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Author(s): Sidney Weston

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NOTES ON AN EXPEDITION INTO THE INTERIOR OF NORTH-WEST AUSTRALIA, 1908-9.

By SIDNEY WESTON.

THE appended sketch-map was made with the prismatic compass, commencing at a fixed point on the Denison downs. No mapping of importance was done until arriving in lat. $20^{\circ} 30'$, long. $129^{\circ} 30'$, Mr. A. Davidson having, in 1902, reached this point. From here southwards the work is original, the country not having been previously explored.

The country has a general elevation of about 1400 feet, and is flat with occasional low hills and ranges, which rise abruptly out of the plains. Occasional extensive stretches of sandy country occur, where sand ridges, of from 50 to 70 feet in height, run east and west in parallel lines, at irregular intervals, varying from a few hundred yards, to a mile, or more.

There is a total absence of rivers or river beds. At the foot of the hills small dry watercourses exist which soon lose themselves in the plains. The hills generally consist of conglomerates and sandstone. A granite range, however, of some magnitude occurs in lat. 20° , long. 129° .

The plains are covered with deep alluvial deposits of recent age, consisting of sand, clay, loam, and gravel. The bedrock occasionally outcrops exposing auriferous rocks in a few instances. Though totally devoid of surface water * the country is covered with timber and bushes. The trees generally are of the eucalyptus family. Many of the bushes are edible, affording excellent sustenance for the camel. Some of the grasses are fine and nutritious and are very suitable for grazing. *Spinifex* is general. *Gastrolobium* is found on and at the foot of some of the hills.

The climate is dry and healthy and by no means unbearable. In summer, though the days are hot the nights are remarkably cool. From November to March thunderstorms are frequent. There are also lighter winter rains.

The timid natives are neither numerous nor hostile. The scarcity of animal and bird life compels them to live in small parties and to lead a wandering life. There is reason to believe that some of them at least are cannibals and that they check the natural increase. Their chief weapons are the spear and boomerang. The latter is not so skilfully made as in many other parts of Australia. The stone axe is their principal implement.

* In one instance in a journey of nearly 500 miles only one small native well was found in the sand, which, on being cleaned out, yielded 50 gallons of water in twenty-four hours.

I was greatly assisted in my work by Mr. H. W. B. Hamilton, who accompanied me.

The Western Australian Government also afforded every assistance.

MAP OF PART OF THE NASSARAWA PROVINCE, NORTHERN NIGERIA.*

By D. CATOR.

THE greater part of the area shown in the accompanying map is under the jurisdiction of Serikin Kwotto. It was close on one hundred years ago that the present chief's father, owing to some trouble at Keffi, it is said, left that place and founded Nassarawa, which is his place of residence. He was a great warrior, and gradually conquered all those within reach. Among others he devastated the kingdom of Kwotto whose chief lived at Panda, near Katakwa, now only a very small village, and from that took his title of Serikin Kwotto. He further subjugated the Koton-karifi district, which was an offshoot of the Kwotto kingdom, and also took his armies across the Benue, and there is little doubt he would have conquered the Ata of Idah had not the advent of Europeans put a stop to his advance.

Umoru, the first Serikin Kwotto, is stated to have reigned from 1818-58. He was succeeded by his eldest son Amadu (1858-78), when his only remaining brother, Mahomadu, followed; he is now (1910) fifty-seven years of age.

The country immediately to the south and south-west of Nassarawa is very sparsely populated, but that part further to the west and lying north of Umaisha is rapidly filling up again, for large numbers of Bassas who fled across the Benue during the unsettled times are returning.

Along the Benue and round Katakwa especially there is a good deal of low swampy ground, very bad in the wet season. Besides the Afo hills, which are extremely rough, there is very hilly country between Ara hill and Gwaragwada; in other parts hills may be met with, but on the whole most of the roads elsewhere are fairly easy travelling.

There are several tribes to be found here, of which the Bassa and Kwoto (= Igbira)† are probably the most numerous; others are Afo, Agatu; Filani, Gade, Gwari, Gwari-n-yama, and Hausa.

The boundary with the Koton-karifi division has lately been delimited, and is here shown; that part was till recently in Kabba Province, but it has now been transferred to Nassarawa Province.

* Map, p. 752.

† This Igbira tribe must not be confused with the Egbira tribe in Kabba Province, whose country was mapped by the writer (see *R.G.S. Journal* for March, 1907).