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Notes on the Kaokoveld (South West Africa) and its People

by

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I N T R O D U C T I O N .

1. In 1947 and again in 1948 I was by the kindness of the Administration of South West Africa permitted to make brief visits to the Kaokoveld in the north-western part of the territory. The object was to make some observations with regard to the ethnic position there. The results of these short visits to only a few portions of the vast area and of only few and brief interviews with some of the more important men follow hereunder.

2 My thanks are due to Dr. H. Vedder for kindly giving me his own views on the relation between the various Herero-speaking groups as the result of a visit to the Kaokoveld many years ago, but especially to Mr. and Mrs. J.B. Wessels of Ohopoho for information, assistance and the kindest hospitality.

1. Definition of area.

3. By the natives the term Kaoko is applied to the whole area now called the Kaokoveld and even to part of the country further south and falling outside the proclaimed boundaries. The Ovambo, and the Herero in the south, all know the country as Kaoko in the same way.

4 Within the Kaoko certain areas are distinguished, viz. (a) the Omaheke or red sandy area, as indicated on the map, (b) Hamuheke or !nani-/ous "Sesfontein" itself, and immediate environs, (c) Omatendeka the hilly country south, south-east and south-west of Sesfontein, (d) the Namib or Omatjana ("flat country") along the coast, and (e) Kaoko

2.

proper, the more typical semi-highland area from Otjitoko to the Kunene, as shewn on the map.

5 The country immediately north of the Kunene in Angola is called Ongambo, to the east lies Ehi rovambo (Ovamboland), to the far south-east lies Ehi rovaherero or the land of the Herero.

6. In German times the Kaokoveld was not under control, though a military post was placed at Sesfontein in 1902. The intention was to settle it, as is shown by the fact that the whole country was surveyed and some concessions were given out.

7. Proclamation No.40. of 1920 defined the boundaries of the Outjo district so as to include the whole of the Kaokoveld, but the Native Commissioner, Ovamboland, appears to have administered the northern area, that is, excluding Sesfontein, by making occasional visits to meet the headmen, whilst the police at Kamanjab patrolled as far as Sesfontein, and the magistrate, Outjo, administered the southern Kaokoveld, probably up to the present Game Reserve boundary.

8. By Proclamation No.26 of 1928 approximately two thirds of the present Kaokoveld district (the northern portion) was included in the Game Reserve. The Game Warden is the Native Commissioner, Ovamboland. Government Notice No.375 of 1947 amended the proclamation by excising a few farms in the Outjo district.

9. Proclamation No.10 of 1939 decreased the Outjo district and created the new Kaokoveld district, and established a court, to be held at Ohopoho (at that time called Ohopuho).

2 Authority and control.

10. In the early days the natives of the Kaokoveld were, as we have seen, left almost completely to themselves.

11. A police post was established at Tshimhaka (Otjimuhaka) on the Kunene in 1925 and normally two men were stationed there until constable van Eck died of malaria on 1st April 1939 and the post was closed down. The first officers were Hillebrandt and Cogill, after them came Adam, du Buisson, Erasmus, Faber, Swanepoel and van Eck, more or less in this order.

12. During 1938-42 river guards at each drift controlled stock movements in the cattle free zone along the Kunene, to prevent lungsickness from entering from Angola after inoculation had been carried out in the Kaokoveld.

13 Following the proclamation of the new Kaokoveld district, a Native Affairs office was opened at Ohopoho on the 12th April 1939, as station of an Officer-in-charge of Native Affairs, directly responsible to Windhoek. The first officer was A.M. Barnard, till 15th June 1942, followed by J.B. Wessels.

14. The site of the office was chosen for various reasons, but the main one was the proximity of two landing grounds for aircraft. The pan in front of the present office has the native name of Otjihinamatarero "place where nothing can hide", and a more recent one Otjihinamaparero "hard, open space". The coined name Ohopoho is believed to owe its origin to a chance incident unnecessary to dwell on here. Nowadays the natives also call the place Otjitoporo "place of the borehole

15 Prior to all this the Administrator had, by Government Notice No.122 of 1923, "confirmed the right granted by the late German Government to the Native races or tribes in respect

4.

of certain areas of land" amongst which was scheduled "Zessfontein farm, for Topnaar Swartbooi Hottentots, 31,416 ha. 10 km radius from Zessfontein" and further "set aside as Native Reserves" amongst others, a "Kaokoveld Reserve for (a) Chief Oorlog and Tribe, (b) Muhona Katiti and Tribe", with the remark that the western part was to be considered Oorlog's portion and the eastern portion as Katiti's Reserve, and finally a "Kaokoveld Reserve for late chief Kasupi's Tribe". The setting aside of these tiny areas must have been done in complete darkness as to actual conditions and the measure was never related to reality.

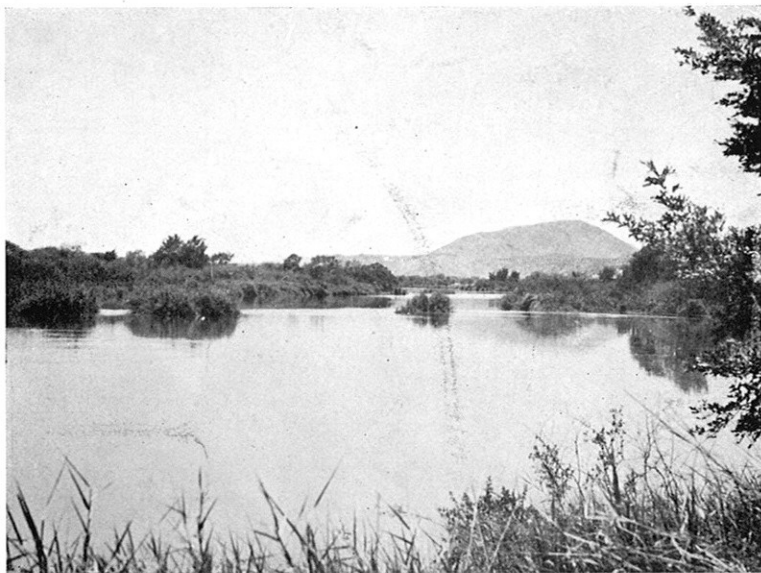
16. By Government Notice No.374 of 1947, the Kaokoveld was proclaimed a native reserve, and the aforementioned reserves were disestablished. The amending Government Notice No. 156 of 1948 included the small but important area Otjetjekua in the south, which had been inadvertently left out. This is spelt Otjetua in the Government Notice and on maps.

