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Chapter 6 White British Diasporas in East and Central Africa: Resources for Study and Future Heritage Provision

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ABSTRACT

This chapter offers a reflection on the experience of writing a biographical study of one White British family resident in East and Central Africa over the greater part of the twentieth century. It offers also some tentative generalisations on the subject of White British diasporas in East and Central Africa and heritage provision for them. Questions of class and classification in the colonial services and in the commercial sphere are discussed. The difficulties that arise in studying people who served in the lower echelons of the colonial services—which the author characterises as the 'warrant officer' class—are considered and potentially useful source materials are identified. This discussion is illustrated with particular reference to the Carr family. The role of memory institutions in Africa is discussed in relation to White British diasporas and it is argued that provision for this group is currently neglected. The potential for ancestral tourism is briefly explored.

INTRODUCTION

Diasporas – the mass migration of identifiable groups of people from their established areas of settlement to new areas – are a growing area of interest. As Zeleza's work demonstrates, so far as African diasporas are concerned, the focus of attention is being re-balanced with East and Southern African perspectives supplementing an earlier focus on West Africa, the Atlantic and the Americas (Zeleza, 2014). At a conference held in Malta in 2015, 'The Commonwealth and its People: Diasporas, Identities, Memories' papers were given on a range of diasporas (Conference, 2015). These included: African diasporas in the West Indies; Indian diasporas in Africa, the West Indies and throughout the Commonwealth; Maltese diasporas in the former Ottoman Empire and Australia; and a range of diasporic communities in the UK.

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In this essay the author makes no special claims for the White British diaspora in East / Central Africa. It is worthy of study and consideration in just the same way as any other dispersal of people from their original homeland.

Literature regarding the White British diaspora in East / Central Africa understandably tends to focus on expatriate civil servants. This is hardly surprising given that expatriate civil servants had a leading role in establishing and running governments in the colonial era. Furthermore, works such as those of Ehrlich, Ferguson, Heussler and Kirk-Greene tend to give disproportionate attention to administrative officers – District Commissioners, Provincial Commissioners and Chief Secretaries – and the class to which they belonged at the expense of other parts of the civil service and of the wider diaspora (Ehrlich, 1973; Ferguson, 2002; Heussler, 1963; Kirk-Greene, 1999). This imbalance has been perpetuated by some African historians. Thus, for instance, Chipungu and his co-authors succeed in offering a nuanced portrayal of the varied roles of chiefs in colonial administration whilst continuing to adhere to the view that the colonial service was a single monolithic institution (Chipungu, 1992).

CLASS AND CLASSIFICATION

Within the ranks of the Colonial Civil Service a key distinction existed between those who might be characterised, in the terms used by the armed forces, as commissioned officers and those who were effectively warrant officers. Characteristically, the commissioned officers entered the Colonial Administrative Service or the higher ranks of the technical branches of the colonial service. This part of the service was recruited in the United Kingdom via the Colonial Office, its members were entitled to regular home leave and retirement to the UK was standard practice for them (Furse, 1962). In contrast, the lower ranks of the colonial technical and support services were usually recruited via the Crown Agents for the Colonies or locally. Their leave and pension entitlements were often less generous. However, the boundary between the commissioned officers and the warrant officers was porous. Especially in times of expansion, as Baker has demonstrated, promotion to the more responsible and privileged positions was both possible and even commonplace (Baker, 2003).

The Colonial Administrative Service included in its ranks: District Commissioners (DCs) and Provincial Commissioners (PCs); Agricultural, Educational, Forestry and Medical Officers; graduate engineers; and, generally speaking, those with degrees or public school education. The colonial technical and support services included: sanitary officials; lower grade public works overseers; merchant marine services; senior prison staff; game rangers; compositors; nurses; and a range of others.

It may be argued that a similar distinction can be observed in the commercial sphere. Senior positions in mining companies and in plantation agriculture were often filled by those with degrees or public school education. Amongst their ranks were graduate engineers and geologists. The recruitment of premium apprentices served to bring public school men into the commercial sphere. Interestingly, the son of Lord Tweedsmuir (aka John Buchan) joined the colonial service because his father could not afford to purchase a premium apprenticeship for him (Tweedsmuir, 1971). Clerks, prospectors, mechanics and labour supervisors occupied a subordinate position in the commercial sphere. However, for them also the boundary was porous. This is exemplified by Ernest Carr who is mentioned below. He progressed from routine clerical work to become a surveyor and valuer.

