

COLONIAL AFRICA

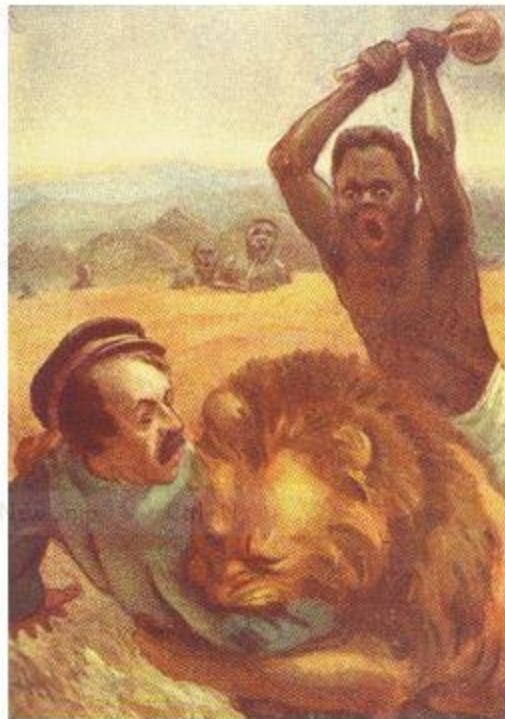
1770 TO 1910

DISCOVERY OF BLUE NILE TO UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA

ERA SUMMARY – COLONIAL AFRICA

British Influence in Africa: An Overview—Substantial British Influence in Africa was not established until the 19th century, and was confined to several regions which have separate histories. By the turn of the 20th century, British holdings included Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast (modern Ghana) and Nigeria in West Africa; the region now composed of South Africa, Botswana, Zambezi, and Zambia in the south; and Uganda and Kenya in the East. In addition, British forces controlled the regions of Egypt and Sudan, although nominally these were still part of the Ottoman Empire. Although British traders, including slave traders, had operated off the west coast of Africa for several hundred years, they confined their operations mainly to a few coastal trading ports and islands, since the African interior was thought to be uninhabitable by Europeans. Britain did not actually gain control of Capetown in South Africa until around 1800, and did not acquire her other colonial holdings until the late 19th century. British colonization of Africa therefore occurred nearly 100 years after its colonial expansion in Asia, and over 200 years since its colonization of North America.

The British colonization of Africa proceeded in a much more hesitant manner than that of Asia. While Asia was essentially colonized by trading companies, which had but one objective in mind, Britons with imperial interests in Africa included missionaries and humanitarians, as well as traders; but even among the humanitarians there was little consensus about what could or should be done about such native practices as domestic slavery, witchcraft, inter-tribal warfare, and human sacrifice. Because of the difficulties with native populations, an unhealthy climate and uncertain commercial opportunities, there was much reluctance and controversy regarding what Britain's objectives should be in the region, beyond preventing other countries from colonizing the region. Control of the British government changed parties rather frequently and no grand or consistent colonial policy regarding Africa was pursued from above. For this reason, committed individuals who were willing to work over the long term, were often very



THE LION BEGAN TO CRUNCH THE BONE OF HIS ARM

influential in determining British "African policy". Some examples of this were [Charles Gordon](#) in the Sudan, [George Goldie](#) in Nigeria, [Cecil Rhodes](#) in South Africa, and [David Livingstone](#).

Certainly, by the 1880's when the discovery of both gold and diamonds had caused hundreds of fortune seekers to flock to the region, there was a great deal of greed and exploitation involved in the development of Africa, but it is false to characterize British influence in Africa as purely exploitive in nature. Serious colonization of Africa by Britain did not begin until after the slave trade was outlawed, and much of the wrath directed against Britain by the natives, was because of its policy of opposing slavery and witchcraft, which were thoroughly ingrained into native African culture. Millions of dollars were spent on humanitarian relief for the natives; hundreds of missionaries risked their lives to bring the best aspects of civilization to the African tribes. The problems of Africa have always been serious and difficult of redress, before, during, and after colonization, but it is certain that many of the most committed of British colonizers, were motivated to alleviate the suffering of the native populations, and not entirely driven by greed.