17. In August 1939 South African Airways organised a weekly service to Angola, and Ohopoho became a landing and refuelling station on this route. The service was discontinued during the war, but the wireless station and landing grounds were put to military use for reconnaissance and protection of convoys. An aerial photographic survey was also made.

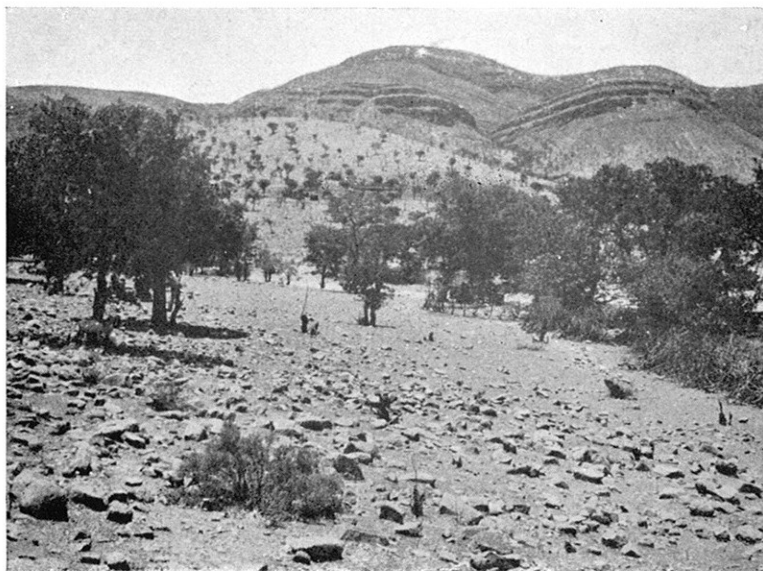
18. Two-way daily radio communication with Windhoek and Ondangua makes administration a good deal easier than it would otherwise have been, and rendered it more practicable to place the Ohopoho office under the control of the Native Commissioner at Ondangua in Ovambo-land. This is the present arrangement.

19. As it is, post for Ohopoho is only fetched from Outjo and Kamanjab alternately once a month during the dry season, and less frequently in the wet season, so that only such

PLATE 1.



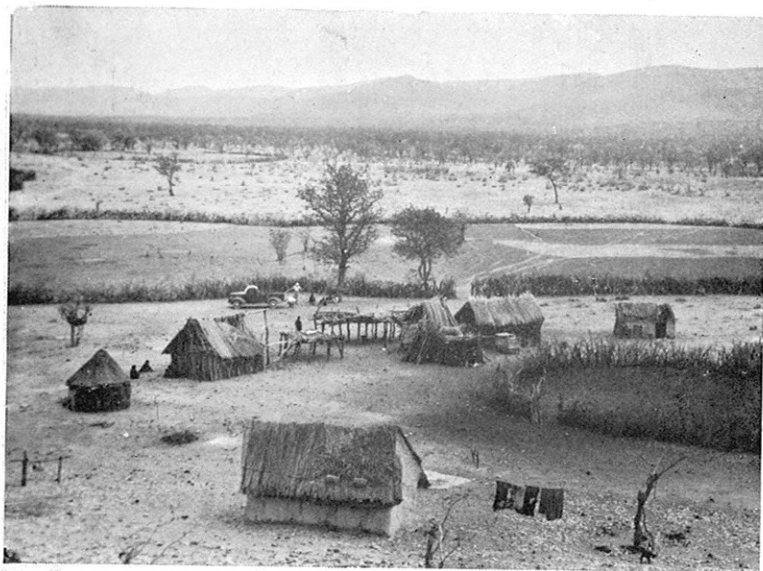
The Kunene River near Otjimuhaka.



View on road to Sesfontein.



Herero settlement at Okorosave.



Tjimba settlement near Ohopoho.

business as can be transacted over the radio-telephone is immediately disposed of. Since however the only Europeans in the whole of the Kaokoveld are at Ohopoho (during the past few years two persons) and the natives have few contacts with the outside world (see para.18) this system of communications is not at present a factor of note. Before the opening of the office, communications were so infrequent as to resemble those of a century ago. The natives walk on foot from Ohopoho to Ukwalthi in Ovamboland in about two and a half days, to Ondangua would mean another three days. They walk to Sesfontein in three days, to Kamanjab would take six to seven days, to Outjo another three days, whilst from Sesfontein to Kamanjab is also about four days.

20 The control exercised by the Officer-in-charge is of the same kind as that exercised by the Native Commissioner, Ovamboland, whose local deputy he is. It is a sort of indirect rule based on a minimum of interference in internal matters.

21 No special powers have been vested in the Officer-in-charge. He is not a marriage officer and has never yet been called upon to officiate as such. He may not grant divorce to parties married by civil rites, a function reserved to the Native Commissioner, and has never been asked to do so. It is unlikely that there are more than a few couples, married by civil rites, in the Kaokoveld.

22 He is supposed to administer native estates according to native law though of course the law does not recognise native law, and customary unions are unknown in the law of South West Africa.

23 The same curious position thus exists as in the rest of the territory that the law does not recognise a customary union during the lifetime of the parties, but after the death of the husband is prepared to concede that a

6.

marriage did in fact exist when it comes to determining who is the next of kin and administering the estate.