THE CARR FAMILY

A primary focus of this essay will be on Norman Carr (1912-97) and Barbara Carr (b. 1920), husband and wife, and their wider family. What follows is a summary of an article by the author devoted to the Carrs (Tough, in press). This is a family with British roots who have moved between Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, the UK and Zambia. Norman and Barbara's family backgrounds and the life stories of their children will also be given some attention. To provide a contrast, mention will also be made of George and Joy Adamson. The Carr family were chosen as the focus of this study by a process of good fortune. At a time when the author had read already Norman Carr's books, he came across Carr's staff file in the National Records and Archives of Malawi (National Records and Archives of Malawi, multiple dates). Reading this file demonstrated that Carr was a more significant figure in the development of record keeping systems than he had acknowledged in his autobiographical publications and that he would provide a suitable figure around which to construct this study.

Norman's father, Ernest Carr (1882-1931), worked for the African Lakes Corporation from 1900 before setting up his own business as an auctioneer and surveyor in Malawi (then Nyasaland). Ernest died young leaving his wife and four children facing poverty. Aged 18 Norman became a locally recruited civil servant, initially on a temporary basis. In the headquarters of the Nyasaland Government he was responsible for confidential record keeping. Then he became a game warden

Norman Carr pioneered community-based conservation in Africa in the 1940s when he persuaded Chief Nsefu to create a game reserve in Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia)'s Luangwa Valley. To begin with Nsefu was sceptical – he asked why would people who had nice houses in towns want to come into the bush? To keep costs down the tourist lodges were built of local materials – uneven tree branches with grass thatching. For severely practical reasons mosquito nets were fitted and paraffin lamps used. In this way a particular 'safari style' came into being in several countries independently.

Norman was born in Chinde, a British concession in Mozambique (then Portuguese East Africa), and had a good understanding of the realities of life for villagers. The cost of creating conventional National Parks fell particularly on local people who lost land and opportunities to hunt for meat. So Norman hit on the idea of a reserve run by local people where they would benefit from entrance fees paid by visitors. On the same basis, he was happy to accept that 'big game' hunters had a role to play in conservation because the large fees they paid make a significant contribution to the public revenues of developing countries. During the 1950s Norman became concerned about habitat degradation caused by a rapid growth in the animal population: large areas of woodland were devastated. Norman advocated culling on the grounds that success in conservation depended on the defence of the habitat rather than the protection of individual animals.

The Norman Carr Safari company was founded in 1962 during the transition to independence. Its creation represented a determination to stay on in an independent African country. Norman was happy to embrace the transition to a society in which race would no longer determine people's life chances and proud to have appointed Zambia's first 'Brown white hunter' (Anon., 2004). His decision to stay split the Carr family, with Barbara demonstrating a firm determination to leave. Over subsequent decades the Carrs' children have tended to follow their father's lead. Judy Carr is involved in community-based conservation also in the Luangwa Valley. Pamela Guhrs became a wildlife artist whilst her brother Adrian became a professional hunter before taking over their father's safari business for a time. Operating only in the Luangwa Valley, Norman Carr Safaris pioneered a significant innovation – walking safaris. These involve sleeping out in the bush and provide a more equal relationship between human beings and wild-

life than can be achieved from a 4 wheel drive vehicle. In 1979 Norman was a founder of the Save the Rhino Trust which campaigned against the commercial extermination of the rhinoceros. He remained in Zambia until a fatal illness necessitated treatment abroad.

One of the intriguing challenges in writing about Norman Carr is trying to understand how he negotiated the complexities of colonial administration in the 1940s and 1950s. It seems that his sympathies lay with the District Commissioners (who saw their primary role as promoting the interests of indigenous people) rather than with his colleagues in the Game Department. Most of the Game staff wanted to adopt a 'command and control' approach to conservation. Amongst the latter was Major Eustace Poles who as the game warden based in Mpika had responsibility for the central part of the Luangwa Valley whilst Norman Carr had responsibility for the southern and northern parts. It is not fanciful to suggest that the pattern that exists in Zambia today with national parks in the South and North Luangwa but not in the Munyamadzi Corridor reflects Poles failure to engage local people in conservation. One possible and partial explanation of this situation is that Norman's experience as a record keeper, working in close proximity to the Attorney General and Chief Secretary, provided him with insights into the functioning of government and that these helped him to achieve his own goals without jeopardising his career.

