TRADE AND TRAVEL IN EARLY BAROTSELAND

The Diaries of George Westbeech 1885–1888
AND
Captain Norman MacLeod 1875–1876
ILLUSTRATED WITH THE SKETCHES OF
Lieutenant William Fairlie

EDITED BY
Edward C. Tabler
M.S.

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THE DIARY OF NORMAN MACLEOD
1875-1876

January 19th, 1875. Engaged 4 boys, Zulus, for trip to Zambesi at 3/- a month, 2 as forelouper, 1 cook, 1 groom.
29th. Back to Maritzburg.
30th. 13th P.A.L.I. marched in, come from Malta, to relieve 75th. Bought pointer 'Clem' for £3-10.
February 1st. Bought pointer 'King' £3. Got another, 'Dinah,' from Woodroffe.
5th. Bought 12 oxen from Hawkins, £10 each. Zulu, all inoculated.
7th. Started at last for our trip to Zambesi. Fairlie, myself, and Cowley,a a young fellow out here by way of learning farming. We had a wagon and span of oxen a piece, supplies for a year, 5 or 6 dogs. I had 2 horses, the others 1 each. My wagon stuck on the town hill. The oxen did not know their places, and the boy couldn't drive. Then I broke the dusselboom.b
14th. Started again at 2.30. Borrowed a driver from a transport riderc McIntosh, a good man. Soon put the oxen together. Rain every day. I shall only give a general account, as each day's notes are in the diary (Lett's) for 1875.
16th. Got into a tremendous hail storm as we were going to outspan. Stones as big as bullets fell. Hurt my head and frightened

1 Zulu oxen, a small native breed of cattle that was very hardy. They were inoculated against lung sickness, or pleuro-pneumonia, a disease of cattle introduced into South Africa in 1874. The yellow virus from the lungs of an animal dead of the disease was allowed to soak into a piece of twine, which was passed through a hole punched in the skin of the tail just above the tuft, tied in a loop, and left there. This induced a mild form of the malady, though it sometimes resulted in a loss of the tail.
2 Dr. Holub calls him Frank Cowley, but his name appears to have been Richard.
3 The wagon pole.
4 One who freighted for hire, by ox wagon.
5 This diary has not been found.
wick, about 660 miles. I lost my best horse ‘Guts’ from inflammation of lungs\(^1\) yesterday. Saw our first giraffe yesterday also. Bamangwato is a trading station with several stores. Most of the Zambesi traders load up & start from here. It is also a Kafir town, the capital of the Bechuanaland nation. Population said to be 10,000. Kama the present King is about 45 & seems a nice, intelligent fellow. He is a Christian and dresses as if to walk in Rotten Row. He is now stopping Boers coming in to hunt as they kill off everything for skins and he will not allow liquor to be taken in. The trade is feathers & ivory.

16th. Left Bamangwato for the Zambesi in company with George Dorehill, a young fellow who had been trading and hunting for 3 or 4 years. I will not continue daily records, which are in Letts diary for 1875 but just state generally that we travelled by the western and more direct road by the Kari Kari,\(^2\) leaving the road for a bit and following the R. Nata from the drift to Matlama-ganyani\(^3\) into road again. A great deal was heavy sand, and slow travelling, also long distances without water (once 3 days) and water generally only muddy pools. The weather was beautiful, not too hot.

Fairlie & Cowley each lost a horse close to Bamangwato, after which we had no sickness either amongst horses or oxen. We hunted every day and had fair sport, chiefly giraffe, but also buffalo, eland, quagga, koodoo, sable antelope, wildebeest, springbok, & elephant on the Nata R. and a rhinoceros. Also lots of pheasants, partridges, & guinea fowl. The thermometer in April & May were to vary from about 80 to 100 in the wagon during the day, from about 50 to 70 at daylight, but in June it got down to 44 at daybreak.

On the 15th June we arrived at Pantamatinika where the Zambesi traders leave their wagons while trading across the river.

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\(^1\) The African horse sickness. See sketch 100.

\(^2\) This road led north from Shoohong past the eastern side of the Makarikari Salt Pan, and joined the Westbeeck Road from Tati at Nwasha Pan.

\(^3\) Matlamawaye, a chain of four permanent waters on the road to the Zambesi. Nwasha Pan was the last of these towards the north.