24. Up to now, disputes e.g. over estates and cases of divorce, which would not be settled by the individual headmen concerned, have been heard and decided by the council of headmen, and the officer-in-charge, whilst usually listening to the proceedings and taking cognizance of the judgment, has never found it necessary to intervene and set it aside.

25. For any offence concerning which the headmen have no jurisdiction (murder, rape, treason) the accused must be arrested by the Officer-in-charge, conveyed by him to Outjo, and charged before the magistrate of Outjo district. Serious crime hardly ever occurs at all.

26. No tax or levy of any kind is payable by the natives resident in the Kaokoveld.

3 Description of country.

27 The Kaokoveld is a hilly, in parts even exceedingly broken, country shelving down westwards from the Ovamboland plateau to the sea. The altitude of Ohopoho is thought to be c.3594 ft. A broad belt nearest the sea is desert and waterless Namib. Further inland the country is also extremely dry, but the broken formation collects water and leads it underground in such a manner as to give rise to perennial springs and waterholes.

28. Such permanent springs are found throughout the country, e.g. at Ehomba, Otjijandjasemo, Epembe, Ombazu, Okorosave, Kaoko-Otavi, Oruvandjei, Otuzemba, Otjitundua, Ombombo, Otjondeka, Okatjiuru and many others. These have never been known to dry up.

31 RAINFALL AT OHOPHO IN MILLIMETRES

| | '41-'42 | '42-'43 | '43-'44 | '44-'45 | '45-'46 | '46-'47 | '47-'48 |
|--------|---|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| Oct. | 25 0.4 27 1.6 28 17.7 29 1.0 | | 10 1.0 | | | | |
| Nov. | 20 6.9 | | 4 0.3 6 1.0 | | 14 5.0 15 5.5 16 10.5 | | |
| Dec. | 3 5.0 4 4.9 5 3.8 6 37.3 17 0.4 27 0.4 29 11.8 | | 7 1.5 10 1.2 11 6.2 12 6.0 13 14.5 14 12.2 17 2.0 23 0.2 27 9.4 28 0.4 29 6.5 30 0.2 31 27.0 | 15 8.0 | 7 13.0 9 4.5 10 10.0 12 10.5 13 18.0 18 54.5 | 4 4.0 5 34.5 10 2.2 11 4.2 17 70.5 18 15.5 19 6.0 21 17.0 | 19 14.0 20 20.5 |
| Jan. | 11 4.9 12 9.3 13 40.3 21 1.2 24 19.1 27 1.7 28 1.0 | | 2 26.3 7 2.5 8 1.4 12 17.3 13 13.0 14 31.4 17 38.0 18 0.8 20 1.6 24 3.2 25 3.4 26 3.0 | 23 6.0 29 6.5 30 23.0 31 9.0 | | 10 18.5 13 8.5 14 21.0 16 3.5 18 7.5 20 5.5 22 9.5 25 9.3 | |
| Feb. | 5 0.3 6 0.1 8 7.4 9 2.9 14 10.7 15 5.5 16 12.4 17 2.0 18 7.8 19 16.4 22 1.4 27 7.4 28 0.4 | | 15 3.0 | 8 46.0 9 6.0 10 28.5 11 6.0 13 12.5 14 5.0 19 30.0 20 4.5 22 11.0 | 20 5.5 | 2 16.0 14 28.0 15 32.0 17 18.0 19 14.5 | 5 10.0 6 20.5 7 3.5 12 17.5 14 16.0 16 7.5 19 5.5 |
| Mar. | 1 0.3 2 15.8 3 2.7 10 0.6 12 14.2 13 3.9 15 16.6 16 7.7 29 1.2 30 0.7 | 16 12.0 17 1.0 19 c.100.0 20 55.0 21 34.5 22 19.2 | 6 7.0 7 3.0 8 23.5 9 9.5 11 3.5 13 5.0 17 49.0 18 26.0 20 32.5 25 2.0 26 6.0 | 6 57.0 | 6 10.5 13 7.0 15 6.5 25 27.0 | | 2 13.0 5 16.7 6 15.0 8 1.0 16 17.3 19 13.0 27 16.6 |
| Apr. | 10 2.1 11 4.1 14 14.6 | 6 3.0 7 1.2 8 49.0 11 6.0 | | | | 11 10.5 | 14 8.0 19 16.5 21 7.2 26 4.5 28 13.8 |
| Totals | 327.9 | 280.9 | 457.5 | 324.5 | 154.5 | 404.2 | 260.4 |

29 The vegetation is sparse and the grass cover insufficient to retard the flow of water much. When it does rain, the run-off is therefore considerable and, unbelievable though it may seem to the visitor who arrives in the dry season, the summer rains often transform large tracts into waterlogged stretches of impassable mud.

30. About the rainfall insufficient is known. The only record is that of Ohopoho, which is given in the table. From this it appears that the earliest rain recorded fell on 10th October, but that more usually the first rains come much later. The latest rain recorded on the other hand fell on 28th April, but again a number of years show no rain in this month at all. The pause between the early and late rains is clearly shown by the dry January occurring in several years.

31 Rainfall table see separate sheet.

32 These figures are deceptive insofar as the rain often falls in patches, so that some parts get five times, and it may well be, fifty times as much as other areas, in the same season. Distribution and rate of precipitation are thus the main factors which cause the tremendous variations and make each year seem different from all preceding ones.

33 In 1941-2 there was a drought considered by the natives to be the worst they ever had. Yet 229.2 mm (9.2 in.) fell at Ohopoho. But some areas had no rain at all. 6000 cattle and 3000 small stock were estimated to have died. At Sesfontein 40% of the livestock were lost.