Barbara Carr was born in Iraq, the daughter of a regular soldier who later became Director of Prisons in Malawi. According to her two autobiographical books, she entered into marriage a convinced Imperialist and with the intention of being a good colonial wife. However, she found life on isolated bush stations dismally unfulfilling, even when she was able to take up paid employment (Carr, 1965 and 1969). She acquired a reputation as a 'purple cow' - a woman who was constantly grumbling, all too evidently un-interested in other women's children and domestic activities, and suspected of sneering at their voluntary work for the indigenous people (Bradley, 1950). She left her husband in the late 1950s on a tentative basis and settled in South Africa permanently in the early 1960s. There she became a best-selling author, a noted feminist and ardent supporter of Apartheid and the racist ideology that it espoused and a critic of British colonialism. In 'The beastly wilds' (Carr, 1969) she wrote:

... a game ranger employed by the British Government was more of a slave than a Southern negro on a cotton plantation and his family too were enmeshed in the chains. ... (p. 254)

This sentiment was readily received by white South African readers and her books became best sellers. Barbara moved to the UK after the end of Apartheid and now lives in Cornwall.

At first sight, Barbara may not seem a very appealing person because of the explicit racism of the books she wrote in the 1960s. However, it is worth making an effort not to read her life backwards. She became a supporter of Apartheid in mid-life at a time when her children's future seemed to be threatened by the emergence of independent African nations. It should be borne in mind that in her early teens she learnt to read and write Chichewa so that when she left for boarding school it would be possible for her to correspond with indigenous people in Zomba.

Joy Adamson (1910-80) is best remembered for the book 'Born free' and the highly successful film based on it (Adamson, 1960). She was of Austrian origin, a gifted artist and characterised by her biographer Adrian House as having 'histrionic personality disorder' (House, 1993). She had an apparently successful relationship with John Carberry – a notorious sadist – and a deeply troubled relationship with her husband. A large collection of her paintings of Kenyan people and of tropical fish is displayed in museums in Nairobi and Mombasa. She was murdered in Kenya in 1980.

George Adamson (1906-89) was born in India. His family re-located to Kenya in 1924. Like Norman Carr he spent most of his adult life as a game warden and otherwise engaged in animal conservation. He was murdered in Kenya in 1989. David Attenborough, the celebrated television naturalist, had commented on the atmosphere of violence and fear that surrounded the Adamsons' animal adoption activities: "Elsa's story, at first sight so touching and tender, had started with violence ... it ended as it had begun" (Attenborough, 2010). George and Joy Adamson provide helpful comparisons with the Carrs. They have some things in common – the husbands' occupation in wildlife conservation, their troubled marriages and the high intelligence of both the women. There are, however, significant differences. One of these is the nature of the white settler population in the country in which they worked. This was encapsulated by contemporaries in the expression "Kenya for the officers, Rhodesia for the NCOs". On a personal level, the most significant contrast is that Norman Carr aimed to work with indigenous peoples in pursuit of wildlife conservation whilst the Adamsons sought to impose their objectives on local people and were willing to resort to coercion.

PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIALS AND DIGITAL RESOURCES

It is conventional to distinguish publications from true primary sources. In this context, however, the distinction becomes blurred. Many personal testimonies are available in print (albeit often in very short print runs) and some official publications that were once widely available are now so scarce that accessing even one surviving copy may be a challenge. Primary sources that should be acknowledged here include: Colonial Office Lists; the Staff Lists issued by each colony; the Annual Reports about each colony that were published in London for the Colonial Office; memoirs, published and unpublished; other publications; and archives and personal papers. Each of these will be dealt with below.

The Colonial Office List was published in the UK annually, except in wartime. It was modelled on the Navy List and the Army List. It lists 'commissioned' officers but only some senior 'warrant' officers. Crucially, colonial civil servants were only included if they had completed ten years of service. So many people who were invalided out of the service or left for other reasons do not appear. One of these is the second Lord Tweedsmuir whose autobiography describes how he needed prolonged recuperation after he had been invalided out of Uganda (Tweedsmuir, 1971). Entries follow a predetermined structure: name; year of birth; education; military service; postings in the colonial service, usually in chronological order; awards and honours; and sometimes publications or scientific accomplishments. Anthony Kirk-Greene created a compilation volume, taking the last entry relating to each person who had been included in the Colonial Office List to create a biographical dictionary (Kirk-Greene, 1991).

