt created construction obstacles, and also meant that water was difficult to obtain. Old Drifters, so adamant about being close to the Falls, were chagrined by the difficulty they had in accessing Victoria Falls. One resident of the town who arrived there in 1906 remembered that “when he first went to Livingstone there were no roads to the Falls, only Native tracks³⁸ over which they cycled and then crossed the River by canoe.”³⁹ All the development they had put into Old Drift for over a decade was lost and the white entrepreneurs faced a new challenge of manipulating and transforming the space allotted to them. Whereas their earlier location at Old Drift was less invasive to Tonga settlements, Livingstone’s site forced the Tonga to have more interaction and disruption by the growing European presence.

Despite the reluctance of European settlers to share the space with African inhabitants, they relied on African labor to construct the hotels, shops, and restaurants necessary to a tourist industry. From the Old Drift days, there was an emphasis on creating a community with the “civility” and “culture” of European towns, yet there were often Africans sharing that social space. In 1898, a meeting between representatives of the BSACo and Chief Lewanika and his advisers was used as cause to hold the first meeting of the Victoria Falls Turf Club. The event “was held under the patronage of the Royal Family of Barotseland. A bending race,

³⁸This rather innocuous statement provides further evidence that the local Tonga were frequent visitors to the Falls.

³⁹[British South Africa Police] Regimental Association Annual Reports, Minutes. Minutes from the Annual Meeting of the BSAP Regimental Association, Livingstone (S 6/B/740, National Archives of Zimbabwe).

steeplechase, V.C. race, postilion race and several foot races formed the programme and it is stated that the king [Lewanika] was greatly delighted with the fun.”⁴⁰ Although there is no explicit mention here, in references about similar events, there were typically European and African groupings for the races.⁴¹ These social activities highlighted western ideas of leisure, but also managed to incorporate Africans into the experience. Considering that many of the white settlers wrote about wanting little to do with their African neighbors, it is interesting to see the reality of shared social space.⁴²

Livingstonians were intent on building a social and sporting life in this frontier town, in part to keep the white townspeople entertained but also because such events attracted tourists to the area. In 1905, when Livingstone was more of a fledging hamlet than a cosmopolitan town, the white population organized the first regatta on the Zambezi River, about five miles above Victoria Falls. In terms of attracting visitors to the event, Livingstone’s entrepreneurs were quite successful, with “[C]rews from Capetown, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg, Salisbury, Buluwayo [*sic*], Livingstone and Beira” competing and “a party of 200 from Cape Colony, and one of 60 or 70 more from the other Colonies” leaving from Cape Town to attend the regatta.⁴³ This was the first of the many regattas hosted by the town of Livingstone and the success of this water sport helped stimulate other organized sporting events such as running races and shooting club competitions. Livingstone was also an important stop along the way for big game hunters headed into Barotseland. North Western Rhodesia was promoted as a hot spot for hunting, as would-be sportsmen were promised “[T]here are few better regions of the world for the big game hunter than North Western Rhodesia...”⁴⁴ The white entrepreneurs in

⁴⁰A.H. Jack, “Some Early Journals to the Victoria Falls,” *British South Africa Annual*, December 1936 (National Archives of Zimbabwe), p. 139.

⁴¹In this case, I suspect Africans would only be involved in the foot races, not equine races because their exposure to and involvement in such sports activities was likely minimal, if not non-existent at this early date.

⁴²I do not mean to imply that Europeans and Africans are equal partners in this shared social space. Quite often, African races and sporting events served as entertainment for the Europeans. But, as Chap. 5 demonstrates, Africans explored and performed European culture through such events.

⁴³“First Regatta on Zambesi River,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, June 8, 1905, p. 7.

⁴⁴“North Western Rhodesia,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, November 6, 1905, p. 2.

Livingstone promoted these activities as much as possible to attract visitors to their town (Fig. 4.2).

The lure of regattas and hunting, coupled with a flurry of economic activities and construction projects resulted in the fast creation of a frontier cosmopolitan space. Within half a decade, the town's newspaper boasted about Livingstone's "two butchers, two chemists, a cabinetmaker and a blacksmith, two hotels, a clinic, and a number of stores."⁴⁵ The newspaper proudly advertised the North Western Hotel, listing services for potential guests as "shooting, fishing, boating, riding, and driving."⁴⁶ Although still grumbling about their displacement from Old Drift, the residents of Livingstone quickly turned the scruffy location into a bustling town. Their conflicts with the administration were only just beginning though, and for many, developing their businesses became bureaucratic headaches.



Fig. 4.2 Audience attending the first regatta on the Zambezi, 1905. Image courtesy of Pete Roberts, with permission from the National Railways of Zimbabwe Museum, Archives in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

⁴⁵Tanner Robbins, p. 22.

⁴⁶Town growth, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 26, Vol. 2, September 22, 1906.

Filings for licenses became frequent necessities as the former Old Drifters, accustomed to operating under their own standards, were forced to formalize their activities through BSACo licenses. William Trayner, the self-described editor and founder of Central Africa's first newspaper found himself at odds with the BSACo. His paper, often called *Trayner's Rag*, the *Gazette*, or *Advertiser* was an informal publication, usually just a page long that chronicled the activities and gossip of Livingstone's white population. Trayner recalled that he was called to the office of the District Commissioner (Frank Sykes held the title at the time). Sykes informed Trayner that the BSACo office in Kalomo required that "the paper [be] put on a proper footing and registered" because "all newspapers have got to be registered and to state where they are published."⁴⁷ Trayner ended up registering his paper to meet the requirements of the administration, but describes the transition somewhat cynically. He explained, "[I]t [his paper] had started as a schoolboy's prank and it was now a respectable paper."⁴⁸ The BSACo was asserting itself to North Western Rhodesian white settlers and for these pioneers drawn to Victoria Falls to fulfill their own agendas, the BSACo's regulations were increasingly burdensome.

The need for licenses and permits often created confusion, as the BSACo wanted to earn revenue through licensing but was not fully prepared logistically to do so and because the administration of North Western Rhodesia was sometimes conflated with that of Southern Rhodesia. Entrepreneurs in the area often existed in a transcolonial context⁴⁹; they did not think within the confines of one colonial territory, and instead looked for opportunities all around Victoria Falls. In early 1906, two entrepreneurs, Walker and Goodwin, appealed to Sykes, the BSACo Conservator of the Falls area working in the administration's Livingstone office, "for permission to establish a Ricksha [*sic*] service between the Falls hotel [on the south bank] and the Falls and River."⁵⁰ Since the project entailed setting up a track that operated in both North Western Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia, the North Western Rhodesia administration had to consider the

⁴⁷ Patrick Barnes, "'The Livingstone Pioneer' as told By William Trayner," *The Northern Rhodesia Journal* V, 1962–1964 (NAZ S/NO71, National Archives of Zimbabwe), p. 564.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ I use this term as a loose comparison to how transnational would be used in postcolonial Africa.

⁵⁰ Letter from F.W. Sykes from the DC Office Livingstone to the Secretary at Kalomo, January 14, 1906 (National Archives of Zimbabwe).

proposal and send it to Salisbury. Eventually, it was determined that with the permission of the Salisbury office, the men would get their license (presumably issued out of Kalomo, North Western Rhodesia) with the caveat that “no monopoly should be granted,”⁵¹ something Walker and Goodwin requested in their original appeal.

Another example of the developing bureaucratic quagmire Livingstonians experienced is the trouble Percy Clark faced when he tried to get permission to sell periodicals at his Falls bookstand. Although some of his businesses were based in Livingstone, he decided to set up a stand on the south bank (Southern Rhodesian) side of the Falls so he went to the BSACo administration based in Umtali, Southern Rhodesia to get the necessary permit. The administrator there sent a letter to the administration in Salisbury asking if they can give him permission to sell his paper goods without a dealers’ license because at that time, Southern Rhodesia did not give out such licenses for selling on the south bank of the Zambezi.⁵² At the time, there were only two points of interest and economic activities on the south bank, the Victoria Falls Hotel and the train station so they were not prepared to deal with the issue, but it was out of the jurisdiction of the North Western Rhodesian administration. Clark knew that he would need to obtain permission though, which led to a significant paper trail as the Southern Rhodesia side scrambled to accommodate the request. After more correspondence between the Umtali and Salisbury offices, it was decided that a license would be issued that only allowed him to sell “papers, books and periodicals”⁵³ at Victoria Falls, which the Southern Rhodesian administration understood to be on the southern side of the waterfalls. Though it remained unclear to the administrators deliberating the request who should ultimately make the decision, both administrators referenced Clark’s wares as “a convenience to visitors”⁵⁴ and concluded that he should be allowed to sell his items.

⁵¹ Letter to Kalomo from Salisbury, February 12, 1906 (N.W.R. 16/06, National Archives of Zimbabwe).

⁵² Letter from C. Wibberley in Umtali to the Administration in Salisbury, August 13, 1906 (Folder A 11 2/16/10-2/17/1, National Archives of Zimbabwe).

⁵³ Document No. P.S. 243/06 [or 08, faded typeprint], Letter from the Office of the Private Secretary to Wibberley, August 23, 1906 (Folder A 11 2/16/10-2/17/1, National Archives of Zimbabwe).

⁵⁴ Document No. GM/8702. Letter from Manager’s Office in Umtali to the Administrator of Southern Rhodesia, Salisbury, August 21, 1906 (Folder A 11/2/16/10-2/17/1, National Archives of Zimbabwe).

These two examples of both jurisdictional confusion and transcolonial cooperation are worth noting. For the white settlers around Victoria Falls, the distinction between colonial administrations was hugely problematic. Though most settled on the north bank of the river, their business plans and activities had them firmly situated on both sides of the Falls. On the north bank of the Zambezi, the administration showed little enthusiasm for tourism development and instead focused on its relationship with Chief Lewanika and with the questions over how best to use the land, labor, and resources within the territory. They would soon be grappling with the amalgamation of North Western Rhodesia and North Eastern Rhodesia, so the demands of the small population of white entrepreneurs were low on their priorities. White Livingstonians were keenly aware of the administration's lack of concern over them and the tourism industry they hoped to create.⁵⁵ On the other side of the river though, the Southern Rhodesian administration was at least somewhat aware of the possible benefits of exploiting the Falls. One BSACo report written by an observant administrator posited “[I]n the Victoria Falls we possess a very valuable property, which is likely to promote materially the prosperity of the country. During the short period in which the railway to the Falls has been open, a large number of visitors has been attracted to them, and the tourist traffic which may be legitimately expected in the immediate future is likely to increase.”⁵⁶ This governmental interest in developing the commercial potential of the Falls intensified within a few decades, and pushed the bulk of tourism development and profits to the southern side of the Falls (Fig. 4.3).

During the first decade of the twentieth century, Livingstone fought hard to dominate the transcolonial tourism trade. Livingstonians were increasingly convinced that the administrative support the tourism industry had on the south bank was threatening Livingstone's position as the tourism center of the Victoria Falls experience. The publisher of the newspaper, L.F. Moore, enthusiastically reported the steady growth of the tourism trade as the town itself grew. In 1907, a group of 400 tourists from Cape Town, South Africa traveled to the Falls and stopped in Livingstone. According to the article about the event, “Livingstone, during the two hours of their visit, was a sight to be remembered. Every store displaying

⁵⁵ These conflicts in interest will be discussed further in this chapter, and in Chap. 5.

⁵⁶ John Creewel, *90 Glorious Years: A History of the Victoria Falls Hotel* (Harare: HarperCollins Publishers [Zimbabwe], 1994), p. 2.



Fig. 4.3 Victoria Falls Train Station situated on the southern banks of the Zambezi, ca 1905. Image courtesy of Pete Roberts, with permission from the National Railways of Zimbabwe Museum, Archives in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

curios did a roaring trade...”⁵⁷ Despite the thrill of such a successful tour of the town, Livingstonians continued to voice concern over their town’s location. Those 400 visitors only came to the town for a couple of hours which meant that they accessed overnight accommodation somewhere else. Still, the tourism trade generated profits for the white entrepreneurs and further stimulated their ideas about how to make even more money. Clark reported that he was “making good money at the Falls, for the railway was bringing a constant stream of visitors from all over the world.”⁵⁸ The increase in tourists opened up more opportunities for Livingstone’s entrepreneurs.

A year earlier, the town missed out on heavy tourist traffic because there was no transportation between the Falls and Livingstone, which meant that groups often viewed the Falls from the Southern Rhodesia side and never made it to Livingstone. The townspeople were informed

⁵⁷ Roaring trade, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 64, Vol. 3, June 15, 1907.

⁵⁸ Clark 1972, p. 225.

by the train conductor that he had carried around 100 passengers to see the Falls, but only about a dozen managed to get to Livingstone.⁵⁹ This obviously provoked anger among the white Livingstonians who relied so heavily on tourist foot traffic and only further bolstered their complaints about the town's location. In order to meet their expectations of the business potential of Victoria Falls, they needed more support from the colonial administration. Instead, help came from the ever-enterprising Percy Clark who decided to develop a transport system for the visitors to use during their visit. He opened a boating business and a rickshaw system and for a few years enjoyed the profits of his monopoly on local transportation.⁶⁰

Livingstonians did not want to turn the town into a simple resting stop for tourists in the area. They proudly developed a destination that offered visitors top-quality accommodation and entertainment. The North Western hotel, the first fully functioning accommodation in the town was a source of obvious pride. One contributor to *The Livingstone Mail* visited the hotel and shared his experiences, writing, "Last Friday being the first guest-night at the North Western, we dined there, and a very good dinner it was. The surroundings, moreover, are congenial; one could fancy oneself at the Ritz or Carlton, but for the colour of the waiters."⁶¹ Indeed, the North Western Hotel set the standard for other hotels and restaurants in Livingstone. An advertisement in the newspaper highlighted the billiard room, livery and bait stables, carriages that met every train, as well as the ability to host banquets and private dinners.⁶²

It was not easy to achieve the high standards set by the townspeople and tourists, and compliments were not always forthcoming. Almost a decade into the development of tourist amenities, one editorial in the newspaper suggested there were still obstacles to overcome. The author wrote:

We have grave complaints of the means which some hotels up the line are run. What truth there may be in the allegations we are unable to say, but visitors complain of the accommodation, especially the beds and bedrooms, the service and the cooking. We are well aware that N. Rhodesia is almost on the edge of beyond, and that it is unreasonable to expect comfort and convenience in all things. Cleanliness, however, is a different matter...

⁵⁹ Lost opportunity, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 3, Vol. 1, April 21, 1906.

⁶⁰ Clark 1872, pp. 243–245.

⁶¹ Ritz and Carlton, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 160, Vol. 7, April 17, 1909.

⁶² Amenities advertisement, *The Livingstone Mail*, Christmas Edition, December 25, 1909.

Hotelkeepers should be made to realize that their privileges are granted conditionally, and that they are under obligation to provide adequate accommodation, service, and meals.⁶³

Undoubtedly such a critique hit many Livingstonians hard, as they constantly worked to develop tourism amenities to offer visitors a comfortable stay. It was perhaps even more disheartening to receive criticism from the administration since many Livingstonians involved in tourism felt the BSACO was stifling their industry. In one memo sent to the Bulawayo BSACo office, the writer expressed concern that the Falls area was unable to provide adequately for tourists. According to the author who was planning an official trip to the area, a “recent visitor [to] Falls states no accommodation or other provision ready [and] if so fear a bad impression will be made.”⁶⁴ Livingstonians might have used this very memo to prove the need and importance of having administrative support for their efforts in building the tourism industry.

LIVING IN LIVINGSTONE: AFRICAN EXPERIENCES AND EUROPEAN DISCOURSE

The BSACo, business development, and the establishment of high standards of tourism amenities were not the only concerns white settlers had in the early days of colonization. The town they helped create and called home opened a space where Africans and Europeans encountered each other daily. It was perfectly acceptable to have African employees, but to have African neighbors was a different matter entirely.

For Africans, city living was obviously a much different experience than that of the white townspeople. In the centuries leading up to colonization, the local populations migrated to accommodate environmental changes, so migration in and of itself was not a new concept to adapt. As more Africans, who often came from Lozi and Tonga villages and towns, moved into the Livingstone area, there was a profound shift in terms of authority. This gradual migration process slowly decreased the power held by Lewanika and other headmen as more Africans moved out of the direct

⁶³ Obstacles, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 410, February 6, 1914.

⁶⁴ Handwritten note, numbered 432, Names illegible, June 21, 1907 or 1909 [illegible] (Folder A 11 2/16/10-2/17/1, National Archives of Zimbabwe).

jurisdiction of their community leaders and found themselves living under European laws and scrutiny.

Lewanika used concessions and written orders to negotiate his power over Barotse land but in many ways that produced a rather limited and abstract notion of authority. He used the bureaucracy of colonization to achieve his goal of expanded power but in the end, the realities of colonization circumscribed his power. Increasing numbers of Africans became interested in earning money which resulted in less focus on agricultural activities and as one article in the *Livingstone Mail* expressed, “the result is that, their stocks of grain and cattle being exhausted, an ever growing proportion of them will have to seek work in the mines or towns.”⁶⁵ As more moved away from their home communities the power Lewanika had painstakingly negotiated slowly dissolved. His authority was guaranteed over Barotse land proper but he had very little clout over any other area. Likewise, the Tonga leaders who were virtually absent in the establishment of the colony also had little authority over Tonga migrants into Livingstone.

It appears in the early days of colonization that local Africans preferred staying close to home if they decided to pursue wage labor opportunities. Although the BSACo and white farmers encouraged Africans to work on mines or on commercial farms, Lozi and Tonga men liked remaining in the area when possible. The *Livingstone Mail* printed the BSACo Annual Report for N. Rhodesia in 1912 which included census numbers. The population of North Western Rhodesia at that time was 1,238 Europeans and 379,055 Africans. Of the Africans, 9,565 worked as domestics or servants for settlers, 930 worked in mines, and over 368,000 remained in their communities.⁶⁶ Of those staying in their villages and towns, many found ways to participate in the emerging colonial economy by providing fruits, vegetables, and crafts to stores and restaurants in Livingstone, and to a lesser degree, Kalomo.

These numbers suggest that in this part of colonial Africa there was a noticeable attempt by the majority of Africans to stay in their home territory to earn money rather than migrate to mines and commercial farms. Although there was considerable pressure put on the Lozi, Tonga, and Ila to send young men south for paid labor, these communities found ways to keep men at home, much to the chagrin of the BSACo. Livingstone’s

⁶⁵ Urbanization trend, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 84, Vol. 4, November 2, 1907.

⁶⁶ BSACo annual report, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 311, Vol. 13, March 16, 1912.

tourism industry offered local African men and women the opportunity to stay in the area and still take advantage of the cash economy. This gave them greater freedom in making their work choices. It also affected the amount of their salary they demanded from less desirable jobs. The BSACo Directors Reports Accounts of 1910 mentioned that the labor shortage in Southern Rhodesia affected commercial farmers. They looked north for more workers, and according to the report, “A few farmers were fortunate enough to secure labour from North Western Rhodesia, but the cost was well nigh prohibitive.”⁶⁷ African workers exercised at least some control in setting their wages as workers in labor-starved Southern Rhodesia because they had opportunities to stay closer to home. Southern Rhodesian farmers paid a high price for workers from across the Zambezi as they shouldered the recruitment and transport costs of the limited number of workers willing to head south.

Africans offered their labor to Europeans around the Falls from the beginning of the exploration in the area and this only increased as white entrepreneurs settled in the area. The influx of BSACo administrators into the region also increased the opportunities for Africans to find wage labor close to home. Before the establishment of the colonial administration, Europeans relied on Africans to help them navigate the area around the Falls and this reliance continued as the town and tourist infrastructure developed. For both the white settlers and the BSACo administrators, it took much African help and time to establish a presence north of the Zambezi. There was a heavy focus on maintaining “civilized” or western standards of living in this remote part of the continent, which added to the expense, time, and labor necessary for the process.

A visitor in 1906 wrote an article for the *Livingstone Mail* and noted “two natives carried my ‘imphahla’ (luggage).”⁶⁸ This was only one of many ways African men assisted tourists in the area and as the tourism industry blossomed more employment opportunities for African men were created. A picture advertising the North Western Hotel from 1909 demonstrated the number of workers required to keep tourist amenities running. The picture included eight to ten white adults and infants and about ten African workers.⁶⁹ This image sent a clear message to would-be

⁶⁷ Board of Directors Report (Box C 1/8-C 1/1/25, File C 1/1/21 Acc/ 5717, Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 66.

⁶⁸ Visitor observations, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 2, Vol. 1, April 7, 1906.

⁶⁹ North Western Hotel photograph, *The Livingstone Mail*, Christmas Edition, December 25, 1909.

visitors that there would be plenty of people on hand to serve them during their stay.

Tourism is inherently a labor-intensive industry, which meant that although the businesses in Livingstone were small, they relied on a large number of workers. A job posting in the newspaper also showed the number of African workers necessary to keep a hotel operating. The advertisement was as follows, “Wanted—Any number up to 50 boys for New Hotel, Apply, Sellick & Coy, Victoria Falls.”⁷⁰ It is not difficult to think of the countless ways African laborers contributed to the tourism economy. Men could find work as porters, carriage drivers, liverymen, waiters, butlers, gardeners, handymen, cooks, housekeepers, and in construction. Men and women also contributed by participating in the informal sector. They grew and sold vegetables and fruits, provided meat, and crafted and sold curios. Their contributions to the souvenir offerings were extensive. L.F. Moore sold in his pharmacy “native curios: wicker baskets, sjamboks, assegais, carved wood-work, ivory handled fly switches, etc.”⁷¹ Local Africans were finding ample opportunities to engage in revenue production and much of those opportunities stemmed directly from tourism (Fig. 4.4).

Although the local population was necessary for the growth of Livingstone, they were not treated with respect and were often regarded as nuisances. In many cases, the work was dangerous and thankless. In 1907 an article in the *Livingstone Mail* reported the deaths of two African men working for a merchant. They were crossing the Zambezi in a canoe and were attacked by a hippo. On the same day, another African man carrying a cargo of millet was also attacked, though not fatally. In the article, the African workers were referred to as “boys,” not uncommon in colonial records, but certainly reflective of the way the men were regarded. More significant is the moral of the story, as the author wrote, “Someday a still more serious accident will happen—a boat load of tourists, or perhaps, a Director of the Chartered Company—will be drowned and the nuisance will be taken in hand...There is no reason why these dangerous monsters should be permitted to imperil the lives of visitors and the property of residents.”⁷² Clearly, the point was not the tragedy of two Africans losing their lives but of the potential for more goods and products to be lost and

⁷⁰ Job ad, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 477, No Volume Number, May 21, 1915.

⁷¹ African souvenirs, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 68, Vol. 3, July 13, 1907.

⁷² Dangerous work, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 63, Vol. 3, June 8, 1907.



Fig. 4.4 L.F. Moore in front of his chemist shop in Livingstone, ca 1905. Image provided by the Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University.

the lives of white people to be put in danger. There was a blatant disregard for the loss of African lives.

In another piece from *The Livingstone Mail*, the caustic attitude held by the white population served as the punch line to a joke. In the satirical piece, picked up by other British newspapers, the author sarcastically complained about hungry lions disrupting mail service and destroying mail-bags, and jokingly attributed blame to the BSACo, ribbing “Well-fed lions will not eat mail-bags, love letters, or even the most tasty local newspapers. In order to avoid similar catastrophes, the Government ought to undertake the feeding of these lions. We know one or two local natives that might well be used for the purpose.”⁷³ It is a particularly telling joke in that the sarcasm is reflective of the discourse of the administration being simultaneously powerful and unhelpful, yet the punch line revealed the negative attitude about Africans living in the area and suggested the insignificant value placed on African lives.

⁷³ “Letter-Eating Lions” (originally published in *The Livingstone Mail*), *Dundee Courier*, October 30, 1907, p. 4.

As more jobs opened up, an increasing number of Africans moved into the town and outlying areas further changing the social and cultural landscape around Victoria Falls. This marked a shift in authority as more Africans came under the jurisdiction of the colonial town and moved away from local systems of political power. Although letters from Lewanika do not reveal if he was concerned with this trend, or even noticed it, it is an important shift to consider. African leaders, already adjusting to circumscribed power, had to relinquish more control as people moved into urban locations so clearly under colonial jurisdiction. For the urbanized Africans, authority was probably an unclear, abstract concept. Who did they answer to in the city—their chiefs back at home, their new bosses, or the BSACo administrators?

It was difficult for white Livingstonians to adjust to the influx of African residents and there were numerous debates concerning the ways to accommodate the new town dwellers. They struggled with this issue as they felt conflicted about how close Africans should live to white families. They relied on Africans to keep their houses and businesses running, but they also wanted to create distance between themselves and Africans after the workday ended. As early as 1906, there were complaints about Africans in the town when an article in the *Livingstone Pioneer and Advertiser* complained that “unsightly tumuli of sticks and grass, in and out of which natives of both sexes crawl, are to be seen on several prominent unsold stands... We are glad to hear that his Honour is considering the advisability of laying out a Location in the neighbourhood.”⁷⁴ This not only showed how quickly this issue became a problem, it also indicated that African women were already migrating to urban areas as well. Women created a new dimension to the problem, as white settlers preferred that African males come and live in the town on their own. With women in the picture, issues of housing and controlling the size of the African population became even more critical.

The white townspeople were often contradictory in the tone of their discussions and their ideas on how to deal with the growing African segment. It would almost appear that in their earliest days around Victoria Falls, their ambitions blinded them to the reality that they would be dealing with the same “native questions” that other colonies also grappled with in Africa. Of course African labor was necessary to fulfill the goal of building and sustaining a tourism destination at Victoria Falls, yet white

⁷⁴ *The Livingstone Pioneer and Advertiser*, No. 5, Vol. 1, February 10, 1906.

Livingstonians were unprepared to address how to live with an urbanizing African population. In this regard, the fluidity that marked life in North Western Rhodesia actually backfired on the European population. It was important that African laborers stay healthy to keep productivity up, but it was equally important that all the Africans in the town were healthy to ensure that no epidemics struck the town. Very early in the town's development, just a year after the formal establishment of Livingstone, there were already calls for a native hospital. One contributor to the newspaper wrote:

Daily we are solicited by indigent natives to supply them with 'muti' for the cure of repulsive looking sores, or to minister to other ailments. They never have any money, or if they have will certainly not spend it on medicine; the missionaries have taught them to expect that to be supplied gratis. We wonder what an employer is supposed to do with his sick boys? He can neither treat them nor keep them indefinitely.⁷⁵

Sanitation issues also posed a challenge for city planners. Because the town rested on a sand belt, "water was a problem. In the beginning the water was supplied by the Railways, pumping water up from the Maramba River to tank... from which all residents had to draw their water by bucket. Every household had to employ one African who had only that task."⁷⁶ In 1910 a pump system was introduced that moved water from the Zambezi into town along a pipe system. "The sanitary services consisted of a bucket system. All the outside toilets were backing on to the sanitary lanes wide enough to use oxen and carts to service the sanitary buckets."⁷⁷ These services were extended to the white town dwellers, but a proper water supply for Africans was not as easily obtained. A writer complained in the newspaper that, "We have to draw attention to the lack of convenience for washing clothes. Cleanliness, we are told, is next to godliness, and the natives should be encouraged to practice so commendable a virtue but not in Barotse Centre [the town's main park]."⁷⁸ There were expectations that the African population was supposed to meet, but there was no actual support to help them achieve those expectations.

⁷⁵ Native health concerns, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 30, Vol. 2, October 20, 1906.

⁷⁶ Ese, p. 24.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁷⁸ Barotse Centre, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 106, Vol. 5, April 4, 1908.

Health was clearly an important concern and closely connected to this issue was the question of housing. In 1907 the town built a “Native Location” to house men working in the city. This only addressed part of the issue though, as it provided only a small number of Africans housing. One writer to the newspaper announced the opening of the location for “boys” but also voiced concern that “we have not yet heard what is to be done about housing the increasing number of natives in search of work, but are assured that the supervision of natives within the precincts of the town is to be efficiently performed.”⁷⁹ White townspeople were intent on establishing a heavily monitored space for Africans to inhabit. In a letter to the BSACo published in the *Livingstone Mail* written by leaders of the Standholders and Ratepayers Association, the authors wrote:

Several public meetings were held...and on every occasion proposals were submitted that further regulations, dealing with the natives employed in town, should be drafted. It was considered that a native location should be established under the control native huts should be of adequate and sanitary construction, and that the many abuses inseparable from a mixed community should be dealt with.⁸⁰

It is evident that the white settlers wanted to exercise as much control as possible, but there is little in the historical record to reveal the African perspective of living in the town. This “location” did provide some men with shelter, but it was under a controlled environment. It also was limited in giving accommodation only to single men, or men who planned on remaining single. And as mentioned above, it did not address the needs of men coming into town looking for work. Unsanctioned housing sprang up, much to the dismay of the white townspeople. In a letter to the newspaper, a writer complained “The town is now nearly surrounded by the huts and shelters of natives—some of whom are employed by residents, some of which contain inmates of questionable characters.”⁸¹ Not only was this an unorganized settlement, it did not fall under the control of the white townspeople, which was clearly perceived as a threat to the town’s well-being.

⁷⁹Native housing, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 88, Vol. 4, November 30, 1907.

⁸⁰Native location, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 71, Vol. 3, August 3, 1907.

⁸¹Unplanned settlements, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 232, Vol. 10, September 3, 1910.

LOCAL AFRICAN MEMORY AND THE HISTORY OF LIVINGSTONE

Although it is not possible to talk with the earliest African residents of the Livingstone area, there are collective memories shared among the relatives of those first African Livingstonians. The perspectives of Africans living in Livingstone during the early days are captured in the reflections of the children of those first African urban dwellers. Upon my request, the three oldest members of the Leya (a subgroup of the larger Tonga ethnicity) village outside of Livingstone, identified by the current Chief Mukuni, recalled some of the experiences of African workers in the town. Despite these interviewees not being able to provide firsthand observations about the earliest days of the town's history, I was interested to find out how the so-called "Old-Timers" "remembered" or reconstructed Livingstone's past based on the stories they were told. These Leya informants came from the village closest to the Falls and Livingstone, so their information offers a highly localized perspective of the growth of the town.

My first enquiry focused on the labor activities of Africans in the area. When asked what kinds of jobs men found in the town, the response was that men worked as cooks, houseboys, launderers, tailors, salesmen, waiters, and hotel servants.⁸² The respondents also stated that African women were able to earn money by selling fish, cattle, and vegetables to the white townspeople.⁸³ One of the stories the three interviewees most emphasized regarded the involvement of Leya in the curio industry. When I asked the group why people from their community were so heavily involved in making and selling curios, Mr. Siloka told the following story (paraphrased):

After completion of the Victoria Falls Bridge to show appreciation to local people they brought bags of sand and coins to Chief Mukuni. The Chief could choose either the bag of sand or the bag of coins. The Chief picked

⁸²Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansanda, and Dorica Makole, interview by author, July 2006. This interview was arranged by Chief Mukuni and took place at his Royal Lodge. Mukuni selected the oldest three members of his community and asked if they would be willing to speak with me about Old Livingstone. Mr. Siloka was 75 years old, Mr. Siansanda was 81 years old, and Mrs. Makole was 73 years old. Their families inhabited the Tonga plateau in the community closest to the Falls when Livingstone was first established. Mr. Siloka served as the translator when the other two interviewees spoke in Tonga. The interview took place over about three hours.

⁸³Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansanda, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

the soil—they asked why and the Chief said ‘because this is my inheritance.’ The white people gave Mukuni a license to let the people develop curios.⁸⁴

This story, often repeated, credits the Leya chief with having the foresight to know that he could make choices that would long benefit the Leya people. Whether the incident actually took place is unknown, but somehow the decision to open up the curio industry to the Leya was made. The Leya continue to dominate the curio industry on the Zambian side of the Falls to this day.

Continuing on the theme of ethnicity in the city, the respondents stated that the white townspeople preferred hiring Mukuni’s people. They were considered the most honest.⁸⁵ Because Livingstone was a place where Tonga (Leya), Lozi, Ila, and other smaller groups mingled, I was curious about the role of ethnicity in intra-African relations in the town. On the subject, the interviewees had many thoughts. They remembered a peaceful atmosphere among the groups and no segregation occurred. Originally Europeans encouraged them to marry within the same group, and the respondents believed this was a tactic to keep people divided. Despite this pressure, Africans married whom they wanted and these intermarriages cemented the congeniality between the various groups living in town.⁸⁶ This presents a pleasant and friendly image of the town’s history. Now Livingstone is teeming with a mixed-ethnicity population that also includes Bemba and Nguni and although ethnicity does not appear to cause problems in the town, there is some divisiveness. Stereotypes abound—“the Tonga are good farmers but maybe not so smart,” “marry a Tonga woman if you want a hard worker,” “the Bemba are smart and too clever—watch out for business deals. They are sneaky,” and “the Lozi are the most beautiful but don’t have to work as hard because of it” are all comments I heard multiple times when talking to Livingstonians about the various ethnicities in the town.

I asked about the relationship between whites and blacks in the town during the early days and again received emphatic responses. My informants said that the relationship between employers and employees was not that good and that white people regarded Africans as tools with no wisdom to do things properly. They divided employers into two catego-

⁸⁴ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansanda, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

⁸⁵ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansanda, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

⁸⁶ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansanda, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

ries. White employers who preached (in this context they were referring to church-going people) had a decent relationship with their workers. The other group had no regard for Africans and would yell at and hit their workers.⁸⁷ The collective memory here is clear—Africans were exploited but to varying degrees of violence and maltreatment.

I asked about the housing situation and the respondents answered that there were some locations for male employees to live in and some domestic workers lived in servants' quarters. They also mentioned that the railway workers were provided accommodation.⁸⁸ On the issue of whether African workers were paid fairly, they responded with a resounding no. They said that the pay was not adequate when paid in cash and that often times the employers preferred paying most of the wages with goods. There was a system of giving rations in mealie meal, salt, and other household requirements.⁸⁹

Their stories about living and working in Livingstone only begin to illuminate the experiences Africans had in Livingstone. There was a clear divide between white and black in the town, and the power still held by chiefs such as Lewanika and Mukuni did not extend into Livingstone. African workers negotiated their own terms of existence and found ways to claim their own space in the town's political economy and culture. The early days of Livingstone town was dominated by the white entrepreneurs' desire to create a civilized outpost to bring in as much tourist traffic as possible. Victoria Falls inspired their dreams of building this tourist Mecca, but the role of Africans in this imagined tourism hub was less clearly defined. Their labor was needed, but they were otherwise supposed to disappear. In this case, the landscape was such an important scenery that Africans were not even relegated to fade into the background; they were not meant to be a part of the natural scenery on which the white population hoped to capitalize.