34. There are signs of denudation due to overstocking, especially round existing water-holes, where the natives congregate with their stock because they are not in the habit of

8.

digging for water. Drilling has not been tried except at Ohopoho, where one hole equipped with an oil engine supplies good water. But drilling is merely a form of mining, and uses up assets without improving anything. The only real and lasting method of improving the country would therefore seem to be water conservation by means of contours, banks and dams, and sooner or later this will probably have to be done, but if accompanied by uncontrolled grazing, this method of betterment would very likely do more damage than to have done nothing at all.

35. Approximately two thirds of the Kaokoveld district (the northern portion) is a proclaimed Game Reserve. Elephants, rhino, giraffe, zebra, lions, leopards, and a number of species of antelope roam the whole country at will. No wildebeest occur in the Kaokoveld.

4 Numbers and distribution of population.

36. In the absence of reliable census figures, extremely difficult to obtain in a country like this, I have had to resort to careful estimation based on the local knowledge of the Officer-in-charge, and of others born and bred in the Kaokoveld. The figures in the annexed table reflect the position in October 1947, but in 1948 it was thought that they still applied.

37. The respective areas of the headmen are indicated on the map. The boundaries between them are in many places indefinite as they constitute a sort of no-man's land. Disputes over these boundaries do not arise.

38. See population table.

38 KAOKOVELD : HEADMEN AND POPULATION

| No. Headmen and Sub-headmen | Residence | Tribe | Herero | Tjimba | Himba | Total |
|---|---|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Moses Ndjai and Edward Tlipepa Paul Zakekua Uemusepa | Okorosave Omuhiva Orotjitombo | Herero Herero Himba | 175 40 | 175 40 | 110 | 350 80 110 540 |
| 2 George Hartley † 2/3/49 Twazapo Misaso Kaimuvaza Mbunguha | Oruvandjei Ongango Otjiu | Coloured Tjimba Tjimba | 200 | 80 260 230 | | 280 260 230 790 |
| 3 Langman Tjihahura Jonas Tjivikua Hiaukambe Turitjo | Otjondeka Otjitoko Omuhama | Herero Herero Herero | 140 80 140 | 210 210 | | 350 80 350 780 |
| 4 Willem Tjerije Ngairo Muhenje Cabritu @ Hiyangombo † | Oukongo Ozombazu Otjihama | Herero Herero Herero | 100 90 40 | 80 70 90 | 110 70 | 290 230 130 650 |
| 5 Johannes Muzuma † May '48 Isak Ngazepue Gideon Muteze | Okahua Oruvandjei Otjapitjapi | Herero Herero Herero | 80 220 100 | 30 70 70 | | 110 290 170 570 |
| 6 Martin Tjheura† Adrian Karipose | Otjirunda Ohakarungu | Herero Herero | 50 35 | 90 85 | 10 | 150 120 270 |
| 7 Kapute and Joururuka Kainamuni Vetjii Hipukire | Ehomba Orue Orue Okarere | Himba Himba Himba Himba | | 20 10 10 5 | 180 90 90 35 | 200 100 100 40 440 |
| 8 Minimuhoro Katjinatji Kotjiuta | Ombuku Etengwa Enjandi | Himba Himba Himba | | 15 10 10 | 155 90 90 | 170 100 100 370 |
| 9 Veripaka Vetamuna Tjaurete Kavepanga Tjaripo | Etanga Orujombo Katjimbombo Otjiha Etanga | Himba Himba Himba Himba Himba | | 10 5 5 5 5 | 60 55 55 55 45 | 70 60 60 60 50 300 |
| 10 Mariha | Okauua | Himba | | 10 | 60 | 70 |
| 11 Karuo | Otjizu | Himba | | 10 | 60 | 70 |
| 12 Vependura | Otjihende | Himba | | 10 | 60 | 70 |
| 13 Tuarimbara Kazongama | Ekoto Otjivero | Himba Himba | | 20 10 | 180 90 | 200 100 300 |
| In the above area (whole Kaoko except Sesfontein) there are also approximately Basters and Coloureds 15, Ovambo 10, various hybrids 5 Total 30 | | | 1490 | 1960 | 1750 | 5200 5230 |
| 14 Sesfontein Reserve: Hottentots; 124, Basters and Coloureds 6, Bergdama 374, Ovambo 1, Bushmen 18 Total 523 | | | 87 | 23 | 152 | 262 785 |
| Miscellaneous (Kaoko 30, Sesfontein 523) | | | 1577 | 1983 | 1902 | 5462 553 |
| Grand Total | | | | | | 6015 |

5. The culture-groups represented in the Kaokoveld.

39. These are four in number: the Bantu-speaking cattle people (Tjimba, Himba and Herero), the Hottentots, the Bergdama and the Bushmen. The last three are encountered only in the south and are considered when referring to Sesfontein, see paragraphs 150-170. There are also some Coloureds and Basters.

40. Apart from Sesfontein, the Kaokoveld may be regarded as entirely belonging to the cattle folk. These again present considerable differences most easily understood by reference to their history, which I now propose to touch on.

6. History of the Herero-speaking cattle people.

(i) Early origins.

41. There are (or were) traditions of a more or less legendary character current among the Herero-speaking groups relating to their origin. These indicate that they came from the north-east and split into two sections before reaching South West Africa. One section entered South West Africa from the east. These were the Mbanderu. The other section took a course much further to the north and eventually reached the Kaokoveld.

42. It seems to me, from the available evidence, that the first of those to arrive, who were the pioneers, lost their cattle through hardship, misfortune or other circumstances, and had to take to a life of hunting and collecting. The Ovambo called them Ovashimba or Aashimba (Herero: Ovatjimba) because they lived the precarious digging life of the antbear (ondjimba). Those of their kin that followed

| No. | Name | Group | Language | Notes | References |
|-----|------------|---------|----------|-------|------------|
| 1 | Herero | Bantu | Herero | ... | ... |
| 2 | Himba | Bantu | Himba | ... | ... |
| 3 | Tjimba | Bantu | Tjimba | ... | ... |
| 4 | Hottentots | Hamitic | Nama | ... | ... |
| 5 | Bergdama | Hamitic | Bergdama | ... | ... |
| 6 | Bushmen | Hamitic | Bushman | ... | ... |
| 7 | Coloureds | Mixed | Coloured | ... | ... |
| 8 | Basters | Mixed | Baster | ... | ... |

later were more fortunate and did not lose their cattle. These were the Ovahimba, the rich people, who in course of time roamed over most of the country. Eventually part of them moved south into what is now Damaraland or the Herero country proper and became the Herero nation.