The Staff Lists issued by each colony bear some resemblance to the Colonial Office Lists but there are important differences. They are published four times per year by the Government Printer in the colony to which they relate. They list both 'Commissioned' and 'Warrant' officers, including locally recruited White British staff. Staff with less than 10 years service are not excluded as is the case with the Colonial Office List. Whilst there are some variations between colonies, the Staff Lists commonly provide detailed information about each officer's leave (including date of departure and anticipated date of return), salary and examinations passed (in local languages and the law).

It is worth bearing in mind that the Staff Lists were used for commercial and social purposes as well as for official purposes. Shop keepers and trading companies bought copies and used the information on salaries to fix the credit that might be given to customers who worked in the civil service. Thus the credit available to Emily Carr during the 1930s would have been determined by her son's earnings as she was keeping house for him following her husband's death. The staff list was used also to determine where guests should sit at dinner parties that were hosted and attended by civil servants. Norman Carr's place would have been at the outermost margins of any dining table in Zomba.

The Annual Reports about each colony that were published in London for the Colonial Office form a uniform series. The text and illustrations were supplied by the Chief Secretary of the colony in question. He in turn relied on departmental chiefs to supply him with information. The Annual Reports are calm and authoritative in tone and might be regarded as particularly good sources for the 'official view' and recent legislation.

Memoirs, both published and unpublished, are a crucial source for the study of White British diasporas in East and Central Africa. Both Norman and Barbara Carr wrote autobiographical books. Barbara Carr's account of her married life subjects her husband to sharp criticism (Carr, B. 1969). Perhaps her most damaging revelation was that two adolescent lions that Norman was preparing to return to the wild had killed an African child. He did not reply to her comments in his books. A careful scrutiny of Norman Carr's books shows that whilst he rarely made untruthful statements, he did simplify and even misrepresent events in order to craft an entertaining story (Carr, N.J. 1962, 1969, 1996). In addition, the choice of subject matter was probably shaped by the desire to maintain a particular image in the eyes of safari clients. This may explain why he did not write about his early education in commercial subjects or his time in charge of government record keeping. In studying the Carr family, another memoir has been of particular value: Sir Kenneth Bradley's 'Diary of a district officer' which vividly describes the Luangwa Valley as it was when Norman first worked there (Bradley, 1947). Bradley's book is unusual amongst colonial memoirs in that it is of real literary merit and was a best-seller. A substantial list of unpublished memoirs and diaries has been compiled by Anthony Kirk-Greene (Kirk-Greene, 1991). The greatest single concentration of unpublished memoirs and diaries is probably in Oxford University's library system. Nonetheless, memoirs and diaries can be found scattered across the Commonwealth. It is illustrative of this that one important source for the study of Norman Carr takes the form of the diaries and personal papers of Major Eustace Poles, game ranger at Mpika: these are housed in the Library of the Zoological Society of London

The term 'other publications' is, by its nature, a broad and ill-defined category. It may be used to cover a range of printed materials produced by or aimed at White British diasporic communities. Contemporary publications aimed at settlers and colonists include newspapers and 'quality' local interest magazines. Newspapers written by settlers and aimed at the diasporic community often consisted of only a few pages. For example, in the 1930s the Nyasaland Times was produced by folding one large sheet of paper to produce 4 pages. Colonial newspapers may be difficult to access. Sometimes the national library of the country will possess a set. Or it may be necessary to visit a university library or the national archives. It is worth bearing in mind that the British Library holds some colonial newspapers and may make these available in microfiche or microfilm format. 'Quality' is a subjective term. Nonetheless it is apposite in this setting as it accurately expresses the intentions of such magazines at the Northern Rhodesia Journal which characteristically published a mix of articles on wildlife, geography and historical subjects along with good quality illustrations. Similar publications existed in most of the territories of British East and

Central Africa. Sometimes they were printed on expensive clay-loaded paper so that high resolution photographs could be used. Most 'quality' local interest magazines came into existence in the decade after 1945 and ceased publication in the decade of independence. An exception is the Journal of the Society of Malawi which is still going strong today. Also worthy of mention are the Women's Corona Society publications which were aimed originally at the wives of serving colonial officers but seem to have reached a wider audience (Swaisland, 1992). Similar in intent is Emily Bradley's book "Dearest Priscilla" which was aimed at recently-married women preparing to embark for an African colony (Bradley, 1950).