Exploration of the African Continent—The geography of the African interior was almost completely unknown well into the 19th century, but when exploration was finally undertaken most of the adventurers were British Scots. One of the earliest explorers of Africa was [James Bruce](#) who discovered the source of the Blue Nile in 1770. Soon after [Mungo Park](#) discovered the Niger river by traveling across land, but never determined its source or mouth. Several other British explorers, including [Hugh Clapperton](#) and the Landers brothers continued to explore this region over the next few decades. They determined the course and the outlet of the Niger, but not much was done to follow up their efforts because of the extreme danger of traveling inland in this region. The source of the White Nile and Lake Victoria, were not discovered until 1856 by [John Hanning Speke](#) and [Richard Burton](#), and [David Livingstone](#), the most famous of African Explorers, did not undertake his first expedition to cross the southern horn of the continent until 1852, and by his death in 1873, much of the interior of the continent was still unknown. It was left to [H. M. Stanley](#), yet another Scotsman, to cross the continent east to west, and in 1874 discover the route of the Congo river. Even after these discoveries were made further development was proceeded very slowly, and large swaths of the continent lay unexplored.

West Africa—In West Africa, France was the major colonial power in the region, and British traders held only a few outposts, and even held these half-heartedly at times, since it was difficult to retain governors. The climate was deadly for white men, and few ventured into the interior. The coast possessed some honest traders, and mission stations, but the overall character of many of the Europeans who did venture into the regions was poor—pirates and slavers abounded, and even many philanthropic ventures that were naively attempted ended in disaster. During the 19th century, British traders established several additional outposts in the Gold Coast region, and made alliances with the Fanti, who were the dominant coastal tribes at the time. During the same period, the interior Ashanti tribe was becoming more powerful, and sought to displace the Fanti and take over the coastal trade. The first [Ashanti War](#) occurred when the Ashanti's made several raids into the coastal settlements protected by the British and

burned Fanti villages. Since the area was under their protection, the British made several raids into Ashanti territory between 1826 and 1874 in order to punish the incursions. A final uprising in 1896 resulted in the declaration of the territory as the Crown Colony of the Gold Coast.

The man most responsible for the establishment of Nigeria as a British colony was [George Goldie](#), who for twenty years worked to establish a functioning government to Nigeria. Unable to get Britain to commit, he raised funds privately, and founded a government chartered development company. He essentially governed the region himself for twenty years, until "selling-out" to Britain in 1900. Like most people of the his age, he did not think the natives were capable of governing themselves humanely, and saw his role both as promoting commerce and civilization.

South Africa—The Cape Town region of South Africa was originally settled by the Dutch East India Company in the 17th century, and by the time the colony fell into British hands, around 1800, much of the population had been established in the area for over 150 years. The Native Dutch, also called Boers, or Afrikaners, were fiercely independent slave-owners, and they resented the British interference. When the British government decided to abolish slavery in all of its colonies, many of the Boers decided to pack up their belongings and move out of the sphere of British influence. They first settled in Natal, on the east side of the peninsula, but as Britain had already started to form settlements in the area, they moved across the Vaal river, into a desolate wilderness, inhabited by Zulu tribes. After using their usual methods of [slaughter](#), enslavement, and diplomacy to bring the native tribes to bay, the Boers settled and formed two republics in the region, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal Republic.



THUS DID A HUNDRED MEN KEEP THREE THOUSAND SAVAGES AT BAY

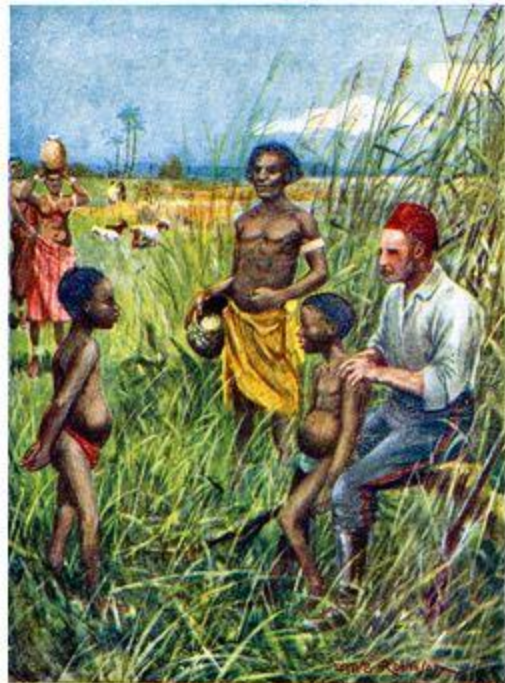
Meanwhile, Cape Town, Natal, and several other towns in the south grew under Britain's protection. In 1867 however, diamonds were found in a remote area of Kimberly, claimed by both Britain and the Transvaal. The commerce and industry minded English were in a far better position to exploit the discoveries, and so took over government of the area. Within ten years of the discovery of South African Diamonds, [Cecil Rhodes](#), a young man from a middle-class farming family in England, had built a diamond-mining empire that gained greater and greater control of the market until he had a multi-million dollar cartel at his disposal. In spite of his personal riches, Rhodes led a relatively austere life, and threw his entire energies and much of his wealth into the project of unifying the various colonies of South Africa under a single government, within the British Commonwealth. With this goal in mind, he negotiated with the native tribes, and helped to lay claim to the regions north of the Transvaal, including modern