43. The tradition of this early sojourn in the Kaokoveld is still alive amongst the Herero to this day. On a visit to the Kaokoveld some years ago, Hosea Kutako remarked that his ancestors had at one time lived at Okangundumba, south of Kaoko-Otavi. In 1901 Georg Hartman found, at Otjabikua far north in Angola, old Tjimba men who still knew the Herero chief Kambazembi, who was born in the northern Kaokoveld.

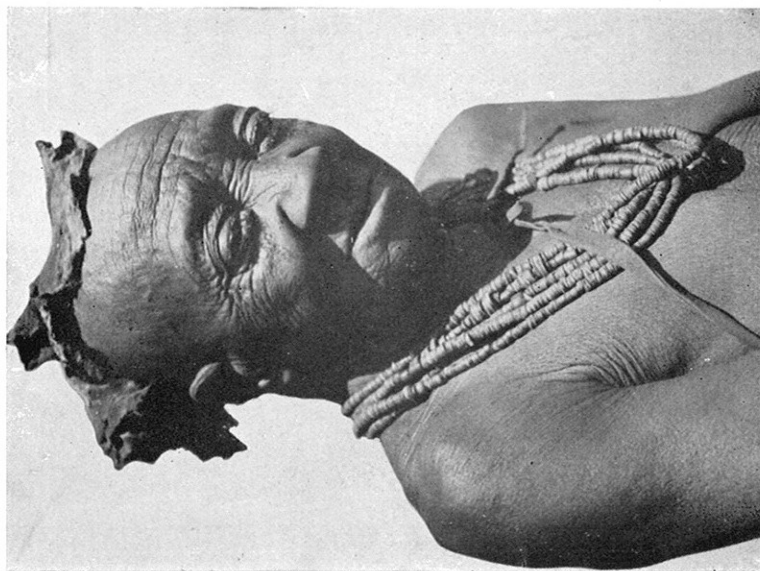
44. But whilst a large number of the people thus moved out of the Kaokoveld, a portion of them remained and these were the ancestors of the Himba of today.

45. The Ovambo, who first called the poor wandering hunters and collectors Aashimba (Ovatjimba), extended the use of this name to all successive immigrants who had the same language and customs, despite the fact that the later arrivals were not poor but had plenty of cattle. This is the reason why the Ovambo call all Herero-speaking people Aashimba no matter where they live, and use the term Oushimba for Herero-land, because the great majority of them live there.

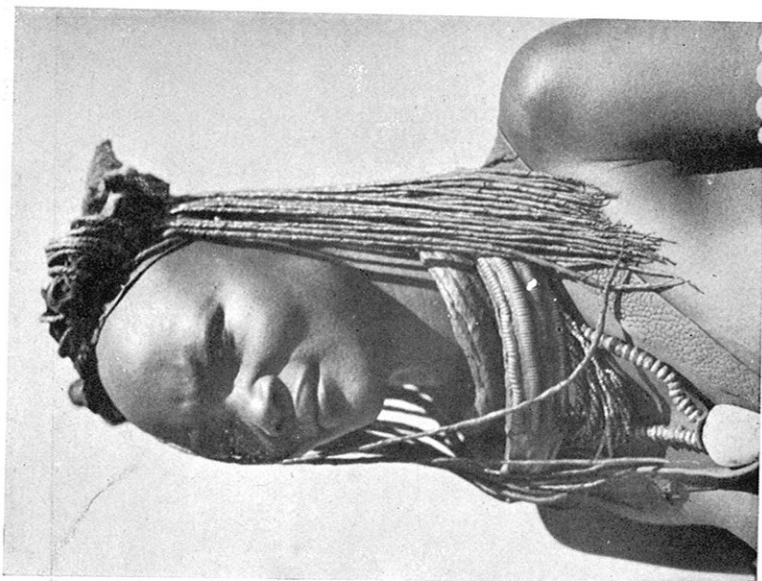
46. The Ovahimba who had the cattle and the Ovatjimba who were poor and lived on veldkos, honey and meat, together continued to occupy the Kaokoveld. The Tjimba probably found it to their advantage to attach themselves to Himba groups and render service in return for certain benefits and thus Himba and Tjimba lived intermixed all over the country. The Himba do not appear to have exploited and



Himba leader, Kapute, brother of Omuhona Katiti.



Himba woman, sister of Omuhona Katiti.



Himba woman.



Himba woman.

maltreated the Tjimba as was done with the Bergdama in the south. They were after all very closely related and had not been separated long. To this day the difference between Himba and Tjimba is largely that between a well-dressed, well-fed, well-to-do farmer and his poorer, dirtier, neglected and underfed bywoner-type cousin.

47. The Tjimba do not like this name, which has a disparaging connotation, and as soon as they manage to achieve greater opulence they can no longer be readily distinguished from either Himba or Herero.

48. The relatively peaceful existence of the Himba and Tjimba in the Kaokoveld was rudely shattered by the arrival of the Hottentots from the south who came armed with guns and began raiding their cattle. Sesfontein became a Hottentot stronghold. A number of the Himba therefore retired further north across the Kunene to be out of their reach.

49. Then came the Herero war. Those of the fleeing Herero who went north found refuge in Ovamboland and later in Angola. They had lost their cattle and served the Portuguese to make a fresh start. But when South West Africa was no longer German they immediately left Angola and entered the Kaokoveld with the intention of returning to Damaraland. But there was no room for them there, so they stayed in the Kaokoveld.

