



International Boundary Study

No. 148 – December 6, 1974

Botswana – Zimbabwe (*Southern Rhodesia*) Boundary

(Country Codes: BC-ZI)

**The Geographer
Office of the Geographer
Bureau of Intelligence and Research**

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

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BOTSWANA – ZIMBABWE (SOUTHERN RHODESIA) BOUNDARY

I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Botswana–Southern Rhodesia boundary is approximately 505 miles long and is demarcated by rivers or pillars throughout most of its length. Northwestward from the confluence of the Shashi and Limpopo, the boundary follows the Shashi for a short distance before extending west of the river to include an area in Southern Rhodesia within a 10-mile radius of Tuli. It then continues along the Shashi to its junction with the Ramaquabane, follows the Ramaquabane to its headwaters, and then extends along the Ramaquabane–Shashi drainage divide. From the intersection of the drainage divide with the Pandamantenga road, the boundary follows or is in close proximity with this road northward to the vicinity of the Zambezi.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A proclamation issued by the High Commissioner for South Africa on September 30, 1885, provided for British jurisdiction over the territory then known as Bechuanaland and the Kalahari and later as the Bechuanaland Protectorate. The tract subsequently to become Southern Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia, to the north and east of Bechuanaland, was proclaimed a British sphere of influence in 1888. The following year Cecil Rhodes was granted a charter for the British South Africa Company, which was to operate initially in a somewhat vaguely delimited area between the Zambezi and Bechuanaland.

On October 20, 1898, an Order in Council¹ delimited the boundary between Southern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland, which is the present-day Botswana(Southern Rhodesia boundary. The boundary in the arc west of Tuli was demarcated by pillars numbered counterclockwise from 1 to 45, and the sector along the Pandamatenga road was demarcated by joint commissions first in 1907 and then in 1959.

Following the abrogation of the charter of the British South Africa Company in 1923, Southern Rhodesia was annexed formally by the United Kingdom as a self-governing colony. Between August 1, 1953, and December 31, 1963, Southern Rhodesia, along with Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, was a member of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. On November 11, 1965, Southern Rhodesia made a unilateral declaration of independence from the United Kingdom which the British Government considered to have no legal validity.

The Bechuanaland Protectorate was administered as a High Commission Territory from 1891 until the dissolution of the Commission on August 1, 1964. The Protectorate became

¹ The Southern Rhodesia Order in Council of October 20, 1898, is contained both in Edward Hertslet's The Map of Africa by Treaty and in Section 1 of the High Commissioner's Proclamation No. 8 of 1899.

self-governing on March 1, 1965, and independent as the Republic of Botswana on September 30, 1966.

III. ALIGNMENT

The Botswana-Southern Rhodesia boundary as delimited in Article 4 of the Southern Rhodesia Order in Council of October 20, 1898, is as follows:

...[from] a point opposite the mouth of the River Shashi,² by the River Shashi to its junction with the Tati and Ramaquaban Rivers, thence by the Ramaquaban River to its source, thence by the watershed of the River Shashi and Ramaquaban until such watershed strikes the Hunter's road (called the Pandamtenka road), thence by that road to the River Zambezi, and by that river to the Portuguese boundary. The said limits include an area of ten miles radius round Fort Tuli, but exclude the area of the district known as the Tati, district as defined by the Charter.

Section 2 of the *Commissioners Report*³ on the *Boundary Redemarcation between Southern Rhodesia and Bechuanaland Protectorate* describes the 1959 demarcation from beacon or pillar 1 at the intersection of the Shashi-Ramaquabane drainage divide and the Pandamatenga road⁴ to number 842 on the south bank of the Zambezi as follows:

Section 2: Demarcation of the Boundary.

We have divided the Boundary into eleven sections for descriptive purposes. Beacon numbers quoted refer to new beacons sited by us unless the contrary is specifically stated:

(i) Beacon 1 near Gungwe to Nata River.

This section contains a barbed wire fence which runs in a series of roughly straight lines from one original beacon to the next regardless of the course of the old Hunter's Road. We have beacons the road and consequently the boundary frequently crosses and recrosses the fence.

From beacon 1 to 24 the road more or less follows the fence. At No. 5 local inhabitants told us that the old road ran to the east of a small kopje [hill] and not to the west as the present road does. We beacons the Eastern track.

