

# British postal history of south/central/east Africa

## Philatelic genealogy (introduction continued)

We'll get back to the cliff-hanger story of Cecil Rhodes shortly. First, let's finish up the overview.

**British Central Africa (BCA)** was the smallest of the three imperial projects, which also included the British South Africa

Company (BSAC) and the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC). BCA's mandate as a British protectorate began in 1889, to keep out the Portuguese, and lasted until 1907, when the territory known as Nyasaland Protectorate became the new postal authority. Eventually the name was shortened to Nyasaland, and stamps were issued through 1953, when Nyasaland joined the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Fighting the

tailwinds of imperialism and the headwinds of African nationalism, the federation probably was doomed from the start; by 1964 it had dissolved. Nyasaland was briefly reconstituted, then promptly granted independence as the new nation of Malawi.



1895



1938



1908



1964



1959



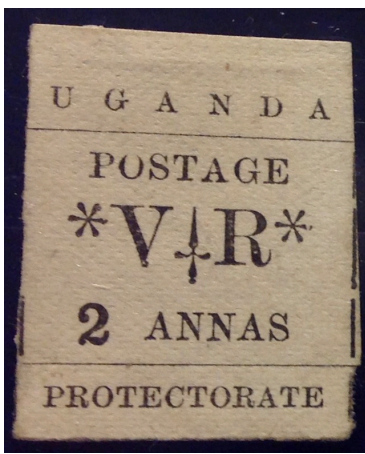
1890

**The Imperial British East Africa Company** laid claim to being the first private company to issue its overprint on a postally valid stamp (left) — and the first to issue its own postage stamps (right). Its territorial claims extended



1891





1896

through what is today Kenya into Uganda. This interesting label from 1896 (left) is among the first stamps of Uganda, up to now under the authority of the IBEAC. In the earliest days the plucky postmaster traded stamps for cowrie shells. Soon enough, Grandmama would step in and declare Uganda one of Britain's proliferating protectorates (right).

By 1895, London was taking over administrative duties from the struggling IBEAC.



1895

This meant no more company stamps, but rather a return to overprints (left).

After Victoria's death in 1901, the first set of stamps picturing the new King Edward VII also announced a new postal configuration:

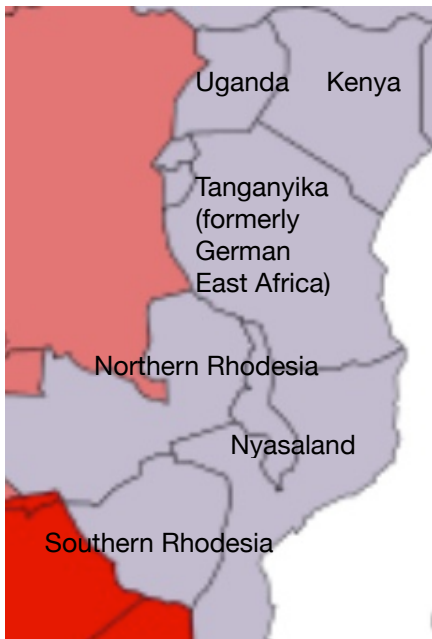


1902



1898

East Africa and Uganda Protectorates.



At right is the first stamp where "Kenya" replaces "East Africa." This was just after World War I, when the defeated Germans were stripped of their colonies. *Deutch Ost Afrika* promptly became Tanganyika, under British mandate.

At right below is a stamp from the first definitive series listing all three members of a new and surprisingly durable and effective federation: Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika (KUT). Yes, this was British colonialism, steeped in racist traditions, institutions and economics. So what's my point? Just that somehow, KUT made this federation work, from the 1930s through the years of independence and on. (And by the way, isn't this a pretty stamp?) While the federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland lasted barely a decade, the KUT postal authority kept issuing stamps for 40 years, through 1975, when the federation of bickering independent nations collapsed in dissension and disarray.



1922



1935



1963



1962



1961\*\*

Here is a display of stamps celebrating Independence Day in Kenya (1963), Uganda (1962) and Tanganyika (1961). Colorful stamps. Inspirational, Aspirational. That arm bearing a torch through the clouds at Kilimanjaro is downright otherworldly. Ah, such hopes and expectations, 60 years ago. How have things worked out? How are average citizens of these three nations faring now, compared to the 1930s, 40s and 50s?

\*\* What happened to Tanganyika? How it became Tanzania is a tangled tale told in another FMF Stamp Project Essay, on Zanzibar! <<https://mancrymf.com/2019/10/>>

**NEXT: CECIL RHODES – THE REST OF THE STORY!**