

Book Review

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Title: *Europeans in British Administered East Africa, A Biographical Listing 1888–1910*, 4th Edition.

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Reviewer: *Colin J. Courtney-Mustaphi**

With the interest and passion of a collector, and through the methods of archival investigation, North presents the results of several decades of enquiry into the written material and photographs that identified and placed Europeans who came into contact with the lands of eastern Africa administered by Britain. Since the 3rd edition (North, 2005), the 4th edition presents over 300 additional pages; and is spread across two hardback volumes that totals over 8000 biographical entries of Europeans present in primary historical sources. The author begins with an overview of the early colonial history and key archival sources of documented names and biographical details of European settlers, travellers and employees across tropical eastern Africa — from the Indian Ocean coast, inland to the lakes, and from Zanzibar. The author describes his journey from initial interest during the 1960s in Nairobi to delving into archives in East Africa and Britain, travels to cemeteries, and later online research, to build biographies and source new material. Biographical entries contain names and known aliases, nationalities, and employment descriptors; and listing of dates, locations, sources, and recorded activities of the individuals. Black and white busts and headshot photographs of individuals are reproduced when possible. One limitation is that not all the photographs are referenced to the original source(s) or format(s). Names of companion Europeans are also cross-referenced in bold font if there is a corresponding entry in the volumes. The author acknowledges previous efforts to catalogue many of the Europeans present across the region, such as the *East Africa Hand Book* and the *Dictionary of East African Biography*, as well as online resources. The history of these products and the dispersed nature of cited sources are listed by North for future researchers.

The volumes are a crucial resource to those who study the history of the region, the people and the archives of the colonial experience; and the legacy of institutions that shaped parts of eastern African landscapes. The author summarises the major sources investigated throughout the research, and these descriptions aid in querying academic literature for further relevant content. The resource is a useful companion for studies of the historical ecology, environmental change, and institutional histories related to environmental policy in eastern Africa. For example, it is interesting to read through the movements of Bertram F.G.

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Cranworth who had written an early monograph describing the ecosystems of Kenya and encouraged further settlement of Europeans (Cranworth, 1912). Also, the work provides context to the expedition led by MacKinder (1900) to Mount Kenya that published early photographs of the vegetation and landscape of the Afromontane ecosystems; and permits quick summaries of expedition companions, such as Campbell H. Hausberg who subsequently returned to Kenya to farm, and has a legacy of toponyms on the mountain. Many entries span the time interval of interest to those examining the exploration and cartographic development of colonial lands, such as the activities of army officer, explorer and settler, Ewart Scott Grogan, who arrived in Mombasa in 1904; and who applied for game licences and land grants during his time in Kenya. Some activities can be correlated with other digitised resources available through the British Library, as in the case of the historical maps and manuscripts associated with the War Office Material (WOMAT) collection (OSO, 1915–1917).

There remains scope for new entries and additional biographical information through a literature review of academic journals and newsletters to include scientific expeditions of the time. The author makes no claims for an exhaustive search or a complete retrospective census; and dutifully flags the tragedy amounting from the losses of primary sources that were once available within the archives. Entries of some individuals may be missing that would be of interest to researchers of historical ecology, conservation history, and land use and land cover changes. The time interval is a bit too early for many of the names relevant to the history of conservation and land use changes, such as some of the early sport-hunters and foresters.

At a broader scale, the book identifies a biographical research gap of the vast area administered by Germany prior to the British, of what is now mainland Tanzania. For example, the brothers Adolf and Friedrich Wilhelm who were important to the early European use of the Ngorongoro Crater area are not included in the scope, but were geographically adjacent. The land use and land cover changes introduced included the planting of *Eucalyptus* and channelised irrigation agriculture as the area changed to leaseholder tenancy and removal of many pastoralist families by 1907 (Gissibl, 2016: 4–5). Parallel researches into the German language archives in combination with new genealogical tools would complement the deep efforts of North. As previously raised by Kollman (2006) and Barringer (2014), digitisation would improve accessibility, findability and utility for new users; but, it is worth noting that digital solutions also have limitations and trade-offs that contrast with having a printed resource on the shelf. Of note to readers, an independently developed digital database of biographical entries and digitised photographs is maintained by Christine Nicholls (retired editor of the Oxford Press), which can be found online at <http://www.europeansineastafrica.co.uk>, and covers the time interval from 1880–1939. The sweeping work of North to catalogue many of the Europeans in contact with British Administered East Africa is a useful—and potentially underused—resource for those interested in the history and development of the region.

Book Review: Europeans in British Administered East Africa

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