At 24 an old track is visible. It leaves the fence road between 24 and 34 and 35 and 37. We concluded that this was the Hunter's Road and drew the boundary accordingly.

² The tripoint with South Africa is at the confluence of the Shashi and Limpopo.

³ The Report also includes section 1, General, and five Annexures: A. Commissioners' Terms of Reference, B. Report of 1907 Boundary Commission, C. Plan of Design of Boundary Beacon, D. List of Beacons Placed, and E. 1:100,000 Provisional Map of boundary.

⁴ The southern part of the Pandamatenga road is now abandoned.

At 44 there is an old road which leaves the fence and runs east to 45, where it joins a road which is in use and which goes as far as 78, south of Border Store. We beaconsed this road. Along its course, between 71 and 72 lies Makalo Store, situated immediately east of the fence which the proprietors apparently took to be the border. We concluded that the old Hunter's Road passed about three hundred yards to the east of the store, which therefore lies in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Even if the border at this point was taken to be the straight line between original beacons 12 and 13 the store would still be in the Bechuanaland Protectorate because the fence at this point has a concave curve to the west.

Beacons 79 and 79A are not the normal boundary beacons but half inch pegs at the base of tram line section fence posts both in concrete. This is because they are cadastral beacons and to replace the tram lines, which were the original surveyed beacons with concrete cubes, would have meant demolishing the fence.

Between 78 and 115 we found thirteen old beacons, but could find no continuous road or track connecting them. We therefore decided to adopt the approximate straight line between these beacons as the boundary. This line follows the already cleared line of the fence and a considerable saving in clearing costs will be effected as the area is heavily wooded.

Between 115 and 164 an old track passing twelve of the original beacons was demarcated. It became lost in open country between 127 and 130 and between 148 and 150; here we again adopted the approximate straight line between old beacons. At 156 we found one of the original beacons only three feet from the sheer ten foot deep eastern bank of the Maitengwe River. This was a precarious position and we decided to put the new beacon in a position where there would be no danger of its being destroyed by a collapsing bank. The replacement beacon was sited 22.4 Cape feet from the old one on a compass bearing of 29 1/2 degrees.

From 164 to a point between 211 and 212 the old road and present Panda-ma-Tenka roads are one. At 212 an old beacon was found one hundred yards to the east of the present road. The old road at this point was visible on the aerial photograph and we beaconsed it although no trace of it could be found on the ground. It rejoined the present Panda-ma-Tenka road approximately one mile further north.

From 214 to 221; 0.40 miles, south of the Nata River, three old beacons were found along a visible track. At 221 the road disappeared and we engaged African guides to show us the point at which the Hunter's Road crossed the Nata.

(ii) Nata River to Sibanini Pan.

Original beacon No. 59 formerly stood on the north bank of the Nata. It was a corner beacon of Wankie National Park and Special Native A. We could not find it but endeavoured with the means at our disposal to site a new beacon (No. 222) in the place where it had stood.

The old road was untraceable for the first half-mile north of the Nata. We beacons in an approximate straight line from 222 to the point where the road again appears at 224. From here to 239 the track was traceable and we found five old beacons on it. From 239 to Sibanini Pan, a distance of nine miles, we found no beacons but followed a blazed track shown to us by African guides from Basuto Village.

(iii) Sibanini Pan to Tamasanka Pan.

In this difficult twenty-six mile section which was described in 1907 as being "very much obliterated and overgrown" we were completely in the hands of our African guides. They showed us a footpath which had, they said, once been the Hunter's Road. Their reliability was demonstrated by the finding of two beacons along the footpath. One of these was broken and protruded only one inch from the ground.

There were several pans in this section. They were dealt with as follows:

- a) Sibanini (at 266); all water in Bechuanaland Protectorate as stated in 1907 Report.
- b) Teleman (at 284); all water in Bechuanaland Protectorate; aerial photographs clearly show road to east of pan.
- c) Small pan at 297; all water in S. Rhodesia. Guide said old road went to west of pan.
- d) Small pan at 304; boundary passes through centre. Guides and photos indicated road passed this way.
- e) Small pan between 305 and 306; boundary passes through centre for reasons stated above.
- f) Kowati (at 312) through centre as above.
- g) Nantungu (at 320) approximately three-quarters of water in S. Rhodesia for reasons as above.
- h) Tamasanka (at 366); all water in S. Rhodesia as stated in 1907 Report.

Of these pans, we are informed that only Sibanini and Tamasanka contain permanent water.