CONCLUSION

During their visit to South Africa in late 1904, Princess Christian and Princess Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein made a trip to North Western Rhodesia to see Victoria Falls. They were the first members of the Royal

⁸⁷ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansanda, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

⁸⁸ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansanda, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

⁸⁹ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansanda, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

Family to see the Falls, so their trip to the site was particularly momentous. Their visit coincided with the BSACo's push to establish Livingstone as the official town near Victoria Falls, so it was also a critical time in the emerging relationship between white settlers and the BSACo. Percy Clark, one of the Old Drifters remembered the occasion with fondness, recalling in his memoirs he "was commanded to bring post cards and photographs to the royal train for her [Princess Christian] inspection."⁹⁰ Clark continued with the anecdote, explaining how he was worried about what clothes to wear in the presence of the princess. In order to piece together an appropriate outfit, he "hunted round the camp to collect what decent togs I could borrow or steal."⁹¹ He shared his wardrobe anxiety with a staff member of one of the princesses and that aide then told her the story, which apparently left her amused.

Clark's autobiography and memories of this man left by other Old Drifters suggest he was quite a character and an excellent storyteller. But he was also deeply devoted to fulfilling his dreams inspired by Victoria Falls. Clark was one of the first to settle at Old Drift, and as the BSACo expanded administrative control, Clark continued to do as much as he could to profit from the emerging tourism industry. This anecdote of the royal visit is interesting in that it juxtaposed the white settler population with the royal family and at the center of that polarity is the BSACo. The BSACo served as the middle ground between the lower class whites and British nobility and all three parties were brought together by Victoria Falls. Clark's language is telling—he was "commanded," presumably by the BSACo administration, to bring his products to the train for the princess to inspect. He also considered himself in a quandary as he tried to dress appropriately for this activity. At a time when the BSACo, with its own power and as representative of the British Crown, started to assert authority over Victoria Falls pioneers, Clark and other white settlers rushed in with as much hospitality as they could offer. Despite early frustrations over the township site the white settlers understood the importance of the visit, and it is evident from this short anecdote that at this point in North Western Rhodesia's history, the white pioneers were willing to meet the demands of the BSACo and British royalty.

After their visit to Victoria Falls, the BSACo honored Princesses Christian and Victoria's visit by announcing, "Two of the Islands above

⁹⁰ Percy Clark, p. 211.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

Victoria Falls [so in North Western Rhodesia], on the Zambesi River, have been officially designated Princess Christian and Princess Victoria Island respectively...⁹² Although it is unclear if they actually visited these islands it is important to consider how the BSACo was further imprinting the British Crown into the southern African landscape. The princesses were apparently pleased with this development. In a published reply to a letter from the Duke of Abercorn, Major J.E. Martin wrote “I am directed by the Princess Christian to thank you for your letter, and to say that her Royal Highness and the Princess Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein are much gratified that the islands should bear their names, and are deeply touched by the wish of the Board of the British South Africa Company to commemorate the Princesses’ visit in this manner.”⁹³ North Western Rhodesia was further entrenched into the expanding British Empire with the addition of these royal names to the landscape.

It is not only the royal family becoming part of the physical landscape through the naming of these islands that is significant about this time period in North Western Rhodesia. Interestingly, as much as Lewanika pushed to get the British into Barotseland, there was less enthusiasm among white settlers to bring the BSACo into North Western Rhodesia. The Barotseland Lewanika imagined, as detailed in Chapter 3, was much different than the ways white settlers imagined development around Victoria Falls. As Chapter 5 will show, in the first decade of the twentieth century, the BSACo’s plans for North Western Rhodesia evolved in ways that diverged from Lewanika and the white settlers’ agendas. The fluidity of life on the frontier changed significantly during this period, and the BSACo began pushing the interests and goals of other parties aside as it determined its own hopes for the territory.

The final significance of the visit of these members of the royal family was that through the naming of the islands in their honor, we see further British appropriation of the landscape at Victoria Falls. In naming these islands after the princesses, the BSACo, as a representative of the British monarch made a stronger assertion of proprietary rights to the land and resources north of the Zambezi. By the early twentieth century it was clear the British were staking their claim to this part of the African frontier and expanding the empire beyond the banks of the Zambezi.

⁹² Untitled piece, printed directly under “To-day’s Recipes,” *Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser*, March 8, 1905, p. 6.

⁹³ “Christening Islands in South Africa,” *Nottingham Evening Post*, March 4, 1905, p. 5.

Performing Europe or Redefining African: The African Social Life of a Colonial Town

The interviews used in Chap. 4 hinted at the role of Africans in the creation and evolution of the town of Livingstone. Just as white entrepreneurs, colonial administrators, and Lewanika and the Lozi elite developed their own agendas for Victoria Falls and North Western Rhodesia, so too did African laborers living around Livingstone.¹ For many Africans, exposure to Europeans in this white settler town stimulated interest in westernized behavior. European culture and manifestations of that culture represented the goals that African migrants defined for themselves and was at the core of their social imaginations. These cosmopolitan Africans engaged in appropriations of their own as they accessed and laid claim to various aspects of the colonizing culture. Colonization was very much a two-way street: Europeans not only appropriated African land and labor for their own use, but Africans also claimed European culture and systems for themselves. This was, of course, often objectionable to Europeans who felt that they should determine what Africans could and could not

¹This use of the term “African” is, of course, imprecise and problematic. However, it would be misleading to use a more specific ethnic identification to describe the African population around Livingstone and Victoria Falls during this time period. Many of the migrants came from the vicinity around Victoria Falls, but even with that localized population there were multiple ethnic identifications. The Tonga-Leya were not the only ones to inhabit this area; some Lozi started working their way to the quickly developing town as did Africans from other groups in North Western Rhodesia. Likewise, the term “European” is also too general, but because there was such diversity in ancestral heritage among the white population, the broadness of the term is useful.

access. The creation of an African social life allowed the urban migrants the opportunity to network with their new neighbors, as they formed interethnic partnerships that made life in the town more fulfilling.² In many ways, through “performances” of Europe, Africans defined their own experiences of colonization, and, despite obvious constraints, dictated the construction of their colonial realities.

Africans were not the only people around Livingstone “performing” Europe. Starting in the Old Drift days, white settlers created a decidedly rural, or even frontier, cosmopolitan in order to facilitate a lively social life. The activities they chose to initiate reflected a rather obvious attempt to re-create European leisure, and most were decidedly middle class in nature. The social life they created served two purposes: it provided a space for recreation and it offered tourists activities to participate in during their time in the area. Because so many of the white settlers had an interest in the success of tourism, they enthusiastically designed a social scene attractive to visitors. Their grand vision, inspired by Victoria Falls and all it seemed to promise white entrepreneurs, was to create an outpost of British civilization in the African frontier.

In particular, this chapter focuses on the choices Africans made regarding clothing and leisure activities. While attire and recreation may, at the outset, seem rather superficial in terms of African lives under colonization, both represented important choices exercised by colonial subjects. The decision to don European outfits and take part in western sports was more profound than a simple desire to imitate white settlers. In the case of Livingstone, such decisions reflected the desire among working-class Africans to become part of a local community and to develop a richer social scene. The first few decades of colonization marked a period when Africans aspired, as much as Europeans and the African elite, to shape the colonial culture and community in which they lived. Brought into close contact with whites around Victoria Falls, African laborers experienced a changing worldview and an evolving image of where and how they fit into that expanded world. The choices Africans made about what to wear and how to spend their free time was familiar to the colonizers, but had dif-

²Richard Werbner describes the importance of interethnic partnerships and mutuality in colonial cosmopolitans as replacements for the intra-ethnic relationships urban migrants left behind in their home communities. See Richard Werbner, “Cosmopolitan Ethnicity, Entrepreneurship and the Nation: Minority Elites in Botswana,” *Journal of South African Studies* (2002).

ferent meanings to the black working class. Clothing and leisure symbolized the construction of a social life that was designed less in response to colonial parameters and more as an expression of a working-class identity.

Although European settlers and the administration appropriated their land, labor, and culture, Africans also made claims to European culture and systems. It would be dangerous and inaccurate to downplay the significance and consequences of European colonization in Africa, and it is useful to examine the appropriation process from a new angle that positions Africans as the appropriators rather than as the appropriated. Influenced by the introduction of new goods and recreational activities, working-class men and women invented a social life that experimented with the novelties exposed through cross-cultural exchanges. This aspect of the African social experiences offers insights into how working-class Africans imagined their position in the changing colonial system, and it is quite evident that urbanizing Africans pictured themselves in very different ways than did the white settlers and the colonial administration.

This chapter continues with a consideration of the colonial expectations and realities by examining the social lives of non-elite Africans. As Chapter 4 demonstrated, Livingstone's early development, though fraught with emerging tensions among the various parties involved, was an environment charged with ambition and enthusiasm. There was excitement for the potential development of tourism and hydroelectric power, as well as broader implications of the expanding British Empire in the region and Africans migrating into the Victoria Falls area contributed to the fledging town's energy. The reality of these Africans represented a different facet of colonial life. The colonial state certainly shaped the experiences of Africans, but critically, Africans also influenced state formation. An emerging African working class enjoyed a sense of great expectations and optimism at the same time that white settlers and elite Africans perceived declining privilege and opportunities. There was unexpected freedom in everyday choices regarding material culture and leisure activities. In the first decades of the twentieth century, North Western Rhodesia experienced a unique moment when the people at the lowest level of the colonial hierarchy redefined and transformed their social identities and lives. This does not mean that the African working class found itself unrestricted by colonial rule. Rather, it suggests that people were simultaneously subjects and shapers of the colonial state.

The previous chapters touched minimally upon the experiences of non-elite Africans, but for the most part the bulk of the data used thus far came

from analysis of documents written by white people of various statuses and less frequently from the written records of the elite Africans. This chapter aims to better balance this study on early colonial experiences in North Western and Northern Rhodesia. Just as white settlers envisioned their roles in and the development of the colony in a myriad of ways, so too did African laborers. The hopes and realities of the elite and the working-class Africans contributed heavily to the evolution of Northern Rhodesia and in many ways affected the ways that Europeans thought about the colony. As more Africans accessed education, wage labor, urbanization, and European culture, the crisis intensified over where Africans, or perhaps more to the point, where Europeans, fit into the new colony. Some white settlers believed Africans should be “civilized,” others felt they should be left alone, and still others believed the more “primitive” the Africans were, the better it was for tourism. The result was a very public and often heated discourse over the ways to control Africans living in the territory. Despite this overarching public discourse among the white settlers and colonial administration though, working-class Africans were finding their niche in the transforming cultural and social landscape. While whites discussed what they thought Africans *should* be doing, Africans were *already* “doing.” They did not wait for cues or resolutions from the white debaters; instead, they sought out opportunities and inserted themselves into Livingstone’s economic and social systems.

AFRICANS IN A COLONIAL TOWN

In February of 1909, an article in *The Livingstone Mail* provided an anecdote informing this analysis of the significance of clothing and recreation among Africans in North Western Rhodesia. The writer reported that:

Last week a gentleman requiring his evening clothes found the coat was missing. On questioning his boy the latter fetched the garment...Investigation revealed that he had worn it the previous evening at a dinner party given by some of his friends... A native dinner party, with the gentlemen attired in evening dress, stand up collars, white vests, and possibly patent leather shoes, the ladies doubtless en décolleté, must have been an inspiring sight, and the fact that such a function has been successfully held is available as evidence of civilization.³

³ Dinner Party article, *The Livingstone Mail*, February 20, 1909, No. 152, Vol. 6.

The white author was clearly bemused by the incident, and interpreted it as a sign that Africans were becoming “civilized” according to European standards. While that is one possible meaning of the dinner party, the event deserves greater consideration. The decision by the party-goers to organize such an affair and go to the dangerous lengths of clandestinely “borrowing” their employers’ clothing seems that they were less concerned with impressing Europeans and more focused on their own social experiment. Were they proving to themselves, or to one another, that they were “civilized” or was there a more meaningful intention behind this activity? Is this experience a sign that the party-goers were determined to create their own social scene and that they were finding new ways to enjoy their leisure time? This chapter examines the multiple meanings of clothing and recreation to better understand the colonial world as Africans lived and imagined it.

White settlers and administrators were not the only folks with high expectations for the future of North Western Rhodesia. Africans from both privileged and peasant backgrounds revealed what they hoped to gain from colonial development. More often than not, it seemed what Africans dreamed of and enacted during this transitory time contradicted the plans Europeans had for “native” behavior. African leaders faced the difficult choice of openly fighting or subtly acquiescing to the colonial state. Interestingly, non-elite Africans north of the Zambezi saw the encroachment of Europeans as an opportunity to shrug off some of the heavy-handed control placed on them by African rulers. In particular, those who lived as subjects of Lozi Chief Lewanika viewed European settlement and development as a way to lessen slavery and tribute labor they were forced to accept under Lewanika’s rule. Secretary of Native Affairs Frank Worthington wrote a memorandum on slavery in Barotseland as a preface to the chief’s statement that abolished the system. In his investigation, Worthington learned that “slaves expected a British expedition would free them from their masters’ control.”⁴ Under Lozi labor systems, “the categories of slave and free were not mutually exclusive,”⁵ so if Worthington’s assessment was correct, it is possible that a good number of people looked forward to participating in a new economic system.

⁴ Frank Worthington, Memorandum on Slavery in Barotseland, 1906 (Box G 18...G 33. G 19/5 Account 1876, Livingstone Museum Archives).

⁵ Prins, *Hidden Hippopotamus*, p. 73.

Africans at the lowest level of their local socio-economic hierarchy viewed the British presence as the welcome end to domestic slavery.

Slaves were not the only Africans that held high hopes for their new lives and identities they believed possible under colonization. A village of Lewanika's subjects warmly received Worthington, apparently grateful for the presence of a white administrator. Worthington described the villagers as "terribly afraid of their Barotse masters, who no doubt treat them very harshly when no white-man is present. Men and women try to show their gratitude to me by following me about on hands and knees and shouting... a Kasubia form of salute."⁶ These Lozi subjects saw the colonial presence as a sign of change and possibility. They imagined a life free from slavery or subjugation. Colonialism afforded them the opportunity to go from Lewanika's subject to colonial subject and many seemed excited at the chance. A former Tonga-Leya slave in Barotseland declared, "people have been saved from Lozi slavery. Europeans are good people, for if they had not come, we should still be in slavery. We would still be working for no pay, claimed in slavery."⁷ Former slaves and subjects provided an eager and often grateful workforce to the Europeans they deemed responsible for their newfound freedom.

The chiefs and headmen of the subject groups around North Western Rhodesia also saw optimism and opportunity in their future. In some ways they were perhaps more astute than Lewanika because they realized even as he negotiated lucrative agreements with the BSACo that his days of unchecked power were coming to an end. As one scholar noted, "[N]ow, with the loosening of the Lozi grip over them, they vied for recognition by the Company administration."⁸ These leaders, who for so long bowed to the Lozi chief, hoped they could regain some of their local authority under the indirect rule policies favored by the BSACo.

Once again, North Western Rhodesia stirred a spirit of optimism and high expectations, this time among Africans who envisioned a new social order that allowed mobility and improvement of political and social conditions. Although their agendas differed significantly from the ambitions of others in the area, it would seem that many people living in Livingstone

⁶Frank Worthington, Copy of Journal kept 1902 May 19 to 1902 July 30 (G 19/6 Acc 1876 or 315, Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 74.

⁷Kambole Mpatamatenga, "Kasimbo ambaendaabo" (Vol. 2, Livingstone Museum Archives).

⁸Kafungulwa Mubitana, "Christian Missions and the Toka-Leya of Southern Zambia" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1977), p. 89.

and other parts of North Western Rhodesia imagined the sky was the limit for their individual opportunities. Such feelings of hope were not unique to the white settlers and African elites. Many peasants welcomed a change from the old system that kept them enslaved or subjected. Both elite and non-elite Africans, regardless of ethnic identity, not only imagined their place in the new colonial society, but also started to perform their changed role. This transformation occurred in a heavily contested environment, as Europeans argued over the proper status and behavior of Africans, and elite Africans struggled to maintain power over African subjects and influence among Europeans.

The establishment of Old Drift, the first white settlement, marked the first step toward colonization and urbanization, and the creation of Livingstone town cemented the territory's fate. The location itself became a contested space, not only between the Old Drifters who were dismayed by the relocation of the town-site but also by Africans who hoped to establish themselves in the town and by Africans living in the area. According to one administrator, "British settlers advocated the view that the town was essentially theirs and the use of urban facilities by African was strictly regulated...African hunting, grazing, and other economic activities were proscribed by the colonial authorities, with the result that local economies were undermined."⁹ This resulted in two important developments. First, it ensured white entrepreneurs a labor supply, as more Africans who could not support themselves turned to European businesses and homes for employment. Secondly, and ironically, it also pushed more Africans into the urban space that settlers were so intent to keep as a whites-only location. Africans did not want to commute to work—they were displaced from their economic activities and felt little need to stay on the land on which they could no longer support themselves.

Although there was much debate and contention among white entrepreneurs, missionaries, and administrators during the early years of colonization over the place of Africans in the new colonial order, it was clear to Africans that in order to continue benefiting from the European presence, they had to keep themselves actively engaged with the white population. This actually became more difficult in the decade before and after the turn of the century, as the white entrepreneurs' visions took a back seat to the

⁹Livingstone District Notebook, 1904–1959 (File KSC4/1, National Archives of Zambia), p. 42.

administration's activities. In an article written by one visitor to the Falls, the writer noted this transition. The author explained:

Before the BSACo imposed its authority, Europeans traveling to the Falls depended on various services made available by African such as food and carriage. The travelers needed African boats and pilots to cross the Zambezi. Moreover, it was the custom for Europeans to pay their respects to the chiefs and headmen whose territory they passed through to ensure their safe passage, gain permission to hunt, and to secure carriers and guides.¹⁰

The settlers knew the importance of African participation in the economy in order to keep tourism flowing and businesses profitable but they were also paranoid of the potential consequences of living in close proximity to the black population. The visitor also noted that the BSACo “regulated African labour and entrepreneurial ambitions.”¹¹ Africans in the earliest days of white settlement found themselves under the scrutiny of the colonial government, but even under tight supervisions, they profited in the new economy. As the colonial administration tightened its grip on the area, officials implemented policies they believed preserved “Native rights.” This approach irritated white settlers who felt that the interests of Africans were placed before their own. It also curtailed African entrepreneurship as it established restrictions that actually made it more difficult for the local population to produce food and items for trade.

The activities of Africans during this transitory period suggest that they had their own ideas about where they should be and what they should be doing. Amidst the white population's battle over ideological differences and visions for the colony, Africans created their own spaces in the new cultural landscape with seeming disregard or influence from the debates that whirled around them. Despite the protests of Europeans who did not welcome them, towns became places where Africans migrated not just to work but to live. The pervasiveness of Africans settling in the town forced the white settlers to reconsider their tactics. Rather than banning or deporting Africans, they pushed for regulations to better control the Africans moving into urban areas. The white Livingstonians determined “that a native location should be established under the control of the

¹⁰ Bethell, “A Ride to the Victoria Falls of the Zambezi,” *The Field*, 68, October 0, 1886, 526 (File J631/4, Livingstone Museum Archives), pp. 41–42.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

police and their presence in the town, after dark, should be restricted...¹² As the European population dreamed up ways to restrict local people, Africans continued to imagine and initiate their positions in the colonial, urban context. The result was a strictly segregated urban space, with the town itself reserved for the homes and businesses of the white population and compounds in the periphery that provided housing for African workers.

The town, under the watchful eye of European citizens, developed in such a way that guaranteed Africans only went “to the commercial or industrial parts of the town to work, to visit the Indian shops, or to attend the African hospital.”¹³ Except for the domestic workers who lived at their employers’ houses, the township design kept Africans out of the actual city as much as possible. The compounds provided Africans their housing, clinics, schools, churches, and markets outside of Livingstone as dictated by the white population that was unwilling to share the town with Africans.

The decisions of African workers in terms of cultural transformation and consumption patterns reflected the desire of the local people to establish new identities within the social structure created by colonialism. According to Jane Parpart’s work on the Zambian copperbelt during the mid-twentieth century, “Many [Africans] aspired to a European style of living, adopting customs such as tea drinking, European dances, and clothing made in England” and that “similarities in... material culture, and expectations”¹⁴ helped miners define themselves in new ways. Data suggests that Parpart’s conclusions can be applied to earlier colonial experiences to better understand experiences with cultural changes that occurred even before copper mining brought Africans together as workers and subjects of the colonial state. Livingstone provided many Africans with their first exposure to wage labor and urbanization. The experiences in Livingstone transformed laborers into a working class familiar with capitalism and colonial employment. This knowledge of the colonial system

¹²Letter written to the Committee of the Directors of the British South Africa Company by L.F. Moore, F.J. Clarke, J. Osborne, D. Berton, and F.W. Mills, Chair and Leaders of the Standholders and Ratepayers Association, *The Livingstone Mail*, August 3, 1907, No. 71, Vol. 3.

¹³Merran McCulloch, *A Social Survey of the African Population of Livingstone* (Manchester: Manchester University Press and the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1958), p. 4.

¹⁴Jane Parpart, *Labor and Capital on the African Copperbelt* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983).

surely affected the expectations of the workers who later found employment in the copper belt.

Africans living in Northern Rhodesia were exposed to and responded to European culture in similar ways even before the turn of the century. This chapter is not meant to question the validity and usefulness of the work of copperbelt scholars; rather the data from the first site of colonial development in Northern Rhodesia provides complementary analysis that further historicizes African experiences with European culture. Additionally, the data suggests that it is important to look at European influences from a more localized perspective. Rather than seeing the adaptation of western clothing, education, and leisure activities as an imitation of Europeans, it is clear that in fact, these decisions were reflections of how Africans imagined themselves and their neighbors in the emerging colonial state.

DRESSING EUROPEAN

Historians have long documented the significance of clothing and more importantly, the choosing of clothing, as a marker of status, change, adaptation, and consumption. For Africans living in North Western Rhodesia, European clothing quickly became something to emulate. This is not in and of itself a unique experience in the African colonial narrative. The desire of Africans throughout the continent to “wear Europe” was motivated by and practiced for various reasons with a myriad of interpretations and implications.¹⁵ In some cases, European dress was foisted on Africans by missionaries and signified a conversion to “civilization” and propriety. Many of the references made about Lewanika by the British who came into contact with him discussed his style of dress, deemed proper and noteworthy because of his attention to European style. He was also appreciated for his adoption of European home goods, which signaled he had transitioned into “civilized” living. In an announcement of his death, the writer records the funeral ceremony and reported that a canoe “was loaded up with piles of things which had belonged to Lewanika and were to be buried with him. Everything he usually wore: all his clothes

¹⁵For further reading on clothing as cultural expression, see Jean Allman, *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress*; Margaret Jean Hay, *Western Clothing and African Identity: Changing Consumption Patterns among the Luo*; Hildi Hendrickson, *Clothing and Difference: Embodied Identities in Colonial and Post Colonial Africa*; and Janet Andrewes, *Bodywork, Dress as Cultural Tool: Dress and Demeanor in the South of Senegal*.

(and he *had* clothes! one enormous trunk full of waistcoats alone!), his chairs and easy chairs, his lingerie and blankets—all went down into the grave...”¹⁶ Lewanika was often admired for his wardrobe and style and interpreted as a sign of his transformation into a more civilized African. Among African communities, the leaders were frequently the first of them to don European dress, followed by the elite Africans who created an African middle class, which historians construe as signs that clothing represented status and material wealth.

For the select Africans who could dress as Europeans, the clothing often denoted the desire of these leaders to appear equal to their white counterparts and perhaps also served to set themselves apart from African commoners. Historian Michael West offers evidence of this symbolic use of European clothing in his study on colonial Zimbabwe. He found that among South African immigrants to the colony, clothing was definitively used by the upper class to, as one of the informants explained, indicate “a differentiation between us and the raw native.”¹⁷ This further supports the idea that rather than viewing the adoption of western clothes as a sign that Africans were focused on their standing with Europeans, it is necessary to understand the meaning of this action within a more localized context. Western clothing became a way for Africans to distinguish status within their communities.

As European goods became more accessible, many non-elite Africans also sought such additions to their wardrobes. The act of dressing in European clothes then demonstrated a shift in consumption as well as a cultural transition. Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai insists that tangible objects such as clothing carry their own social meanings and are open for various interpretations. The values and understandings attached to clothing are always in flux, and as such, the significance of these items is dynamic.¹⁸ Scholars can then “read” clothing and material culture as historical documents to better understand identities and values at particular moments in time. Despite the presence of these generalities regarding Africans and European dress in historical studies, it proves worthwhile to give more than a cursory nod to the adoption of European clothing.

¹⁶ “The Death of Lewanika,” *Journal of the Royal African Society* 16, no. 62 (January 1917) on behalf of The Royal African Society, p. 151.

¹⁷ Michael O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898–1965* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 122.

¹⁸ Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Karen Tranberg Hansen highlights the importance of understanding African imitations of European dress as specific to place and time in her study of the second-hand clothing industry in Zambia. Her study analyzes the evolution of African consumption of western clothing from the late colonial period to the contemporary era, and solidly demonstrates the changing meanings and symbolism of such clothing over time. Clothing represented (and does to this day) an African imagination of their position in a local community, and more importantly, what their position could be in the future.

This does not imply that Africans simply wanted to be European, but rather that consumption patterns and clothing choices reflected local and transforming ideas of position and wealth. Tranberg Hansen explains that, “at the core of these dress practices is a disjuncture...between African aspirations and possibilities. In this context clothes were much more than a means of emulating white lifestyle. The crossover appeal of European-style clothing was enormous because clothing consumption constituted the most readily available practice for popular expression of African aspirations.”¹⁹ In other words, the multitude of new possible social identities within the colonial landscape was manifested in changing clothing choices. The desire to acquire European goods and to enact European behaviors was more complex than simple imitation or assimilation. One newspaper article offered insight into the idea that accumulation was used to create new levels of socio-economic stratification. The writer posited, “[T]he natives’ standard of living has improved to a remarkable extent... and their purchases have extended in both range and quality, some of the wealthier indunas even buying farming machinery... there are emulation and rivalry even among the Barotse.”²⁰ The ability to purchase foreign goods was less about impressing Europeans and more about competing with African neighbors.

From the early days of European travel around North Western Rhodesia, the Lozi, Tonga, Ila, and other ethnic groups provided laborers to assist the visitors during their stays in the area. Although it is dangerous to generalize the reasons so many Africans, particularly males, were willing to work for the newcomers, it appears that for many of the would-

¹⁹Karen Tranberg Hansen, *Salaula: The World of Secondhand Clothing and Zambia* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

²⁰Natives standard of living article, *The Livingstone Mail*, November 2, 1907, No. 84, Vol. 4.

be laborers, the opportunity to work for Europeans made possible the ability to accumulate material wealth, and often the desired items were European. One informant asserted that although the first wave of laborers taken out of the Tonga communities did not go on a voluntary basis, they returned with clothing, which motivated others to work for such forms of compensation.²¹ North Western Rhodesia was, as mentioned in the previous chapters, a relatively stable and self-sufficient region by the late twentieth century but that stability was the consequence of Lewanika's heavy-handed control over the Lozi and other ethnic groups who became subjects of the Lozi aristocracy. For the peasantry of the area, opportunities for social mobility were severely curtailed by the Lozi hierarchy. When Europeans arrived in need of African assistance, Lewanika and other headmen frequently "loaned" out their subjects to work as porters, guides, cooks, and herdsmen. This arrangement was generally symbiotic for all the three parties involved. The Europeans were not met with hostility from the elite and usually did not have to search for willing laborers to join their parties. Cooperative headmen enjoyed friendly relationships with the travelers, which often strengthened trade relations and resulted in desirable gift exchanges. The African laborers themselves frequently acquired material wealth that would have been difficult to obtain if they were not given opportunities to work for the Europeans in the area.

It is unsurprising that the Europeans and elite Africans benefited from the labor arrangements, but even with the decision often made at a higher level, the Africans contracted to work for the travelers also gained from the arrangement. Although the allowance of able-bodied men was generally viewed as a "gift" to Europeans from African leaders, the laborers were still given work contracts that promised payment at the end of their work tenure. Payment came in the form of European goods and it is evident that both cloth and clothing were highly coveted forms of compensation. Data shows that not only did laborers often expect payment in western textiles and apparel but they were also willing to fight for what they considered fair amounts of the goods.

Africans working for Europeans in the early days of exploration and colonization realized that clothing was used as a way to distinguish a hierarchy. Those in contact with Chief Lewanika knew that he frequently appeared in full English gentleman's garb. The chief's clothing choices, which often impressed the Europeans he encountered, reflected his obses-

²¹ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansandu, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

sion with his relationship with the British Crown. He was, of course, trying to impress Europeans and Africans with his modern, worldly wardrobe, but his clothing points to something more significant and intimate. Lewanika constantly reminded those around him of his power and nobility, to the point that he seemed to be assuring himself of his authority. He was devastated to learn that his agreements with the BSACo were not actually an alliance between the British Monarch and himself. His clothing, often impeccable if not seasonal or activity-appropriate, can be interpreted as further evidence of his need to assert power and aristocracy equal to that of the Queen. He was not just trying to impress Europeans with his clothes: his self-perception and identity of “all mighty King” manifested in his wardrobe. The fancier his clothes, the stronger his compulsion to “wear” his power.

Non-elite Africans surely took note of the clothing worn by their chiefs and new colonial rulers and they knew that clothing indicated rank or status. Europeans used uniforms to distinguish their African workers in terms of their position in a localized hierarchy. One diarist working in the armed service of the colony recorded that the uniform of the white members of the touring group included “boots & fattees [possibly short for fatigues] shorts, which are trousers cut off short above the knee, shirts are worn inside the short-trousers, & helmet” and that “Our boys [Africans], of course, are not allowed to wear anything but a shirt or singlet, & a piece of [term unclear], but all of them carry umbrellas.”²² Cloth, just like clothing, also took on local significance and reflected status. One Portuguese trader attempted to engage Chief Lewanika in an illegal gun trade and sent him “a present, a nice one, some calico and a chair for travelling—all these are presents”²³ to sweeten the potential deal. The fact that cloth was used to entice someone as powerful as Chief Lewanika would certainly resonate with commoner Africans. In fact, by the turn of the century, Chief Lewanika received tribute from subjected groups in the form of calico.²⁴ Cloth and clothing quickly became an important currency in North Western Rhodesia, not just in exchanges between Africans and Europeans, but also between Africans.

²² “Privat [sic] Diary of D.W.G. Stuart 1914 Dec. 22–1915 Feb. 11” (Box G 70/1-G/83. Index 672, Acc. 160, Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 5.

²³ Forwarded copy of letter to Lewanika from Jose’ Maria Maraez, February 24, 1906 (A 3/24/9 Location 3994, Livingstone Museum Archives).

²⁴ Letter from Colin Harding to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, January 16, 1901 (A 6/1/2 Location 4007, National Archives of Zambia).

It is then easy to see why Africans viewed clothing as one way to determine the positions of fellow Africans in the newly imagined African socio-economic stratification. Besides clothing, rations also helped define new levels of status among Africans in the new colonial order. Frank Worthington, a high-level administrator with great attention to detail explained how Africans in his service experienced a hierarchy demonstrated through rations. In a journal kept for his father he explained:

My poor carriers will get very little food today, fortunately they will eat grain cooked whole, and look upon anything else than this as luxuries... 2 lbs. raw grain is a carriers ration for 24 hours and they keep fairly fat on it. A policeman gets 2 ½ lbs mealie meal per day and ½ oz of salt, which is also the ration for a messenger. Neither police nor messengers do half the work a carrier does, but in this life men are not paid for the work they do, the men who tell them to do the work get the most wages.²⁵

The new political economy of early colonialism helped define new levels of stratification among Africans, and from these early cues, Africans themselves expanded their ideas on the changing hierarchy. They saw clothing as “a highly visible and shocking symbol of their apartness, their new self definitions.”²⁶ With the exception of Africans recognized as elites and therefore maintained that designation, peasants could both imagine and realize their potential for social and economic mobility. Thus, African laborers increasingly insisted that they receive proper compensation for their services. There are countless stories of porters, guides, and cooks stopping in their tracks and demanding more rations and extracting promises for additional pieces of cloth and clothing at the end of their service. Reverend Francois Coillard recalled such an incident in his journal. He wrote:

My boatmen had struck, and were noisily refusing to move till they had received *setsibas* [pieces of cloth]. Without giving in, I managed to calm them down...At our last stage, I distributed *setsibas* of red calico. After a

²⁵ Journal of Frank Worthington, May 19–July 30, 1902 (Box G 18.... G 33. G 19/6, Acc 1876 or 315, Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 11.

²⁶ Margaret Jean Hay, “Western Clothing and African Identity: Changing Consumption Patterns among the Luo,” AH Number 2, 1989 (Boston: African Studies Center, Boston University), p. 11.

bath, they dressed themselves up in them, each according to his own fancy, and all alike grotesque.²⁷

From Coillard's description, it is evident that his laborers were concerned about receiving adequate compensation and they specifically desired cloth. While the imagery of the men bathing and dressing up in their new cloth demonstrates Coillard's patronizing amusement, it also points to a real satisfaction among the boatmen that their labor was worth the end reward.

Coillard's negotiating skills set him apart from many other Europeans, who learned the hard way that demands for increased payment were serious to laborers. Arthur Baldwin, a missionary who worked for the Primitive Methodist South Central African Mission during the 1890s, recorded an endless stream of difficulties with his workers in his unpublished journal. Baldwin was preoccupied with his labor woes and was increasingly dismayed with the demands laid out by his hired help. In one particularly striking incident, Baldwin recounted workers who were given to him by a local headman to help with the work on the mission station. The group was supposed to construct a *kraal* for oxen, but before the work was completed, the laborers demanded that a "tip" be given to each of them. They specifically asked for colored handkerchiefs, but Baldwin resisted because he had recently handed out *setsibas* to each worker as previously agreed. Baldwin recalled the reaction of the workers in his journal:

Whilst we [whites] were sat at the fire (after supper) they [the workers] came in a body, sat round our fire and for a minute or two no one spoke, then they broke out afresh demanding their handkerchiefs. I denied them again, then to all they said afterwards I remained silent. They grew worse and worse, bringing sticks and threatening me. At length one...came deliberately up to me pulled off my hat, stuck it on his head and began marching round. I got up, walked towards him, held out my hand and said, 'Here, give me that hat'. He stood back a pace or two and brandished his kerry, muttering most rapidly...before I was really aware and certainly without the least expectation of it, he whirled his kerry round and struck me a blow on the leg with all his might.²⁸

²⁷ Coillard, *On the Threshold*, p. 144.

