

THE EARLY POSTCARDS OF EAST AFRICA - AN UNLISTED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND MISSION SET

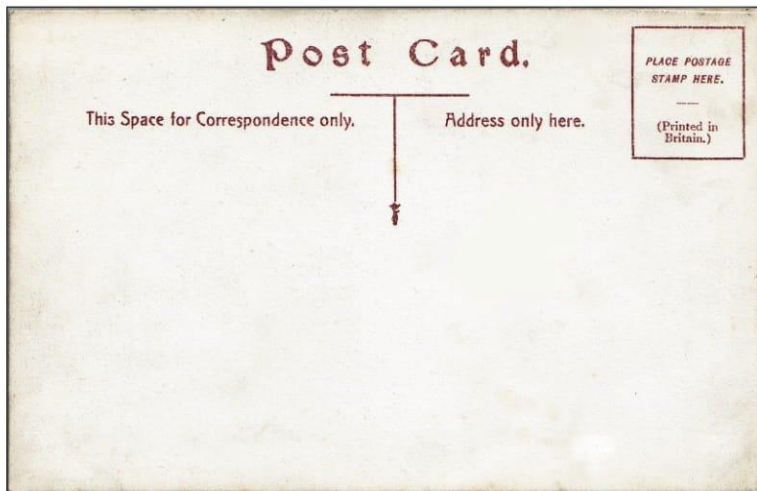


Figure 1



Figure 2

Introduction

In his book, Clive Evans documents, in Category Misc.16, a series of cards produced by the Church of Scotland Mission. Six cards were listed, but I am aware of three others, one of which is illustrated in [BEA Vol.12, No.77, p52](#). For completeness, though I am sure that there are others yet to be found, an augmented list of Misc.16 cards follows:

- St. Andrew's Church, Nairobi.
- The Church and School Kikuyu.
- The Hunter Memorial Hospital Kikuyu.
- "Kikuyu" Conference, June, 1913.
- Kings School Uganda v Kikuyu.
- In the Making, Kikuyu. [vert.]
- Tumutumu, Kenia.
- Boy's Brigade, Kikuyu. [seen dated in manuscript, Sept.1918]
- Witch Doctor, Kikuyu. [vert.]

However, another series of cards used to promote the mission also exists, which was not covered in the Evans publication. To date, I have identified eight cards, which I suspect may be the complete set. Using the Evans system, I believe that these could be classified as a sub-category – [Category Misc.16.1](#), since there is a clear association between these two sets, both produced during the Protectorate period. This unlisted series contains images that date to 1908, when a missionary expedition took place, details of which follow.

Brief Historical Background

The East African Scottish Mission had been established in 1891, sponsored by Sir William Mackinnon, Chairman of the Imperial British East Africa Company. The mission was largely funded by Scottish businessmen who had moved to East Africa and the mission headquarters was first established at Kibwezi. This location was ultimately deemed too dangerous (it had proved to be malaria-prone, and several missionaries had been killed by wild animals), so the station was moved in 1899 to Thogoto (Kikuyu), from where the mission provided medical and educational services. It also seems



Figure 3

to have been from about this time that the organisation's constitution named it as: The Church of Scotland Mission.

Missionaries John Arthur and Henry Scott, accompanied by several Kikuyu teachers, left Thogoto in July 1908, travelling north towards Mount Kenya in search of suitable mission sites. The caravan crossed the Tana River and camped on the highest hill in the region – Tumutumu, which provided a commanding view of the countryside around. From there, the missionaries claimed to be able to see more than fifty villages and decided this was a good place from where to conduct the evangelisation of the Kikuyu. Around 1910, new mission stations were opened at

Tumutumu, which lies to the east of Nyeri, and at Chogoria, further to the north-east, towards Meru.

The Postcards

Clearly, the 1908 expedition must have been accompanied by a photographer, since several of the pictures on the cards have been taken on the journey.

The images on the postcards are small, with wide margins inscribed, '**CHURCH OF SCOTLAND MISSION, BRITISH EAST AFRICA**' above and with a caption below, both printed in red. The back (Fig 1) is divided, printed in brown, with '**(Printed in Britain.)**' in the stamp space, but no printer's name is present. The captions recorded are:

- The Expedition to Kenia, July 1908, the Caravan on the March. [vert.] [seen used in Edinburgh 1914] (Figure 2)
- The Thika Falls (on the way to Kenia). [vert.]
- Camp Life, Dr. H. Scott and Dr. Arthur at luncheon, on the way to Kenia. [vignette] [Fig 3]
- Service at the Site of New Mission Station, Kenia. [seen used in Glasgow 1911]
- A Burn in Kenia District. [vert.]
- Young Married Woman, Kikuyu. [vert. vignette]
- Hunters and Honey Gatherers, Kikuyu.
- Mogu. The first teacher to Kenia, 1st October, 1908. [vert. vignette]

Whether these cards were ever available in East Africa or not is unknown – the only two used examples I have seen were both posted in Scotland.

References:

- 1) *The Early Postcards of the British East Africa Protectorate / Kenya* – P.C. Evans
- 2) *BEA 77/52* – Gerald Storer
- 3) *The Missionary Movement in Colonial Kenya* – James Karanja