Botswana, Zambia, and Zambezi. He did much else to lay the groundwork for unification, but was hotly resisted by the Boers, who hated British rule, and loved their independence.

The population of the Zulu nation increased quickly under British protection, and soon there was conflict with the Boers and other British colonies. The British regiment that was sent to put down Cetewayo, the Zulu king of the time, was caught off guard and slaughtered in one of the worst massacres in British history. It took the British nearly a year to regroup, but they eventually destroyed the Zulu capital, and sent the king into exile. No sooner had the British prevailed against the Zulu's, and annexed the Boer republic, but the first Boer War broke out and went very badly for the British. The current Prime minister, William Gladstone, was glad to make peace with the Boers and granted them their independence, much to the dismay of Rhodes and other die-hard imperialists, who believed that South Africa could only thrive under a unified government.

Yet the situation would get uglier still. In 1885, an enormous vein of gold was discovered in the Transvaal. The Boers themselves were agricultural and only wanted to be left alone, but could do nothing to prevent the enormous influx of foreigners into their territory. They did however, tax the miners, but did not allow the *outlanders* to have a say in government. Since many of the outlanders were British, this was an excuse to attempt to annex the area into British territory, and an unofficial "revolution" was staged which ended in disaster. By 1899 the pressure was at an intolerable level, and the Boer's laid siege to three British cities. This was the start of the very costly and difficult second Boer War. It lasted until 1902, but ultimately, the far stronger British defeated the republic and forced the Boers to submit to British government. It took ten more years to integrate the colonies, but neither the imperialist Cecil Rhodes nor his Boer nemesis Paul Kruger lived to see the birth of the South African Nation.

Egypt-Sudan—Even before the Crimean War, during which Britain took the side of the Ottoman Turks against Russia, the British had developed friendly relations with some Ottoman rulers, particularly Mehemet Ali, who had taken control of Egypt and the Sudan, and allowed the British to run a transportation line (P.& O.) from Alexandria to the Red Sea, to facilitate travel to India. Unfortunately, Mehemet's successors did not govern as ably as he did, and relied on Britain and other European powers provide advice on modernization, and to bail them out of financial trouble. The Suez Canal was begun with the aid of the French, but through diplomacy and other shenanigans, Britain ended up controlling an minority share. Soon after the opening of the canal,



IN THE SOUDAN, BUY TWO CHILDREN FOR A BASKET FULL OF DHOORA.

Britain was called upon to help put down [Arabi's Rebellion](#) against the Egyptian government, and at the *Battle of Tel-el-kebir* drove the rebel leader into exile. By this point Britain was no longer playing merely an "advisory" role in Egypt, but by assuming control of both the finances of the Egyptian government, and also the military, it was in effect, although not in name, ruling the region.

Meanwhile the great British military hero [Charles Gordon](#), who had already distinguished himself by his valiant service in China and Britain, was appointed Governor of Sudan, a region where slavery was still rife, and the natives were severely oppressed by warlords, bandits, and Moslem slavers. Gordon worked ceaselessly for five years to improve the condition of the natives, and returned to Britain in 1879, exhausted. Shortly after Gordon left Sudan a rebellion broke out, led by the [Mahdi](#), a fanatical Moslem warlord. Within a few years he controlled much of Sudan, and murdered and enslaved those who opposed him. In 1884, when Gordon heard that Khartoum, the capital of Sudan was threatened, he returned to help defend the city and urged the British government to send a relief party. The relief party however, after many delays, arrived too late, and Gordon was killed when the city of Khartoum was taken. It was not until 13 years later, that this disgrace was avenged by [Horatio Kitchener](#), hero of the [Soudan Campaign](#) at the *Battle of Omdurman*, and the Mahdists finally driven out of Sudan. Egypt and Sudan continued under British protection until finally becoming an official colony after the Great War.