²⁸ Arthur Baldwin, "A Voortrekker of the Faith: The Journal of Arthur Baldwin Pioneer Missionary in Northern Rhodesia" (Box G 70/1-G83. G 71 Acc 159, Livingstone Museum Archives), Chapter 5, pp. 17–18.

This heated exchange, even if exaggerated by the missionary, reveals both the resoluteness of the workers to receive what they considered due to them, and the position they imagined themselves to hold. That was not the action of a cowed, trembling African, and what is perhaps most remarkable is that the workers in the story were considered slaves of the local headman. As more peasants and bondsmen found employment among Europeans, there was a shift in their self-perceptions. Lower status Africans could imagine themselves with more options, with more possibilities and they were willing to fight for the chance to turn their aspirations into reality.

This was not the first or last time his workers challenged Baldwin. Upon the departure of a fellow missionary and his wife, Baldwin had great difficulty in rousing the porters into action. He recalled:

Three times I stood at the gate and called them but not a single one stirred...When I asked the reason I got no answer; and very reluctantly a fellow whom I called by name came to me, He said they wanted a cloth each before they lifted a case...We talked a long time trying to get them to adhere to their original terms, but it was all of no use. They became impatient and because we were helpless we had to yield. This satisfied them at least for the moment and we set to work cutting up the calico into 2 ¼ yard lengths.²⁹

Baldwin's workers were aware of the strength of their bargaining position. The missionary and his wife to be moved were ill and even in the best of health could not have carried their belongings on the journey ahead of them. It is interesting to consider that with such a strong position, it was cloth, not guns and not cash that the workers so hotly demanded.

Clothing was not only something to fight for as payment but served also as a spark of ingenuity. Henry Rangeley, a Magistrate of North Western Rhodesia around the turn of the century offered an example of how one group of workers used clothing to both lighten their load and their spirits. A group of Ila porters transporting a load of trunks decided the best way to ease their workload was to remove items from the trunks. Upon discovering that they were carrying clothing, they "decided that the easiest way to carry the things was to dress themselves with all the garments they could put on. The load was thus lightened and everything went well."³⁰

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Epilogue, p. 7.

³⁰ "The Memoirs of Henry Rangeley" (Box 70/1-G/83 (Box 2). G 75/1 Acc 7548, Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 22.

While this was done in part to decrease the weight of the chests, it is not hard to imagine that it entertained the carriers as they dressed up in western garb. Before arriving at the mission station, they repacked the clothing and stripped themselves almost naked. The missionary, who preceded the carriers with his new bride, was quick to pay the Ila extra, with cloth, to ensure that they were properly covered in front of his modest wife. In the end, the antics of these workers lightened their load, provided amusement, and resulted in an added gratuity of highly coveted cloth.

By the early twentieth century, it was clear that European clothing was in high demand for Africans in the colony. One observer noted in 1909 that he was “astonished to see the class of clothing in demand by the natives...”³¹ Certainly, the opportunities for employment with Europeans sparked major changes in the economy of the territory and the personal aspirations of Africans. Accumulation of material wealth was highly desired, especially among those who under precolonial conditions had little opportunity for mobility and economic improvement. The desire for cloth and clothing was so great that in addition to earning the goods through labor contracts there were also frequent reports of theft or “borrowing” of gear from European camps and homes. Worthington recounted the story of a missionary who hired Ila (Mashukulumbwe) men to help carry his luggage to a mission station. Although many Ila communities were subjects of Lewanika who was no stranger to formal English attire, most Ila were relatively unfamiliar with western clothing because of their more isolated populations. The group of men hired by the missionary was thus curious about the luggage they were carrying. According to Worthington’s story:

They stole nothing, but they opened all the packs and put on what clothing took their fancy...The peculiar shapes of several of the articles puzzled them. They had never seen the like before, but guessed as to how they should be put on...Many garments were put to uses never dreamed of by the maker. A white man met the outfit, and described the scene to me, but as you are probably well acquainted with ladies’ garments, I won’t repeat what he told me.³²

This was only the first in a spate of reports of clothing being stolen from Europeans. Baldwin, the missionary so disgusted with payment nego-

³¹ Class of clothing article, *The Livingstone Mail*, February 6, 1909, No. 150, Vol. 6.

³² Frank Worthington, “Journal of Frank Worthington, May 19–July 30, 1902” (Box G 18.... G 33. G 19/6, Acc 1876 or 315, Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 16.

tiations, recorded a number of clothing thefts at his station. One such incident occurred when a fellow missionary was called away as he was conducting an inventory of the station's tradeable goods. When he returned two minutes later, he discovered he was gone "just long enough for five shirts to disappear."³³ Blame was quickly placed on some laborers loitering around the building, but all denied any knowledge of the crime. The storeroom from which the clothing was stolen housed all kinds of goods and supplies, but it was the clothing that received attention from the quick-moving thief.

Missionaries stationed out in the countryside were not the only Europeans to face the growing problem of burglary. White settlers in Livingstone and other towns encountered frequent clothing theft, only adding to their complaints about Africans living in urban areas. A man identified as Mundiia was accused of stealing from a storekeeper a long list of items, most of which were articles of clothing. In the court charges against him it was recorded that he stole, among other things, "3 white blankets, 5 shirts, 2 shawls, 1 pair riding breeches, 2 vests, 1 sweater, 3 kafir handkerchiefs."³⁴ Mundiia pled guilty, was found guilty, and received a sentence of twelve months of hard labor.

In another court case dealing with the crime of theft, four criminals broke into a storehouse in the town of Lealui owned by Reverend Jalla, a prominent member of North Western Rhodesia's white citizenry. The criminals made away with what was described as a "canoe full" of goods, including cloth. For some time it appeared they might get away with the crime but the goods were traced back to a nearby headman whose wife was found wearing clothing made from some of the stolen cloth. Eventually the four criminals were brought to court for their crimes, and two of them implicated the headman as being complicit, if not actively involved, in the act.³⁵ Court documents record a number of cases of theft that primarily involved stolen clothing and cloth. Despite the development of the judicial system at this time, Africans seemed undeterred in their quest to obtain these coveted goods.

³³ Baldwin, "A Voortrekker of the Faith," Chapter 5, p. 9.

³⁴ Preliminary Examination for the case of the King versus Mundiia (IMF 1/1/3, Vol. 1, National Archives of Zambia), p. 2.

³⁵ Memorandum from the Secretary for Native Affairs to the District Commissioner at Lealui, June 26, 1906 (A 3/25, National Archives of Zambia).

Given the importance Africans placed on receiving clothing as pay and the incidents of clothing theft, it is unsurprising that the contributor to *The Livingstone Mail* mentioned previously who was surprised by the style and quality of clothing worn by African appraised the attention to clothing as a reflection “on the enormous advances achieved in this territory within our knowledge, extending over five years.”³⁶ Clearly, white settlers equated the adoption of western clothing as a sign that Africans were progressing as desired. Some saw the donning of European clothing by Africans as a reflection of the success of the colony. Another editorial in the newspaper claimed that “the natives have become accustomed to their domination and have attempted to assimilate their civilization; at any rate they have purchased their goods and copied their clothes.”³⁷ But these comments only offer insight into how Europeans perceived the meaning of Africans wearing European clothes. From the perspective of Africans though, it seems that their desire for western attire stemmed from a more localized significance. If they were intent on impressing Europeans, then they would not have acquired the items through hard-fought labor battles and dangerous burglaries. The fact that the items were obtained in ways that further alienated Africans and Europeans suggests that it was not the opinion of whites that really mattered. Indeed, one Native Commissioner wrote of the Lozi, “The wealth of a person is shown by the quantity of limbo [cloth] worn in the ‘seziba’ or skirt.”³⁸ The style in which western cloth was worn would hardly have impressed a European, but it signified status among neighbors. Africans used their clothing to impress each other and define new social stratification and identities within their communities.

SOCIAL LIFE/PERFORMING EUROPE

It is easy to view colonialism as the destruction of a “traditional” way of life, and as a period when African culture and networks were devastated by the adoption of European standards. Certainly the lives of Africans were transformed by their contact with European systems and a strong case can be made that many Africans assimilated into colonial culture and customs. Often, that position is regarded as one of the most tragic aspects of

³⁶ Dinner Party article, *The Livingstone Mail*, February 20, 1909, No. 152, Vol. 6.

³⁷ Editorial on African dress, *The Livingstone Mail*, April 9, 1914, No. 419.

³⁸ Stirke, *Barotseland*, p. 115.

colonization—the denigration of African values and traditions by not only Europeans but Africans themselves. In the past, many historians regard the decision by Africans to dress in European clothes, attend church, and participate in western sporting events as a sign that they rejected their own culture and placed European standards on a pedestal. The choices Africans made regarding their free time deserve a deeper consideration though. The recreational activities selected by Africans reflected a desire to create a social life within the new colonial context.

By examining the meanings of African colonial leisure, historians can expand “our understanding of the dynamics of African societies, of the complex constructions and contestations over resources, meanings, symbols, spaces, and time.”³⁹ Just as they “tried on” changing identities through changes in their appearance, Africans also experimented with new activities. Their enthusiasm and willingness to try and enact new forms of entertainment reflected the openness and fluidity of working-class life. Historians are re-examining leisure to analyse the importance of recreational activities within the colonial context, and are discovering that the choices made by Africans and Europeans offer further insight into the development of a complicated and deeply textured colonial culture.⁴⁰

Philip Mayer addresses the importance of developing social networks within the constraints of a colonial state in East London, South Africa. He reminds us that new and exciting sources of entertainment and relaxation became a possibility for Africans in the city. Mayer writes of the range of activities, “they include such alternatives as rugby, tennis, horseracing, cricket, golf, gambling, ballroom dancing, jiving, shebeen drinking, private drinking, bioscope, concerts, and ‘shows.’”⁴¹ Although it would be some time before North Western Rhodesia offered such a wide array of amusement for its African subjects, the point is well taken that with colonialism came a rather diverse and stimulating selection of recreational activities. It is simplistic to suggest that Africans simply participated in such free time

³⁹ Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Cassandra Rachel Veney, eds., *Leisure in Urban Africa* (Trenton, NJ and Asmara: Africa World Press, Inc., 2003), p. viii.

⁴⁰ For further reading, see Phyllis Martin, *The Social History of Leisure and Sport in Colonial Brazzaville*; William A. Baker and James A. Mangan, eds., *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History*; Ashwin Desai, *Blacks in Whites: A Century of Cricket Struggles in KwaZulu Natal*; Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Cassandra Rachel Veney, eds., *Leisure in Urban Africa*.

⁴¹ Philip Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen: Conservatism and the Process of Urbanization in a South African City* (Cape Town, London, New York, and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 16.

events because they thought Europe was “superior.” Mayer’s study examines how important such activities were to Africans who were, in many ways, establishing new social networks and relationships that made life in the towns more pleasurable. The significance of a sense of community and belonging cannot be understated and should not be chalked up as a one-dimensional mimicry of European culture.

In North Western Rhodesia and particularly around Livingstone, Africans imagined and developed a new social scene and European models of leisure influenced the ways that Africans organized their own recreational activities. The town, which data suggests did not suffer from the ethnicity-based tensions of other colonial urban spaces,⁴² became a place where Africans could participate in a community that they themselves helped define. The pioneering white settlers worked hard, but they also played hard. They were quick to develop their own social networks and from the Old Drift days to the resettlement of the white population at Livingstone, they did not lack for recreation. They imagined their town as an outpost of civilization amidst the wilds of “deep, dark Africa” and turned their ideas into a reality. Africans observed this, and embraced the concept of and value on recreation as well.

In his fast-paced and lively memoir, Percy Clark captured the spirit of the white settlers north of the Zambezi. His stories and detail provide images of a town bursting with energy and aspirations. It was also a place where Europeans created a strong sense of community, especially among the entrepreneurs. According to Clark:

Livingstone...became a centre of social activity in the early days...My wife and I went to dances and dinners there...Social gatherings were of all sorts and frequent at Livingstone, for the pioneers were a jovial lot. There were dances at the court-house, and we were often invited to functions at Government House. On such visits we had to put up at the hotel...All classes were represented in the dining room, from the one local barrister to the one local bricklayer. The bar was a rowdy place...one could see its coun-

⁴² Of all the primary source data collected and reviewed for this study, there was little mention or discussion of outright hostilities among the various ethnic groups. Although many of the groups contributing to the urbanization trend were subjects under Lewanika and the Lozi, the issue did not appear to create divides among African town-dwellers.

ter crowded with men tossing for drinks, its corners occupied with others singing raucously and out of tune...⁴³

The town's white population supported a rifle association, ladies' groups, tennis courts, boating activities, fishing and hunting activities, picnics, plays, concerts, and grand balls. What they lacked in resources and wealth, they made up for by creativity and ingenuity. White Livingstonians did not want for entertainment. Sports were particularly important to them and they were quick to form a boat club in order to host international regattas. This was created to complement the athletic competitions offered by the small town of Kalomo, which in 1905 organized "the only race and Gymkhana Meeting in the country."⁴⁴ Such sporting events were eagerly anticipated and generated much enthusiasm and support from the white community.

It is unsurprising that the Lozi, Tonga, Ila, and other Africans who migrated into Livingstone and other towns also desired such a lively social scene. After all, Europeans were not the only people who wanted to have fun during their free time. In some instances, Africans found ways to insert themselves into the activities designed by the white population, but they also produced their own opportunities for socializing and amusement. Recreation was one way that Africans could develop the all-important social networks that helped ease their transition and enrich their experiences in the towns. White settlers in the North Western Rhodesia area were obsessed with sports and it was through their development of sporting events that Africans accessed new forms of entertainment and leisure. It seemed the preoccupation with sports was contagious and Africans quickly developed an interest in competitions. They reinterpreted activities that were functional rather than entertaining before colonization and ascribed new meanings to the activities. For example, men in this riparian system often used the Zambezi for transport purposes. Over time, the communities improved their canoeing skills to enhance mobility. Men specialized in river transport and considered that "paddling itself is quite a fine art, and to be a paddler in the Baroze sense of the word is have a

⁴³ Percy M. Clark, *The Autobiography of an Old Drifter* (Bulawayo: Books of Rhodesia, 1972), pp. 230–231.

⁴⁴ Letter to Wilson Fox, January 31, 1906 (A 3/38 Loc. 4001, National Archives of Zambia), pp. 2–4.

more than useful knowledge of science.”⁴⁵ The art that made life more efficient in the precolonial context took on new meaning and appreciation as Africans were exposed to European regattas. Sports offered Africans revised meanings on familiar activities.

Early accounts from missionaries record the introduction of certain sports to Africans at mission stations. Arthur Baldwin, the missionary who faced so much opposition from his laborers, found that sports served as a reward for the Ila who lived at his station. As a Christmas gift to his congregation he taught them how to play cricket and other English games, much to their delight.⁴⁶ No doubt that such a break was welcomed at the station where Baldwin instituted strict rules and seemed to regard the local population with transparent disdain. Cricket was only the beginning of the sports introduced to Africans and as more became exposed to European sports, competitions among Africans increasingly showed up on the programs of sporting events. In 1904, upon the completion of a stretch of railway leading to Victoria Falls, a celebration ensued. Included in the events were “native sports, mock battles with assegais and knobkerries, then a feast for the whites.”⁴⁷ Although the quick account of the celebration cannot hide the segregation inherent in the party, it does provide evidence that Africans were to at least some degree incorporated into such events.

In 1905, Chief Lewanika expressed interest in sending some of his men to participate in the first regatta on the Zambezi River. In a letter to Lewanika from a BSACo official, the author acknowledged. “Mr. Aitkens [another BSACo administrator] wrote to me and told me that you were anxious to send boats from Lealui to row in the boat races—what we call a regatta—at the Falls on the 12th June. I am very glad to hear this and hope the boats will be down at the Falls in time for the races. I myself will give prizes to the men who win; I hope your boat will win.”⁴⁸ Although it is not clear from this excerpt if Lewanika’s men were keen on competing in the regatta, it is obvious that Lewanika instigated the entries of African-manned boats in the race. Lewanika had his way and he and a couple of other chiefs “each entered a team for the Native ‘dug out’ races (a tree

⁴⁵ Stirke, *Barotseland*, pp. 55–56.

⁴⁶ Baldwin, “A Voortrekker of the Faith,” Chapter 7, p. 17.

⁴⁷ Clark, *Old Drifter*, p. 202.

⁴⁸ Letter to Lewanika, dated May 29, 1905 (A 3/24/4, National Archives of Zambia), pp. 7–8.

hollowed out), and it was wonderful to see the way they got through the water. King Lewanika's son, Chief of the Seseke's crew winning the one-and-a-half miles in the good time of 9 min. 14 sec."⁴⁹ Despite the obvious racial hierarchy of this colonial town, Livingstonians seemed to accept and even welcome the presence of Africans in their sporting events.

Regattas became a wildly popular sport among Livingstonians and others in North Western Rhodesia and support came from both the European and African populations. Africans did not race against European crews but African competitions became a regular feature at the regattas. The first regatta mentioned above attracted Africans well beyond Livingstone who "came down the river over 300 miles to compete."⁵⁰ This sporting activity appealed to Africans in this riparian system and African participants eagerly joined the events. Starting in 1906, the programs included notice of the races of "Native Canoes for paddlers employed on the river."⁵¹ The white population of North Western Rhodesia and tourists immensely enjoyed the regattas and the local African population also became fans of the sporting event. The organizers of regattas included in their plans that "[D]uring the Regatta days a space will be fenced off for the natives and no crowding to the landing stages will be permitted"⁵² to accommodate an African audience.

The Zambezi Boat Club, which hosted the regattas during the early years of colonization, worked hard to build up the reputation of the Zambezi regattas. Eventually, the club hosted World Championship competitions. There are still regattas on the Zambezi River, and the Zambezi Boat Club, now resurrected, hosts the popular events. In 2005, I attended an international regatta held on the Zambezi. The event closely resembled the descriptions of competitions in the past. Crews from British and South African universities made the journey to Livingstone where they were lavished with hospitality from both white and black residents. After the university teams competed, the area reserved for onlookers suddenly swelled, as black Livingstonians poured onto the riverbank. The university rowers, tired from their races, squeezed into the crowd and an excited buzz filled the space. The real fun was about to begin—the true crowd pleaser was

⁴⁹ "A Whitsuntide Excursion to the Victoria Falls," *Tamworth Herald*, August 5, 1905, p. 2.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Native canoes article, *The Livingstone Mail*, June 23, 1906, No. 13, Vol. 1.

⁵² Letter from Acting Secretary to Fred Brown of Zambesi Boat Club, August 8, 1910 (A 3/38 Loc 4001, National Archives of Zambia), p. 104.

evidently the competitions between crews from the various white-water rafting operators. These men and women raced in the same yellow rafts used to carry tourists through the rapids of the Zambezi. The men were familiar with the rafts: they were the guides on such white-water adventures. The women, who provoked the most laughs, were the staff of the tour operators and clearly had little experience in the rafts.

Both the men and women enjoyed the attention and performed their races with as much gusto as can be imagined. Although the white crew teams from the UK and South Africa brought with them the finest equipment and top expertise, it was the black crews who got the audience excited. The sport was, for lack of a better word, "Africanized," by the local men and women and those races were by far the most anticipated and enjoyed. It was hard not to imagine into the past and create a picture of the pleasure of the African competitors and the joy and entertainment of the African audience. The Lozi, Tonga, and Ila had long been paddling down the Zambezi River, but with the introduction of regattas a century ago, that activity often associated with labor took on a new meaning.

Sports were not the only ways that opened up recreation to Africans living in North Western Rhodesia. Socializing was an important pastime. It allowed the African community to interact and create new, urban networks. Despite the wariness of Europeans to allow Africans to use Livingstone as anything more than a work site, there were instances when space was allocated to the use of Africans for leisure, even if it also served to entertain upper class men. In 1908, "A Native Dance was held in the Government House Compound..."⁵³ Africans performed their own dances at the same venue for European dances. Although it is difficult to discern how the dancers and musicians felt about performing for Europeans, it is entirely conceivable that they played with pride and were excited to perform. They were, after all, dancing in the most significant building in the colony and to an esteemed audience.

Churches provided another place where Africans could form communities and strengthen social networks. While there was a history of missions in the area, the overall impact of those missions during the late nineteenth century was minimal. Save for the small number who moved onto mission stations, there was not a discernible rush by Africans to convert during the first decades of church organization. Once in the towns though, churches took on a different meaning for Africans searching for

⁵³Native dance article, *The Livingstone Mail*, August 15, 1908, No. 125, Vol. 5.

a sense of community. In 1908, “The new native church at the location [Maramba township] was formally opened, and Divine Service held, last Sunday afternoon. About two hundred and fifty natives attended.”⁵⁴ The population of Africans residing in Livingstone this early in the town’s history was well under 2000 (and probably closer to 1000), so this crowd was significant. The Native Church provided Africans a place all their own to form friendships and enjoy time off from work.

Within a decade of the establishment of Livingstone, Africans found more opportunities to enjoy social events for their sector of the population. A newspaper article announced in 1915, “[T]he Natives held a great concert at the location. The Rev. Roulet appears to have organized and the natives themselves to have carried out the entertainment, which began at sundown and lasted till six next morning.”⁵⁵ This event had nothing to do with performing for Europeans and did not reflect any desire of the Africans to impress or mimic Europeans. Instead, the dance represented the importance of social networking and fun. Other informal activities also emerged. Just as drinking was a pastime for European settlers in North Western Rhodesia, it was also a form of recreation for some Africans. This leisure activity was considerably more irritating to the white population, despite the fact that they had some members of their community that imbibed irresponsibly. The African newspaper reported, “[I]n spite of being arrested and punished compound residents do not seem to stop illicit beer brewing in Maramba compound.”⁵⁶ It would be difficult to assert that such an activity, particularly one considered a punishable offence, was meant to impress the white population. The story itself focused on the beer brewers, who most likely engaged in producing and selling the drink to earn money, but it also signaled that Africans were engaging in drinking during their down time and likely saw it as a social and leisure activity.

As African voices became more public in the colony, another form of entertainment developed. African radio broadcasts found avid listeners, and perhaps in some ways resonating with more old-fashioned storytelling, became another way that Africans relaxed. According to one writer to

⁵⁴ Native church opening article, *The Livingstone Mail*, August 15, 1908, No. 127, Vol. 5.

⁵⁵ Native concert article, *The Livingstone Mail*, December 31, 1915, No. 509.

⁵⁶ Maramba beer brewing article, *Mutunde: The African Newspaper of Northern Rhodesia*, July 1936, No. 5. Though this incident took place in the 1930s, beyond the scope of the time period of this study, it is unlikely this was the first time it was discovered that Africans brewed beer in Maramba.

The Livingstone Mail, “Luanshya broadcasts in three languages, Chiwemba [Bemba], Serozi [Lozi], and Chinyanga, on Mondays and Fridays from 6:45 to 7:15 pm. Our houseboys generally some of those of our neighbors and we may have an audience of a dozen who sit very quietly and apparently hear everything.”⁵⁷ Like African dances and “traditional” beer, these local-language broadcasts gave Africans their own entertainment and helped create relationships for those living in urban settings.

Interviews with some of the area’s oldest residents offer further insight into the social world created by Africans living in North Western Rhodesia during the early days. Their memories of Livingstone are especially useful in understanding the development of an urbanized African community. The dearth of data suggesting any ethnic divisions made sense to the informants. According to their statements, despite encouragement by Europeans to marry within their own ethnicity, intermarriages were common and helped create a harmonious urban population. They confirmed that among Africans living around the town, there was a peaceful atmosphere and no ethnic segregation.⁵⁸ When asked about the clothing worn by African urban dwellers, they remembered a mixture of “traditional” clothing and European attire. One informant concluded that Africans did have the desire to wear European and offered yet another localized meaning to explain that aspiration. When asked why Africans wanted to dress like Europeans, the response was a detailed explanation of the process of making traditional cloth. Such production was time-consuming and laborious and the implication was that obviously European clothes were coveted because they did not require such hard labor!⁵⁹ Such practicality rarely makes it into historical analysis and it is certainly proof that historians often overlook the obvious when interpreting the past.

When asked about the leisure activities of Africans living around towns, the first response was that local brew provided the backdrop for socializing. The informants explained that drinking occurred on Saturdays and Sundays and that the drink of choice was traditional beer because “the bottle was foreign.”⁶⁰ Alcohol and prostitution in urban African loca-

⁵⁷ Radio broadcast article, *The Livingstone Mail*, December 16, 1939. No volume or number included. Again, this anecdote comes from a later period, but offers evidence that the African population embraced European leisure and social activities and systems.

⁵⁸ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansanda, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

⁵⁹ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansanda, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

⁶⁰ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansanda, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

tions were issues commonly bemoaned by colonial administrators,⁶¹ and while beer brewing and drinking was an issue discussed by both the white population and Africans, prostitution is strangely absent from the primary sources and recollections. Because the topic of prostitution never made an appearance in the documents I collected for the study, at the interview I asked if there were prostitutes in Livingstone. The response was a resounding “no” and that the activity was a much more recent problem in the town’s history. The discussion of prostitution also sparked a consideration of crime in Livingstone. Material earlier in the chapter demonstrates that white settlers were frequently robbed of clothing and other goods, but such burglaries, according to the informants, did not occur with the African community. They went so far as to say that in fact, houses in the locations did not have locks and that you could leave your house for a couple of months without fear of having your household items stolen.⁶²

Whether life was so idyllic is, of course, up for debate. Just as historians employ a historical imagination to put themselves back in time, it is entirely possible that my interviewees were also imagining a “good ol’ days” that was never really so good. To dig deeper into their historical imagination, I asked them which they preferred, the days long past or life currently in Livingstone. The response was revealing:

There are beautiful things when we remember the olden days compared to what we are experiencing and the hardships we are encountering. These days you cannot walk safely because you will find people who will cut off your hands and feet and heart. These days we live in fear of human beings. We are prohibited from some areas that were ours. We can’t go. We have to have a license to hunt.⁶³

To prove their point, they provided examples of places that in the past were used by Tonga people and were open to them in the early days of colonialism. The *Chilyata Ngombe*, a local name for the airport, was once an

⁶¹ For selected reading, see Marc Epprecht, *This Matter of Women is Getting Very Bad: Gender, Development and Politics in Colonial Lesotho*; Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi*; Kenneth Little, *African Women in Towns: An Aspect of Africa’s Social Revolution*; Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *African Women: A Modern History*; and Phil Bonner, “Desirable or Undesirable Basotho Women?: Liquor, Prostitution and the Migration of Basotho Women to the Rand, 1920–1945.”

⁶² Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansanda, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

⁶³ Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansanda, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

area used by African townspeople but is no longer accessible. The riverbanks, which were used for recreation and even local burial grounds are also prohibited. The location of the current Zambezi Boat Club is at a site known by the local population as *Sichaungwa* and they can no longer access the site unless they buy a club membership or buy admission tickets to regattas.⁶⁴

These differences perhaps best prove the point that although colonialism brought with it a new set of standards and regulations, the decades right before and after the turn of the century were an exciting and optimistic time for both Europeans and Africans living in North Western Rhodesia, particularly those living near the Falls where a steady flow of foreigners visited and brought new ideas to the frontier town. Recently, African historians have turned their attention to the rise and fall of colonial states, and in particular are examining the later years of colonization. Scholars such as Frederick Cooper are concluding that the economic, political, and social strains plaguing the colonial order created a space for Africans to maneuver around old constraints and exercise more freedom.⁶⁵ It seems this theory can also be applied to the earliest days of colonization, when rules were either not yet determined or still malleable. Administrators, white settlers, African elites, and the African peasantry were meeting each other on new terms and, for many, enjoyed freedom and possibility in ways never before imagined. If colonial states were scarred by the 1950s, they were organic and dynamic in the earliest years. The result for North Western Rhodesians was an environment where creativity and optimism reigned and social networking was experimental and fluid.

SOCIAL IMAGINATION AND LIFE IN LIVINGSTONE

This chapter began with an anecdote about a group of African employees who borrowed the dress clothes of their employers and enacted a formal dinner party. By itself, the narrative appears as an anomaly, a random crime reported as an amusing story. In fact, the evidence for this analysis could all be reduced to anecdotes: unrelated and often bizarre glimpses into the behavior and practices of urban-dwelling Africans. But these stories weave into a broader narrative and actually reveal a pattern in the social lives of North Western Rhodesia's Africans. The acquisition of European clothing

⁶⁴Interview with Wingrey Balengu Siloka, Mulubu Sampson Siansanda, and Dorica Makole, July 2006.

⁶⁵Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

and cloth and the engagement in activities that are decidedly European in nature could be written off as another example of Africans assimilating into western culture. The stories could support the idea that Africans considered their own culture backward and were quick to accept the “better” offerings of European customs and practices. But read as a whole, the all too few and brief insights into African lives found buried in the historical records suggest something more profound about African imaginations and subsequent choices. The local significance of Africans donning European attire, participating in sporting events, or sharing drinks at a neighborhood canteen all pointed to a desire to create and enjoy a new social experience. Experiences in the new political economy sparked aspirations and optimism in “average” Africans who used the shifting cultural landscape as a space in which to transform themselves and their social networks.

For white people living in the town, a colonial culture that blended work and leisure established the rhythm of everyday life. Although as Chapter 6 posits that much time was spent complaining about the BSACo and administration of the colony, white Livingstonians and visitors to the town were able to enjoy the comforts of home in this outpost of “civilization.” For the entrepreneurs and administrators alike, it was neither easy nor cheap to maintain a western standard of living, but great effort was made to reproduce western leisure activities. As one memo from the Foreign Office stated, “it is agreed, the maintenance of a certain standard of comfort in living [in British Central Africa] is essential to the preservation of health, the minimum cost of living is no doubt high; and does not differ sensibly between men of the artisan class and men of that above it.”⁶⁶ Despite the expense and difficulty though, it was important to the European population that they accessed a western style of living.

Before Livingstone was established, Old Drift set the pace for the settler’s entertainment. The riverside camp was a lively site for the energetic entrepreneurs and provided them with raucous amusement. L.F. Moore reminisced about the camp being “a lively spot...There were three bars...I have seen roulette, fare, poker, bridge and dice played at different parts of the same bar room, while two or three (male) couples solemnly gyrated to the strains of a gramophone.”⁶⁷ In many ways, the relocation of the settle-

⁶⁶ “Salaries of Warrant Officers. BSA,” January 21, 1899 (FO 2/246, Public Records Office, Kew).

⁶⁷ “Northern Rhodesia,” Article written by Sir Leopold Moore dated October 14, 1927 (Box 70/1-G/83 (box 2). G 73/3c. Acc. 161, Livingstone Museum Archives), p. 5.

ment to Livingstone seemed to mark a point of maturity, as the new town appeared more reserved and sophisticated in its leisure time. No doubt this was in large part due to the influx of white female settlers who joined their husbands and fiancées in the newly established city. There was also a focus on sporting events, which had the advantage of not only being fun for the townspeople but also had the ability to draw in tourists. Although the types of entertainment changed, the white settlers were consistent in their approach to ensuring that there were frequent opportunities to mingle and pass time together.

One of the first steps taken by white Livingstonians to create a social scene was the founding of a rifle association. This idea was considered important for two reasons. First, it provided organized social time for white men and women. Second, it was seen as imperative by those who felt it was in the best interest of the white population to prepare themselves for revolt by the African population. In a letter written in 1905 by R.T. Coryndon, the Resident Magistrate of North Western Rhodesia to his superiors in the BSACo, a case is made for the sanctioning of a rifle association. In his request, Coryndon asked that “members have their rifles free of cost, and that they can buy ammunition at cost price...”⁶⁸ While Coryndon viewed this as a necessary step in self-protection, it quickly became an important component of the colonial culture. During the first decade of *The Livingstone Mail*, there were numerous (almost weekly) articles dedicated to the results of men’s and women’s shooting competition. Being a member of the rifle association was an important inlet into the Livingstone social scene and white men and women were encouraged to join and participate in the frequent competitions. The rifle association also attracted tourists, particularly long-term visitors to the area, who also involved themselves in the activities.⁶⁹

Even more important to the local white population was the establishment of a boating club on the Zambezi River. As referenced above, the events hosted by the club were thoroughly enjoyed by participants and audiences. Not only did this provide the settlers with a western sporting activity, but it also attracted tourists who helped make regattas popular and profitable affairs. Within months of moving to the new town-site,

⁶⁸ Reports, E 5 No. 0, 1998/1905 (Box D 1/7-F 1/7/3 BSAC, Livingstone Museum Archives).

⁶⁹ *The Livingstone Mail*, 1906–1915. Throughout this time period, the newspaper consistently dedicated space to the results of rifle association competitions and meetings.

there was talk about the opportunities boating amenities could provide. In 1906, a letter from Coryndon appealed for assistance in organizing a regatta at Livingstone. He wrote:

I think if it could be arranged, a Regatta at Livingstone this year in June would be of great value to the country...This last Christmas (1905) the only race and Gymkhana Meeting in the country was held at Kalomo, and it was understood that the Livingstone people decided to hold a large race meeting at the Falls either at Whitsuntide or in June of this year: the latter date would certainly be the most suitable as Whitsuntide falls early and more visitors would be there in June. By that time the large new brick boat house, stand and dressing rooms generously presented by Pauling and Company will be completed and will of the greatest value and attraction...⁷⁰

Coryndon presumably asked for help from multiple companies, including the BSACo and railway companies, but his push for a regatta in the summer of 1906 was not realized. In a response to the request to Rhodesia Railways Limited, it was intimated that Coryndon did not allow enough time for the regatta to be properly planned, and that with only three teams confirmed, “to have held a meeting with only three competitors after so much advertisement would have been a trifle ridiculous and would have done much more harm than no Regatta at all.”⁷¹ Although the first attempt at a regatta failed, the Zambezi Boat Club and the regattas it hosted became an important aspect of the town’s leisure offerings and succeeded in bringing in thousands of visitors to the area.

Within a few years, the Zambezi Boat Club was prepared to host a successful regatta. The BSACo helped the club by leasing a strip of river bank to the club, building landing stages and a boat house, and fencing off an area to be used by Africans.⁷² This regatta proved to be an important development for the town. One administrator reported to the Secretary of the BSACo:

⁷⁰Letter dated January 31, 1906 (A 3/38. Location 4001, National Archives of Zambia), pp. 2–4 of file.