50. Thus it is that there are today in the Kaokoveld three distinct branches of the Herero-speaking nexus, (a) the Tjimba, the pioneers who lost their cattle, (b) the Himba who came next, kept their cattle, and remained in the Kaokoveld when part of them moved south and became the Herero proper, and (c) the refugee Herero who mostly became Christians in the south, fled the country during

the Herero war, lived in Angola until it was safe for them to return and then settled in the Kaokoveld.

51. Corresponding to the different past of each of these groups there are well-defined differences between them today. A few more details regarding the history of some groups must therefore now be given.

(ii) History of the Tjimba

52. In view of the fact that after the loss of their cattle these people became nomad hunters and collectors and had to scatter and live in small kinship groups in order to make a living in a hard country, it is not surprising that there is little information obtainable of a historical nature. Even today there are no Tjimba headmen of any note, and without political groupings of some size there cannot very well be any history to record.

(iii) History of the Himba.

53. Some old Himba today say that their people were created in the beginning at the Okarundu kambeti Falls, that the Tjimba were also made in this country, and that the Herero probably came from the Kaokoveld in the beginning, seeing that their oldest places are here. Thus it seems that the traditions which go back still further are either lost already or almost so.

54. Amongst the Himba the chieftainship in the usual sense can likewise hardly be said to have existed, owing to their organisation in kinship groups and the absence of any real need for a strong central authority apart from that in the family. Questions about notable events are met by the reply that nobody ever did anything worth remembering and that nothing ever happened.

55. I found the genealogical information to be gleaned about leading families also very meagre. Even old men were unable to name persons in their own families further back than a few generations. Compared with the feats of memory performed by members of patrilineally-organised tribes in the Union, these people know very little about their ancestors, and one must conclude that to them this does not matter.

56. A man of great consequence amongst the Himba of the olden days was Mureti according to the tales. His eanda was Omukuendjata or Omukondjata. He and his younger brother Kauua were born at Otjozongombe south of Ombombo, and he grew up there. Once the Hot-tentots came from the south and took some of his cattle. He was invited by the Herero chief Zeraua of Omaruru to come and live with him so he went down with all his people and cattle and was never seen again. He lived on the Omuramba uondjou (Kalkfeld) and died at Otjombaue. From his splendour in those days many Himba in the Kaokoveld today derive a reflected greatness by claiming relationship with him.

57. When European control was first extended over the Kaokoveld there was only one leader amongst the Himba influential enough to be regarded as a chief. This was Katiti. He was generally known as Omuhona Katiti, that is, the great man or chief Katiti. The Government accordingly granted him a scheduled location, vide G.N. No.122 of 1923, already referred to in section 2.

58. Katiti died in c.1930 and in 1947 I interviewed his youngest brother Kapute, an old man of between 75-80, and got some information from him which now follows.

59 Kapute had never heard of any tradition about the origin of the Himba, he thought that they had always lived in the Kaakoveld and had probably been created there in the beginning.

60 Kapute could not remember anybody before his grandfather Maoko who was, he maintained, a chief. His eanda was Omukuijuva or, as others pronounce it, Omukujuva, the same as that of the Herero leader Manasse.

61 Maoko was born at Ondundu ja Tjingwindi or Otjingwindi c.35 miles south-east of Ohopoho, and lived there for a time. Subsequently he settled north of Ehomba mountain.

62 See annexed genealogy of Omuhona Katiti.

63 Maoko was the father of Nandai. It is not certain whether he was also the father of Nandai's mother's other issue. However we may note what issue she had:

Tjingombè, eanda Omukuijuva, same as her husband's, had this issue:

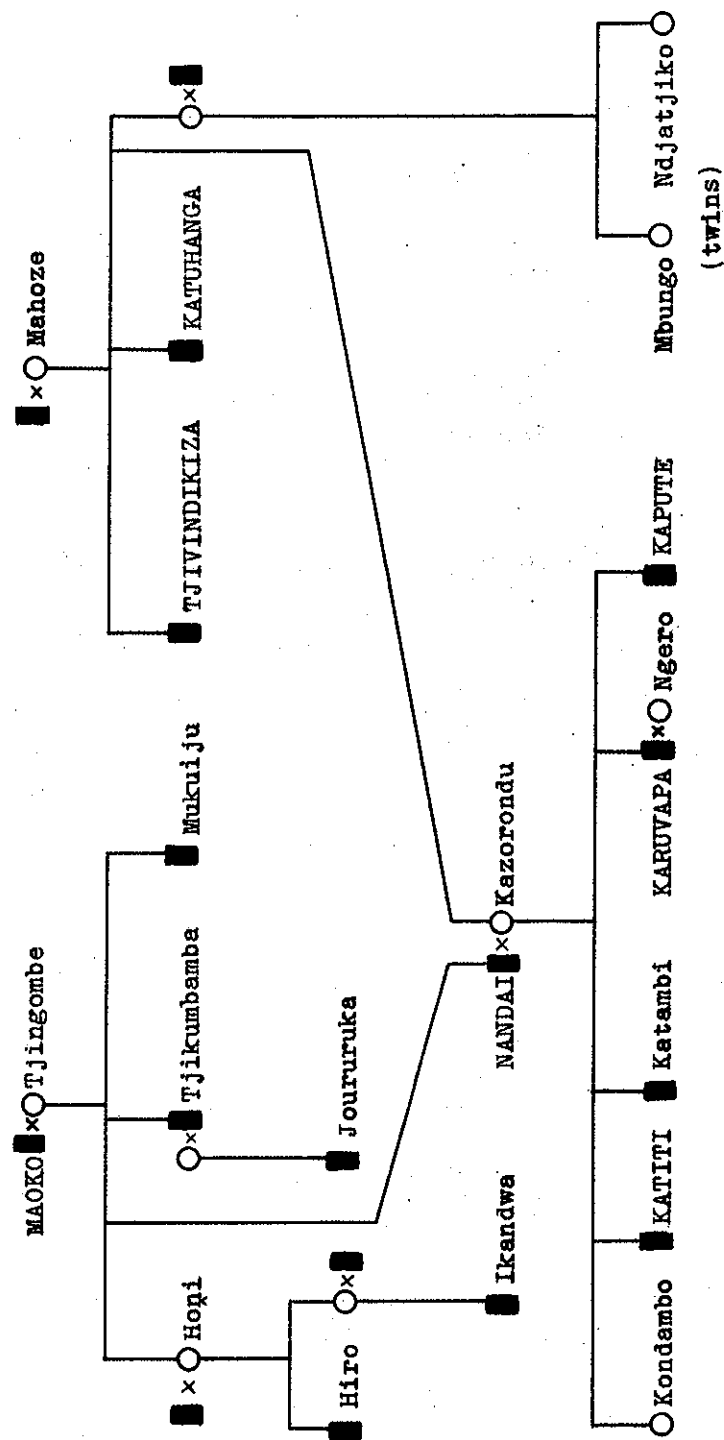
- a Honi f
- b Nandai m father of Katiti and others
- c Tjikumbamba m father of Joururuka
- d Mukuiju m