(iv) Tamasanka Pan to Nyakwachi Pan.

The boundary in this section was again indicated by an African guide. It followed a footpath on which one old beacon was found. From 401 to Nyakwachi, a distance of approximately 1 1/2 miles, there are two footpaths. We chose the one to the east because it is the more direct route and was pointed out to use by the guide. The water at Nyakwachi is all in Rhodesia as stated in the 1907 Report.

(v) Nyakwachi Pan to Tamafupa Pan.

For ten miles north of Nyakwachi the boundary follows a track which at 436 merges with the W.N.L.A. Nata/Kazengula road. The old track, which we beacons does not exactly coincide with the W.N.L.A. road, but crosses and recrosses it at frequent intervals. For the last 1 1/4 miles before Tamafupa the two roads closely coincide and we beacons the W.M.L.A. road. The water at Geroa (441) is in the Bechuanaland Protectorate and the water holes to the east of the W.N.L.A. road at Tamafupa (459) are in S. Rhodesia as stated in the 1907 Report.

(vi) Tamafupa Pan to Hendriks Pan.

From Tamafupa the old road runs on the eastern side of the W.N.L.A. road for 2.7 miles; then the two coincide as far as 494; from 494 to 510 they cross and recross each other; they coincide from 510 to 0.18 miles north of 516, where finally they part, the W.N.L.A. road to the North West the Hunters' road to the north. Two beacons were found on this section, one on the old road, and one at a point where the two were merged. From 516 to Hendriks Pan the road is reasonably well defined. The water at Thamasetse and Hendriks Pans is in the Bechuanaland Protectorate as stated in the 1907 Report.

(vii) Hendriks Pan to Cream of Tartar Pan.

From Hendriks Pan (531) to Jolley's Pan (582) the road is clearly defined and runs through thick mukwa forest. We found one beacon in this section. From Jolley's Pan to Cream of Tartar Pan (598) the road is practically obliterated and no beacons were found. We are satisfied from the evidence at our disposal, however, that we have demarcated a boundary closely following the route of the old Hunter's Road. The water at Tibokae Pan is in S. Rhodesia; at Jolley's and Cream of Tartar it is in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, the latter as stated in the 1907 Report.

(viii) Cream of Tartar Pan to Beacon 648 near Daka Farm.

From Cream of Tartar to 613 the boundary follows an old track which is fairly well defined. No beacons were found on this section. From 613 to 648 we found eight beacons, but had difficulty in deciding where the road connecting them had run because the country side consists of a series of large open vleis. Assistance of African guides enables us to define a satisfactory boundary. One of the corner beacons of Deka Farm (No. 632) is also a Boundary beacon. Its position was checked by Mr. Eekhout, Deputy Federal Boundary Commissioner, who will erect the permanent beacon at the site.

(ix) Beacon 648 to Kaizuma Depression.

From 648 to 669 the old track is clearly defined. We found all five old beacons in this section.

The cadastral boundary of Panda-ma-Tenka Farm runs from 669 to 680. The old curvilinear boundary of the farm was the inner edge of the Hunter's Road. Mr. Eekhout has checked the positions of the cadastral beacons in this section, placed intermediate beacons and substituted a boundary of straight lines which will ensure that the original area of the farm remains unchanged. The Southern Rhodesia Surveyor-General's Department considers that the strip of Crown land between the farm boundary and the middle of the Hunter's Road would be an embarrassment. We therefore decided to make the farm and territorial boundaries one and the same.

From 680 to 715 there are two tracks, the better of which is the C.D.C. road from Panda-ma-Tenka to Kazengula. We found ten old beacons in this section. The boundary runs slightly to the east of the C.D.C. road for one mile, slightly to the west for 1.88 miles; thereafter the two virtually coincide.

Kaizuma Depression was flooded and we made an unsuccessful search for the beacon which used to stand in the flooded area. The route of the Hunter's Road was discernible on the aerial photographs, and the boundary goes through the middle of the Depression. The water in Gazuma Pan is in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, as stated in the 1907 Report.

(x) Kaizuma Depression to Beacon 793.

For 6.86 miles north of the Depression there are two tracks. The eastern one was chosen because three beacons were found on it. This track could rarely be seen on the ground but was visible on the photographs. From 724 to 789 there is only one road; we found nine beacons along it.