⁷¹Letter dated May 25, 1906 (A 3/38. Location 4001, National Archives of Zambia), pp. 7–9.

⁷²Letter dated August 8, 1910 (A 3/38. Location 4001, National Archives of Zambia), p. 104.

The visiting crews were housed in grass huts on the River bank below the Boat House, and all expressed themselves delighted with the arrangements made and the attention shown them by the Committee and members of the Zambesi Boat Club...There were between four and five hundred people present on both days, and adequate arrangements had been made for their accommodation in the Regatta enclosure. A number of residents had taken plots on the River bank, and erected grass shelters which lent a very picturesque appearance to the scene..."⁷³

For the white settlers and BSACo administrators of Livingstone, this was exactly the type of entertainment they hoped to offer potential tourists and to use to demonstrate the development of the area. Indeed, one administrator, A.P. Millar, saw the event as an opportunity to promote the town and colony. He asked that the BSACo approve the request by P.S. Tibbs to photograph the regatta because he believed that "no doubt he would be able to secure some striking pictures of the Regatta, of which we could make good use on this side."⁷⁴ It also provided the townspeople, both white and African, with western-style leisure opportunities. Gauging from the reports in *The Livingstone Mail*, the European inhabitants of Livingstone were excited by boating competitions and wholeheartedly supported the Zambezi Boat Club regattas. The club hosted international regattas, including the world championship, several times much to the delight and financial benefit of the town.⁷⁵ As described earlier in this chapter, these events helped define the social scene of Livingstone and was something that both its European and African residents enjoyed.

The Livingstone Mail served not only as a newspaper but also as a tabloid of sorts, as it kept track of the comings and goings of the local white population. Ladies' teas, balls, competitions, concerts, and the like were often reported in the paper. According to one history of the town,

On Saturday L.F. Moore would arrange gramophone concerts...There were also chess parties and they played bridge. In 1906 a committee was formed to arrange dancing evenings during the cold months. They also had musical

⁷³ Letter dated August 23, 1910 (A 3/38. Location 4001, National Archives of Zambia), pp. 112–114.

⁷⁴ Letter dated March 15, 1910 (A1/2/12. Location 3978, National Archives of Zambia), pp. 96–97.

⁷⁵ *The Livingstone Mail*, 1906–1915. Several articles appeared over the course of a decade reporting on the pleasure of the town hosting numerous regattas.

evenings and entertainment from drama and theater groups. But it was the sports amenities which really created the social life in town... The first tennis and cricket matches were at the Maramba Recreation Centre, close to the Golf Course. In 1910 there were also tennis courts in the Barotse Centre and Government House Gardens. In 1908 the 9-hole Golf Course unofficially opened, and several other sport clubs were formed in the years to come.⁷⁶

Clearly the settlers were intent on creating many social activities and from the reports in *The Livingstone Mail*, it seems most townspeople participated in the numerous events. White men and women mingled freely and the debauchery of the Old Drift days was replaced with a decidedly middle-class approach to entertainment and leisure.

CONCLUSION

Livingstonians knew how to have fun. The town's social scene arguably rivaled that of larger colonial cities despite its small size. Africans and Europeans alike shared a taste for recreation. Sporting events, concerts, dinner parties, and beer drinking were all activities enjoyed by the town's population. Recreation exposes historical subjects perhaps more than any other colonial activity because it lets historians see what people chose to do at their moments of greatest freedom. Historians search and speculate and read between the lines to find instances of agency and self-determination, but often the contexts are so strictly defined that it becomes difficult to discern if people had agency or just plain common sense. The study of leisure lets historians dig a little deeper. Free time was, after all, free and although limitations still existed, there was much more flexibility in choices regarding play than there was for work.

From the choices made by Africans and Europeans living in and around Livingstone, it is clear that there was interest in developing and maintaining a lively social life. Given the constraints of colonization in general and the complaints of subjects of this particular context, it would seem that recreation would be the least of the concerns of most people living in the town and colony. Here again we see the contradictions inherent in colonial settings. There was a pervasive and unmistakable energy in the early days that contradicted the dismay and disappointment that also character-

⁷⁶ Ese, p. 26.

ized the first decade of colonial rule. Simply put, colonialism must not be reduced to a monolithic experience. The subjects of North Western Rhodesia used the social sphere as a place where they could dictate their activities. Africans, white settlers, and visitors in Livingstone near the Falls were especially privy to an exciting and active social life because of the constant flow of people, goods, and ideas into the tourist destination. This was an arena that the BSACo had little control over, and Africans and Europeans alike took advantage of leisure time to make their own life decisions.

“What is the Trouble?”: Dispute and Discontent in North Western Rhodesia

Over the past few decades, the study of colonization and state formation in Africa has evolved into a rather more nuanced and complicated field of inquiry. Static dichotomies pitting the colonizer against the colonized have been replaced with analyses of the complex identities and multidimensional relationships created under colonial rule. Colonial studies, focused both on Africa and other sites of European conquest, are enriched by new considerations of colonial experiences and the meanings behind them.¹ Perhaps one of the most important developments in colonial studies is that historians now focus not on what colonialism means to us as outsiders looking back into the past but what colonization meant to the people

¹For further reading on the trajectory of African colonial studies and on more global colonial experiences see: Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2005); Clifton Crais, ed., *The Culture of Power in Southern Africa: Essays on State Formation and the Political Imagination* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2003); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2002); Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, eds., *Bodies in Contact: Rethinking Colonial Encounters in World History* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005); Frederick Cooper and Laura Ann Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1997).

“What is the Trouble?” *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 419, April 9, 1914.

who actually experienced it. Through this new analysis, the colonial state no longer appears as a monolithic body that controlled the every move of all its subjects.

This chapter is shaped by the premise that North Western Rhodesia epitomized the concept of a “messy” colonization process.² It addresses the question of how people experienced colonialism and the expectations by the various subjects of the state. In this sense, it is important to consider how interested parties and individuals imagined their roles in comparison to their realized roles in the colonial landscape. Experience was the result of individual understandings and perceptions of their realities. Europeans and Africans living in the territory translated colonial realities and attached multiple meanings to their experiences and they juxtaposed those to their hopes and own agendas. This leaves historians with the task of interpreting the data left behind and searching for indications of how people understood the events and moments that comprise “history.” In the early colonial period, particularly the first decade of the twentieth century, the complicated and dynamic perceptions of identity in relation to the state shaped the experiences of North Western Rhodesians. Earlier chapters highlighted the hopes and goals of white entrepreneurs and the Lozi hierarchy during the last years of the nineteenth century into the early twentieth century. During that time, the European population saw North Western Rhodesia as a land of opportunity, and they came with great expectations and aspirations. At the same time, the Lozi king Lewanika welcomed the British presence and actually suggested the formalization of a colonial relationship. He was able to powerfully shape the changing political, economic, and cultural landscape around him. Chapter 5 highlighted the ways that African workers experienced and adapted to the changing social and economic terrain and offered an analysis of how the early years of colonial development around Victoria Falls provided new opportunities for those non-elite Africans.

²The concept of a messy, or ambiguous colonialism is explained in Crais’ *The Culture of Power in Southern Africa: Essays on State Formation and the Political Imagination* and Michael Crowder’s *The Flogging of Phineas McIntosh: A Tale of Colonial Folly and Injustice, Bechuanaland 1933*, “Messy” colonialism was the result of “the fact that European power at the periphery was often weak. It was also because both African and European were engaged in astoundingly complex acts of translation” (Crais, *Culture of Power*, p. 9). Early colonial formation was both a unique and vulnerable process, and within that context “conventional distinctions between white and black, ruler and ruled, educated and illiterate, senior and junior partner, did not operate consistently” (Crowder, *Flogging*, p. 186).

While the last few chapters analyzed the high hopes and imagined outcomes of the white settlers and the Lozi chief, this chapter considers the opposite. Within a few short years, the optimism that characterized North Western Rhodesia’s atmosphere turned into discontent and frustration. The inhabitants of the colony that seemed most likely to enjoy privilege and freedom actually found themselves feeling increasingly limited by their relationships with the BSACo. High expectations gave way to bitter disappointments. The openness and flexibility that characterized the territory before the turn of the century was replaced by anxiety and contention as the European population and King Lewanika struggled with the BSACo for privilege and authority. White settlers frequently attacked the BSACo because they feared that the administration placed them as a bottom priority. Simultaneously, the BSACo found itself placating its former ally King Lewanika as he attempted to revise the terms of his agreements with the colonial body. These tensions highlight the weaknesses and contradictions of the emerging colonial state. As the white settlers and Lewanika perceived an ever-growing weakness in their position within the colonial order, their opinion of the administration changed. The administrative infrastructure that once seemed so promising no longer appeared that way. They unwillingly transformed from colonial partners to colonial subjects. At the heart of this change was the BSACo’s increasing conceptualization of North Western Rhodesia as part of a larger, transcolonial undertaking. North Western Rhodesia was not an entity in and of itself; as much as the white entrepreneurs and Lewanika likely conceived of this territory as unique and localized, the BSACo imagined the future of North Western Rhodesia within its broader goals of empire building in southern and central Africa.

Mahmood Mamdani’s estimation of a colonial state is that it was a system of rule that divides people into two categories: citizens and subjects. In this model, citizens enjoyed freedoms and rights that subjects were denied.³ Traditionally, Europeans classified as citizens while Africans experienced colonialism as subjects. While it is indisputable that the white settlers in North Western Rhodesia had rights and opportunities strictly inaccessible by Africans, the bifurcated nature of this model is problematic for this context (and likely many other colonial situations) because of the limitations of such a dichotomous split. Even though whites in North

³ Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (London: James Currey, 1996).

Western Rhodesia theoretically held more rights than Africans, they often considered themselves subjects of what they deemed an unfair and irrelevant state.

The charge of a colonial state was never a simple or static one. Colonial states, different in every context, often functioned from improvised plans and policies designed to meet the needs of their administrations and those of the people living under colonial rule. In describing the early British administration in the Cape Colony, Tristram Hunt wrote that once the British gained control, in reality “the king’s ministers had very little idea what to do with it all.”⁴ Over a century later and much further north into southern Africa, there was the same lack of clarity. When the BSACo first negotiated with Lewanika, there was no certainty of what it actually had planned for the territory. This resulted in sometimes clumsy and disjointed administration of the territory, which in turn affected the social and economic transformations in the region. The BSACo or the state itself were not responsible for the pace or direction of social and economic changes. Simply stated, “the administration determined less of what happened and responded to it more...The District Commissioner [generically used here as a colonial state representative], far from being the creative initiator of colonial reality, was caught in and reflected its contradictions.”⁵ If the administration or state did not create the realities of colonial experiences, then our attention must turn to those living within, or as some may describe, under colonial rule. After all, “realities” existed as individual interpretations of both tangible and intangible conditions.

FAILED EXPECTATIONS AND UNWELCOME REALITIES

The Settler’s Joke:

“Hallo, old chap, you look deeply interested. What’s the book?”

“*Sons of Satan*, by William Le Quex. You ought to read it.”

“Oh—What does it say about the B.S.A.[British South Africa Company]?”

“Nothing; it is not a true record, it’s fiction.”⁶

⁴Tristram Hunt, *Cities of Empire: The British Colonies and the Creation of the Urban World* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014), p. 165.

⁵Terence Ranger, “White Presence and Power in Africa,” *Journal of African History* 20 (1979), 464.

⁶The Settler’s Joke, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 540, August 4, 1916.

This joke, printed in *The Livingstone Mail* represented the view of the BSACo shared by a growing number of white settlers. By the time it appeared in 1916, many white settlers imagined themselves at the bottom level of the colonial social hierarchy, at least in terms of where they felt they stood in the BSACo's social structure. They felt continuously slighted or ignored by the BSACo and shared a common perception that they were the victims of misrule. White North Western Rhodesians blamed all the problems and frictions on the administration, which they felt failed to represent their interests. An editorial published in 1914 in *The Livingstone Mail* highlighted complaints against the administration and revealed the instability of the colonial state. The author asserted:

A mere handful of white settlers have come in. They have taken up land, established trading centers, and a government. For more than ten years, they have pegged away in perfect peace, undisturbed by any misfortune such as S. Rhodesia endured—rinderpest, rebellion, East Coast Fever... Today the country is suffering from commercial depression and money has to all intents and purposes, ceased to circulate. What is the trouble?⁷

The article suggested that the BSACo was at fault because of poor administrative policies and activities, but the author also identified a lack of cohesion as a major challenge to colonial success. According to the author, the absence of a shared vision among the entire white population plagued North Western Rhodesia and limited the potential prosperity hoped for by so many settlers. From their perspective, the situation was grim and they found the administration culpable. What the settlers failed to accept was that the BSACo did not necessarily share their expectations and concerns.

The white residents and administrators in North Western Rhodesia and later Northern Rhodesia often wrote about their differences and their arguments frequently appeared in the public sphere. There is a rich documentation of the critiques and hostility directed at the BSACo that occurred during the first decades of formal colonization. The disputes were recorded in articles and editorials in *The Livingstone Mail*, transcripts of meetings, and letters to and between the administrators. Those sources reveal the performances enacted by angry settlers against the BSACo. The tensions aired in the public sphere reflected the ways in which white settlers perceived their position within the colonial order. Their primary

⁷What is the trouble editorial, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 419, April 9, 1914.

concern was that the BSACo failed to represent the interests of the white settler population, and in fact created policies that circumscribed white privilege in the colony.

White settlers were not alone in their critique of the administration. It is more challenging to uncover the problems that affected African communities, but some letters and court case records exist that allow for a consideration of points of contentions among Africans. In particular, written negotiations between King Lewanika and various administrators reveal that although it often appeared that the king and the BSACo shared a common vision of colonial development, there was in fact a constant struggle to define the role of the king and colonial administrators in North Western Rhodesia. The loyalty between Lewanika and the BSACo was severely tested during the early twentieth century, as divergent interests illuminated the different expectations of the two parties.

Within just a few years of its formal establishment, North Western Rhodesia experienced a notable increase in the white population. The official creation of Livingstone town around 1905 quickly stimulated urbanization. Although the Old Drifters were reluctant to move to the site selected by the BSACo, they eventually conceded defeat and helped populate the new town. The town grew quickly and soon overshadowed the town of Kalomo, which was “the headquarters of the North Western Rhodesia administration...ninety miles north of the falls...”⁸ Kalomo’s location was not nearly as desirable as Livingstone’s though; at this point in North Western Rhodesia’s history, Victoria Falls served as the main point of reference in this frontier territory. Most travelers who entered North Western Rhodesia stayed around the Falls and the BSACo realized that Livingstone was more likely to serve as a center of commerce and industrial activity. In late 1907, the BSACo under Robert Codrington’s lead, “decided to remove the seat of administration from Kalomo to Livingstone, seven miles north of the Victoria Falls.”⁹ While considering Livingstone’s proximity to Victoria Falls, the biggest draw to North Western Rhodesia, the BSACo also determined that the soil in Kalomo was unlikely suitable to foster the growth of “what may become a large town.”¹⁰ In a sound estimation of

⁸“Cape to Cairo Railway. Building beyond Victoria Falls,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, May 31, 1905, p. 7.

⁹Untitled notice, printed under “Cancer Cure. Yorkshire J.P.’s Discovery,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, September 19, 1907, p. 7.

¹⁰“Our London Correspondence (By Private Wires),” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, September 19, 1907, p. 6.

future commercial and industrial activities, the BSACo made the decision to also develop Livingstone as North Western Rhodesia’s administrative base.

A census report on the township and area around Livingstone in 1911 reported that 300-plus Europeans lived in the town, along with 1,965 Africans and 11 “coloured” people. Of the 178 buildings in existence, only two were unoccupied.¹¹ When Livingstone first opened for settlement, the number of residents was much fewer, but over a short period of time and despite little enthusiasm or assistance from the administration, the white townspeople created an Anglo town that was in full swing by the 1920s. L.F. Moore, the former Old Drift resident who relocated to Livingstone commented on the town’s quick growth and development. He remembered:

no floor in Livingstone can accommodate the crowds of youths in evening dress and the grisl (*sic*: girls) in gay skirts and silk stockings. There is a well-patronised picture-house and plenty of golf and tennis; while the excellent Native band of the Northern Rhodesia Police is in great request; cricket and footer are rarer. The government, railways, the Zambesi Saw Mills and the stores (shops) provide employment for a population of about 1300 whites and 4000 natives.¹²

The white settler population of Livingstone was comprised of energetic entrepreneurs, railway workers, and skilled workers. As discussed in an earlier chapter, they often presented a strong united front against the BSACo administration despite the diversity of socio-economic backgrounds and interests they represented. They saw themselves in constant battle with colonial officials and perceived their interests as tertiary to an administration that gave priority first to its own interests and second to the African population. In a letter from High Commissioner Selborne to Wallace, the Administrator of North Western Rhodesia, it was clear that the settlers were not paranoid or wrong about their standing with the administration. High Commissioner Selborne wrote, “[I]n both these territories [North Western and North Eastern Rhodesia] there is a vast population of natives and an infinitesimal population of white people. The Government, therefore, is necessarily not mainly a government of whites, but mainly a

¹¹ Census, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 276, Vol. 12, July 8, 1911.

¹² Moore, “Northern Rhodesia,” p. 7.

government for natives...”¹³ The administration was clear on its position regarding the priorities of the colony. The hopes of the white settlers were fundamentally opposite to the plans held by the administration. It was this policy that greatly chagrined the white settlers and put them in constant conflict with the administration. The BSACo showed no interest in developing North Western Rhodesia into a settler colony and the white population’s agenda and desires were of little concern to the administrative body.

Earlier chapters described the heated dispute between the settlers and the BSACo officials over the site of North Western Rhodesia’s first major city. Although the settlers, many of who pre-dated the formal colonization of the territory, selected a site known as Old Drift on the banks of the Zambezi, the BSACo insisted that the white population relocate to Livingstone. By moving the site of the town and simultaneously condemning Old Drift, the BSACo sparked the first of the many quarrels with the colony’s European residents. The settlers formed a united front in this matter—newspaper reports from 1906 and 1907 describe the efforts of a committee of concerned citizens who pushed the BSACo to allow for a new town to be established closer to the Old Drift site.¹⁴ More than twenty years after the establishment of Livingstone, L.F. Moore still showed signs of dismay in his recollection of the issue. Although he began with a conciliatory tone, the old grievances quickly followed as he wrote, “[E]arly troubles are now past and a growing town now affords most of the amenities to be found elsewhere...It is rather inconveniently situated for tourists but better communications via the Falls Bridge are promised, and already parties motor through, come over from the Falls, and hunters often equip here.”¹⁵ Complaints were lodged with the BSACo that the Livingstone site was too far from the Falls and that its location on a sand belt made it difficult to access the Falls and the river.

While it may seem like a fairly minor dispute because the BSACo never appeared to take the complaints seriously, the greater significance of this issue is that it marked the beginning of a tumultuous relationship between the white settlers and the colonial administration of North

¹³Letter from High Commissioner Selborne, Cape Town to L.A. Wallace, Livingstone, December 1907 (CO 879/102, No. 244. Received December 27, 1909, Public Records Office, Kew), pp. 320–322.

¹⁴For editorials and articles arguing against the relocation of Old Drift settlement, see *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 3, Vol. 1, April 21, 1906; No. 55, Vol. 3, April 13, 1907; No. 57, Vol. 3, April 27, 1907; No. 58, Vol. 3, May 4, 1907.

¹⁵Moore, “Northern Rhodesia,” p. 6.

Western Rhodesia. As Selborne’s letter demonstrated, the BSACo unreservedly admitted that its main concerns were with its own success and the protection of so-called Native Rights,¹⁶ and by making those the clear focal points, it sent an explicit message to the white population of the territory. North Western Rhodesia was not, in the eyes of the administrative body, a settler colony; therefore, the white population could not expect to garner favor from the government. The BSACo knew from experiences in Southern Rhodesia that settler colonies required extra resources and painstakingly detailed policies to protect and serve the white population. The company was responsible for physically and financially protecting settlers in Southern Rhodesia, which proved costly for an administrative body that was first and foremost concerned with generating profits. It was also difficult for the BSACo to adequately meet the needs of the various interests of white settlers who were involved in farming, trade, and mining.¹⁷ The BSACo was unwilling to allow North Western Rhodesia to develop into another expensive settler colony for which the company was responsible.

The decision by the administration to limit white settlement contradicted an earlier policy on white settlement in the territory which may explain why the European population was so disgruntled by the BSACo’s treatment of them. Percy Clark recorded that once the railway was completed,

people were coming in to wait for the throwing open of North-western Rhodesia to settlers. It was a time of fine opportunity. Pioneers were allowed to select land where they liked in North-western Rhodesia. They were granted 6000 acres at 3*d.* per acre, and were given five years in which to pay...but there was a stipulation in the deed of sale whereby one had to occupy the land...¹⁸

It is little wonder that the administration’s treatment of the white population perplexed and irritated the settlers and the change in policy remains unclear. An official pamphlet detailed the procedure for settlement in North Western Rhodesia and demonstrated that the BSACo was cautious

¹⁶Letter from High Commissioner Selborne, Cape Town to L.A. Wallace, Livingstone, December 1907 (CO 879/102, No. 244. Received December 27, 1909, Public Records Office, Kew), pp. 320–322.

¹⁷Jock McCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue: Sexual Crime in Southern Rhodesia, 1902–1935* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), pp. 12–13.

¹⁸Clark, *Old Drifter*, pp. 200–201.

about white settlement. The policies regarding the land close to the waterfalls hinted at the company's reluctance to provide settlers permanent claims to property near the site. According to the policy, "no land will be sold within 15 miles of the Victoria Falls, but certain land within this area will be leased for a period not exceeding 25 years to approve applicants."¹⁹ The document also provided strict regulations for the purchase of land in the territory's towns and countryside and there was a rigid policy that no land could be leased or bought if Africans already resided on the plot. This was particularly challenging for would-be farmers who had difficulty finding large tracts of land without African inhabitants.

The presence of such policies does not indicate a BSACo inclination toward the development of a settler colony. High Commissioner Alfred Milner made it clear in his correspondence with the Foreign Office in London that there was no plan to turn North Western Rhodesia into a settler colony. He declared that the territory north of the Zambezi

will never, in my opinion, hold a sufficient white population to be a self-governing State. It must be regarded as a dependency, and governed on the principles which we apply to other tropical dependencies... Company rule is, of necessity, transitional. In Southern Rhodesia it will, in time, give way to self-government. In Northern Rhodesia it may continue longer, but, if so, it should be under Imperial control, and the way should be left open to the establishment, when the Company disappears as an administrative factor, of government by Imperial officers, and not by Colonial officers.²⁰

Milner's statement makes clear the position of the Crown government on the future of North Western Rhodesia. There was never an expectation that it would develop into a settler colony. The administration knew that the colony would not exist without a small white population, but there was no plan to attract large numbers of Europeans to the territory. White-owned businesses, especially those located in towns, were a necessity because they provided services and goods to the administration and other Europeans, so the company did not block all attempts at white settle-

¹⁹ BSACo, "Information as to the Conditions on which Land will be Sold or Leased to Bona fide Settlers in North-Western Rhodesia" Box D 1/7-F1/7/3 BSACo. E 5/4 Acc 3465 (Kalomo, North Western Rhodesia: British South Africa Company, January 1905, Livingstone Museum Archives).

²⁰ High Commissioner Sir Alfred Milner, Cape Town to Mr. Chamberlain, London, April 21, 1899 (CO 879/57, Public Records Office, Kew).

ment. Still, the settlers faced a rude awakening as colonial policies became less friendly to the European population. Their treatment was certainly not what the white emigrants expected and it made them question their position within the colonial social order. Most of the vocal opposition to the BSACo's stifling policies came from the entrepreneurs settled near Victoria Falls. They perceived that their ability to build a modern tourist destination was in peril because of the BSACo's lack of support for the project.

The concerns of European business owners, artisans, and farmers were viewed as a nuisance rather than as legitimate issues. The policy of favoring, or at least, appearing to favor, the rights of Africans over those of white settlers was further codified by the amalgamation of North Western Rhodesia and North Eastern Rhodesia. The BSACo began discussing the possibility of joining the two territories in 1909. After naming Livingstone the administrative headquarters of North Western Rhodesia in 1907, the BSACo established plans to improve the town because of its importance to colonial governance. Company directors focused on a better water supply, the construction of sidewalks, a road, and easier access to the Zambezi. They also proposed the allocation of more land to serve as a township for white residents because of the anticipated growth of the European population.²¹ The BSACo demonstrated further confidence in the town when various officials agreed that “the administration of both territories from Livingstone”²² was the best choice for Northern Rhodesia's new company headquarters.

It seemed that this designation would have pleased the white population established in and around Livingstone because of the potential for increased publicity and traffic for the area. After all, a good number of Livingstonians operated businesses that would only benefit from town and colony growth. Indeed, the impact on the territory was dramatic and most certainly affected the economic activities of the town. A BSACo Annual Report in 1912 listed 1,238 Europeans (933 men, 305 women) living in Northern Rhodesia and identified 9,565 Africans who worked as

²¹ “Memo from Visiting Directors of the British South Africa Company” (Box D 1/7-F1/7/3 BSAC. Reports. Livingstone, August 15, 1907. E 5/5 Acc 3464, Livingstone Museum Archives).

²² Wallace Correspondence with BSACo, received October 11, 1909 (CO 879/102, Public Records Office, Kew), p. 293.

domestics or servants under European employment.²³ Although these statistics do not compare directly to the Livingstone census report of 1911,²⁴ it is not difficult to imagine a substantial jump in foot traffic through the town when the two territories were fused into Northern Rhodesia. Despite this development though, the amalgamation only further cemented the administration's commitment to follow through with its goal of protection of African rights first and white settlers second.

In strong language, an administrator working in North Eastern Rhodesia reiterated the company's public position on development and African rights in the merged territories. The BSACo once again declared opposition to the creation of a settler colony lest any of the European population expect the status would change with amalgamation. H.M. McKerrow, the General Manager of North Eastern Rhodesia, discussed the possibility of wide-scale African farming in Northern Rhodesia, and concluded, "[T]he country cannot go ahead without the Native also going ahead and I do not fear, but rather welcome this, but the Administration have assumed too much the White Man's interests must be opposed to the Natives and their attempt to shut them off in Reserves has not been, in my opinion, a success.²⁵ McKerrow articulated an increasingly popular company position that by taking care of the African population, the company would benefit, whereas the white population was so negligible there was no discernible advantage to catering to that group. For European farmers already in Northern Rhodesia and the many still outside the territory hoping to establish farms the idea that African farmers would be given preference over Europeans was alarming. More frightening still for Europeans living in the newly merged colony was the realization that a white administration knowingly and willingly placed the interests of Africans above those of fellow whites.

The idea articulated to the public somewhat obscured other reasons for BSACo interest in Northern Rhodesia. Representatives visited Lewanika in 1890 not because they saw much potential in the king's land but because they wanted to secure a path to Katanga, a territory north of Barotseland with abundant mineral resources. Although the company eventually lost

²³ "Findings of the BSAC Annual Report for N. Rhodesia," *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 311, Vol. 13, March 16, 1912.

²⁴ Census, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 276, Vol. 12, July 8, 1911.

²⁵ H.M. McKerrow, "General Manager's [of NER] Letter to Head Office, January 25, 1911" (A1/2/15, National Archives of Zambia), p. 171.

Katanga to the Belgians, the BSACo continued with its ambivalent overtures to Lewanika because Barotseland could potentially serve as a bargaining chip in its negotiations with the Portuguese in the area.²⁶ Until a good use of Barotseland became obvious, the BSACo maintained it as a labor reserve and put little energy into the development of an administrative or economic structure.

Without doubt, the most contentious issue among the various European populations in North Western and Northern Rhodesia was what they referred to as the “native question.” In fact, the concern may better be described in this context as one over the “settler question” because the core of the dispute between the administration and European population was over the status and privilege white settlers expected to receive but of which the settlers felt denied. On issues that were clearly drawn across black and white lines, the European population had much to say and white skin alone did not bring unity among the settlers. The native question was particularly visible in discussions regarding labor and transcolonial development. Labor was a central feature of BSACo’s struggle in southern Africa. Indeed, after the Boer Wars, one observer noted that “[E]verything points to a great boom in Rhodesia... and Mr. Rhodes is scouring the universe for labour, which is the great difficulty.”²⁷ With the acquisition of the Upper Zambezi Valley, the Africans at and north of Victoria Falls represented a potential source of labor to help bolster production in other colonial territories. At the turn of the twentieth century the BSACo saw little need to keep the labor within North Western Rhodesia and instead focused on transcolonial uses of this newly acquired labor pool.

Labor is perhaps one of the most important factors that contributed to colonial development, whether in Africa or other colonies throughout the world. The future of colonies directly affected the future of their colonizers, so productivity was at the core of colonial operations and policies. Africa was a place where imperial powers “built their empires with the help of African arms and backs.”²⁸ Debates over labor and productivity reflected various interpretations of North Western Rhodesia’s emerging political economy. The BSACo, white settlers, African leaders, African

²⁶ Youé, *Proconsular Imperialism*, pp. 22–23.

²⁷ “News in Brief,” *Portsmouth Evening News*, August 22, 1901, p. 3.

²⁸ Frederick Cooper, *On the African Waterfront: Urban Disorder and the Transformation of Work in Colonial Mombasa* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 1.

workers, and Indians all shared a colonial space, but they also carried their own goals and imagined role in the colonial territory, and they understood their colonial reality in multiple, often conflicting ways. This is where colonialism shows its “messy” side, as imaginations dictated understandings of reality. Control of labor in the territory also reflected another important facet of colonial production through management of land and resources.

A stable labor supply, coupled with access to land offered colonial governments at least some assurance that the colonies could support themselves and push profits back to their metropolises. Colonial administrations all over Africa deliberated the “labor question” because labor was central to the success of the colonies.²⁹ In North Western Rhodesia, there were multiple definitions of colonial success, which explains why there was such dissension among the European administrators and settlers. The BSACO hoped to export laborers to Southern Rhodesia, while European settlers wanted to use the labor supply at their farms and businesses. Prior to the discovery of large tracts of copper in the 1920s, there were no large-scale demands for African laborers in North Western Rhodesia, which made them the perfect solution to labor shortages in Southern Rhodesia and even further south in South Africa.

It is unsurprising, then, that there was disagreement over the issue of African labor among Europeans living in North Western Rhodesia and the conflicts reflected the immediate concerns of various parties. For colonial administrators, labor was an important way to organize control and structure over Africans in the territory and was required for colonial economic growth. White entrepreneurs, especially those in Livingstone wanted to enlist African labor for their own enterprises. Tourism industry development at Victoria Falls depended on the availability of cheap and abundant African labor. The shops, hotels, restaurants, and bars, as well as the private homes, required a modest number of African laborers. Again,

²⁹ For selected readings concerning African labor under colonization, see Keletso E. Atkins, *The Moon is Dead! Give us our Money!: The Cultural Origins of an African Work Ethic, Natal, South Africa, 1843–1900* (Portsmouth and London: Heinemann and James Currey, 1993); Elias Mandala, *Work and Control in a Peasant Economy: A History of the Lower Tcbiri Valley in Malawi, 1859–1960* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); Patrick Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Labourers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860–1910* (Portsmouth, Johannesburg, and London: Heinemann, Witwatersrand University Press, and James Currey, 1994); Frederick Cooper, eds., *Struggle for the City: Migrant Labor, Capital, and the State in Urban Africa* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1983).

disputes over the potential of the tourism industry created weaknesses in the European population as Livingstonians felt disadvantaged and disenfranchised by an administration that showed little interest in the commercial exploitation of Victoria Falls. The additional question over Indian migration to North Western Rhodesia only intensified the internal stresses experienced by the white population.

From the African perspective, there were also internal struggles regarding wage labor. King Lewanika and other chiefs, indunas, and African elites throughout the colony were just as concerned with maintaining control over labor. Their authority over labor bolstered their economic position, something particularly desirable in the evolving political and economic landscape of this time period. Thus, the voluntary labor migration of Africans into external economies was a problem for African leaders. Lozi leaders felt particularly threatened because for decades before colonization they enjoyed the benefits of slave labor and tribute labor.³⁰ Colonialism effectively ended such systems and as more Africans joined the European wage economy African leaders feared a loss of power and wealth.

Disputes over labor significantly weakened the unity so important to maintaining power and financial strength. It is perhaps too easy to simplify the implications of the transition to a colonial, capitalist system, so it must be remembered that the process was convoluted and unfamiliar. Shula Marks captured the complexity of the emergence of a colonial capitalist system when she wrote, “[T]he contests over the form and pace of proletarianization took place at a bewildering number of levels: between capital and labor, between and within branches of the state, between different capitalist interests, and between all of these and the precolonial ruling class of chiefs and headmen in the countryside, as well as between the latter and their subjects.”³¹ The internal stresses felt among the white community, compounded with obvious conflicts between Africans and Europeans, disrupted colonial development and state formation. Life for all participants in the emerging colony seemed unstable to those living in it, as individuals and groups struggled to assert their interests over others.

The goals for North Western Rhodesia often appeared unclear, or, even worse, contradictory, to those living in and governing the colony. Control over labor and the land by the administration was absolutely necessary to

³⁰ For more on this discussion, see Arrington dissertation, chapter 1.

³¹ Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 5.

the creation of a strong colony, especially because they wanted to stifle internal development to benefit Southern Rhodesia. For different reasons and for other purposes, access to labor and land was also important to white entrepreneurs and African elites. All three groups felt unsatisfied with their ability to control the labor supply. It may be that, in fact, the group that was the most empowered, or at least felt least constrained, during this period of negotiation were the laborers themselves, who were in high demand and considered a high-stakes acquisition.

Europeans had multiple interests in obtaining cheap African labor. The colonial administration was particularly concerned with acquiring laborers to send south into Southern Rhodesia. This was obviously counter to the interests of the white settlers, whether they were entrepreneurs in the towns or farmers in the countryside. The administration focused on recruiting Africans from North Western Rhodesia to export to the mines and farms in Southern Rhodesia and this was a clear indication that they were less concerned with development north of the Zambezi.³² For white settlers whose livelihoods depended on the financial success of their businesses and farms, this was an outrageous colonial strategy. They correctly alleged that the BSACo firmly planted its resources and energy south of the Zambezi. The company director admitted that there was little encouragement of white settlement in Northern Rhodesia and that the BSACo's policy "was to develop Southern Rhodesia."³³ This confirmed the white settlers' perception that they lived under a government that had little use or interest in their presence.