64 After Maoko it appears the chief was Tjivindikiza, whose mother was:

Mahoze (eanda not recorded), about whom there is no other information, had the following issue:

- a Tjivindikiza m
- b Kazorundu f born in Kaoko and the mother of Katiti
- * Katuhanga m
- d other issue which is not remembered except that there was a daughter who had twin

62 GENEALOGY OF OMUHONA KATITI



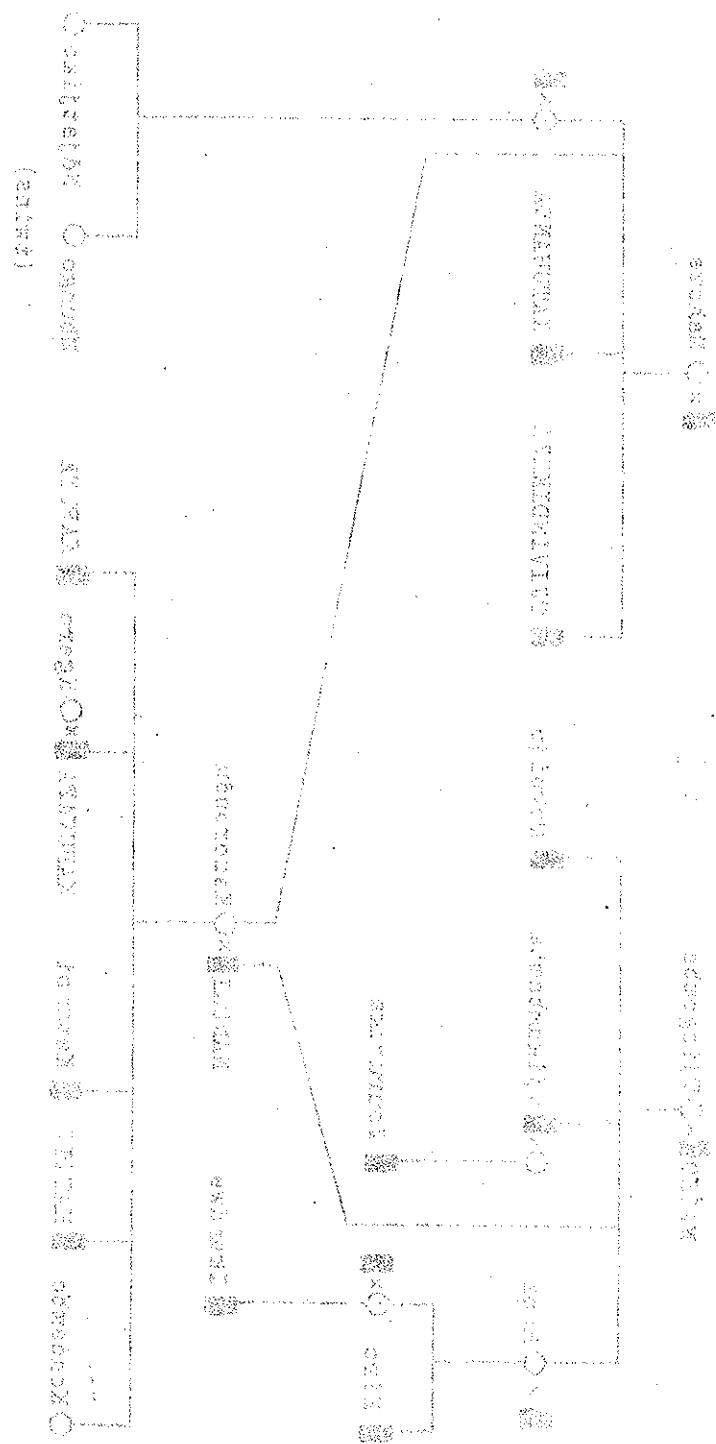
daughters, Mbungo and Ndjatjiko. As their mother died soon after, these twins were reared by their aunt Kazorundu, who did not suckle them but fed them on milk, using mpani leaves as a teat. Both lived. Ndjatjiko lived a long time. Mbungo was the "sister" (ortho-cousin) of the late chiefs Katiti and Karuvapa and as such had to perform those rites of the ancestor cult which are performed by females. She was a venerable dame when I saw her, as may be seen from her portrait, see illustration.

65. After Tjivindikiza his younger brother Katuhanga became chief. After him the position was taken by Nandai. He had been born in the Kaakoveld, but when the Hottentots began to raid the Himba and take their cattle they moved to Angola. Nandai died there. Kazorundu bore her husband this issue:

- a Kondambo f dd
- b Katiti m born in Angola, dd c.1930
- c Katambi m born and died in Angola
- d Karuvapa m born at Ejao near Epupa falls, dd. 1945.
- e Kapute m born c.1870-2.