In this section there are five pans which were dealt with as follows:

- a) Nonyani (at 729) in Bechuanaland Protectorate.

- b) Missis (at 740) in S. Rhodesia as stated in 1907 Report.
- c) Namabwe (at 742) in S. Rhodesia.
- d) Kakulwane (at 758) in S. Rhodesia.
- e) Stoffel's (at 767) in Bechuanaland Protectorate as stated in 1907 Report.

At 789, where the old road turns off right from the C.D.C. road we lost its trace and took as the boundary the approximate straight line 1.4 miles long joining the point where it disappeared and the old beacon found on the Kazengula/Victoria Falls road. Our African guides said that the old road had in fact run along this line.

(xi) Beacon 793 to Zambezi River.

In this section we found three beacons. The 1953 party from the S.R. Surveyor-General's office found seven. In our opinion some of those which were missing had been deliberately destroyed. Old beacon No. 218 was one of these and evidence of its position was necessary to prove that a natural spring in the vicinity was in Bechuanaland. We obtained the following evidence which guided our choice as to the whereabouts of them missing beacon 218 and of the entire boundary in this section:

- (a) We found the remains of the cairn and pipe hole of old beacon 218 at a place where local inhabitants said that the beacon had actually stood only a fortnight before we arrived in the area.
- (b) The natural spring referred to above is mentioned in the last paragraph of the Report of the 1907 Boundary Commission.
- (c) The sketch map prepared by Lt. Thornton for the 1907 Report shows the spring and gives a good indication of the general direction of the road.
- (d) Five African guides took us along the old boundary road on three separate occasions. With some very slight discrepancies, they each pointed out the same road along the entire section.
- (e) We contacted two members of the 1952 party from the S.R. Surveyor-General's office. They showed us the same road as the African guides had done.
- (f) The sketch map and report of the 1953 party provided further confirmation.

In the light of the above, the boundary demarcated by us in this section runs as follows:

- (a) 793 to 805: Following the Victoria Falls/Kazengula road.
- (b) 805 to 830: Swings north into Leshuma Vlei, which it follows until it joins a farm road at a point between 830 and 831. The small earth dam built by Kazengula Ranches a few hundred yards to the west of 823 is in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.
- (c) 831 to 840: Coincides with the farm road which skirts the western edge of irrigated rice lands.
- (d) 840 to 842: The line runs for approximately 300 yards straight to old beacon No. 226 on the south bank of the Zambezi. The compound of the African workers of Kazengula Irrigation Company and Guest Camp is to the west of the line. The farm buildings and Guest Camp are on the east.

The Order in Council of 1898 did not delimit clearly the Bechuanaland(Southern Rhodesia boundary beyond the point where the line reached the Zambezi except to state that it continued "by that river to the Portuguese boundary." In the case of the demarcations of 1907 and 1959, no attempt was made to extend the boundary beyond the right or south bank of the Zambezi.

Note: This International Boundary Study indicates those agreements relevant to the Botswana(Southern Rhodesia boundary in the vicinity of the confluence of the Zambezi and Linyanti. It neither intends to define the exact point of contact between this and other boundaries nor attempts to interpret its relationship to the Southern Rhodesia(Zambia boundary, the South–West Africa (Namibia)(Zambia boundary, and Botswana(South–West Africa boundary in the vicinity of the confluence of these rivers with respect to the physical conditions of the area or the legal consequences of various treaties and all the facts. Accompanied by a boundary disclaimer, the map in the study, because of its small scale, shows Botswana, Southern Rhodesia, South–West Africa (Namibia) and Zambia converging to a quadripoint at the confluence of the Zambezi and Linyanti.

DOCUMENTATION

1. Proclamation – Bechuanaland and the Kalahari: British Protectorate. September 30, 1885. Edward Hertslet, *The Map of Africa by Treaty*, 3 vols., 3rd Edition (London: Harrison and Sons, 1909). Vol. 1, p. 190.
2. Royal Charter of Incorporation granted to the British South Africa Company. October 28, 1889. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 271(7).
3. Order in Council – Regulation of British Jurisdiction in Southern Rhodesia. October 20, 1898. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 268.
4. Commissioner's Report on the Boundary Redemarcation between S. Rhodesia and Bechuanaland Protectorate. March(September 1959).

This International Boundary Study is one of a series of specific boundary papers prepared by the Office of the Geographer, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, in accordance with provisions of the Office of Management and Budget Circular No. 16.

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