The BSACo was much less interested in commercial enterprises in North Western Rhodesia than in other southern African territories. Although in many situations, European migration was welcomed into colonies and in cases such as Southern Rhodesia highly encouraged and facilitated by the administration, they had a much different approach to the settlement of North Western Rhodesia. The company was heavy-handed in its control over Europeans entering the territory. It was difficult to block European immigration into the towns but the company was able to control the settlement in the countryside through its policy of privileging African claims to land. The BSACo position on land settlement revealed the administration's lack of interest in developing the colony's internal economy. A letter written by Lawrence Aubrey Wallace, the Acting Administrator

³² Kenneth Vickery, *Black and White*, p. 44.

³³ BSACo policy, *The Livingstone Mail*, May 5, 1912.

of North Western Rhodesia, summarized a dispatch by Codrington, the Administrator of North Eastern Rhodesia. According to Wallace, “neither the Directors of the Company nor himself [Codrington, the head administrator of North Western Rhodesia] advocated any policy of general settlement of Europeans in the north...Neither would I advocate any general settlement of Europeans...but I would like to make grants of farms to suitable settlers in the manner in which this has been done in North-Eastern Rhodesia, where men whose good faith and character seem not doubtful are allowed to select and apply for the land...”³⁴ In this way, the administration was able to control who entered the territory. The company determined men worthy of the privilege, but could also make sure that the number who settled in North Western Rhodesia did not compromise the BSACo’s goal of exporting African labor out of the area.

To that end, the BSACo did allow some commercial cotton farmers into North Western Rhodesia to determine if it was a viable activity to pursue in the territory. In 1909, the Council of the British Cotton Growing Association was pleased to announce that “Some excellent cotton was grown in North Western Rhodesia last year, and a number of planters have now taken up the industry, there being about 1,000 acres under cotton cultivation at the present time, and the prospects are favourable.”³⁵ This is noteworthy for two reasons: first, it shows that the BSACo was still trying to figure out what it wanted to gain from this territory. While strongly emphasizing its lack of interest in bringing commercial farmers and white settlers to the territory, it explored the possibility of profiting from cotton farming. The BSACo still lacked a cohesive vision for how to exploit the territory as part of the larger, transcolonial project it had underway. Second, the presence of these farms suggested that the BSACo was hypocritical or at least contradictory in its message about African labor. Public references to exporting African labor south did not mesh with the reality of exploring labor-intensive cash crop farming initiatives.

Years later, the administration still struggled to maintain its policies regarding the protection of native rights and land settlement in the colony. It concluded that too many commercial farms would drain the local

³⁴ Letter from Acting Administrator, North Western Rhodesia to High Commissioner, Johannesburg, April 23, 1909 (CO 879/102. Enclosure in No.126, Public Records Office, Kew), p. 166.

³⁵ “Cotton Growing Association,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, July 15, 1909, p. 5.

labor pool, thus detracting from migration south of the Zambezi. The displacement of local populations would also result in an inability to rely on subsistence farming as the primary means of feeding Africans. If they could no longer produce their own food, the administration would be responsible for providing it for them. A dispatch from the Administrator of Northern Rhodesia summarized conversations from the General Missionary Conference and warned:

Since large portions of the country have already been alienated and ceded to European owners it is of the opinion that almost all the balance will be needed to meet the requirements of the native population...the Conference is strongly of the opinion that no more land should be alienated without permission of some authority appointed by the Colonial Office...This is the more urgent since fresh land is being constantly alienated, and the native people becoming seriously unsettled.³⁶

Once again, concern for the protection of Africans and the wish to minimize African resistance to colonial expansion trumped the desires of would-be European immigrants to the colony.

Administrators at the highest level were simply uninterested in development initiated by Europeans. Rather, they were more focused on maintaining an environment where Africans families were self-sufficient. With that achievement, more men were able to leave their homes for labor opportunities in Southern Rhodesia. This also meant that less money would need to be spent on the welfare programs and families would not feel undue hardships if some members sought work south of the Zambezi. This position frustrated R.T. Coryndon, the Administrator of North Western Rhodesia, because he actually saw great potential in the colony for internal production. In a letter to Cecil Rhodes, he argued,

I do not think anyone south of the Zambezi appreciates what is being done up here... This country is an unhealthy one, and our people must be fed and housed well or they will die...I want also to draw your attention to the fact that everything that has been done in the country has had to be created, and not merely carried on, and in the teeth of many obstacles and annoyances...I

³⁶ Copy of Dispatch from the Administrator of Northern Rhodesia forwarding a copy of resolutions regarding the provision of land for natives, which were passed at the General Missionary Recently held at Kafue, c.1922 (CO 879/120/3, Public Records Office, Kew), pp. 226–227.

am not blowing my own trumpet, but that of everyone in the country, when I say that the work done up here during the time that we have been up here has been thorough, hones, and far more than anyone appreciates.³⁷

Despite Coryndon’s appeals though, the BSACo refused to budge on their policy. They believed that the costs would outweigh the money and resources that came out of large-scale white settlement.

European settlers fixated on two major issues regarding labor and land in the colony. They complained that too much labor was sent south which depleted the labor pool they could access. Settlers were also concerned with the displacement of white laborers by cheaper African workers. They bitterly protested that Africans were given jobs that lower-class white men were available to fill. On the other hand, the administration felt it was the right and responsibility of the company to determine the “best” use of North Western Rhodesia’s able-bodied workers. These disputes exposed weaknesses that white settlers both perceived and experienced and threatened the stability and progress of the colony. It also exemplified the BSACo’s transcolonial vision and the ways it saw North Western Rhodesia fitting into its regional goals.

The BSACo did not mask their labor recruitment activities for Southern Rhodesian mines and farms. In fact, the administrators devoted much effort to ensuring that they controlled the movement and welfare of laborers from North Western Rhodesia. They were particularly concerned that independent recruiters negatively affected the process by providing as many workers as possible with little regard for the health or character of those workers. By the turn of the twentieth century, a BSACo-supported recruitment office hired North Western Rhodesian Africans to work in Southern Rhodesia. The Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau “recruited labourers in Northern Rhodesia for work on the farms and mines of Southern Rhodesia.”³⁸ The BSACo was so intent on procuring healthy, strong, and agreeable Africans to send to Southern Rhodesia that they developed policies to terminate the activities of independent recruiters in North Western Rhodesia. One report addressed the problem, and explained:

³⁷ Letter from Coryndon to Rhodes, November 27, 1901 (CO 417/343, Public Records Office, Kew), cited in Youé, *Proconsular Imperialism*, p. 32.

³⁸ Rangeley, “*Memoirs*,” p. 47.

Until recently the recruitment of labour from this country for employment in Southern Rhodesia, in as far as it was not confined to an organized and supervised body such as the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau has been attended with some unsatisfactory results... Since, however, the enactment of Proclamation No. 18 of 1907, under which a bond must be lodged or a sum of money deposited as security for the good behaviour of each Agent, whether in the employ of the Bureau or otherwise, the independent recruiter has for the most part ceased his operations and though other persons are not prohibited from collecting labour, the only Agents of whom the Administration now has practical cognizance are the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau, the agents of the Wankie Coal and Exploration Company and the Beira and Mashonaland and Rhodesia Railways.³⁹

The BSACo did not want to risk the consequences of sending weak or troublesome workers to Southern Rhodesia because it would affect production in that colony. They also worried about the health conditions experienced by the North Western Rhodesian migrants because if they returned with any contagious diseases the welfare of the local population was at risk. Secretary for Native Affairs Frank Worthington supported the argument that only one officially sanctioned labor recruiting organization, the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau, should be allowed to procure and manage workers from North Western Rhodesia. He further stipulated that it was to the best interest of the employers in Southern Rhodesia and the administration of North Western Rhodesia that under the watchful eye of the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau “inspection should continue, unbroken, from the day of recruitment, until the native has once more returned to his home.”⁴⁰ Worthington’s sense of administrative responsibility for monitoring the health of migrant labourers was based on previous experiences of unhealthy workers returning to their homes in North Western Rhodesia. In 1909, four men who worked in Wankie (Hwange) Colliery were sent back to North Western Rhodesia because they suffered from scurvy. The administration in Livingstone decided “that no further labour be supplied by the Bureau until matters have been remedied.”⁴¹ Although

³⁹ John Carden, “Report on the Supervision of Labour Recruited by the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau and Others for Employment in Southern Rhodesia,” January 10, 1908 (HC 1/2/33, National Archives of Zambia).

⁴⁰ Frank Worthington, “Secretary of Native Affairs’ Report. c.1910” (A 3/24/6 Location 13994, Vol. II, National Archives of Zambia).

⁴¹ Mr. Thomson, “Extract from Mr. Thomson’s Letter No. 253, December 4, 1909” (A 1/2/12 Location 3978, National Archives of Zambia).

this was a case of only four sick workers, the administration wanted assurance that its subjects returned to the colony as healthy as they left.

From the perspective of the company, labor recruitment under a sanctioned organization was ideal because they met their goal of providing workers to Southern Rhodesia without using their own resources and energy. Because they exported laborers, a highly valued commodity in Southern Rhodesia, the BSACo negotiated for what it considered proper treatment of the workers. This ensured the administration that returning migrants would not bring diseases that threatened the welfare of the local population. Of course, the white settlers viewed this labor recruitment as threatening because it circumscribed their opportunities to engage local workers. The administration's policy to export laborers created an obstacle to those within the colony who wanted to use African labor for their own benefit. The colonial state made it difficult for the internal development desired by so many white settlers. An advertisement placed by the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau in *The Livingstone Mail* notified farmers in North Western Rhodesia that they could use the services of the Bureau to procure workers.⁴² The fact that farmers could not independently contract their own workers surely inflamed that segment of the white population that already felt slighted and unprotected by the colonial government. They had to rely on the BSACo-sanctioned Labour Bureau to hire workers, which meant, at least in the minds of the white farmers, that the administration had full control over the colony's labor pool. It was clear to the Europeans in North Western Rhodesia that the labor needs of Southern Rhodesia far outweighed their own.

When semi-skilled African workers or African artisans gained employment in higher valued positions tensions developed between white settlers and the BSACo, as the Europeans felt further insecure about their status in the colonial social order. In some ways the problem stemmed from European activities in the area. Missionaries and the BSACo opened schools and offered various forms of education for Africans. Early mission schools focused on basic reading and arithmetic and accepted both male and female students. As education expanded in the colony, male students enrolled in schools that were more vocational in nature. At such institutions, African men received training for various skilled labor positions. Mission schools were the first to be established, and Francois Coillard, who served as a missionary for the *Societe des Missions Evangeliques de*

⁴²Labor Bureau advertisement, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 203, Vol. 9, February 12, 1910.

Paris, helped establish the first schools in the territory. In 1887 a school was built at Sefula, a mission station located in the heart of Barotseland. The school at first catered to the sons of elite Lozi and as such was geared more toward literacy training and Christian worship. Coillard's vision was much different than the reality of his first school and he declared, "[W]hat we need here, and what would do enormous good, is an industrial school...I cannot blind myself: I see ever more clearly the immense services that industry and commerce, in upright and Christian hands, could render to the evangelisation of this country."⁴³

Coillard's idea took root and by the first decade of the twentieth century opportunities opened for Africans to receive vocational training. Although schools remained available to African students more interested in academic pursuits, the industrial schools were also popular. These schools obviously contributed to the preparation of skilled African workers. *The Livingstone Mail* discussed the progression of African education and in 1907 stated that some tax money collected from Africans was "set aside for the support of schools, already established near Lealui, where the natives are given an elementary education, and practical, technical instruction in the arts and crafts of carpentering, brick-laying and -making, blacksmithing, etc."⁴⁴ One of the elite schools, the Barotse National School, included a workshop as a significant component of the curriculum. According to one internal assessment of the school, training in carpentry was a favored activity among many of the pupils. Williams, the school's principal, reported, "[T]he boys are most enthusiastic over their work and are also very eager to resume work in the carpenter's shop."⁴⁵ There is strong evidence that African men had growing access to industrial schools as the colony further developed. Undoubtedly, the education some Africans received affected how they imagined themselves fitting into the changing economic and social landscape.

Missionaries, administrators, and some settlers welcomed such training as the most appropriate type of education to offer African males but education also worried Europeans. The opinion of one long-term trader in North Western and North Eastern Rhodesia represented the view of many settlers when he implored that the administration "[L]et there be

⁴³ Coillard, *On the Threshold*, p. 292.

⁴⁴ African education article, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 92, Vol. 4, December 25, 1907.

⁴⁵ "Report on the work done by the Barotse National School during the month ended 31st January 1908" (A1/13/1, National Archives of Zambia).

a limited, general, slow, but progressive education [for Africans], advancing pace by pace with their surroundings; but never, never a few hundred educated natives representing thousands of savages.”⁴⁶ White settlers were increasingly concerned that African laborers found employment in positions that should only be given to Europeans and that the racial hierarchy was often forgotten in work situations. They believed that education was partially responsible for the presence of African competition in skilled labor positions. A particular concern was that skilled workers would be placed in supervisory positions. One newspaper editorial contributor advised:

I hold the opinion that the position of the white, skilled workmen in this part of Africa should, as far as the labour of rough carpentry, brick laying, etc., is concerned be that of supervision director of native artisans. The health conditions of this country do not admit of sustained, hard, manual labour on the part of a white man, but with the employment of natives a white man, who has any knowledge of his trade, can generally be usefully employed at fair wages. In all the more advanced trades and handicrafts, wherever any real skill or judgment has to be exercised, the white man has no need to fear the competition of the native.⁴⁷

Perhaps the most noteworthy word in this previous quote is “competition.” Clearly, the white settlers of North Western Rhodesia felt insecure in their position in the colonial hierarchy. They knew the company’s policies favored natives’ rights over settlers’ interests, they had little control over the establishment of major towns, and they felt little administrative support in their plan to develop local industries, especially those that contributed to tourism development. The labor hierarchy was an important battlefield and the settlers increasingly feared any advantages given to Africans, including industrial training.

By the 1910s, white settlers obsessed over the position of Africans in the labor and economic hierarchy of the colony. They also quickly recognized and advertised instances when they felt the company or white businesses placed white settlers in a disadvantaged position. This preoccupation illuminated yet another internal division within the colonizing population. Although it seemed natural that the white administration and white settlers would work together and protect each other’s interests,

⁴⁶ Mr. Teixeira-de-Mattos, “Letter from Mr. Teixeira-de-Mattos, Kambove, to Vice-Consul Beak, London. January 6, 1909” (A1/1/7 Location 3972, National Archives of Zambia).

⁴⁷ “WHITE versus BLACK,” *The Livingstone Mail*, July 13, 1907, No. 68, Vol. 3.

North Western Rhodesia epitomized the conflicts that plagued colonial state formation. There was a deep divide between the two parties, and many white settlers shared the concern that their position was not getting any stronger.

An editorial, most likely written by L.F. Moore (editor-in-chief of *The Livingstone Mail*), informed readers that “[I]t came to our knowledge that the Zambesi Boat Club was getting its printing done at the Gout Printing Works. The explanation forthcoming was that they were obliged to ‘go to the cheapest market.’ (We may here remind our readers that the Administration’s employs native compositors, while we employ members of the Typographical Union).”⁴⁸ It was obviously unacceptable to at least some members of the white population that some businesses chose to work with companies that hired skilled Africans. Soon after that complaint, a blurb printed in the same newspaper issued the following newsflash: “We hear, with disgust, that the new offices and buildings at N’dola are to be erected by skilled native labourers...We hope we have been misinformed...”⁴⁹ Again, there is clear evidence that white settlers felt threatened by the employment of African laborers.

This internal tension threatened the cohesion of the white population living in North Western Rhodesia, most who were settled around the Falls and still imagined the site to be their ticket to financial security. There was a line drawn between the two factions. Entrepreneurs came to the territory with long-term plans, but the BSACo administrators served relatively short-term tenures and moved on as they received promotions or reassignments. White settlers who lived in the colony for many years showed concern when it seemed Africans advanced at a quicker pace. They grew particularly uncomfortable when companies hired skilled Africans over Europeans, even though it was financially a well-conceived strategy for the businesses. This showed a real threat to the financial opportunities available to the white settlers. Companies saved money because the wages of skilled Africans were so much lower than that of skilled Europeans, yet they provided quality equal to that of their white counterparts. For the settlers most concerned about these incidents, the issue was less about the economy and more about racial hierarchy. It seems that at least some felt that Africans should not be trained into skilled positions at all. One editorial laid out an equation to solve the labor question. The author wrote,

⁴⁸ Editorial, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 204, Vol. 9, February 19, 1910.

⁴⁹ Skilled Native laborers, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 252, Vol. 11, March 4, 1911.

“The problem is to obtain a sufficiency of unskilled labour at less than its value.”⁵⁰ Africans were not meant to be skilled; that only compounded problems in the colony. Instead, according to this writer and other settlers, the bigger concern was acquiring unskilled labor at bargain prices. If that strategy proved possible, then the higher wages of skilled European laborers could be covered and the value attached to white labor would be increased.

There were multiple discourses on questions over the labor hierarchy that reflected ideas about race in North Western Rhodesia during the first decades of colonization. On the one hand, many Europeans supported education to help train African laborers. By doing so, Africans could be put to work for less money than their European counterparts. On the other hand, some Europeans feared that the competition would displace settlers like themselves. The insecurities felt by white settlers stemmed from economic competition with people they perceived as racially inferior. Europeans translated the presence of equally skilled Africans as a real threat to their opportunities in the new colony.

Concerns also arose over the issue of merchant rights in the colony, as Africans and Indians engaged in commercial enterprises. *The Livingstone Mail* issued a warning in 1910 that “native traders are coming into Livingstone, and the local merchants have lost them [Africans] as customers.”⁵¹ This was an undisguised threat to the economic livelihood of Livingstonians, many with established shops that catered to tourists, white townsmen, and urbanized Africans. African merchants sold items far cheaper and Europeans feared their customers would choose to purchase items from them instead. The company did nothing to discourage these African enterprises, which further intensified the divide between the administration and white settlers.

The immigration of Indians into North Western Rhodesia stimulated more concerns for white settlers. During the first decades of colonization, the BSACo showed little concern about the impact of allowing Indian merchants into the colony even though they posed obvious challenges to European businesses. A letter to the editor of the newspaper expressed outrage that Indians were not hampered in their activities. He complained that “[A]s a newcomer to Livingstone may I express my surprise at the support given to Indians here, especially to the fruit hawkers. A long stay

⁵⁰ Labor question solution, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 290, Vol. 12, October 14, 1911.

⁵¹ Native traders, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 203, Vol. 9, February 12, 1910.

in S. Rhodesia made me acquainted with the fact that Indians are the most insanitary [*sic*], herding together in the most filthy and abominable conditions...It is to be hoped that the authorities here will wake up to a sense of their duty and inquire into these dwelling places [of Indians].”⁵² This situation clearly did not meet many white settlers’ expectations in terms of the emerging racial hierarchy.

The Indian question was hardly a new one, for settlers or administrators. Although white businesses perceived the presence of Indian merchants as a threat to their livelihood, some administrators believed that the price competition ultimately benefited the colony. However, in 1922 a BSACo Advisory Council passed a resolution “that the Immigration Laws be amended so as to prevent the entry of any Asiatics into this Territory.”⁵³ The company re-thought its position on allowing in more Indian traders as they considered the future of the colony. It may seem that this turn-around reflected the influence of popular opinion on company policy but more likely the resolution was passed because, if enacted, it would bolster the BSACo’s initiative to keep internal development to a minimum in this particular colony. The company still envisioned the southward export of labor as the greatest contribution made by Northern Rhodesia. It may also be explained by the discovery of large copper deposits further north in the colony. By the early 1920s, the BSACo realized the potential mining opportunities, and wanted to control the exploitation of that resource while also limiting the number of outsiders vying for a piece of the profits.

As labor was at the heart of many settler-company disputes, it was rather bold of the BSACo to publicly employ large numbers of local Africans to assist with company projects. Although the goal was to send as many Africans for work in Southern Rhodesia, the BSACo required African assistance in North Western Rhodesia. This of course took away more labourers from white settlers who were already angered that so much labor was exported south of the Zambezi. A report by Colonel Leveson who was sent by the BSACo to perform surveys demonstrates the relatively large number of laborers required for one company official’s activities. Leveson’s report included an explanation of why his work took longer than anticipated. He blamed transport arrangements as unsatisfactory and inconsistent. Leveson explained, “the Company kindly undertook

⁵² Indian traders, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 421, April 24, 1914.

⁵³ “Extract of Meeting of Advisory Council, Monday, 17th July, 1922” (CO 879/120/3, Public Records Office, Kew), pp. 195–196.

to supply all the porters required by my party...it was arranged that each frontier district should furnish porters in turn,” but because the system deteriorated, “By the 20th August out of 160, less than 100 remained...”⁵⁴ Clearly, company business required a sizeable work corps. The number of African laborers available to white settlers in the colony was undermined even further by company activities. The realities of limited access to labor served as a constant reminder to Europeans that their needs were low on the BSACo’s priority list. It is not surprising they exhibited signs of paranoia and insecurity about their status in the colony.

Records also show that the labor obtained for use by the company was not always “free labor”; that is, the laborers were acquired under coercion. This was definitively contrary to official BSACo policy, which decried the notion of forced labor, although it was perhaps not surprising. Upon entering Barotseland in the late nineteenth century, one of the first orders of business undertaken by the BSACo was to abolish slavery, perhaps more reflective of British popular sentiment than of a deliberate business policy. Despite that official order though, there is evidence that the company was guilty of forcing Africans to work for BSACo administrators. A letter to High Commissioner Alfred Milner recognized that the acquisition of labor for Leverson’s survey project contradicted with company labor policy. Joseph Chamberlain wrote to Milner, “You should draw the attention...that the labour with which he [Leverson] was supplied from the Matoko tribe was not free labour, the Chiefs of the kraals having been ordered to supply the numbers required. As you are aware, the new regulations do not admit of anything of the nature of compulsory labour.”⁵⁵ The BSACo imposed and enforced laws considered by the white settlers as restrictive and unfair, but was obviously hypocritical when it came to meeting its own labor requirements.

This was not the only case that exposed the company for engaging in activities expressly condemned in formal regulations. Ten years later, there were still accusations that the BSACo illegally obtained African workers. Venables, a white settler in North Western Rhodesia voiced his concerns about company officials exploiting Africans and breaking their own policies regarding forced labor. In a complaint written to Selborne, the High

⁵⁴ “Lieutenant-Colonel Leverson to the Marquess of Salisbury,” October 15, 1898 (CO 879/57. Enclosure in No. 64, Public Records Office, Kew), p. 131.

⁵⁵ Mr. Chamberlain to High Commissioner Sir Alfred Milner, February 10, 1899 (No.64, Public Records Office, Kew), p. 130.

Commissioner in Cape Town, Venables decried the treatment of Africans in his area. He explained:

Another of the grievances of which the natives complain, is that they have been made to proceed to work through the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau, against their wills. The first occasion was in 1907, when Native Messengers, belonging to the District Official, collected together the able-bodied men, most of whom, with the exception of the Headmen and certain others, were sent to work through the local recruiting Agent of the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau, they state that they were never asked if they wished to proceed to work through this recruiting Agent, the only option they were given, was to state in what capacity they wished to be employed.⁵⁶

Interestingly, this is one of the few complaints lodged by a settler that the administration treated Africans improperly. More often, they claimed that the company gave preferential treatment to African subjects. Venables served as a watchdog over the Africans in his area and was quick to point out BSACo's shortcomings. Whether he was motivated by anger that he could not access African labor because of company activities is unclear, but he did provide reports that BSACo's policies were not uniformly followed. It seems ideology was not always put into practice by officials in the field.

On the issue of forced labor, there was some outright support for the company to engage in acquiring laborers through coercion. One contributor argued in a newspaper editorial, "[T]o leave the native in the veld...is to leave him to degenerate into a prolific nuisance. To force him to work is only to assimilate his condition to that of a white man. None of us would work if we were not forced to..."⁵⁷ This show of support only contributed further to the tensions between the settlers and BSACo. The company was clear in its policy, if not in its practice, regarding the illegality of forced labor. That settlers actually supported the concept was contrary to the laws under which they lived and contradicted one of the major justifications for settling the area in the first place—the abolition of slavery.

Another troubling aspect of life under BSACo was the white settler's perception that the entire *raison d'être* for company control over North Western Rhodesia was to serve its other colonial holdings. The BSACo acquired and administered its territories as part of a transcolonial strategy and vision. The Cape-to-Cairo dream was always factored into the

⁵⁶ File dated March 6, 1909 (A1/1/8, National Archives of Zambia), pp. 130–134.

⁵⁷ Editorial, *The Livingstone Mail*, No. 202, Vol. 9, February 5, 1910.

equation, as was concern for using new colonial acquisitions to solidify the British Empire’s expansion in southern and central Africa. Quite often, white settlers around Victoria Falls cried foul about the lack of support they received as the BSACo focused its policies on a grander scale, which often put North Western Rhodesia in a peripheral position. The issue of town site location in the vicinity of Victoria Falls seemed to be a never-ending source of contention between white settlers and the BSACo. Old Drifters felt trampled on when their site was essentially condemned and they were pushed to move to the Livingstone site. Once there though, Livingstonians worked hard to develop a cosmopolitan oasis in this African frontier.

Livingstone’s designation as administrative headquarters of North Western Rhodesia should have indicated the end of this divisive issue. In late 1907, Lord Selborne hinted at resolution between the BSACo and white settlers, when “[R]eplying to an address from a deputation of the inhabitants of Livingstone...[he] said he was glad to find that matters on which dissatisfaction had been expressed with the Chartered Company had been equitably adjusted by the Directors of the Company...”⁵⁸ However, harmony was short-lived, as the BSACo began publicly exploring the idea of establishing a town on the southern side of Victoria Falls, in Southern Rhodesia. In early 1908, after the directors’ visit to Rhodesia, the BSACo announced it had “decided to proceed immediately with the survey of a township on the south bank of the Zambesi, in the vicinity of the Victoria Falls. A suitable site has been indicated by Sir Charles Metcalfe where such a township can be established without in any way detracting from the natural beauties of the locality.”⁵⁹ Already feeling slighted, the white population of North Western Rhodesia was incensed. This move, from their perspective, offered proof of their theory that the BSACo was unconcerned about their interests and survival. For those running hotels, shops, and restaurants that catered to tourist traffic, this was a particularly alarming development. According to the plan, “The splendid reaches of the Zambesi above the Victoria Falls [thus, from the north bank] and the many delightful backwaters and islands will be made accessible to visitors by means of a tramway from Livingstone Station, on the north bank, to the boathouse above the confluence of the Maramba River.”⁶⁰ In other

⁵⁸ “Business Notes,” *Dundee Courier*, September 4, 1907, p. 2.

⁵⁹ “Proposed Township Near Victoria Falls,” *Aberdeen Journal*, January 28, 1908, p. 5.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

words, the North Western Rhodesian side of the Falls would be a day trip, with guests staying in Southern Rhodesia. This was the fear of Old Drifters when they were relocated away from the banks of the Zambezi. The new proposed town-site for the southern bank was within a short walking distance to the Falls, whereas Livingstone was built on a site almost seven miles away from the Falls.

Worse for Livingstone's entrepreneurs than the proposed proximity of the new town-site to the Falls though was the vision the BSACo directors described for this new tourist town. According to one source, "[I]t is expected that, in the course of a few months, increased and improved accommodation and facilities will be provided for this spot, which already attracts thousands of tourists every year."⁶¹ This was an affront to the white entrepreneurs in Livingstone who felt they worked hard in an inhospitable political climate to achieve their successes. The BSACo's vision of the southern town suggested that Livingstone was not able to cater to the Falls' many visitors and that the town's amenities did not meet the needs of modern tourists. It also implied that unlike what Livingstonians experienced, the entrepreneurs to the south would enjoy BSACo support to make their businesses successful.

The BSACo's pursuit of this plan sparked an intense backlash among white settlers in North Western Rhodesia. For many of the whites living there, financial success and security hinged on their connection to Victoria Falls and the potential tourism-based economy. Their concerns were intensified by rumors throughout other BSACo holdings. One article reported, "[A] rumour was prevalent in Salisbury recently to the effect that the B.S.A. Company were gradually abandoning commercial enterprise in N.W. Rhodesia owing to the fact that they had no commercial rights in Barotseland...The removal of Livingstone to the south of the river was mentioned as evidence of the company's desire to evacuate N.W. Rhodesia, and also the fact that the schemes for the allotment of farms had recently been withdrawn."⁶² Sir Lewis Mitchell, a BSACo official, explained to the reporter that he believed the rumor came from misinterpretations of the decision to move the administrative capital from Kalomo to Livingstone and seemed to divorce himself from the fact that other BSACo officials had shared the plans to move forward with a town on the south bank of the Zambezi at Victoria Falls. When pressed by the

⁶¹ "London by Day & Night," *Western Times*, January 27, 1908, p. 3.

⁶² "Sir Lewis Mitchell and Rhodesia," *Cornishman*, June 4, 1908, p. 6.

presentation of material from *The Livingstone Mail*, Sir Lewis emphasized his belief that there was just confusion about the move from Kalomo to Livingstone, but also conceded:

As regards the suggestion for a Falls township I don't think the company will favour that for a considerable time to come, and, at any rate, it will need to be thoroughly discussed between the people and the Government. At present it certainly is not politic to have two townships within six or seven miles of each other...there are people in Livingstone who are spending a lot of money on their stores, which are increasing in number, and it is extremely unlikely that they will want the Government to assist the establishment of rival stores six miles away. It is a delicate question...And then I would like to point out that there is a daily train service between Livingstone and the Falls, and passengers can be taken up or set down when and where they choose...⁶³

In this statement, Sir Lewis confirmed the outrage felt by white Livingstonians, and demonstrated that he, as a representative of the BSACo, understood exactly what was at stake. There was concern that Livingstone and perhaps even all of North Western Rhodesia was being phased out among the white population living near Victoria Falls and those living even farther north. Although they certainly did not embrace the BSACo, to be disenfranchised from the expanding British Empire in southern and central Africa was cause for obvious anxiety. It seemed increasingly certain that the dreams of these white settlers were not going to become reality.

The disdain and distrust felt toward the BSACo was never hidden and when the issue of a separate town to the south of the Falls was discussed, Livingstone civic leaders like L.F. Moore did not mince words in their correspondence with the administration. In 1908, even as the Livingstone town site was settled and expanding to serve as an administrative center and some BSACo officials were dismissing the idea of a town at Victoria Falls in Southern Rhodesia, plans for that town were drawn up and stakes were plotted for businesses. Moore engaged in a heated correspondence with the BSACo about the proposal to establish stands for sale at Victoria Falls on the southern side of the river. Among the plans discussed was that stand owners in Livingstone may give up their claim to those stands and be allocated—for a fee—a plot in the town under construction on the

⁶³ *Ibid.*

southern side of the Falls. In a letter to the Estates Office in Salisbury, Moore wrote:

...I have to inform you that I have seen the plan referred to in your letter, and that I should be satisfied to make my selection from amongst the stands specified. I am, however, amazed at the latter part of your letter. Do you imagine that any businessman would be so stupid as to surrender his stand on the conditions you suggest? You offer, in plain terms, a piece of remote veld for the price of L65.10.0. You are not going to make a township at Victoria Falls; you are not going to make roads, or build government buildings; you are, in consequence of the depression, going to let the matter stand over indefinitely.⁶⁴

Moore was clearly not convinced that BSACo's plan to help support the growth of a town south of the Falls was genuine and even if it was, the terms were extremely unfriendly to the entrepreneurs already begrudgingly settled in Livingstone. In subsequent correspondence, the administration responded to Moore by telling him his stand fee would be waived but to be aware that no roads would be built in the foreseeable future because of concerns about the strength of South Africa's economy, legitimizing Moore's assertion that the plan to develop a town was insincere.⁶⁵ This is a clear example of the transcolonial nature of BSACo's development policy; the territories peripheral to South Africa were given even less priority and resources when there was economic instability at the core.

Although there was never any indication that white settlers planned to revolt against the colonial government, it was obvious that there was discord between the European population and the administrators. The settlers worried less about the lack of direct support they received from BSACo and instead searched for evidence that the state offered unfair assistance to Africans. Arguably, their fears were well founded; BSACo policy did little to encourage or help Europeans settled in North Western Rhodesia. The disputes between the two parties served as a reminder that race was not the only factor that brought cohesion to white populations in

⁶⁴ Letter to the Estates Office, Salisbury from L.F. Moore, November 23, 1908 (folder labeled Central African Archives Item No. L. 2/2/175/62 Southern Rhodesia, National Archives of Zimbabwe).

⁶⁵ Letter from Estates Office, Salisbury to L.F. Moore, November 18, 1908 (folder labeled Central African Archives Item No. L. 2/2/175/62 Southern Rhodesia, National Archives of Zimbabwe).

Africa. The entrepreneurs found much more freedom, and consequently perceived grander possibilities, in their ramshackle settlement at Old Drift than they did in the organized town of Livingstone. It seems a European heyday fleetingly slipped by as the settlers felt increasingly stifled and disadvantaged by the administration that they thought should treat them as proper citizens.

A DREAM DENIED: LEWANIKA AND THE DETERIORATION OF POWER UNDER COLONIAL RULE

While the enthusiasm and optimism of white settlers faded in response to unwelcome administrative policies, King Lewanika also experienced a shift in his relationship with the BSACo. He too felt increasingly insecure as colonial governance chiseled away at his sense of authority. The historical record indicates that in many ways Lewanika was content to work with the BSACo, which made colonial expansion north of the Zambezi relatively easy. During the decades after the formalization of the relationship between Lewanika and the BSACo, a pattern of both complicity and contention developed as the king and the company battled over visions for the colony's future. The honeymoon was over and Lewanika found himself struggling to assert authority in the new political system. The BSACo effectively phased out the king's real power, reducing him to an influential rather than powerful figure in the colony.

Lewanika was disillusioned with the BSACo after the Lochner Concession which made many promises but resulted in little action. By the end of the 1890s though, the BSACo established a stronger presence in the territory and Lewanika turned his attention to strengthening his position within North Western Rhodesia (and eventually Northern Rhodesia). Although his interests at first appeared harmonious with the Company's agenda, the King's vision of his role in the new colony clearly differed from that of the BSACo and the two parties spent decades negotiating the terms of their relationship. Lewanika never threatened the BSACo or British government with words of resistance or potential violence, and in that regard, he appeared content with his relationship with the colonizers. Despite that decided lack of violence though, the historical record documents disparate visions and Lewanika was unafraid of vocalizing his concerns. Thus, the king and the colonial administration developed a relationship that was simultaneously (and often exaggeratedly) friendly and contentious.