CHARACTERS – COLONIAL AFRICA

EXPLORERS

- Mungo Park** 1771–1806 Explorer of the Niger river area in Africa.
- Hugh Clapperton** 1788–1827 Explored Sub-Saharan Africa. Discovered Lake Chad.
- John Hanning Speke** 1827–1864 Explored, with Burton, the Great lakes region of Africa.
- David Livingstone** 1813–1873 As a medical missionary, he explored uncharted regions of the interior of Africa.
- Richard Burton** 1821–1890 Explored, with Speke, the Great lakes region of Africa. Also translated Arabian Nights.
- H. M. Stanley** 1841–1904 Met Livingstone in African, then continued his explorations. Followed the Congo river to the sea.
- Paul du Chailu** 1835–1903 Adventurer who explored equatorial Africa for six years, and tried to cross the continent.

DUTCH/BOER HEROES

- Jan van Riebeck** 1619–1677 Founder and first Governor of the Dutch settlement at Cape Town, South Africa.
- Van der Stel** 1639–1712 First Governor-General of Dutch East India company's colony at Cape town.
- Pieter Retief** 1780–1838 Leader of Boers during the Great Trek. Murdered by Dingaan during negotiations.
- Andries Pretorius** 1798–1853 Leader of Boers who avenged death of Piet Retief, and formed the Transvaal Republic.
- Paul Kruger** 1825–1904 Boer leader who resisted British rule, and was president of the Transvaal Republic.
- Louis Botha** 1862–1919 Boer Hero during the Second Boer War. First Prime Minister of South Africa.

BRITISH HEROES

- Harry Smith** 1787–1860 Notable British military commander who served in the Peninsular War and afterward India and South Africa.
- George Goldie** 1846–1925 British administrator who created a trading company to secure Britain's claim to Nigeria.
- George Grey** 1812–1898 Governor of South Australia, Cape Colony, and New Zealand.
- Cecil Rhodes** 1853–1902 Power broker in South Africa, tried to turn all provinces into a British Colony.
- Robert Baden-Powell** 1857–1941 British general who defended city of Mafeking during the Boer War. Later founded the Boy Scout movement.

NATIVE HEROES

- Chaka** 1781–1828 Chieftain who oversaw the Zulu's rise to power, and domination over a large region of South Africa.
- Dingan** 1795–1840 Ruled Zulus after assassinating Shaka. Murdered Boer leaders leading to Zulu-Boer War.
- Cetewayo** 1826–1884 Leader of the Zulus during the Anglo-Zulu War.

EGYPT/SUDAN

- Mahdi** 1844–1885 Raised an army of Rebel Muslim Sudanese. Caused widespread carnage. Besieged Khartoum.
- The Khalifa** 1846–1899 Succeeded as leader of the Mahdists on the death of Mahdi. Fought Kitchener at Omdurman.
- Charles Gordon** 1833–1885 General who defeated the Tai-pings in China, served as governor in Soudan and resisted the Mahdi in Khartoum.
- Arabi Pasha** 1839–1911 Leader of an insurrectionary movement in Egypt in 1882
- Horatio Kitchener** 1850–1916 Military hero of the late 19th century, first in Sudan, and later in the Boer Wars

TIMELINE – COLONIAL AFRICA

DUTCH SOUTH AFRICA

- 1652 Dutch East India company establishes colony at Cape Town under [Jan van Riebeck](#).
1691 [Van der Stel](#) appointed first Dutch governor of Cape Colony.

BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA

- 1795 British gain control of Cape Colony during [French Revolutionary Wars](#).
1815-35 The Zulus, under [Chaka](#), become the predominant tribe in Southeast Africa.
1833 Slavery prohibited in English colonies. Boers forced to give up slaves.
1835-45 Great Boer Trek, from Cape Colony to Natal; then to the Transvaal.
1837 Zulus, under [Dingaan](#), murders 400 Boers; later defeated at the *Battle of Blood River*.
1843 British annexes Natal, makes Boer settlement of Pietermaritzburg their capital.
1867 Discovery of diamond mines in Kimberly, disputed territory between Boers and British.
1879 After suffering a horrendous massacre at *Isandhlwana*, Britain [subdues the Zulus](#).
1880 [First Boer War](#) ends in victory for the Boers after *Battle of Majuba hill*.
1880 [Cecil Rhodes](#) opens De Beers mining company and corners the diamond market.
1885 Discovery of gold in the Boer Republic; Johannesburg grows around mines.
1885 Rhodes establishes a British Protectorate for Bechuanaland.
1895 Jameson raid on Johannesburg fails to incite an anti-Boer uprising.
1899-1902 [Second Boer War](#)—hard fought struggle ends in a British victory and loss of the Boer republics.
1910 Union of South Africa.

EXPLORATION OF CENTRAL AFRICA

- 1770 [James Bruce](#) discovers the source of the Blue Nile in Ethiopia.
1796 [Mungo Park](#) discovers the source of the Niger, and explores the Niger basin.
1852 [Dr. Livingstone's](#) first Journey across southern Africa
1855 [Paul du Chaillu](#) embarks on his first independent journey into Gabon and Congo.
1858 [John Hanning Speke](#) and [Richard Burton](#) discover Lake Victoria
1859 Livingstone's Zambezi expedition, discovery of Victoria Falls.
1874 [H. M. Stanley](#) starts his expedition down the Congo River.

BRITISH WEST AFRICA

- 1864 Third Anglo-Ashanti War, fought for control of trade in the Gold Coast.
1896 Fourth Anglo-Ashanti War.

RECOMMENDED READING – COLONIAL AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

Marshall - <u>Our Empire Story</u>	<u>Early Days</u> to <u>War and Peace</u> (19)
Sellar - <u>The Story of Lord Roberts</u>	<i>entire book</i>
Wood - <u>Boy's Book of Battles</u>	<u>Isandhlwana and Rorke's Drift</u> to <u>Tsushima</u> (3)
Syngé - <u>Reign of Queen Victoria</u>	<u>In South Africa</u> to <u>Cecil Rhodes in Rhodesia</u> (2)
Syngé - <u>Growth of the British Empire</u>	<u>The Great Boer Trek</u> to <u>The Story of Natal</u> (2)
Syngé - <u>Growth of the British Empire</u>	<u>The Dream of Cecil Rhodes</u> to <u>Livingstone's Discoveries</u> (3)
Hillegas - <u>Oom Paul's People</u>	<i>entire book</i>
Hillegas - <u>With the Boer Forces</u>	<i>entire book</i>
Colvin - <u>South Africa</u>	<i>entire book</i>
Colvin - <u>Cecil Rhodes</u>	<i>entire book</i>

EXPLORATION/WEST AFRICA

Golding - <u>The Story of Livingstone</u>	<i>entire book</i>
Golding - <u>The Story of H. M. Stanley</u>	<i>entire book</i>
du Chaillu - <u>Stories of the Gorilla Country</u>	<i>entire book</i>
du Chaillu - <u>Wild Life Under the Equator</u>	<i>entire book</i>
du Chaillu - <u>Lost in the Jungle</u>	<i>entire book</i>
du Chaillu - <u>My Apingi Kingdom</u>	<i>entire book</i>
du Chaillu - <u>Country of the Dwarfs</u>	<i>entire book</i>
Syngé - <u>Reign of Queen Victoria</u>	<u>British in West Africa</u> (1)
Syngé - <u>Book of Discovery</u>	<u>Bruce in Abyssinia</u> to <u>Dates of Chief Events</u> (2)
Syngé - <u>Book of Discovery</u>	<u>David Livingstone</u> to <u>Through the Dark Continent</u> (7)
Syngé - <u>Struggle for Sea Power</u>	<u>Adventures of Mungo Park</u> to <u>James Bruce and the Nile</u> (2)
Lang - <u>Land of the Golden Trade</u>	<i>entire book</i>

EGYPT/SUDAN

Lang - <u>The Story of General Gordon</u>	<i>entire book</i>
Syngé - <u>Growth of the British Empire</u>	<u>Gordon—Hero of Khartoum</u> to <u>British South Africa</u> (6)

* *Level I and II Study Questions are based on **Core Reading Assignments**.*