The archives consulted in undertaking this study of the Carr family are listed below. They include three national archives, the archives of two business companies and one set of personal diaries and papers. Many archive repositories have some degree of formality in relation to gaining access. Readers' cards are often issued and the production of ID is often required. It should be added that getting access to national archives in East and Central Africa is likely to be more bureaucratic, expensive and time consuming than is customarily the case in Europe and North America. For instance, an annual research permit fee of US \$ 500 is payable for access to the National Archives of Zimbabwe (plus a daily charge of \$1) and the National Archives of Zambia charges between 68 and 450 Kwacha. In both instances, research permission has to be obtained. For this reason, those undertaking diasporic studies may wish to use the services of research agents, where these are available.

The archives consulted in undertaking a study of the Carr family do not include the diaries of Barbara Carr, although it is evident that these once existed as she reproduces an extract from them in one of her books (Carr, B 1969). Nor do the sources used include Norman Carr's personal papers. The reason is that these no longer exist. The destruction of diaries and other papers is a common phenomenon: it may be even more common amongst diasporic communities who are often on the move and those who live in climates where the survival of paper and other media is put at risk by humidity and insects.

Oral history resources in the custody of archival institutions in East and Central Africa were not used in this study. They have a strong tendency to focus on political activists who campaigned for independence. Whilst Norman Carr was not opposed to independence, he played no active part in such campaigns.

The digital resources used in undertaking this study of the Carr family are listed below also. They include Find My Past, an online commercial service for family historians which made it possible to work out how Norman Carr's parents met. They include too a family history website for the Bishop family. Alexander Bishop was Ernest Carr's best friend and much detail relating to their friendship is available from this website and from no other source. Academic historians are sometimes reluctant to make use of the websites produced by family historians. Whilst it is understandable that professionals may have reservations regarding the outputs of amateurs, these can be of great interest. Michael Moss, co-author of an award-winning book on medical services in the Royal Navy in the era of Admiral Nelson, has stated that the work of family historians on ships' officers and surgeons – much of it available online - was of material assistance in that study (Brockliss, Cardwell and Moss, 2005).

THE ROLE OF MEMORY INSTITUTIONS

In countries where the White British element of the population has become the majority and/or a dominant component - Australia, Canada and New Zealand – memory institutions make an effort to provide services

for and shape their holdings to meet the needs of indigenous peoples (Miller, 2017 and McKemmish, 2005). In the United Kingdom itself, many memory institutions (including The National Archives) seek to provide services for and shape their holdings to meet the needs of immigrant minorities, particularly from the West Indies and South Asia (The National Archives, 2017). In addition, some immigrant minorities in the UK have set up 'community archives' and related projects: these have sometimes received financial support from public or NGO funds, as was the case with the Casbah project (Casbah, 2001).

In contrast, in East and Central Africa there does not be much emphasis on the current provision of services aimed at White British (or other European) diasporas. Some explanations for this pattern come to mind immediately. Memory institutions in East and Central Africa have had to work in resource poor environments for a long time (Musembi, 1986). In addition, many national archive services are preoccupied with providing advice on current records management (Lowry & Wamukoya, 2014). And in some instances, there are political considerations which in turn may pivot on racial resentments from a by-gone era.

Nonetheless, it would be sensible to give this some fresh thought to the provision by archival and other memory institutions of services for White British diasporic communities, both in-country and elsewhere. In some instances, national archives and museum services already possess rich accumulations of artefacts, personal papers and of the records of clubs and associations from these communities: the manuscript collections held by the national archives in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe are examples of this pattern. So there are existing holdings to promote and display. A further facet is the recent phenomenon of ancestral tourism. At present ancestral tourism consists overwhelmingly of visitors from Canada and the United States travelling to the United Kingdom and continental Europe to investigate their roots. There is no intrinsic reason why memory institutions in the countries East and Central Africa should not exploit this opportunity to promote their services and their countries' tourism strategies. Digital finding aids, complete with provision for user contributions via Wikis, provide attractive tools for this kind of sensitisation (Gollins and Bayne, 2015). Also, for memory institutions to make provision for ethnic minorities can have symbolic significance in that it demonstrates that citizenship is not limited by skin colour.

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APPENDIX

Archives Used

- The National Archives of the United Kingdom
- The National Archives of Zambia
- The National Records and Archives of Malawi
- The personal papers of Major Eustace Poles in the Library of the Zoological Society of London
- The records of Harper Collins, publishers, in the Company Archives and Glasgow University Archives and Special Collections
- The records of the African Lakes Corporation in Glasgow University Archives and Special Collections