From the early days of BSACo activities north of the Zambezi, Lewanika worked to ensure that he benefited from his relationship with the company. Letters to and from the Lozi king demonstrated his desire to maintain political power and generate economic advantages. These letters document the trajectory of chiefly authority in African colonial contexts; his friendly relationship with the colonizers allowed him to hold a position of political and economic influence, but all the while his actual power crumbled. In early exchanges between Lewanika and the BSACo there are signs that there was a shared vision of Lewanika as the African figure-head of North Western Rhodesia. Coryndon, the first administrator of the territory, willingly afforded the Lozi king certain privileges. In October 1900, he reiterated an agreement between the BSACo and Lewanika and his advisers. Coryndon wrote, "...I see no reason why you should not be paid half the amounts received for licenses issued for shooting game, and the Company guarantees to pay you such sums. As regards the drift at Kazungula and Victoria Falls I agree that you shall have the option of crossing loads—of course at a tariff to be arranged between us—and I agree to lend you my white boat at Kazungula and my large red canoe at the Falls whenever you require them..."⁶⁶ Coryndon was all too happy to compensate the Lozi king who demanded relatively little.

Lewanika subtly insisted that the company reward him for his assistance and Coryndon was willing to oblige with the king's wishes. For the company, it was a small price to pay for the concessions Lewanika so easily signed at the end of the nineteenth century. It is especially interesting to note that this agreement proffered Lewanika control over two waterways that were not clearly under his pre-concession jurisdiction. In particular, the Tonga-Leya previously managed the Victoria Falls drift. Because it was advantageous for the BSACo to work with Lewanika in the early days of colonial development, there was noticeable cooperation between the king and the administration based on a shared agenda. By agreeing with Lewanika's self-assessment of his political sphere of influence, the BSACo expedited the colonization process. It would appear that in some ways, the process moved too quickly; the BSACo gained access to a large territory without having a clear purpose for the land and its resources. While Lewanika imagined his expanding power, white entrepreneurs dreamed about developing a tourism industry, and African workers found more

⁶⁶R.T. Coryndon, "Letter to Lewanika," dated October 15, 1900 (A2/2/1, National Archives of Zambia).

localized opportunities to enter the new wage economy, the BSACo was still trying to figure out how North Western Rhodesia fit into its transcolonial vision for the larger region.

Early in his relationship with the company, Lewanika exemplified the type of king any colonial body would be pleased to encounter. In a letter to High Commissioner Milner in Cape Town in 1899, Lewanika offered flattering words and assurances of his loyalty, but also subtly hinted at a problem facing the Lozi state. He reported that Dutchmen entered Batoka land, which Lewanika appropriated as part of his empire under agreements with the BSACo. Lewanika expressed anger that the headman Monze (who it should be remembered caused problems for the Lozi and BSACo when he resisted Lewanika’s claims to his land) allowed the Dutch nationals into the territory. He assured the BSACo that he did not “want anyone to be in my country except the British subject; because I am under Her Majesty’s Imperial Government...I am indeed very glad to hear from the Major R.T. Coryndon, the British representative, that there is a law fixed by the High Commissioner to prevent such men as these Dutchmen to come in the country.”⁶⁷

Interestingly, Lewanika explained that he was concerned that white men, such as the Dutch travelers, might start relationships with African women and possibly spark tensions between African men and the European meddlers. By offering this as his reason for worry, Lewanika not only showed his loyalty to the British but also reassured them that he found inter-racial intimate relationships undesirable. Milner’s response to the king was that “I am as anxious to prevent such trouble as you.”⁶⁸ The BSACo felt relief that the territory’s most influential chief spoke against something so potentially problematic from an administrative perspective.

The presence of the Dutchmen was hardly a real concern for Lewanika. Although it irritated him that Monze allowed them into the territory, it is doubtful that the Lozi king really cared about a couple of drifters. After his discussion about the unwelcome Dutchmen, Lewanika turned to an issue that truly was critical to his position. Without actually asking for help, Lewanika casually mentioned that the “thing I am much doubting about is the boundaries on the west. I am afraid the Portuguese may

⁶⁷ Letter from Lewanika, Lealui, Barotseland to High Commissioner Alfred Milner, Cape Town, January 2, 1899 (CO 879/57, Public Records Office, Kew).

⁶⁸ Letter from High Commissioner Milner, Cape Town to Lewanika, Barotseland, April 1899 (CO 879/57, Public Records Office, Kew).

steal my country there.”⁶⁹ With this note, Lewanika appealed to the company’s competitive nature. They did not want Portuguese traders in their territory, particularly because the Portuguese often traded in guns and slaves. The BSACo was clear on its mission to abolish the slave trade, but they were also committed to keeping guns out of the hands of Africans in North Western Rhodesia. W.H. Milton, an administrator based in Salisbury, advised High Commissioner Milner to enact a law “forbidding, under severe penalties, the introduction of arms and ammunition into Northern Rhodesia and their sale except under a permit granted by an authorised official.”⁷⁰ Lewanika was well aware of the BSACo’s goal to rid the area of Portuguese traders. He was less concerned with issues over gun and slave trades and much more interested in securing his boundaries. The Portuguese traders worked along the western border between Barotseland and Mbunda land. The Lozi king had long attempted to claim the Mbunda as part of his empire and he was trying to use the British to achieve that goal. If the BSACo claimed the western territory in question Lewanika would finally officially rule over the Mbunda inhabitants. It was to that end that he constantly reminded the company about the Portuguese presence along the border.

Lewanika continued to show his loyalty to the BSACo while he also reasserted his claim to vast regional power. In 1906, Lewanika reiterated the terms of the Concession of 1900 which allowed him to grant “land anywhere in the Territory over which I am Paramount Chief, that is to say within the boundaries of Barotziland, North Western Rhodesia, with the exception of the country in the Barotse valley and round Sesheke.”⁷¹ The Barotse Valley and Sesheke were home to Lewanika and his closest advisers and was the heart of the Lozi empire. In another statement he reasserted control over the Tonga and Ila while reminding the BSACo of his complicity with their agenda when he swore that he gave the company the right to lease land “in the Batoka and Mashukulumbwe country.”⁷² The BSACo requested these sworn statements to ensure clarity for their

⁶⁹Letter from Lewanika, Lealui, Barotseland to High Commissioner Alfred Milner, Cape Town, January 2, 1899 (CO 879/57, Public Records Office, Kew).

⁷⁰Letter from W.H. Milton, Salisbury to High Commissioner Milner, Cape Town, March 17, 1899 (FO 2/246, Public Records Office, Kew).

⁷¹Letter from Lewanika, Lealui, to BSACo Board. London, January 23, 1906 (A 3/21, Location 3991. No. B. 34, National Archives of Zambia).

⁷²Letter from Lewanika, Lealui to BSACo Board, London, March 13, 1906 (A 3/21 Location 3991. No. B. 34, National Archives of Zambia).

own purposes of governance and it offered Lewanika another opportunity to assert his control over the Tonga and Ila while he protected the most important parts of Barotseland proper.

Around the same time that Lewanika was asked for statements that clarified his agreements with the BSACo, his relationship with the administrative body slowly shifted. The correspondences between the chief and administrators carried a new terse tone and the BSACo showed more impatience with Lewanika than in earlier exchanges. Lewanika expressed interest in allowing Ethiopian missionaries to visit and perhaps settle in Lealui, his hometown. Coryndon, Administrator of North Western Rhodesia, could not hide his disgust for Lewanika's idea and was irritated that Lewanika was in contact with the group. He wrote:

Mr. Coillard and Mr. Jalla (European missionaries) were friends of yours for many years, and I am a friend of yours for more than seven years; now how can you listen to the advice of the Ethiopian Missionaries who have just come and about whom you know nothing? It is not true that I told you you could invite the Ethiopian Missionaries. It is true that your country is open to all good churches; the French Mission, the Roman Catholics, the Primitive Methodists are good churches, but I have told you plainly in Lealui that the Ethiopian is not a good church. You like them because their Missionaries are black people and because they talk nicely to you and do not tell you when you do wrong as Mr. Coillard did.⁷³

Coryndon not only lambasted the chief for his relationship with the Ethiopians, he also reminded Lewanika of the “favor” the BSACo provided by ensuring that the Germans and Portuguese stayed out of his territory. Coryndon also referenced a statement that Lewanika made in a letter that suggested “that the Chartered Company would like to put the people in darkness.”⁷⁴ The administrator argued that was far from reality and that the king need not be influenced by such bad characters as the Ethiopian missionaries. This letter demonstrated Lewanika's growing distrust of the BSACo, as well as the administration's frustration and rather patronizing attitude toward the king.

Lewanika's sense of insecurity only intensified after that exchange. In 1910 he wrote a letter to James Fair, the Resident Commissioner of

⁷³ Letter from R.T. Coryndon to Lewanika, Lealui, January 3, 1905 (IN 1/1/7, National Archives of Zambia).

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Southern Rhodesia in which he asked for his own clarifications. It is evident from Fair's response that Lewanika was anxious about his status and authority in North Western Rhodesia. Fair assured the nervous king in response to his first question that he did still have power to rule the Reserve (Barotseland proper). He also promised Lewanika that the BSACo would "sell no land to a native without reference to the Paramount Chief..." and "that natives will not be removed with the Paramount Chief being informed."⁷⁵ Lewanika was forced to question the meaning of his identity and the true depth of his power, both of which seemed alarmingly irrelevant as the BSACo solidified its presence in North Western Rhodesia.

The king who used the BSACo to reach new heights in power was quickly deflated once the administration got what they needed from him. Although there was no plan to remove the king from a position of influence, the company gradually stripped him of the power he so obviously craved. Lewanika's perception of an equal partnership with the British Crown gave way to the fear and anxiety associated with loss of power. In 1906 the administration pressured him to truly abolish slavery, and all forms of forced/ tribute labor,⁷⁶ which further distanced Lewanika from his desire for increased power. By the time North Western and North Eastern Rhodesia merged, Lewanika was little more than a figurehead.

Another issue that put a strain on Lewanika's relationship with the BSACo was that of slavery. While Lewanika was happy to help end the external trade, an activity he had minimal involvement in, he was much more reluctant to end his own trade in slaves. Over time, a work system had evolved, with slavery and serfdom at the center of it ensuring the regional supremacy of the Lozi people. Lewanika was hardly willing to end the practice that was essential to his claims of power. In fact, it took much prodding by the BSACo to get him to sign off on the abolition of slavery in Barotseland and he did not fully allow the system to end. Worthington was able to convince Lewanika to make a proclamation ending slavery in 1906. His resistance to losing access to and power over labor was obvious. The proclamation states that in the name of "justice and progress" all slaves were to be freed. However, this came with a stipulation:

⁷⁵ Letter from J. Fair to Lewanika, November 19, 1910 (A 2/1/4, National Archives of Zambia).

⁷⁶ BSACo, "Proclamation of Lewanika 1906" (Box C I/8-C I/I/25 BSACo Board of Directors' Report, C 1/20 A, Account 9251, Livingstone Museum Archives).

As, however, it is the established and recognised right of Native Chiefs to demand unpaid labour from their People, the following rules shall be laid down, and observed by me, by my INDUNAS and by my HEADMEN...It shall be the rule that under the Paramount Chief can call the INDUNAS, HEADMEN, and the People under them to send them on matter of business...can call the INDUNAS, HEADMEN, and the People under them to cultivate certain fields, known by the name of NAMOKAO...can call on the INDUNAS, HEADMEN and their People under them, for the purpose of of (*sic*) building huts, cutting reeds or grass for thatching, and procuring firewood. But it must be distinctly understood that these supplies are for the use of the Paramount Chief and for that of his household only.⁷⁷

To meet the demands of the BSACo, Lewanika went on in the proclamation to guarantee that he would only subject people to twelve days of labor under those conditions and that they would be paid a set wage if they did work for a longer period or provided services not listed in the proclamation. Yet in another assertion of his authority, he also included the caveat that he was not responsible for feeding or paying his workers for their twelve days' service and that any person who refused to provide their twelve days of requested labor would be fined. In accordance with the earlier assertion that work was understood to be beneficial not just to the king but to the kingdom itself, Lewanika codified the requirement that indunas or headmen could enlist free labor to assist with the construction and upkeep of community structures, as that was meant to benefit the community or kraal.⁷⁸

The BSACo took all this in its stride and apparently focused on the small steps necessary to achieve the larger goal of total abolition of slavery. While Lewanika and his headmen had difficulty imagining a world without tribute labor, the BSACo gave the disgruntled elite some time to come to terms with the change. In 1911, the year of amalgamation, the administration boasted that domestic slavery in its original form was abolished from the region, but that “it would be very wrong to sweep away the mild forms of feudalism which is the sole remnant of the once ruthless despotism. The people are remodelling (*sic*) their Social System slowly but very surely for the better and it would be most unwise to hurry unduly

⁷⁷ BSACo Board of Directors' Report, “Proclamation of Lewanika 1906” (Box C1/8-C1/1/25, File C1/20 A. Acc 9251, Livingstone Museum Archives).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

the radical change which civilisation is bringing about.”⁷⁹ They allowed Lewanika and his chiefs time to adjust to the new system under the guise of protecting the interests of the African peasants.

Clearly, Lewanika was not ready to concede his power over labor. He was innovative though and found ways to ensure that the new system worked to his benefit. If he could not control the productive activities of the Zambezi Valley populations, he was determined to profit in other ways. In this task he was highly successful, as he created numerous opportunities to extract compensation for the labor of his subjects. Lewanika devised a system under which European labor recruiters paid for the right to solicit workers in his jurisdiction and, upon the hiring of his subjects, he received further compensation. He was persistent about the payment of these fees, as shown in a series of correspondences from the king demanding payment for helping the recruiters find laborers to work on the railway in 1904. The complaint, lodged in 1911, argued that he was not paid the full amount promised to him for his help in procuring over 500 workers for the railway. The administration readily agreed that “this money has been owing to Lewanika for a number of years, and since application to the Firm’s local Agent seems fruitless, I would ask that the matter be referred to Mr. Pauling himself (the chair of the labour recruitment organization) in London, who, I feel sure, will cause prompt settlement to be made.”⁸⁰ The BSACo willingly supported Lewanika’s “modernized” claims to labour because they viewed it as a sign of his gradual acceptance of the new colonial political economy.

Lewanika was in fact so resistant to relinquishing his authority over the work activities of North Western Rhodesia that, in 1925, almost twenty years after his declaration that abolished slavery, the new chief of Barotseland signed a new proclamation. Paramount Chief Yeta succumbed to the pressure by the colonial administration to completely end unpaid labour in his jurisdiction. The proclamation stated that “there will be no unpaid work or works of any kind which will be given to anybody to perform, but that every kind of work, national, personal, or for the Paramount Chief himself, or for a Councillor or Village-headman or for any ordinary person under the authority of the Paramount Chief of

⁷⁹ Administrator’s Office, Livingstone, North Western Rhodesia, February 17, 1911 (File A2/2/6 No. 61, National Archives of Zambia).

⁸⁰ Administrator’s Office, Livingstone, North Western Rhodesia, February 23, 1911 (A 2/2/6, No. 71, National Archives of Zambia).

Barotseland, these works will be paid for in the same way as is being done for all other works in the country.”⁸¹ The Lozi aristocracy clung to their power over production as long as possible, but finally relinquished claims to the labour of non-elite Africans.

CONCLUSION

The openness and fluidity that marked life for white settlers and King Lewanika in the 1890s deteriorated slowly over the next decade of colonial rule. Once hopeful and secure with their positions in North Western Rhodesia, European emigrants faced escalating obstacles in their attempts to develop their businesses and better their lives. The treatment they received from the BSACo profoundly affected their perceptions of themselves and the colony. Although they hoped for elevated status because of their race, white settlers cast themselves as the unwilling subjects of an unjust and distant colonial state. The debates between the European population and the company exposed a raw and messy colonization process. King Lewanika shared the disappointments and insecurities that characterized the way white settlers increasingly imagined and experienced life in North Western Rhodesia. He too found his expectations unrealized and opportunities curtailed by the colonial government.

This was a critical turning point in the trajectory of development around Victoria Falls. With Lewanika subdued and colonial bureaucracy intensifying in North Western Rhodesia, white entrepreneurs found it increasingly challenging to establish and sustain their economic activities near the Falls. The news that the BSACo was not only allowing but actually encouraging the development of a town on the southern side of the waterfalls squashed the dreams of building a modern tourist destination on the north bank of the Zambezi. White settlers were frustrated that their efforts to exercise their economic imperatives were so handily circumscribed by BSACo’s policy, but the establishment of a competitive town in Southern Rhodesia was enough to crack even the most fervent believers in tourism development on the northern side of the Falls. Subsequent correspondence between Clark and Moore offer evidence that against their desires, they felt coerced into seeking opportunities in the south. By the start of World War I, the interests of white entrepreneurs were all but decimated as attention turned

⁸¹ BSACo Board of Directors’ Report (Box C I/8-CI/I/25, File C I/20, Acc 8066, Livingstone Museum Archives).

more heavily onto hydroelectric power generation and industrial activities that could support the war effort and increasingly modernized and mechanized economic sectors. It is hard to not see the BSACo's promotion of a tourism center to the south of the Falls as some sort of punishment or affront to the early pioneers who devoted their energies and resources into building a tourism hotspot in the African frontier. The push for a robust and sustainable tourism industry on the northern side of Victoria Falls would go into hibernation for well over half a century and renewed interest in expanding the sector in profound ways did not resume until the 1990s.

‘Of More Value to South Africa than all the Diamonds Ever Found or Dreamed:’ Victoria Falls and the Hydroelectric Power Scheme

In January 2010 the head of Zesco, Zambia’s parastatal electric company announced that the company would be exporting surplus power to South Africa during the World Cup to help the latter meet its high demands during the event. Unsurprising to people familiar with Zambia’s frequent power outages, many Zambians reacted with sarcastic quips and irritation about how the state was once again willing to sell its power while keeping in-country customers in the dark.¹ Although the issue of power stability is a frustrating one to Zambians, Zesco is following the historical precedent set almost a century earlier by colonial administrators and private investors. From early in its colonial history, this area was viewed greedily as a source of hydroelectric power, and one area of special focus was the generating power of the Zambezi River around Victoria Falls. Rather than planning

¹Comments on web-based articles about electricity exports to South Africa revealed the anger of many Zambians wondering why they suffered through power cuts, while ensuring steady electricity to other countries. *Lusaka Times* posted an article entitled “Zambia to export power to South Africa for World Cup” (<http://www.lusakatimes.com/2010/01/10/zambia-to-export-power-to-south-africa-for-world-cup/>) on January 10, 2010. Among the pointed comments about this decision, one reader responded: “Eyo, charity begins at home. You can barely keep the whole of Zambia lit.” Another reader questioned the decision, writing “We experience power cuts every day and we will somehow have surplus power to export? How will this happen... We wil [sic] be in darkness in the name of not embarrassing Africa so that SA can have power. How irresponsible is this?” Most commentators seemed irritated that Zambia’s power would be used elsewhere.

for localized use of that electricity, ideas were hatched to use the power in the mines and towns of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. Once again, Victoria Falls served as a physical reminder of the resources available in the frontier lands of British South Africa and sparked the imagination of colonial agents, settlers, and industrialists. There seemed, to these interested parties, to be no limit to what British South Africa could become, if the landscape and all its riches were properly exploited. Engineering feats, whether completed or only envisioned, placed Victoria Falls at the heart of British plans for African and empire expansion.

From the beginning of its colonial history, North Western Rhodesia was in many ways envisioned to serve as a territory that met the needs of her southern colonial sisters. The policies used to establish the BSACo's colonial authority created what some white settlers in the territory deemed parasitic, as resources from North Western Rhodesia were diverted to serve Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. As earlier chapters explained, labor, native land rights, and control over white settlement were contentious factors in the colonial expansion over North Western Rhodesia. In this chapter, I examine how engineering projects that opened up the land north of the Zambezi and the schemes to develop hydroelectric power in North Western Rhodesia (and later Northern Rhodesia) put the economic agendas of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa ahead of local needs and desires. The BSACo and private investors created a transcolonial development agenda that placed Victoria Falls at the center stage. This also meant that North Western Rhodesia's interests and power needs were placed as peripheral to the vision of greater British South Africa.

The scheme to bridge and lay railway to connect the resources north of the Zambezi to Southern Rhodesia and South Africa and the plan to export hydroelectric power from North Western Rhodesia to Southern Rhodesia and South Africa serve as prime examples of how the economically and politically stronger southern British holdings planned to extract resources from the north with little concern for local development in those northern territories. The scheme also provides insight into how British colonial efforts in southern Africa were not conceived as a colony-by-colony plan but rather reflected a broader image of how various colonies and territories could be exploited to aid in the development of the British Empire in Africa. The BSACo was more concerned with its broader, regional vision, exemplifying once more the need to look at colonial southern African history through a transcolonial lens. Colonial borders in this respect were fluid, and perhaps more accurately, porous, to

allow for resource exploitation in one territory or colony to benefit other parts of British South Africa. The British considered the building of the bridge within sight of the waterfalls and the continuation of the railway to Victoria Falls and beyond key milestones as they plotted their development of the region north of the Zambezi.

Once those projects were complete, interested parties focused their attention on the immense potential of hydroelectric power generation. This chapter also examines the engineering projects around Victoria Falls, as well as the concerns about preserving the natural beauty of the site as construction spread into the area, once again demonstrating how the waterfalls themselves served as inspiration for colonial development. In the early twentieth century, Victoria Falls served as the BSACo’s strongest propaganda in its push to develop British South Africa. The site inspired vision and ambition and helped sustain enthusiasm for British Empire building.

BRIDGING THE ZAMBEZI

There were many benefits of bridging the Zambezi near Victoria Falls and the completion of the bridge connecting the north and south banks of the Zambezi was crucial in stimulating more development on the northern side. The railway and the bridge represented a true domination of this frontier land and in the eyes of many Europeans was an important step in expanding business and profits. As Chapters 4 and 6 explained, the bridge over the Zambezi, extension of the railway, and building of roads were milestones for the European settlers in North Western Rhodesia. This community located near Victoria Falls knew that to exploit the tourism potential of the area, tourists had to be able to access the site.² But in the bigger picture of British expansion, the bridge and railway meant

²A commemorative article written in 1955 to celebrate the centennial anniversary of Livingstone’s “discovery of the Falls” credits the completion of the bridge and railway for making the Falls accessible to tourists. The author wrote “For the last hundred years the Victoria Falls have attracted the attention of visitors from all over the world—first a few isolated explorers, then a trickle of adventurous hunters and travelers. Since the railway reached there in 1904, the trickle has become a steady growing flood, until nowadays a visit to the Falls may be as commonplace to the commercial traveler and should be on the itinerary of every globe-trotter.” Tom Northcote, “The Smoke that Thunders’ A Hundred Years Ago Livingstone Discovered Africa’s Greatest Scenic Wonder,” *African World*, November 1955 (National Archives of Zimbabwe), p. 8.

opening the land north of the Zambezi for commercial exploitation that went beyond the scope of establishing a tourist destination. It was a project that would be profitable not just for British Southern Africa but would extend back into the British homeland. As one news article declared, “[W]hen the railway extensions in Rhodesia have been completed, and the important engineering work of utilising the Victoria Falls has been carried out, industrial manufacturing circles in this country are expected to derive considerable benefit from the erection of large factories in the neighbourhood, for it is presumed—and it is certain to be hoped—that important orders for machinery, &c., will be offered to British makers.”³ For the BSACo, industrialists, and commercial farmers, the bridge and railway were integral components of colonial expansion and important steps in achieving the Cape to Cairo dream, but the ramifications were thought to have the ability to reverberate throughout the British Empire and back in Britain itself.

Victoria Falls factored heavily into discussions about the extension of the railway and building of a bridge. The waterfalls came to symbolize British goals in southern Africa, and as such, plans for the bridge and railway centered on the site. As one writer explained, “[T]he railway, part of [Cecil] Rhodes’ scheme for opening up a great empire for Britain in Africa, was, in the meantime, creeping slowly northward...By Rhodes’ wish, the bridge was sited so that the spray might fall on the carriages, and although a great many people did protest against the location of the bridge so near to the Falls, the actual structure, in the words of Lord Curzon is ‘an ornament rather than a desecration to the scene.’”⁴ For Rhodes, the strongest proponent of British expansion in this region, the railway and bridge were hugely important in opening up the empire and he wanted those physical manifestations of British technology to pass within sight of Victoria Falls.⁵

Indeed, for many, the laying of tracks this far north seemed more a pipedream than a vision grounded in reality. Richard Frewin, a visitor to Victoria Falls in 1877, a time when the trip from South Africa was still

³“To Harness Victoria Falls,” *Edinburgh Evening News*, October 3, 1903.

⁴“Cape Town to the Victoria Falls. Incidents on the Luxurious Railway Journey,” *South Africa*, January 20, 1906 (National Archives of Zimbabwe), p. 174.

⁵This was a controversial decision, as many British settlers and administrators argued that by building the bridge and railway within sight of the waterfalls, the natural beauty of the landscape would be disturbed. Ultimately though, the bridge represented to Rhodes and other powerful decision-makers power over what they deemed to be a wild frontier that only the British with their technological superiority could tame.

considered a dangerous journey, was sure he would be one of only a few Europeans to make it to Victoria Falls. He believed “this part of Africa... will never support a railway and the travelling by ox-wagon, its difficulties, troubles, fatigue, and endurance of hardships will never suit a Cockney or a cotton wool traveler.”⁶ Visionaries like Rhodes obviously disagreed and over time opinion changed as an increasing number of Britons were convinced that Victoria Falls and the land beyond was actually the future of British Empire in Africa. One writer traveling to Victoria Falls in 1906, shortly after the completion of the bridge and railway near the waterfalls addressed the doubt that some Europeans had expressed about expansion north of the Zambezi. He wrote:

...on we steam slowly beside the hot, sunbaked [*sic*] parts where pioneers and pilgrims in former times endured so much hardship to find the great waterfalls we are with such ease journeying towards. All along the route are the remains of the camp fires of the men who have made this great railway. And they are still making it, despite the sniffs and sneers of narrow-minded commercialdom [*sic*]. According to some people the railway was never to be made beyond Kimberley. Then it could not possibly get to Bulawayo this side of modern times. Then it was madness to think it would ever get to the Victoria Falls, but it is there, and 200 miles beyond them already.⁷

This writer gravely dismissed doubt about the purpose and promise of British expansion north of the Zambezi. He passionately believed in the Cape-to-Cairo mission and angrily derided those who spoke in opposition to such vision. He continued:

Now its [the railway] builders are sighing for branch worlds to conquer, as well as the main route, and the pessimists shrug their shoulders and say, ‘It won’t pay.’ Why should they trouble their empty brain-pans on the subject? Have they not a spark of sympathetic interest and admiration to spare for the men who are fighting and dying to spread the name of England and Empire from the south to the north of Africa, and more gleams of loving reverence for the great man who schemed it all out that they and their children might be heritors of a greater England, leaders in the civilisation of the earth... As

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁷ “Cape Town to the Victoria Falls. Incidents on the Luxurious Railway Journey,” *South Africa*, January 20, 1906 (National Archives of Zimbabwe), p. 174.

the line progresses it is tapping and will tap districts or even mines any one of which would buy up the lot of jeerers, stock, lock and barrel...⁸

Building the bridge and railway to Victoria Falls and beyond was clearly an important step in British expansion, and proponents of this stage of empire-building fervently supported the extension of the railway north of the Zambezi.

There was considerable buzz about the status of the bridge project once it was conceived and publicized. In 1902, shortly after the death of Cecil Rhodes, an article commemorating his influence and power in southern Africa and British Empire building included mention that the northward extension of the railway would “cross the Zambesi River in the neighbourhood of the celebrated Victoria Fall by a bridge of one span of 600 feet,”⁹ indicating that the public was informed about specific plans to build the bridge. The contract to build the bridge was awarded to the Cleveland Bridge and Engineering Company out of Darlington, England.¹⁰ It was a bold project; although experts would not consider it a unique engineering task, the setting and meaning of the bridge instilled wonder and excitement to many Britons and Europeans. It was “the largest bridge contract let in Great Britain since the completion of the Forth Bridge..., the estimated amount being half a million pounds sterling...”¹¹ Less than two years after securing the contract, “the preliminary arrangements in connection with the erection of the bridge, which will be the highest in the world, have now been completed, and as the ‘Cape to Cairo’ railway will shortly be extended as far as the Victoria Falls, the first consignment of the 2000 tons of finished steelwork will be consigned from Darlington to South Africa, at the end of the present month.”¹² The project had momentum and enthusiasm and was closely watched by an enthralled British public that continued to be inspired by Victoria Falls and intrigued by what lay beyond the waterfalls (Fig. 7.1).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ “A Great Man’s Addition to the Empire,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, June 3, 1902.

¹⁰ The designer of the bridge was George Andrew Hobson, a partner in the Sir Douglas Fox and Sir Francis Fox Engineering Firm. Of Hobson’s achievements, “Perhaps the best example of his work is the bridge spanning the Zambezi River near the Victoria Falls” (Sir Norman Lockyer, ed., *Nature*, Vol. 98 [London: Macmillan Journals Ltd., 1917], p. 452).

¹¹ “Harnessing the Victoria Falls: The African Concessions Syndicate’s Huge Electrical Project,” *The African World*, September 12, 1903 (National Archives of Zimbabwe), p. 221.

¹² “The Zambesi Bridge,” *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, January 22, 1904, p. 7.

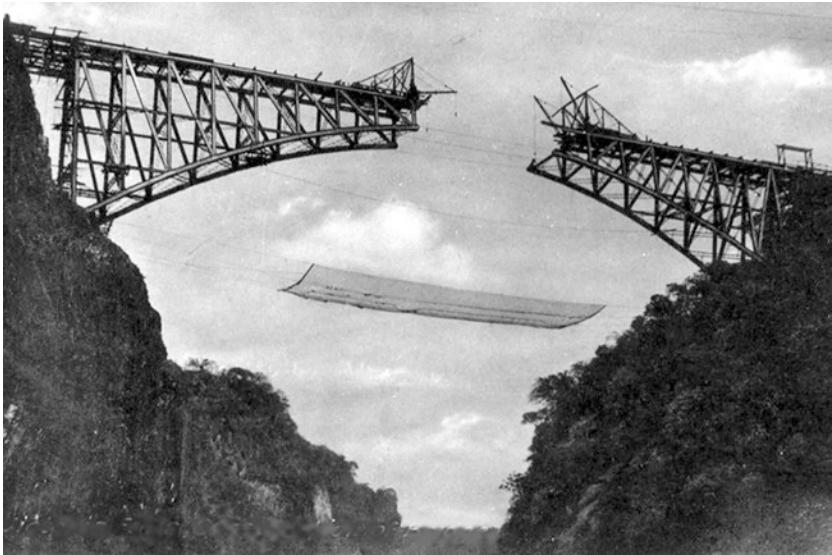


Fig. 7.1 Final phase of bridge construction, ca 1904–1905. Image courtesy of Pete Roberts, with permission from the National Railways of Zimbabwe Museum, Archives in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

The bridge itself was not particularly awe-inspiring but many thought it was perfectly situated within the landscape to capture the magnitude of the waterfalls while showcasing British technological superiority. The execution of the construction followed closely to the engineering plan shared with the public in 1903. The proposal called for a bridge “of one span, 600 ft. in length and will cross the river some 400 ft. above the water over a narrow gorge through which the river flows...The proposed bridge is intended to be built out from each bank of the ravine on the cantilever principle, until the steel work of the arch meets in the centre. The bridge will be of sufficient width...to accommodate a double line of railway.”¹³ The Cleveland Bridge and Engineering Company expected to complete the bridge by the end of 1904¹⁴ but the project was not completed until 1905. Perhaps more inspiring than the plans for the actual bridge was the

¹³ “Harnessing the Victoria Falls: The African Concessions Syndicate’s Huge Electrical Project,” p. 221.

¹⁴ “The Viaduct at Victoria Falls,” *Aberdeen Journal*, March 4, 1904.

promise of a thrilling ride for passengers crossing the bridge by rail. The location of the bridge ensured that “passengers, in crossing the bridge, will have a magnificent view of the Falls, the carriages even at this distance being plentifully besprinkled with the spray which rises like a cloud from the falling water, and through which the sun shines in the day time with an effect that is almost indescribable in its beauty.”¹⁵ The bridge was functional but the plan was to also make the crossing of it an experience for passengers to remember. This bridge would provide those on the train with their first view of the waterfalls and the hope was that they would be inspired and amazed by their first impression.

More important than the physical attributes though was the symbolism of this project. Once construction began in 1904, there was much enthusiasm among Britons, which bolstered efforts to continue British Empire building in southern Africa. One writer suggested that the bridge and expansion of the railway was “one of the miracles of to-day” and believed that someday in the future, the railway crossing over the Zambezi would “meet the line coming southward from Khartoum.”¹⁶ The completion of the bridge itself was a rather minor achievement, but it represented something much greater—the opening of the frontier north of the Zambezi. Much publicity was given to the bridge; it helped garner public support, in Britain and among Britons living in southern Africa, for this next phase of BSACo activity. More importantly though, it represented the extension of the rail line into northern territories ripe for exploitation and brought the Cape-to-Cairo dream even closer to fruition. While the public seemed most fixated on the bridge, railway construction maintained a quick pace as Rhodesia Railways rushed to push the line north. In an update on the progress of the Victoria Falls bridge project, the writer added, “It is interesting to note that 50 miles of the railway north of the Falls were constructed before materials could be taken across the bridge, locomotives, trucks, rails, sleepers and other necessities being carried across the gorge by means of the electric transporter.”¹⁷ Although the bridge would offer a more efficient conveyance of materials, Rhodesia Railways was not post-

¹⁵ “The Falls and the New Bridge,” *The Evening Post*, February 9, 1905. Of course, what this writer fails to note is that such an experience would only be possible when the waterfalls were engaged. During the low season, Victoria Falls would not have the water volume to produce such a spray.

¹⁶ “Cape to Cairo: A Modern Miracle,” *Evening Telegraph*, April 9, 1904.

