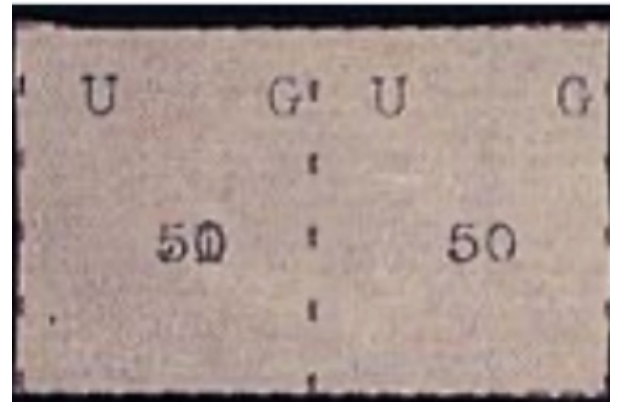


East Africa and Uganda

Here is one of the strangest stamps you'll ever see (right). It's from the first set of stamps of Uganda, and it was produced on a typewriter by the Rev. E. Millar of the Church Missionary Society in March 1895, at the request of C. Wilson, representing the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) in Kampala. The stamps were on thin gummed paper, and displayed territorial letters "U G" for Uganda — and the denomination.



Notice that Rev. Millar corrected the number on the left stamp; this is a global rarity, folks.



Cowry shell currency

By the way, the currency was not British sterling or annas, but shells — cowry shells. In 1895 you could mail a letter within Buganda for 10 cowries. It took 200 cowries to make a rupee. A letter might take three months to

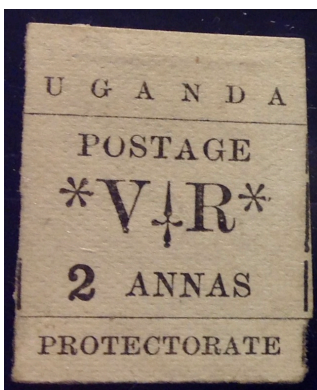
reach Europe.

It is said the quality of these primitive stamps improved after C. Wilson supplied the Rev. Millar with a fresh typewriter ribbon. Very few of these stamps have survived. Surcharges and pen cancels exist, so rare that one dealer remarked: "We do not recall selling a copy in over 25 years."

One chronicler warns that these stamps have been forged. Ya think? I'd be tempted to make my own copy, just for fun, if I still had a manual typewriter. There is at least one other example of

typewritten stamps — the Kansas and Nebraska overprints of U.S. definitives in 1922 (right). When I was a kid I remember taking one of the cheap stamps and typing on it to create a passable forgery. Dangerous fun!

In 1896 the British took over the postal service and a new series of typeset stamps was issued (example left). This was a pretty simple stamp as well — just black on white, the name Uganda Protectorate, the letters VR for Victoria Regina, separated by a ceremonial dagger, and the denomination. The values were in annas and rupees, no longer cowry shells.



In 1898 came a set featuring a dignified portrait of the aging Queen Victoria, based on Angeli's painting of 1885 (right). In 1902, as the queen was breathing her last, two low-value stamps from British East Africa were overprinted "Uganda" (below)



1902



1898

A year later, the first Edward VII stamps appeared from a new postal authority: East Africa and Uganda, covering both protectorates. That arrangement would last into George V's reign, beginning in 1910, until 1922, when the name Kenya was adopted to replace East Africa. About time.



1903



1912

NEXT: KENYA, UGANDA AND TANGANYIKA