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ZAMBEZIA

A Journal of Social Studies in Southern and Central Africa

Volume 1, No. 2  January, 1970

Edited by

R. S. Roberts

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF RHODESIA
SALISBURY
Zambezia

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The Editorial Board plans to produce the journal once a year and will welcome contributions in the field of local art and literature, education, sociology, social medicine, political science, history, linguistics, and indeed in any aspect of society. It is therefore hoped that contributions will be forthcoming not only from members of the College, but also from other scholars with a knowledge of Rhodesia and other parts of Central and Southern Africa.

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Editorial

This second issue of Zambezia has an even wider range of interest than the first. The Editor is particularly pleased that in addition to several articles on the social sciences he has been able to include studies on a Rhodesian poet and various aspects of the history of Southern and Central Africa. An informative letter has been received from the National Archives of Rhodesia on the use of the word Zambezia. The wide use of this term, at least for a short period, is of great interest to the Editorial Board of Zambezia, for it helps to draw attention to the policy of this journal to invite contributions from other parts of Central and Southern Africa. It has therefore been decided to reproduce, with its author’s permission, the full text of the letter:

Although E. C. Tabler has entitled a book Zambezia and Matabeleland in the Seventies, the term “Zambezia” does not appear to have been used for the territory now known as Rhodesia before about 1889: the designations were “Mashonaland,” “Matabeleland,” “Banyaland,” “Middle Zambesi,” “Northern Goldfields,” “South Central Africa,” “Southern Africa,” “Across the Limpopo,” “Gazaland,” “Manica,” etc. An early use of the word may have been overlooked, but “Zambezia” was certainly not in general currency.

At the time of the granting of the Charter, “Zambesia” was put forward as a possible name for the new British possession, and other suggestions were “Cecilia,” “Charterland” and “Rhodesia.” At first “Zambesia” (sometimes “Zambezia”) was most popular: The Times of 15th October, 1889, carried an article entitled “British Zambesia,” and in October, 1890, a Stanford map was produced showing “Zambesia and Matabeleland.” The predecessor of The Rhodesian Herald was The Mashonaland Herald and Zambezi Times. Mather’s book Zambesia, England’s El Dorado in Africa, was published in 1891 and Wills and Collingridge speak of “Zambesia” (Northern and Southern) in The Downfall of Lobengula (c. 1894). However Jameson favoured “Rhodesia” in a letter to his brother in December, 1890, and from October, 1892, The Mashonaland Herald and Zambezi Times became The Rhodesia Herald. More writers, especially when Matabeleland had been occupied and “Mashonaland” no longer covered the area of the British South Africa Company’s administration, began to use “Rhodesia” frequently. In an Administrator’s Proclamation of 1st May, 1895, “Rhodesia” was adopted as the official title of the whole of the British South Africa Company’s territory, with the provinces of Matabeleland, Mashonaland and Northern Zambesia. Legislation up to that point had avoided using “Rhodesia” or “Zambezia,” e.g., Matabeleland Order in Council, 1894. Parts of the Proclamation were eventually found to be ultra vires, and when it was replaced (by the Southern Rhodesia Boundary Regulations, 1897) “Southern Rhodesia” and “Northern Rhodesia” became the official names. Government Notice 82 of 1897, dated 1st June, 1897, confirmed that the Secretary of State had approved the term “Rhodesia.”

However, the name “Zambesia” continued to be used, just as the title “Central African Federation” lingered on after the “Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland” had become the official designation. Companies such as the Zambezia Exploring Company and the Zambezia Rand Investment Company continued for several years and “Zambezia” was still used in tardily revised overseas publications such as The Encyclopaedia Britannica (1902 edition) and Stanford’s maps (1901 edition).

Outside Rhodesia’s borders, Zambezia is still, of course, the official title for a Province of Moçambique.