¹⁷ “Victoria Falls Bridge: Structure Nearing Completion,” *Nottingham Evening Post*, April 28, 1905.

poning the laying of rail lines crucial to British colonial and commercial efforts. Only a month later, another newspaper reported that the Cape-to-Cairo rail line extended seventy-seven miles north of Victoria Falls.¹⁸

Although Europeans were excited by the building of the bridge and saw it as a crucial element in British colonialism in southern Africa, Chief Mukuni of the Tonga people living closest to the waterfalls had his doubts. According to local history, Mukuni was uncertain that the British would be able to achieve this engineering feat. One account of his reaction to the building of the bridge suggests he was quite skeptical of the project, reporting that

Throughout the construction of the bridge, Old Chief Mukuni camped near the site. He could not believe that the bridge would hold up without a centre support and daily invited friends to ‘come and see the white man’s bridge fall into the tumbling waters- I am sorry, for these men work for no profit.’ As the first mail train crossed safely Old Mukuni [*sic*] stood alone and amazed upon his rock.¹⁹

Unfortunately, this account of Mukuni’s reaction to the bridge is one of only a few documents offering insight into how the local African population perceived the project. Certainly we can assume that they realized that with the coming of the bridge and railway, there would be more displacement, a heavier European presence, and that outsiders would be claiming even more of the land and resources in the area.

If any of the Africans or Europeans considered the bridge and railway to be a profitless endeavor, their voices were lost among the cheers for this project. To so many interested British and European parties, the bridge and rail line expansion stirred the collective imagination as people dreamed of the commercial potential north of the Zambezi and placed this part of Africa at the epicenter of British colonial domination. The

¹⁸ *Western Times*, May 26, 1905.

¹⁹ Daphne Harris, *The Victoria Falls: Souvenir Guide in Pictures and Story* (Salisbury: Roundabout Press, 1969) (NAZ GEN-P/HAR, National Archives of Zimbabwe), p. 19. This report may be more of an account of how Europeans perceived the local chief’s reaction to the building of the bridge, or may highlight the discomfort the Tonga chief had with the changes happening in his backyard (made possible not by his own concessions, but those of Chief Lewanika of Barotseland), but it is interesting to contemplate how local Africans viewed this construction project. It is particularly compelling to consider how they felt about this site that served as sacred grounds and as protection being turned into a British tourist and commercial destination.

opening of the bridge was a momentous occasion that generated more publicity for British colonial exploits and reflected the optimism so many administrators, industrialists, settlers, and Britons in general had for this phase of British colonialism. Newspaper articles started promoting the event months ahead of the opening ceremony, signaling the gravitas of the completion of the bridge. One writer addressed the importance of the opening of the bridge and the diversity of interested parties, explaining, “[N]ot among practical engineers and pioneers of South African enterprise alone has the intelligence of the successful bridging of Victoria Falls been received with gratification. It concerns, though in less direct fashion, a considerable body of quiet, unobtrusive men of science, who have laid their plans to visit South Africa...and to extend their journey to the famous falls on the Zambesi. That body, it is hardly necessary to add, is the British Association.”²⁰ It was significant to have these well-respected scientists with influence among the educated masses show such interest in the bridge, as it added weight to the decision to continue British colonial expansion into the land north of the Zambezi (Fig. 7.2).

The opening of the bridge on April 12, 1905 was an important enough achievement to attract many trusted public figures to the ceremony and one correspondent succinctly described the significance of the bridge with the following words: “...the bridge which forms the most important of links in the great railway running from Cape Town to Cairo, was to be opened this morning by Dr. Darwen [*sic*], as president of the British Association.”²¹ Much publicity followed George Darwin (son of Charles Darwin) and the British Association as he and fellow members participated in the occasion. Darwin himself seemed pleased to serve as speaker, “referring to the occasion as the ‘crowning glory of the tour [the British Association’s tour of South Africa]” and he “took the opportunity to reflect on the achievements of Cecil Rhodes and the technological marvels

²⁰ *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, April 8, 1905. The British Association (full title The British Association for the Advancement of Science) was comprised of respected scientists and scholars with the goal “to give a stronger impulse and a more systematic direction to scientific inquiry,—to promote the intercourse of those who cultivate Science in different parts of the British Empire...,—to obtain a more general attention to the objects of Science, and a removal of any disadvantages of a public kind which impede its progress” (*Report of the Sixty-Fourth Annual Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* [London: John Murray, 1894], p. xxix).

²¹ “Victoria Falls and the Cape to Cairo Railway,” *Nottingham Evening Post*, September 12, 1905.

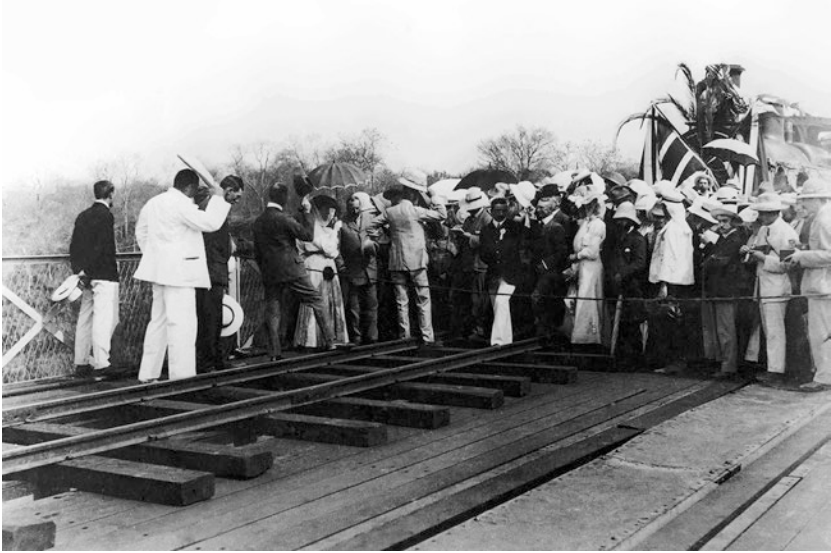


Fig. 7.2 Opening ceremony of the bridge, April 1905. Image courtesy of Pete Roberts, with permission from the National Railways of Zimbabwe Museum, Archives in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

of modern railway travel...and he proceeded to muse about how his illustrious ancestor would react if he could see his great-grandson ‘declaring a railway bridge open in the heart of Equatorial Africa.’”²² In his speech Darwin also praised steam technology, which he declared to be what made such an engineering feat possible. The ceremony included a dramatic flair, having Darwin make his “speech in the middle of the bridge where the train had drawn up,”²³ and “the engine was decorated with two enormous Union Jacks.”²⁴ Much of Darwin’s comments reflected on the visionary nature of science and imperialism; his musings highlighted how important imagination and ambition was to making technological feats possible,

²² Saul Dubow, ed., *Science and Society in Southern Africa* (Manchester and New York City: Manchester University Press and St. Martin’s Press, 2000), p. 72.

²³ “British Association at Victoria Falls,” *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, September 13, 1905, p. 3.

²⁴ “Opening of the Great Bridge Across the Zambesi: Professor Darwin Performs Ceremony,” *Dundee Courier*, September 13, 1905, p. 5.

and how the combination of vision and science and technology was at the heart of British colonial expansion. To Darwin, “[I]t seemed nothing short of a fairy tale to stand on this bridge over the Zambesia.”²⁵ It was the fantastical visions of British administrators, settlers, entrepreneurs, and industrialists that turned the collective dream of conquering Victoria Falls and forging ahead even further north into a reality, and to so many Britons, the bridge represented the manifestation of those imaginings.

Darwin was only one of many guests at the opening ceremony led by Duke of Abercorn, as Chairman of the BSACo and important figures unable to make the trip participated through telegram. Sir Charles Metcalfe, an engineer with Rhodesia Railways and a Rhodes’ intimate read from a telegram sent by the BSACo office in London, which read:

President and directors (of the BSACo) congratulate you personally, also the distinguished President of the British Association, the bridge contractors, and the people of Rhodesia on the opening of the bridge today, the fifteenth anniversary of the occupation of Mashonaland. It is very fitting that the foremost representative of science should be associated with the inauguration of this triumph of modern engineering. Regret the founder of the country is not alive to witness the realisation of part of his great ideal.²⁶

Earl Grey joined in the accolades, and reiterated the importance of having men of science attend the function when he wrote, “[E]nvy you the privilege of receiving the British Association at Victoria Falls. Tell Professor Darwin that I hope a permanent fertilisation in the form of stimulated scientific activity in Zambesi Valley may result from the picnic.”²⁷ Again, Victoria Falls and the bridge inspired connections between science and imperialism as the British reflected on the meaning of this completed project.

By the time the bridge was opened, the territory north of the Zambezi was more than just a frontier. It was no longer the ends of British Southern Africa but instead represented the future of British expansion and influence. In British African colonial scheme, the Victoria Falls was not the end of the earth, it was the center of it.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ “The Opening Ceremony” [Reuters Telegram], *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, September 13, 1905.

²⁷ Ibid.

HARNESSING THE FALLS

With Victoria Falls firmly situated as an important launching pad for British colonial activities and increasing commercial and industrial endeavors, attention could move past the building of the bridge and extension of the rail line. With those projects completed, focus was placed squarely on Victoria Falls as a potential source of electricity. This developing interest in establishing the waterfalls as a power source for other parts of British Southern Africa demonstrates the pervasive transcolonial approach to British expansion in the region and provides insight into how Victoria Falls continued to be an important source of inspiration and aspiration for the British in Africa.

By the early twentieth century, whites living in North Western Rhodesia viewed themselves at the bottom level of the colonial social hierarchy. It was clear to them, as seen in their journals, newspaper articles and editorials, meeting notes, and letters to administrators, that North Western Rhodesia was being exploited to meet the needs of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. As earlier chapters showed, these settlers felt their interests were non-factors in BSACo's policies regarding the development of southern Africa. They often suggested that native rights even trumped their own, which sparked obvious discontent among white settlers. The attention given to the hydroelectric generation potential of Victoria Falls created another division between those whites living around the waterfalls and the BSACo and businessmen hoping to exploit the Falls for industries and municipalities further south. Although the actual building and running of hydroelectric stations around the Victoria Falls cataracts did not come to fruition until the 1930s, the various schemes and discussions about how to harness that power source centered squarely on concern for exporting the electricity to the south and on powering copper mines to the north. That copper would then eventually be filtered south for industrial use and trade, leaving the northern frontier of British South Africa more as a contributor to colonial southern Africa's development and less of a beneficiary of that development.

Livingstone was the largest town with arguably the most power needs in North Western Rhodesia. It was first the capital of North Western Rhodesia and then of Northern Rhodesia until the mid-1930s. Despite being an important site for tourists, administrators, traders, farmers, and industrial growth, and despite being so close to a site identified as a source for hydroelectric power, Livingstone went decades without a large

and secure source of power. This put pressure on the business owners in Livingstone, a commercial and tourism-focused town, as there was an expectation for the town to offer modern amenities that included and relied upon electricity. Up until 1938, any electricity used in the town came from a generator. Although hotels and businesses paid the high costs to tap into that power source, most townspeople, white and African, could not afford or access electricity. In 1938, a hydroelectric power station was built on the Zambezi that finally provided electricity to customers in Livingstone. But this is not the beginning of how hydroelectric power came to be and it certainly was not the end goal in terms of using the Zambezi as a power source.

Just as labor was a pressing concern at the turn of the twentieth century in southern Africa, so too was the issue of electric power. As mining activities accelerated in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, concern increased about meeting the electricity demands of these industries. It was clear to industrialists and the South African government, as well as to BSACo representatives that the power produced first by steam engines and later by coal would not be enough to maintain the projected mining output.²⁸ In 1903, Curtis Brown, a writer for *Cassell's Magazine*, reported that there were optimistic plans in the works to use the cataract to produce power that would potentially serve all of southern Africa. Several American and European engineers visited the site and enthusiastically discussed the untapped potential of this part of the Zambezi, prompting the BSACo and a private company, the Africa Trust, to join together to start developing plans for a power station close to Victoria Falls. According to Brown, the plan first devised by an American engineer would have the “cataract generate electricity and carry the power down to Rhodesia.”²⁹ Cecil Rhodes was supportive of the plan and “placed no restrictions on the company as to the amount of water they might divert...”³⁰ The focus was on how that water could be diverted to the benefit of those south and north of the Falls but certainly showed no concern for how that energy might be used locally as well. The plans to harness the Falls were bold and

²⁸ Reuel J. Khoza and Mohamed Adam, “The Structure and Governance of Eskom—A Case Study,” in *International Corporate Governance: A Case Study Approach*, ed. Christina A. Mallin (Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd., 2006), p. 284.

²⁹ Curtis Brown, “Harnessing the Victoria Falls.” *Cassell's Magazine* 1903, (GEN-P/BRO, National Archives of Zimbabwe), pp. 185–186.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

optimistic, suggesting that it was expected that Victoria Falls would be able to provide power wholesale within fifteen years and had established a radius of what supporters of the scheme hoped to electrify. This included “the great sandstone quarries that supplied walls for most of the houses in Bulawayo; the great teak forests of the Gwai district; the immense copper fields north of the Falls..., and the Wankie coalfields.”³¹ Although it might seem a good sign to those living north of the Zambezi that the copper fields were included, at the time, the copper fields were part of North Eastern Rhodesia, a separate entity, and copper was very much on the radar as an exportable resource, yet another source of profit to be sent south.

W.A. Wills, the secretary of the first syndicate to develop plans to exploit Victoria Falls was an early voice in the call for using Victoria Falls to produce electricity. He believed the waterfalls offered seemingly limitless power possibility and he linked that potential with British expansion and plans for the entire southern African region. Wills’ vision captured that of many industrialists, administrators, and white settlers in the region. He proclaimed:

In the first place, it (southern Africa) is the richest gold country of the world...; the richest diamond country...The whole land is a mass of coal. The copper mines may be expected to make an immense difference in the world’s copper trade. The country is well watered; all kinds of cattle flourish, and cereals of every sort do well. There is any amount of cheap labour... White children thrive in the country...In time Rhodesia will be the one place in the world for a young man to go to. In fifty years we shall have a tremendous population there, and what the country may become and what part the Victoria Falls may play then is a subject that is too big even for my imagination.³²

The value Wills and other like-minded people placed on Victoria Falls was intense and helped drive the push to build power stations along the Zambezi, yet their plans only applied to the mainly industrial and residential needs of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa and, to a lesser degree, the copper mines in North Eastern Rhodesia. The potential value that engineers, industrialists, farmers, government administrators, and settlers

³¹ Ibid.

³² Curtis Brown, “Harnessing the Victoria Falls.” *Cassell’s Magazine* 1903, (GEN-P/BRO, National Archives of Zimbabwe), p. 189.

saw in Victoria Falls influenced colonial discourse and visions of modern British South Africa in profound ways and helped sustain the momentum of colonial expansion into the northern frontier. One writer captured the focus on how hydroelectric power from Victoria Falls was crucial to the success of other parts of British Africa. He declared that, “In the fulness [*sic*] of time Rhodesia must become a manufacturing country, and the Victoria Falls are likely to prove an important factor in the movement.”³³ Victoria Falls, once a site associated with the deepest, “darkest” Africa was inextricably linked to the seemingly endless opportunities in the industrial and commercial future of the region.

In this regard, Victoria Falls came to represent the future of the British Empire in southern Africa and points to an interesting evolution of the evocative power of the site. Over the course of just a couple of decades the waterfalls went from symbolizing the pristine, wild frontier to inspiring visions of a modern, industrialized Africa. As Chapter 2 demonstrated, writings about Victoria Falls in the mid to late nineteenth century were romanticized and detailed descriptions of the landscape and cataract. As late as the 1890s, writers continued to focus on the beauty and physical features of the site; the hydroelectric possibilities were still unrecognized. One visitor to Victoria Falls in 1896 followed in the literary tradition of numerous other travel writers and journalists, relying on evocative language to convey the splendor of the waterfalls, with no obvious thoughts on the utilitarian nature of the site. This late entry into the travel accounts of a landscape that was, by this point, quite popular, described the waterfalls as “one of the sights which no traveler in the neighbourhood should miss...When the sun is sinking and shining upon the vapour rising from the falls the whole mass of this vapour is painted with prismatic colours, and combines, with the islands in the river, each with many lofty palm-trees, and the dark belt of evergreen trees on the other side of the falls to form a picture not easily forgotten.”³⁴ In 1896, reflection on the waterfalls still offered an aesthetic, romanticized focus rather than one influenced by industrial imagination. That perspective was to quickly change though. As the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, so too did the views of the waterfalls. Although there was still much admiration for the physical beauty, an increasing number of voices joined the call to harness Victoria Falls to generate power for southern Africa. A detailed article

³³ “Cape to Cairo: A Modern Miracle.”

³⁴ “A Visit to the Victoria Falls,” *The Graphic*, London, January 18, 1896.

in *The African World* in September 1903 exemplified the changed view of the waterfalls from an exotic, remote site to a focal point of “modern” development schemes. The author noted, “[I]n this utilitarian age it is only natural and indeed proper that advantage should be taken of the tremendous amount of energy which is at present being wasted in the Zambesi River.”³⁵ For the British in southern Africa, Victoria Falls represented a natural resource that would open up a world of colonial development opportunities. The magnitude of possibility was espoused by one observer who wrote, “the electrification of the Zambesi Falls may have consequences at least as great as the Panama Canal...What these millions of horse-power may do in the future for the wealth and civilisation of Central Africa no mind can foretell.”³⁶ It was clear that to so many Britons, ownership and exploitation of Victoria Falls was a major coup.

Proponents calling for the exploitation of hydroelectric power generation at Victoria Falls offered Niagara Falls in North America as proof of the potential for this resource and proclaimed the superiority of Victoria Falls over Niagara Falls to encourage support for the construction of power stations. In late 1903, there was much publicity for possible hydroelectric schemes along the Zambezi, as the BSACo worked with industrialists and engineers to determine the benefits of harnessing Victoria Falls. To that end it was reported that “Sir Chas. Metcalfe, consulting railway engineer to the British South Africa Company, and Mr. J.F. Jones, C.M.G., joint manager and secretary of the Chartered Company, have left England on a special mission to the United States, the principal object of which is to visit the Niagara Falls and inquire into the possibilities of the transmission of power, more particularly in connection with the utilisation of the Victoria Falls.”³⁷ Officials, settlers, and industrialists were anxious to determine how useful powerful waterfalls would be in helping electrify the countryside. The author of *The African World*’s piece on harnessing Victoria Falls was strongly convinced, based on information about how power from Niagara Falls was used that “the possible applications are capable of almost unlimited extensions”³⁸ and cited the compelling position of one authority that suggested

³⁵ “Harnessing the Victoria Falls: The African Concessions Syndicate’s Huge Electrical Project,” p. 212.

³⁶ “Harnessing Victoria Falls,” *Luton Times and Advertiser*, June 23, 1905, p. 7.

³⁷ “To Harness Victoria Falls: Great Scheme of the British South Africa Company,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, October 6, 1903.

³⁸ “Harnessing the Victoria Falls: The African Concessions Syndicate’s Huge Electrical Project,” p. 217.

Gold mines to the south-east, the coal mines of Wankie, and the important copper deposits in Barotse-land, which are believed likely to prove among the greatest in the world, would all require power to a very large extent. Chemical and metallurgical industries will be attracted, as they have been at Niagara, and, if alluvial gold deposits exist, as reported, in the vicinity of the Falls, they might be cheaply worked by ‘hydraulicking [*sic*],’ that is, washing down the beds by powerful water jets supplied by electrically driven pumps. Water would also be required for irrigation, and ploughing, sawing timber, and all kinds of agricultural work could be carried on by electrically-transmitted power. The great need for manufacturing on the spot all the various products which can be obtained by electrical energy is at once apparent...³⁹

It was quickly assumed and publicized that because the size of Victoria Falls was greater than that of Niagara Falls, the potential output and profitability was also much larger and others mentioned that the physical structure of the waterfalls and the nearby landscape also gave Victoria Falls an edge over Niagara Falls.

The BSACo and industrialists were not only interested in learning about how Niagara Falls was used to generate hydroelectric power; there was also a competitive spirit, as the British repeatedly highlighted what they believed made Victoria Falls superior over Niagara Falls. Soon after David Livingstone’s travel writings popularized the site, English Lord Palmerton wrote to a fellow Englishman, “what a triumph for the N----- over the Yankee to have a waterfall so much finer than Niagara.”⁴⁰ It was not long before Victoria Falls was no longer considered an African treasure as the British comfortably invoked ownership of the waterfalls and its potential productivity. Along with that sense of ownership came bragging rights. One writer drew comparisons of Niagara Falls to Victoria Falls for his readers, explaining, “some idea of the magnitude of these Falls may be formed when we state that they are twice as big as Niagara and more than twice as wide.”⁴¹ For others, it was not just the size differential but also the actual topography that made Victoria Falls more dramatic and special than Niagara Falls. Hensman wrote, “[U]nlike their great American prototype, to which it is almost inevitable that the Victoria Falls should be compared

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Letter from Lord Palmerton, April 12, 1861 (30/22/2, Public Records Office, London).

⁴¹ “Victoria Falls and the Cape to Cairo Railway,” p. 3.

by all who see them, these falls do not terminate in an open gorge. The face of the falls is confronted by another cliff of almost equal height, and it is between these two solid walls of hard, black, basalt rock that the river turns and twists...”⁴² Although this detail about Victoria Falls does not imply greater commercial potential use, the drama of the swirling water at the bottom of a gorge in between two cliffs is used as evidence of the uniqueness of Victoria Falls.

Indeed, writers and travelers marveled at the sight and power of Victoria Falls and their writing praised the mightiness of the African waterfalls over Niagara Falls and highlighted their fantasies of the potential exploitation of hydroelectric power from the Zambezi. But it was the opinions of engineers and industrialists, bolstered by public excitement that mattered most in terms of actually turning dreams into reality. As mentioned above, by 1903, specific ideas were forming about how to generate electricity from the waterfalls among men who could execute those schemes. According to legend, “the story goes that Professor Forbes [an engineer] and Mr. Alfred Haggard were discussing Africa one night...when the latter began to enthuse about the wonders of the Victoria Falls. ‘Why not make the cataract generate electricity and carry the power all through Rhodesia?’”⁴³ From that alleged conversation, Haggard approached Wills and Wills was interested in the project and willing to finance it. When the Wills-Haggard-Forbes team went to Rhodes seeking a concession from the BSACo to start the project, Rhodes put them in touch with H.B. Marshall, a millionaire who also expressed interest in Victoria Falls and hydroelectric power. Marshall joined forces with the others, and the African Concessions Syndicate was born. The company was given a concession for the length of seventy-five years,⁴⁴ and “after a visit to the Falls [in 1902] made by Sir Chas. Metcalfe...it was arranged that the capital of the syndicate should be doubled and that the Chartered Company should be allowed to subscribe the whole of the new capital. Mr. Wilson Fox and Mr. J.F. Jones—the joint managers of the Chartered Company—joining

⁴² Howard Hensman, “The Victoria Falls: By Rail to the Eighth Wonder of the World,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, December 23, 1904.

⁴³ “Harnessing the Victoria Falls: The African Concessions Syndicate’s Huge Electrical Project,” p. 212.

⁴⁴ “Financial Notes,” *Edinburgh Evening News*, April 25, 1902, p. 3. These men were some of the earliest to consider the Victoria Falls as a potential source of electricity. They sought the concession in 1895, at least a few years before there was public interest in the possibility of hydroelectric generation.

the syndicate's board."⁴⁵ To these men, the future of the British Empire hinged on the potential of Victoria Falls, and they were willing to put their fortune in the line for it. The addition of BSACo capital indicated how committed the company was to turning this imagined gold mine of hydroelectric power into reality.

By August 1903, the groundwork was laid for pushing forward with hydroelectric generation at Victoria Falls and the men promoting the scheme were confident enough to go public. Wills called a meeting of the African Concessions Syndicate and there he "outlined the scheme for harnessing the Victoria Falls, and spoke of the benefits which would accrue to South Africa therefrom."⁴⁶ As the extension of the railway from Bulawayo to Victoria Falls was nearing completion, the African Concessions Syndicate's plans to build power stations garnered public interest, as the syndicate indicated "whilst the total amount of energy running to waste at Niagara is 7,000,000 horse-power, the corresponding figure for the Victoria Falls in the wet season is 35,000,000...It is believed that it will be practicable to carry the electric energy generated at the falls economically even as far as the Rand, and it is hoped to work by means of it a large proportion of the South African Railway mileage, as well as to supply the power needed to the gold lines."⁴⁷ Optimism was high, and Victoria Falls was envisioned to be an invaluable source of hydroelectricity that would help strengthen the performance and profit of other parts of British Southern Africa.

Yet, the truth at this point was that the syndicate was still in the very preliminary phases of developing a scheme. At the annual meeting, Wills detailed the financial status of the syndicate but the huge sum of money already raised was only expected to cover the costs of a detailed survey of the Zambezi at Victoria Falls. Once that survey was complete, Wills said that the next phase of the project would focus on the creation of an actual power company to execute the building and running of power stations at the waterfalls. This step in the process would, by his estimation, cost at least half a million pounds, with costs likely to increase as the operation escalated.⁴⁸ In other words, there was a long way to go and much

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ "Business Notes," *Dundee Courier*, August 29, 1903, p. 4.

⁴⁷ "The Zambezi Power Scheme," *Falkirk Herald*, September 9, 1903, p. 8.

⁴⁸ "Harnessing the Victoria Falls: The African Concessions Syndicate's Huge Electrical Project," p. 219.

capital to be raised before Victoria Falls went from a hydroelectric dream to power generation reality. Although Wills’ report may have concerned some interested parties, since it indicated that there was much yet to be done before electricity was actually produced, Wills ended his report at the syndicate with this reassuring message: “I have just had the pleasure of discussing this scheme with Major Coryndon, who...is Administrator of North-Western Rhodesia...and he tells me...that the country in the immediate vicinity of the Falls and on both sides is healthy...and for that reason power townships could be established...in the immediate neighbourhood of the Falls. I think I have said enough to show you that this Syndicate has important work before it, and that shareholders should reap ultimately a fine reward for their patience.”⁴⁹ Despite the large amount of work ahead of the syndicate, Wills was confident that the project was going to be a success.⁵⁰ It is interesting too to note that Coryndon discussed the potential establishment of towns to help support the hydroelectric stations, indicating that he did not see the settlement at Old Drift or the soon to be established town of Livingstone to aid in the development of the power company.

The African Concessions Syndicate continued its pursuit of harnessing the waterfalls, enjoying the exclusive rights it had over potential hydroelectric development around Victoria Falls. In 1905, an update on their progress was released and picked up by the media. In one article it was announced that the syndicate “has been in consultation with the leading American and Continental engineers and experts on the subject of the transmission of power from the Victoria Falls to the Witwatersrand, and these authorities...have unanimously expressed the opinion that the scheme is not only quite feasible, but would be commercially successful, especially as the climate of South Africa is one of the most suitable in the

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 220.

⁵⁰ Of all the documents I consulted about Wills’ annual report, only one author showed subtle signs that he believed Wills was perhaps getting ahead of himself. The author referred to Wills’ statement as “interesting,” and made mention that that there had not yet even been an initial survey of the Falls nor was there an actual plan devised for the necessary power company. The author wrote that despite these facts, “the chairman of the Syndicate..., has already, in his mind, arranged a very wide market for the power.” Still, this writer ended his piece with the same conclusion as so many others when he wrote, “on this basis the Victoria Falls scheme will play an important part in the development of the country, for the possible applications of electric power are capable of almost unlimited extension.” “Financial Notes,” *Edinburgh Evening News*, August 29, 1903, p. 3.

world for the transmission of power.”⁵¹ The syndicate was moving forward and expert opinions bolstered the claims that hydroelectric power from Victoria Falls would be a game changer for British Southern Africa. According to another article just two weeks later, the Witwatersrand mines had already initiated negotiations with the syndicate and BSACo to procure power from Victoria Falls,⁵² this despite the fact that there was still no formal blueprint for a power station or power transmission system. The hydroelectric potential was, at this point, still built on vision and ambition, and the syndicate and the experts assessing Victoria Falls provided a solution to an escalating concern many in British Southern Africa had about the ability for the British Empire to continue to progress and profit in twentieth-century Africa.⁵³ Another article from November 1905 perhaps most explicitly explains why such hope was placed on hydroelectric power from Victoria Falls. The writer explained, “[B]y the adoption of this scheme, it is pointed out that power could be supplied to the mines more cheaply than in any other way. The importance of this can be gathered from the fact that at present over £3,000,000 are spent annually on power on the Witwatersrand...The reduction of working costs resultant from the adoption of the scheme would, it is urged, go far to re-establishing public confidence in South African enterprise.”⁵⁴ Victoria Falls offered a progressive and profitable future, and to some, the successful harnessing of the Falls would help improve the image of South African industry. Once again, we see Victoria Falls perceived as a crucial element in the future of the British Empire in southern Africa.

Enthusiasm for the hydroelectric scheme was contagious. By 1906, there was outside interest in the quest for electricity generation at Victoria Falls. *Allgemeine Elektrizität Rathenan* (A.E.G.), a Berlin-based electric

⁵¹ “To Harness Victoria Falls: Rand Mine Power Scheme,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, November 9, 1905, p. 7.

⁵² “City Items—Chartered Company,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, November 23, 1905, p. 4.

⁵³ After all, going into the early twentieth century, Britain and the BSACo were involved in the Boer War and northward expansion, while also speculating that increasing mineral and industrial activities would make the effort of claiming land in southern Africa worth their while. Cecil Rhodes, the greatest visionary in the British Southern Africa project had died, leaving a void at a critical time in the region and administration’s history. By 1905, there was a need for reassurance that British colonial efforts were still on the right path. It appears that the promise of Victoria Falls’ hydroelectric production was offered as proof that there was still much to be gained by colonial activities in the region.

⁵⁴ “Victoria Falls and Power Transmission,” *Aberdeen Journal*, November 9, 1905, p. 5.

company, subscribed £ 625,000 in debentures to gain interest in the project. The agreement that followed their inclusion in the scheme entailed that “the German Corporation is to supply a large proportion of the plant for the power installations, the Chartered Company has stipulated that much of the heavy machinery is to come from makers in the United Kingdom.”⁵⁵ Along with this investment came a position on the Board of Directors, to which A.E.G. appointed their general director. The BSACo and African Concessions Syndicate knew that to prevent a backlash from involving a German company, there had to be assurances to the British public that the endeavour would still be profitable for British manufacturers. It was a financial relief for some of the start-up capital to come from a third source and would have been difficult to turn A.E.G. away. With this commitment of capital, expertise, and materials, a tentative deadline was set to have the first installation of a transmission station in either Vereeniging or on the East Rand completed within two years, and then focus shifting to the power station(s) at Victoria Falls.⁵⁶

By late 1906, the Syndicate and BSACo were the established forces in Victoria Falls hydroelectric planning; they had secured the concession and not only garnered British support for the project but also had attracted the A.E.G., a major investor. The Victoria Falls Power Company was created as an umbrella company in 1906 with the purpose of moving beyond planning and surveying and into the actual implementation of the plans. There were, however, some entrepreneurs who had sought to profit from the expansion of the transmission of hydroelectric power from the Falls. One partnership in particular hoped to build its own power stations to control the sharing of the power within South Africa.⁵⁷ It became clear though that the promise of cheaper power to not only sustain but stimu-

⁵⁵ “Harnessing Victoria Falls,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, July 27, 1906, p. 12.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Despite the enthusiasm of so many Britons and whites living in southern Africa, there were some people who were wary of importing electricity from outside of South Africa proper, in part out of concern that it would put the local coal industry in peril. Some efforts were made to block requests by the Victoria Falls Power Company, and there was a vocal opposition to the plan to invest so much in a plan that did not have a proven desirable outcome. Opposition to these activities manifested, for instance, in early December, 1906, when the Transvaal government “refused the application of the African Concessions Syndicate for power to construct an electric power line through Witwatersrand.” “The Transvaal Constitution,” *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, December 5, 1906, p. 6. For more, see <http://heritage.eskom.co.za/heritage/vfp.htm>

late manufacturing and mining in British Southern Africa was too popular to fight, and perhaps even more to the point, The Victoria Falls Power Company was too powerful to compete against. In December 1906, the leaders of the Vereeniging Estate Limited “decided not to proceed independently with the erection of a power station at Vereeniging, on the Vaal River, and have entered into arrangements with the Victoria Falls Company, Limited, which includes the acceptance of a seat on the board of that company by Mr Isaac Lewis [one of the owners of the Vereeniging Estate group].”⁵⁸ The final consolidation of this monopoly over not only the power to be developed at Victoria Falls but also the transmission of it in South Africa also occurred around the same time with the acquisition of other competitors. The Victoria Falls Power Company bought “the whole of the steam-driven electrical power plant and undertaking of the General Electric Power Company at Driehook, near Germiston, on the Witwatersrand.”⁵⁹ Likewise, the company also acquired the Rand Central Electric Works Limited. In the announcement of the purchase, the Victoria Falls Power Company reported, “the works of all existing competitors have now been purchased, and the co-operation of the Vereeniging Estates secured.”⁶⁰ It would seem then that the interests of the greater British Southern African region trumped those of the industrialists within South Africa (no doubt because by this point, the BSACo was so heavily invested in the outcome of this hydroelectric scheme) and Victoria Falls was reaffirmed as an important site in future plans for the British Empire in Africa. Hydroelectric power from Victoria Falls was deemed the solution to the high cost of electrifying manufacturing and mining throughout the region, even if it put other power-generating enterprises at risk.

The focus of these efforts by the Victoria Falls Power Company was clear. By buying out the stations and equipment of existing power companies in Witwatersrand, the hope was not only to establish a monopoly, but to also generate income to finance the development of the hydroelectric stations near Victoria Falls. The Victoria Falls Power Company issued a prospectus in December 1906 that clarified its plan. According to that document, “the Company will, therefore, in the first instance, erect a steam-driven

⁵⁸ “The Victoria Falls Power Company,” *Aberdeen Journal*, December 14, 1906, p. 6.

⁵⁹ “On ‘Change and Off: Talks and Topics To-day, Victoria Falls Power Company,” *Hull Daily Mail*, December 17, 1906, p. 5.

⁶⁰ “Victoria Falls Power Company, Ltd.: Important Purchase,” *Dundee Courier*, December 19, 1906, p. 2.

station in the vicinity of Johannesburg with a total generating capacity of 24,000 H.P. for the purpose of supplying its customers with electrical energy until such time as the erection of a transmission line from the Falls and the necessary works have been completed. The construction of this steam-driven plant will be carried out by the Allgemeine Elektrizitätsgesellschaft of Berlin, and it will be possible to commence delivery of power from it within two years.”⁶¹ The Power Company expected to be turning profits quickly from that operation, which would help facilitate the development of stations and lines at Victoria Falls.

The flurry of announcements and newspaper articles in December of 1906 kept Britons and whites living in southern Africa focused on Victoria Falls and the hydroelectric scheme. In late December, an article in the *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* addressed questions that many followers of the scheme probably had at the time. The piece offered a more precise explanation of the plan, describing that “[H]ydraulic power will be developed by means of a canal, which will conduct water from a point selected on the left northern bank of the river above the Falls, and deliver it at a convenient place near the top of the gorge at the first bend below the Falls. The water will be taken hence by means of a series of steel ducts, fixed on the slope of the gorge, and delivered to a power house to be erected near the water’s edge, some three hundred and fifty feet below.”⁶² Eventually, the operation would expand with the lengthening of the canal to other power stations in the area. Ultimately, the bulk of the voltage would travel through a transmission line, either as a direct current or through a three-phase current, linking a station at Victoria Falls to one near the Rand, and the route would roughly follow the Rhodesia Railways line connecting the two sites.⁶³

This article was one of the most detailed explanations of the hydroelectric scheme and although it provided specific aspects of the plan, there were still only vague descriptions when it came to the actual execution of the projects and the timeline the Power Company hoped to follow. A significant portion of the piece focused on the justifications for the huge scheme and highlighted once again the envisioned potential of Victoria Falls to the whole of British Southern Africa. Perhaps the author felt the

⁶¹ “Money and Shares,” *Aberdeen Journal*, December 17, 1906, p. 1.

⁶² “South Africa’s Future: Harnessing the Zambesi, Power from the Victoria Falls,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, December 20, 1906, p. 10.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

public needed a reminder of why this project was so important and offered bold statements in support of the still-evolving scheme. Citing a BSACo memoranda, readers were reminded “that South Africa is still in the making. The need of the country is a cheaper and more plentiful supply of power. It is claimed that the Victoria Falls Power Company will inaugurate a new era for the expansion of every form of industry in South Africa.”⁶⁴ It would seem that at this point in the history of British colonial expansion in southern Africa, the economic and political activities of the nineteenth century were only the beginning of the great future of the British in the region. To the BSACo and many other Britons, the full realization of British goals in southern Africa could only occur with the successful generation of cheap and plentiful electricity. Victoria Falls was crucial in helping British Southern Africa evolve and meet the twentieth-century visions of industrialists, administrators, and settlers.

Despite the buzz over the acquisitions and plans of the Victoria Falls Power Company in late 1906, the next few years were relatively quiet as the quest for hydroelectric power plodded along. In 1907, the electric companies, such as the Rand Central Electric Works, that the Victoria Falls Power Company purchased during the previous year were dissolved as independent entities and absorbed into the Power Company with little fanfare.⁶⁵ In late 1907, the Victoria Falls Power Company announced that power stations at Germiston and Brakpan, both on the Rand were “supplying power to their utmost capacity, and that it has been necessary to enlarge the capacity of the Germiston Station...”⁶⁶ Ralph D. Mershon, another consulting engineer with experience at Niagara Falls paid a visit to Victoria Falls and South Africa, and shared his opinion of the site, stating that he was “satisfied that an excellent electrical development could be made, if need be up to three hundred thousand horse power...” and that “the length of the proposed transmission line [from Victoria Falls to the Rand] is unique...he said he does not entertain a shadow of doubt that it can be profitably effected.”⁶⁷ Mershon’s assessment offered the always-welcomed assurance that the hydroelectric dream could become a reality and a large volume of cheap electricity was waiting to be tapped at Victoria

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ “Public Companies,” *Aberdeen Journal*, April 9, 1907, p. 9.

⁶⁶ “Victoria Falls Power Company,” *Hull Daily Mail*, September 23, 1907, p. 6.

⁶⁷ “Our London Correspondence,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, September 30, 1907, p. 6.

Falls. There was also news from a meeting of the Victoria Falls Power Company in November 1907 that reported that the company was “making a working profit of £ 80,000 annually, and they were daily refusing orders for power, as they had not sufficient facilities yet for supplying the demand.”⁶⁸ Some of these orders, the president of the Power Company boasted, were mining groups that had previously refused to enter contracts with the Victoria Falls Power Company.⁶⁹ This suggests either that the concerns of some South African industrialists and mining operations for the grand hydroelectric scheme had faded or that the efforts of the Power Company to consolidate and monopolize electricity transmission forced them to move away from coal in favor of cheaper power. Either way, Wilson Fox, manager of the BSACo in 1907 stated, “that the leaders of the mining industry in Johannesburg are viewing with favour the business of the Victoria Falls Power Company.”⁷⁰ Fox’s statement reflected confidence in the Power Company’s growing control over the electricity industry.

It is unsurprising that with all the speculation about how profitable the Victoria Falls hydroelectric scheme might be, other parties would also try to tap into this market. In late 1908, there were signs that other bodies were interested in pushing into southern Africa’s power industry, despite the strong position of the Victoria Falls Power Company. One article reported, “[C]onsiderable progress is apparently being made with the new scheme for supplying power in bulk to the mines on the Rand. It appears that the support of at least one powerful finance house in London has now been secured, besides the contracts with some of the mines, and we believe the flotation of the new company is in an advanced stage of preparation.”⁷¹ After all, the reason the Victoria Falls hydroelectric scheme was so popular was because it promised large amounts of electricity at minimal costs—this was touted as the future of British Southern Africa. If other companies could figure out how to keep the costs of power even lower, the tide could

⁶⁸ “Public Companies: Victoria Falls Power Company, Ltd.,” *Aberdeen Journal*, November 14, 1907, p. 9.

⁶⁹ “Company Meetings: Victoria Falls,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, November 14, 1907, p. 4.

⁷⁰ “Electric Power for the Rand,” in *The Electrical Engineer*, Vol. 40 (London: Biggs and Sons, November 8, 1907), p. 650 (digitized copy from University of Michigan collection of the journal).

⁷¹ “Power on the Rand,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, October 19, 1908, p. 44.

swing in favor of their schemes. However, the writer of the piece also cautioned that despite the fact that there might be an emerging competitor of the Victoria Falls Power Company, “we should imagine that investors would look very carefully into the new scheme before involving themselves in this competition. The Victoria Falls Power Company is, of course, installed and has a long start; and if the new concern proposes to use compressed air, involving of course, steam and fuel, it is difficult to see how it can compete against the cheap water-power which the Victoria Falls Power Company possesses on the spot.”⁷² Fortunately for the already existing Power Company, close ties with the BSACo and the 75-year concession it had already been awarded guaranteed that if hydroelectric energy was to be tapped from Victoria Falls, the Power Company was still secure in its ability to be the only operation profiting from that unique source of power.

Rumors of competition did garner a response from the chairman of the Victoria Falls Power Company at the October 1908 annual general meeting. In his aggressive address to the shareholders at the meeting, he stated:

To sum up our position, I may say that we have firmly established ourselves upon the Rand, that we will shortly be delivering electrical power from two large modern plants, of which one is already earning revenue; that our estimates of cost have not been exceeded; that we have entered into satisfactory contracts in regard to our supplies of coal; that we have large cash balances; and that our affairs in South Africa are in most capable hands... Besides this we have the Falls in reserve. They are our most valuable asset, and in any estimate of our company's position must never be lost sight of... We do not propose to surrender any of the position which we have scoured for you upon the Rand without a struggle which, if necessary, will be a strenuous and protracted, and from which, if we are compelled to take part in it, we are confident that we shall ultimately emerge victorious.⁷³

Importantly, the chairman chose to highlight Victoria Falls as the most valuable asset of the company as a way to reassure his shareholders. It was understood that as long as that site remained solely the Power Company's to exploit, there was a sense of security that competitors would fail. Despite so much of the Power Company's focus on consolidating transmission and

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ “Rand Electric Power: The Marquis of Winchester on Possible Competition to the Victoria Falls Co.,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, October 24, 1908, p. 3.

power stations in South Africa, the real strength behind their activities was still the promise of Victoria Falls’ hydroelectric capabilities. The waterfalls still figured prominently as the key to success, not just for this particular company, but for all of British Southern Africa.

The Victoria Falls Power Company accelerated electricity production and transmission in 1909, announcing in January of that year its plans to use new capital to build additional power stations to provide an increase of 100,000 horse power of electricity to its customers. It was believed that once those new stations were operating, the Victoria Falls Power Company would be the largest provider of electricity in the world.⁷⁴ Certainly this flurry of activity was in response to rumors of competitors hoping to profit from southern Africa’s (particularly around South Africa’s mines) increasing power demands. In a move to assert jurisdiction over both Victoria Falls and the potential hydroelectric power source there and the Transvaal where so many mining operations required large amounts of electricity, the Victoria Falls Power Company presented a resolution to its shareholders to rename the company the Victoria Falls and Transvaal Power Company. In presenting the resolution, the president of the company said to the shareholders, “I think you will agree with me that this new title expresses better the scope of our business as at present constituted, although I have every hope that in the immediate future we shall be selling a large quantity of power at the Falls at remunerative prices for metallurgical and other purposes.”⁷⁵ It was unanimously agreed that the name should be changed and on March 11, 1909, the resolution to change the name was confirmed and the company officially adopted the name The Victoria Falls and Transvaal Power Company Limited.⁷⁶

In the years leading up to World War I, the Victoria Falls and Transvaal Power Company continued to strengthen its standing as one of the world’s most impressive power operations. A statement issued in 1913 reported, “[T]he Company owns one of the largest and most modern power installations in existence, and also a concession to develop 250,000 h.p. at the Victoria Falls, the greatest source of [n]atural power in Africa. The Company now has long-term contracts with the Rand mining indus-

⁷⁴ “Victoria Falls Power Company,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, January 21, 1909, p. 5.

⁷⁵ “Victoria Falls Power Company: Change of Name, Extraordinary General Meeting,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, February 19, 1909, p. 5.

⁷⁶ (No title to the small notice in the newspaper) *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, March 12, 1909, p. 4.

try...At the present time the supply reaches 140,000 h.p., and a further 50,000 h.p. is contracted for, and will be supplied when the plant now under construction is completed.”⁷⁷ This report shows that within just a few years, the Company went from predicting the production of roughly 100,000 horse power of electricity to 250,000 horse power at the proposed Victoria Falls power station and also indicated that despite threats of competition, the Victoria Falls and Transvaal Power Company was maintaining its standing as the major source for transmitting electricity in South Africa. Still, one wonders if some observers questioned why the hydroelectric dream remained a vision rather than a reality. Clearly, Victoria Falls continued to be a prominent component of the future of electricity and thus industrialization in British Southern Africa, yet there was still little indication of when that dream would come to fruition. The Power Company was also falling short in the overall objective of using cheap power produced at Victoria Falls to serve not just the mines in the Transvaal, but also elsewhere in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. It seemed that until the power stations were operating at Victoria Falls, the Power Company continued to bank on potential activities.

By the 1920s, despite delays and the distraction of World War I, Victoria Falls still figured prominently in development plans for British South Africa. American engineer H.C. Peters opined that “the Falls can probably supply the whole of the existing needs of South Africa in electrical power” and that in fact, “the Victoria Falls can be of more value to South Africa than all the diamonds ever found or dreamed of.”⁷⁸ That value was at the heart of hydroelectric schemes and yet seemed limited to the enrichment of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa and had still not come into fruition. North Western Rhodesia, though a crucial component of British Southern Africa was still thought of as an exploitable source to be used for the benefit of her more established and industrial sister-colonies to the south. The bridge, the railway, and hydroelectric power generation, though in some peripheral ways were beneficial to the white settlement around Victoria Falls, were conceived of and executed to aid in the development of Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. In this context, Victoria Falls became less of a localized asset and more of a regional

⁷⁷ “Victoria Falls and Transvaal Power Company,” *Gloucester Citizen*, December 24, 1913, p. 6.

⁷⁸ *The African World*, April 3, 1926, Vol. 94 (S/AF 75, National Archives of Zimbabwe), p. 389.

resource. It was no longer a site to be seen at the edge of the colonial frontier, but instead represented the transcolonial goals of intensifying mining operations to the south and the north of the actual site. The potential of the resource continued to demonstrate the vision of interested parties but was not yet a reality.

Despite the shortcomings though, the nature of the Victoria Falls and Transvaal Power Company’s activities and geographical breadth epitomizes the approach to British colonial and commercial expansion in southern Africa in the early twentieth century. Administrators, industrialists, and settlers did not limit their imaginations or ambitions to stay within colonial borders; their visions reflected a transcolonial approach to development, which enabled them to dream bigger and plan broader than if they felt confined within one colony or another. Whereas a mere twenty years earlier, Victoria Falls and the land north of the Zambezi represented the ends of the earth, or “darkest” Africa to many Britons, by the early twentieth century, it was conceivable by many that the region was part and parcel of broader British Southern Africa and a crucial element in colonial and commercial expansion in the region.

CONCLUSION: CALLS FOR CONSERVATION IN AN INDUSTRIALIZING CONTEXT

With so much discussion about how to exploit Victoria Falls, it seems few were talking about how to preserve the natural wonder. Much of the discourse on the Falls in the early twentieth century centered upon visions of profiteering and the widespread benefits of hydroelectric power from the site. But in fact, there was juxtaposition in the way that the British perceived and imagined the waterfalls. On the one hand, Victoria Falls represented the wild African frontier and for several decades was seen as the end of the civilized world. On the other hand though, by the early twentieth century, it was clear that many envisioned Victoria Falls as the epicenter of British interests in Africa and as a launching pad for further exploits into the hinterlands. It was a place where science and technology faced nature and landscape head on, as the British sought ways to use their knowledge and technical skills to extract natural resources. Victoria Falls was the future in terms of hydroelectric power and served as a tangible symbol of what the British deemed modernity and progress in southern Africa. But the site also garnered deep nostalgia for the extreme landscape

first brought to the British by David Livingstone and other early explorers. Despite the increasing presence of western infrastructure and the general footprint left by colonial activity though, preserving the natural beauty of Victoria Falls was always a concern of the BSACo and the white settlers.

The waterfalls were considered a prized British “discovery” and were lauded for evocative beauty. As more Europeans made the trek to the see Victoria Falls, calls to preserve the beauty and natural landscape increased and by the early twentieth century, concern about development in the vicinity of the waterfalls focused not just on what could be gained from development, but what also might be lost. As anthropologist David McDermott Hughes explained, the white population in southern Africa initiated a project of entitlement to the land they colonized by convincing themselves that they belonged to the land, and thus the land belonged to them.⁷⁹ Even while having conversations about how to carve up and utilize land, there were passionate discussions about what pieces of that land should be preserved. Colonial imagination was not just about how to use land but also how to claim it and protect it, though protection itself was loosely defined, as Europeans co-opted the land away from its original guardians.⁸⁰

While the disputes between white settlers north of the waterfalls and the BSACo about a settlement site were underway, there were also arguments about where the bridge and railway should be built and how some land should be protected from the scars of British development efforts. As mentioned above, Rhodes emphatically pushed for the bridge to be built close enough to be hit by the spray of the waterfalls, no doubt making this engineering feat appear even more dramatic and impressive. But other Europeans were not convinced that the bridge and railway needed to be so close to Victoria Falls and insisted that the landscape be preserved. As one newspaper article entitled “Vandalism at the Victoria Falls” highlighted, some Europeans in southern Africa had grave concern that the construc-

⁷⁹ David McDermott Hughes, *Whiteness in Zimbabwe: Race, Landscape, and the Problem of Belonging* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

⁸⁰ McGregor’s *Crossing the Zambezi* offers a nuanced and close study on the displacement of local people from Victoria Falls. The Leya, who lived closest to the Falls, were particularly vulnerable to displacement as the town of Livingstone grew. Beyond the scope of the calls for natural conservation that I address here, Europeans failed to think about conservation and preservation from an African perspective. I do not mean to discount the importance of that discussion; rather, I feel McGregor’s important text thoroughly and critically addresses the issue as a major focus of her analysis.

tion of the bridge and railway would ruin the beauty of the area. The article reported:

A correspondent...makes protest against the effect of the new railway from Bulawayo to Victoria Falls on ‘what is perhaps the most magnificent scenic effect nature has to show anywhere in the world.’ ‘For no particular reason that can be discovered,’ he says, ‘the engineers and contractors of the railway are making preparations to carry the railway across the Zambesi immediately below the falls. Not only will the whole effect of this great work of nature be marred by the vision of an unsightly spidery lattice-work of iron girders placed just in front of it, but also for the purposes of the railway a great part of the fine timber and luxurious undergrowth, which adds so much to the beauty of the scene, is being ruthlessly cut down.’⁸¹

This sentiment was echoed by Colonel Frank Rhodes, brother of Cecil Rhodes, when he was asked by a correspondent from Cape Town’s *Times* publication⁸² what he thought of the “alleged prospect of disfigurement of Victoria Falls,” to which he reportedly replied that “he considers the railway will be unnecessarily near the Falls thereby entailing destruction of timber and undergrowth which make the spot very beautiful.”⁸³ Despite the outcry of some opponents to the construction of the bridge in such close proximity to Victoria Falls, the plan proceeded, forever changing the view of the waterfalls and adjacent landscape.

To allay the fears of those concerned about the preservation of the natural wonder, some writers offered consoling descriptions that minimized the effect of the bridge on the beauty of the landscape. One portrayal of the Falls after the completion of the bridge reassured the readers that “...the gorge is spanned by a railway bridge of the lightest and most appropriate description, such as to give no charge of vandalism against the Chartered Company.”⁸⁴ In 1904, Coryndon wrote to the Secretary of the BSACo in London with strong suggestions on how to control development around the waterfalls and the settlement of whites in the vicinity. He agreed with other recommendations that “within a radius of 15 miles from the Falls no land shall be sold.”⁸⁵ There was collective support for

⁸¹ “Vandalism at the Victoria Falls,” *Aberdeen Journal*, October 5, 1903.

⁸² This correspondent I presume to be the same correspondent who commented in the *Aberdeen Journal* about his concern over the placement of the bridge and railway.

⁸³ “Victoria Falls Endangered,” *Edinburgh Evening News*, October 13, 1903.

⁸⁴ “The Victoria Falls,” *Surrey Mirror*, July 7, 1905, p. 3.

⁸⁵ “N.W.R. Reservation Round Victoria Falls: Land Grants: Price of Land: (R.T. Coryndon),” February 16, 1904 (A3/21 Loc. 3991, National Archives of Zimbabwe).

this decision, as even some of the enthusiasts of development celebrated the preservation of some of the land adjacent to the waterfalls. The author of an article in *The Evening Telegraph*, who wrote with obvious excitement about the building of the railway and power stations in the vicinity of Victoria Falls also felt compelled to assure his readers that “the country in the immediate neighbourhood of the Falls is to be conserved as a great public reservation. An area from one to two miles wide and six miles long has been set apart as a State reservation forever.”⁸⁶ Although there were grand visions for Victoria Falls to help develop industrial hubs, some interested parties there showed clear concern for conservation.

Despite efforts to maintain some of the natural beauty of the area around the waterfalls, it was inevitable that there would be consequences of British expansion into the area. Although some attempts were made, with varying degrees of success, to keep some of the land closed off to human settlement, there was still significant activity in the vicinity of Victoria Falls that affected the landscape and those living in it. Local Africans were displaced and lost access to Victoria Falls. They were blocked from performing ceremonies near the Falls using water from various collection points also within close distance of the waterfalls, or they had to receive special permission to access those sites. Construction of the rail line, roads, and towns proceeded and animals lost swathes of their roaming grounds. In an area once favored by European sportsmen and big game hunters, it took only a few decades for the landscape to change enough to make such activities less fruitful. Howard Hensman, a visitor to Victoria Falls in 1904 noted the transforming scenery and ecosystems, conceding that “To-day, however, big game is very scarce in these regions, and with the advent of the railway and the civilisation that the iron horse always brings in its wake, will grow much more so. The sportsman, however, will still find much employment for his rifle in the neighbourhood. If, however, big game is his object he will have to push on northwards from the Falls.”⁸⁷ To Hensman, and many others, this was a necessary side effect of British expansion. In his writing, it is clear that he admired the beauty of the waterfalls and adjacent land, but he was also pragmatic about the changing landscape. Conservation, in his estimation, was not more important than what he deemed to be progress. He asserted:

⁸⁶ “Cape to Cairo: A Modern Miracle.”

⁸⁷ Hensman, December 23, 1904.

it was not, however, to enable tourists to reach the Victoria Falls in comfort, or to provide sportsmen and big game hunters with convenient means of indulging their desires that the Rhodesia Railways Limited hurried on this railway to the shores of the great Zambesi. As has been said, this line forms an important link the chain of railway that is some day to unite the Mediterranean with Table Bay, but the reason that such expedition has been employed in building this line from Bulawayo to the Falls is a weightier one still... it was decided to push on to the Falls for the sake of opening up the rich tract country that exists here.⁸⁸

It was not in the best interest of the British Empire in southern Africa to preserve the landscape if that meant ignoring the incredible potential of what the land had to offer. As earlier chapters showed, the BSACo in general had only casual interest in the tourism industry around Victoria Falls; as long as the sector did not interfere with the broader plans, tourism development was fine, but the interests of the tourism industry did not trump the interests of industrialists, capitalists, and the colonial administration.

The directors of the Power Company knew that there was a balance to achieve in terms of satisfying the public that there would not be a desecration of the landscape at this important site. Of utmost importance was harnessing the Falls to its maximum potential, but there was a collective respect for the beauty of Victoria Falls that the Power Company knew was important to honor. In terms of public relations, it was important that the Power Company, with its close connection to the BSACo, take into account the call for conservation. To that end, it was claimed that “[B]eing fully alive to the necessity of jealously guarding from spoliation the magnificent natural spectacle of the Falls, Sir Douglas Fox and Partners [directors of the power company] have, in planning the hydraulic works, made it their special study that the installation will in no way interfere with the beauty of the scenery, and that it will be invisible from any of the points of vantage favoured by visitors to the locality.”⁸⁹ Company officials were attuned to the call for conservation and publicized their intention to minimize environmental damage or aesthetic disruptions to the natural landscape. Of course, the fact remained that there were major construction projects underway, and the land would have to be altered in order to achieve the goal of harnessing the Falls for hydroelectric power.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ “South Africa’s Future: Harnessing the Zambesi, Power from the Victoria Falls,” p. 10.

In 1907, there was enough concern about the detrimental effect the hydroelectric scheme might have at Victoria Falls that at a meeting of the House of Commons, one member, Mr. Essex, asked for Churchill to explain the terms and conditions which the BSACo and Syndicate had to follow. Churchill responded that there were limitations on what could be built within a five-mile radius of the Falls and that even more importantly, “[O]ne of these conditions was that the syndicate shall undertake that none of the works to be carried out under the agreement shall destroy, disfigure, or interfere with the natural beauty and characteristics of the Victoria Falls and their surroundings.”⁹⁰ These “conditions” were subjective though; what one person considered disfiguring, another might consider acceptable and there was no clear consensus about what was acceptable and what was not.

If we consider the calls for industrial “development” to be loud, enthusiastic, and persuasive, perhaps the proponents of conservation spoke more in a whisper. There was never a suggestion that a railway and bridge not be built and there is no evidence that any Briton objected outright to the development of hydroelectric power at Victoria Falls. Certainly, influential men and respected writers and publications endorsed preservation of the natural beauty of the site. But it is naïve to think that the extension of the rail line, building of the bridge, and construction of power lines and power stations, along with the increased tourist traffic, white settlement, and general development that comes with urbanization would not have had a disruptive effect on the landscape. Even though select lands were to some extent protected from human settlement, the area around Victoria Falls underwent major changes that started in the early twentieth century. The bridge and rail line were perhaps the most contested in terms of placement because of the purposely conspicuous placement of the railway bridge so close to Victoria Falls. Power stations, once finally built in the late 1930s, did not obstruct or alter views of the Falls, but that is not to say that these structures are beautiful enhancements to the river banks or that the diversion of water through the canal systems built to harness the Zambezi for hydroelectric production left the land unscarred.⁹¹

⁹⁰ “Imperial Parliament, House of Commons,” *Aberdeen Journal*, May 15, 1907, p. 6.

⁹¹ When I asked a long-time Livingstone resident if he sensed that locals felt the power stations disfigured the landscape, he replied that it was not the actual power stations that people disliked since they are tucked away along the river bank, but that it is the diversion of water from the Zambian side of the Falls that upsets locals. This displacement of water above the Falls means that the Falls are drier than need to be from October to December, which of

In 1903, the author of *The African World* article detailing Victoria Falls and the early discussions of hydroelectric power may offer a clue as to how administrators, industrialists, engineers, tourists, and settlers came to terms with the romanticized admiration for the beauty of the Falls and the seemingly contradictory desire to stamp the landscape with hallmarks of British technology. He wrote:

The finest picture or photograph in the world cannot possibly do justice to the Victoria Falls a whole, however agreeably it might present the great natural beauty of certain features thereof. The fact is, of course, the series of chasms and cataracts which comprise the Falls is so vast, so scattered, so bewildering in its complexity that it is almost impossible to ‘get it all in,’ so to speak, in a single picture. Only from a model of the Falls—like that in the admirable Museum in the Chartered Company’s new offices—is one able to understand what a wonderful freak of Nature is to be found in Rhodesia.⁹²

There is, within this conceptualization of the site, an underlying temptation to somehow tame the land. The beauty of the waterfalls and adjacent land refuses to be captured by film, thus denying power to cameras, a tool of western technology. Additionally, the Falls are so grand and powerful that it can only be considered an anomaly in nature. Even as the beauty beckons and pleases the European observer, it also teases him or her. For the British, keen on demonstrating advanced technology and superior skills in colonial expansion, the beauty of the Falls was trumped by the wildness and untapped potential of the site.

For almost fifty years after Livingstone first stumbled upon the waterfalls, the British gave almost sacred status to Victoria Falls. It was named after a beloved queen, hailed in travel writing and popularized by paintings, sketches, and photos attempting to convey the incredible scene. As the needs of the empire changed though and as the goals of the British intensified and expanded, Victoria Falls became more than just a pretty place to visit. It represented a resource that needed conquering and one that when properly exploited could bring more wealth and progress to British Southern Africa. As one author proclaimed, “[T]he Victoria Falls

course lowers the aesthetic value and detracts from tourists’ experiences during those months. This is just one way that the landscape has been negatively altered by British colonial development, and it was likely not a thought or concern of the engineers, industrialists, or administrators who affected such changes.

⁹²“Concerning the Victoria Falls: Interesting Details of the Eight Wonder of the World. Some Account of the Great Electrical Power Scheme,” p. 195.

not only form a magnificent bit of scenery, but they provide practically unlimited ‘power’ for the working of mines, the generation of electricity, and other objects.”⁹³ It would seem that preserving that beautiful scenery was not considered mutually exclusive of exploiting the landscape and scarring it with signs of modernity. There was too much at stake to let Victoria Falls continue to be simply a lovely sight; in the early twentieth century, that “magnificent scenery” was the key to British Southern Africa’s future.

⁹³ “Victoria Falls and the Cape to Cairo Railway,” p. 3.

EPILOGUE

REVISITING IMAGINATION: THE TRANSNATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF VICTORIA FALLS TODAY

Two of the most popular activities at Victoria Falls today are white-water rafting and bungee jumping. Both of these activities allow participants the unique experience of moving in and out of two different countries as their raft carries them closer to one bank or another and as the bungee cord swings from side to side in the middle of the bridge between the two countries' border crossings. While many tourists revel in the knowledge that they are floating back and forth between two countries, they are unwittingly part of the larger history of transcolonial and transnational development and experience centered on Victoria Falls. This has been, and will continue to be a site of crossing; it belongs to no one definitively, yet is claimed by many. It is unsurprising that with its history in the early colonial period as a place of precolonial fluctuation and contested claims and as a marker of the end and the beginning of British expansion,

Victoria Falls continues to be a fixed point in an ever-changing political, economic, and social landscape.

The bungee cords swinging like a pendulum between Zambia and Zimbabwe serve as a reminder of the history of this site, when use of the Falls for cultural ceremonies and political sparring by local and not-so-local African populations and the colonial exploitation that followed kept this as an always contested and transforming feature of the landscape. Although this analysis ends in the 1910s, the pendulum metaphor becomes even more useful when considering how colonial and postcolonial development unfolded at Victoria Falls. Early colonial development first started on the north banks of the Zambezi but by the 1910s, Southern Rhodesia was winning the battle for tourist traffic. The BSACo's policies made urban development in Victoria Falls Town, Southern Rhodesia much easier and more enticing than the situation in Livingstone, and many Livingstonians felt coerced into moving south to participate in the growing tourism industry that was replacing their earlier endeavors north of the Falls. It was clear by the 1920s that the BSACo and subsequent Southern Rhodesian governments viewed Victoria Falls Town as the home of tourism in Southern Rhodesia. Government publications strongly promoted tourism as one of the most appealing features of living and visiting Southern Rhodesia and Victoria Falls figured prominently in the advertisement campaigns for domestic, regional, and global tourism.

At the other end of the spectrum was Livingstone, where BSACo and the governments that followed gave little support to the small tourism industry that persisted on the northern side of the Falls. The BSACo's priorities changed when North Western Rhodesia and North Eastern Rhodesia merged to form Northern Rhodesia in 1911 and although there was still active pursuit of hydroelectric generation at Victoria Falls, most of the BSACo's energy went into developing the copper mines. Despite some early forays into industrialization, Livingstone slowly faded into a provincial, outdated town, and in 1935 Lusaka was named the new capital of Northern Rhodesia. It seemed Livingstone's heyday had passed and tourism was only a small part of the anemic economic landscape of the town for many decades.

Returning to L.F. Moore's vision of the future of Victoria Falls used to open the introduction to this study, it would seem evident that Moore's optimism was misplaced, or more bluntly, delusional. His high-tech and multifaceted dream of what Livingstone would look like in the mid-twentieth century was aggressively bold and in retrospect seems more sci-

ence fiction than realistic. That Livingstone would be all but a ghost town by the 1950s is a cruel twist to the story Moore hoped would unfold. Even at the turn of the twenty-first century, Moore's dreams for his beloved town would appear laughable. I well remember my first trip into Livingstone in 1999, when I felt like I was crossing back in time as I approached the town by foot after crossing over from Victoria Falls Town, Zimbabwe and being dropped by a share-taxi outside of town. My guidebooks were uncharacteristically subdued about the offerings of a town that seemed it should be at least close to offering what its counterpart in Zimbabwe provided tourists. I wandered the main thoroughfare, Mosi-oa-Tunya Road, and wondered if I just hadn't reached the center of town, but in less than an hour I realized I had seen what there was to see. Crumbling Edwardian buildings and dusty sidewalks lined the main street and though there was certainly pedestrian traffic, the slower pace and less crowded walking paths surprised me. In 1999, you could certainly seek out tourist activities, but it was a far cry from what you found through the ubiquitous and confident touts in Victoria Falls Town.

In subsequent trips over the past decade, I observed that Livingstone experienced a renaissance. The pendulum of time, energy, and most crucially perhaps, circumstance was swinging back to the northern side of the Falls. The political and economic woes in Zimbabwe slowly pushed tourists north into Zambia. Livingstone was now more than just a side note or day trip in regional guidebooks. Regardless of political troubles, people still wanted to see the Falls and Zambia made that possible. Resort complexes were opened or being constructed, some that were within walking distance to Victoria Falls. More foreign-owned and Zambian-owned businesses were opening or planned in response to the surge in tourists and Livingstone became a hive of economic activity once again. Zimbabwe's loss was Zambia's gain and the people of Livingstone and the Zambian government seized the opportunity to promote Zambia as "the Real Africa" and promised visitors the best view of the Falls with all the modern amenities and adventure tourism activities imaginable. Although the slogan "Zambia, the Real Africa" was in use by the Ministry of Tourism for a while, there was momentum and energy in the first decade of the twenty-first century and the description was used to appeal to tourists and offered them a multi-faceted tourism experience, with the Falls as the capstone to any visit to the country.

L.F. Moore, we can presume, would be pleased with this turn of events. Early entrepreneurs at Old Drift and then Livingstone had big dreams for

their side of the Falls and the same concepts of a robust tourist experience, replete with both modern infrastructure, adventure activities, and exposure to exoticized African culture resonate with the ideas of those first white businessmen and the current trends in promoting tourism in Zambia. Moore and his cohorts would perhaps be surprised to see government initiatives to lure local and foreign investors to Livingstone and other parts of the country to help exploit the boom in tourist traffic. There are, of course, some troubling developments though. Foreign corporations own the luxury and mid-range accommodations and restaurants. The roads serving those complexes are improved more frequently than those serving the smaller, locally owned guesthouses and cafes. Prices in Livingstone for rooms, food, toiletries, transportation, and leisure activities are always increasing, pricing out the local population. Despite the hydroelectric power stations and obvious abundance of water within the vicinity of Livingstone and the Maramba, the neighboring township, both localities experience frequent power outages and cut water supplies. Economic refugees from Zimbabwe moved into Livingstone, as did Zambians from less economically active parts of the country, putting a squeeze on the resources and opportunities available to the local population. Where there is increased opportunity, increased challenges follow.

Livingstone and the rest of Zambia must figure out how to sustain growth in tourism while also diversifying related industries because even as this was written, the pendulum is swinging once more in a southward direction. Zimbabwe, though not out of the woods yet with its political and economic crises, is on the rebound and Victoria Falls Town is gearing up for a comeback. The notion of tourism capital of the Victoria Falls area will not defer to Livingstone for much longer and the divisions between these two parts of the broader tourism economy in the region will continue to vie for the upper hand. As an outsider-observer who admittedly grew to love the charm of Livingstone as the underdog in this race for tourism revenue but who also felt compassion for the people suffering from deteriorating business in Victoria Falls Town, it would seem that the way forward might be best imagined in less bold terms than L.F. Moore's prescribed vision. Both sides of the Falls have now experienced down times and they may both be better served in the long term to go back to a transborder approach to development. With other transnational tourism initiatives such as the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park between South Africa and Botswana and the Limpopo-Shashe Transfrontier Conservation that crosses South African, Zimbabwean, and Botswanan borders it may

be worthwhile for the tourism industries in Zambia and Zimbabwe at Victoria Falls to imagine—and then enact—more collaborative practices and designs to ensure that the pendulum of economic benefit does not swing too far south or north in the future.

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