66. Katiti in course of time also acquired a certain standing as a leader and was known as Omuhona Katiti in consequence. He crossed over into the Kaakoveld but later returned to Angola, then came into the Kaakoveld again, before Oorlog (see below) did. He was given a reserve as stated.

67. In a statement made to Major Manning on 19th August, 1917, chief Oorlog said that Katiti and his people left the Kaakoveld because of Hottentot raids, that he had no cattle and sought Oorlog's protection, that he became rich and settled at Otjabikua, where he murdered a Portuguese trader and so had to flee back across the Kunene and finally settled



on the Muhonga. This account may be inaccurate because Oorlog was trying to prove a point in his favour.

68 After Katiti's death in c.1930 his younger brother Karuvapa was recognised as his successor by the government. He was named after Axel Eriksson, known amongst the Herero as Karuvapa "the young tall white man", one of the pioneer traders of South West Africa.

69 Karuvapa died in August 1945 and his next younger brother Kapute was recognised as his successor. As he is very old, see illustration, his cousin Jeururuka acts for him to some extent.

70 There is little or nothing to say about the other Himba headmen. Munimuhoro, who lives at Otjijandjasero in summer if planning to grow a little maize, and at Ombuku in winter, is regarded as the head of those Himba who live along the Kunene in Angola, between Otjimuhaka and the Epupa falls.

(iv) History of the Kaokoveld Hereros.

(a) Oorlog and people.

71 In the olden days a Tswana man came from Bechuanaland and settled in Omaruru. They called him Ou Tom, but as he lacked two fingers on his right hand the Herero called him Minue "Fingers". He married Kahitondereko, a member of the chief Manasse's eanda Omukuijuv but only a distant relation of his. She had only one child, a son called Vita ("War" or "Oorlog") because he was born at Otjimbingue on the very day of the fight there between the Hottentots and the Herero on the 15th June 1863. Oorlog was later often called Omuzanduua Minue "the (brave) young man of Minue."

72 Oorlog grew up in Otjimbingue. His father

had been with the hunter Green when he accompanied the first Rhenish missionaries to Ondonga and they were nearly massacred by chief Nangolo. When old enough to shoot, Oorlog went with his father and Green to Karakuvisa north-east of Grootfontein and on to the Okavango. Thence they travelled to Ondonga where Kambonde was now chief and met the trader Eriksson (Karuvapa), and together trekked to Humpata in Angola.

73. Oorlog began running transport for the Portuguese in Angola. In course of time he collected quite a following because of his status, his mother being a member of the noble family of Kandjiripi, which was closely related to the Tjipepa family of Manasse. The Portuguese therefore made him chief over a portion of the country near Lubango, with headquarters at Neve. He collected more Himba and other followers (amongst them Katiti, see 66) and helped the Portuguese against the Humbi tribe, which killed fifty of his men and many Portuguese before being beaten, and also against the local Ambo tribes which were still independent and troublesome.

74. When Herero refugees reached Angola after the Herero war, some attached themselves to Oorlog, others remained more independent but in some measure became subject to his control nevertheless. He employed them, together with his other followers, to assist the Portuguese in the campaigns against the Mbandja, Nivale, Kwanyama and other tribes.

75. But in 1916, after the occupation of South West Africa, he decided to return. He is reported to have said that the Hereros had nothing but pleasant memories of the English who had given them guns and never done them any harm; moreover his mother's people were there, so he would go back. He persuaded most of his Herero and Himba followers to accompany him, and in 1916 crossed the Kunene at Hamuhenge

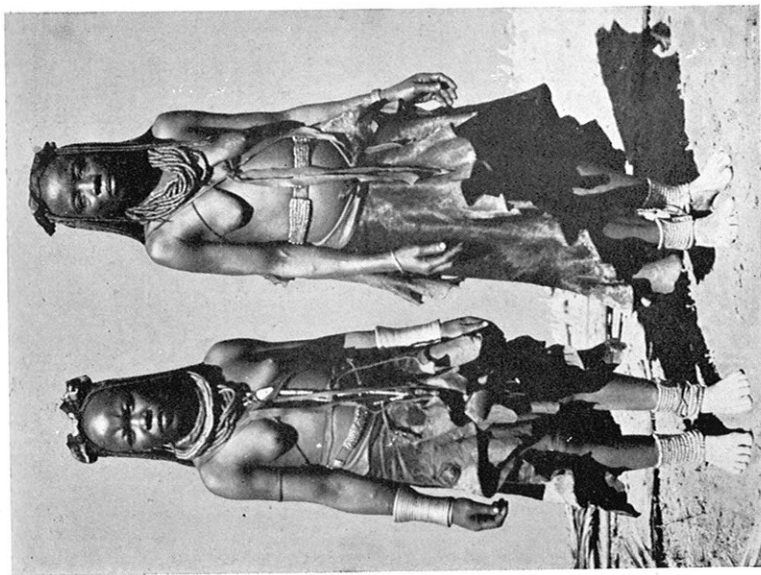
drift and settled at Otjijandjasemo. The local Himba warned them that it was an unhealthy spot and indeed many people died there. Others moved away. But Oorlog himself stayed on until c.1937 when he fell ill and was taken to Windhoek. On the way back he was taken ill again and died in Ukwaluthi where he lies buried in the cemetery.

76. Although Oorlog left numerous progeny, there was no one fit to succeed. His children had no status as they were the issue of Himba and Bush wives, except for some minors whose mothers were Herero wives married shortly before his death. A council of seven therefore took Oorlog's place but this body was soon dissolved. The leadership of the Herero in the Kaokoveld then fell to a number of men, see list in paragraph 4. Much later there was some talk of making one Fritz Ndjahera, a sister's son of Oorlog, his successor, but he died in 1946 and nothing came of it.

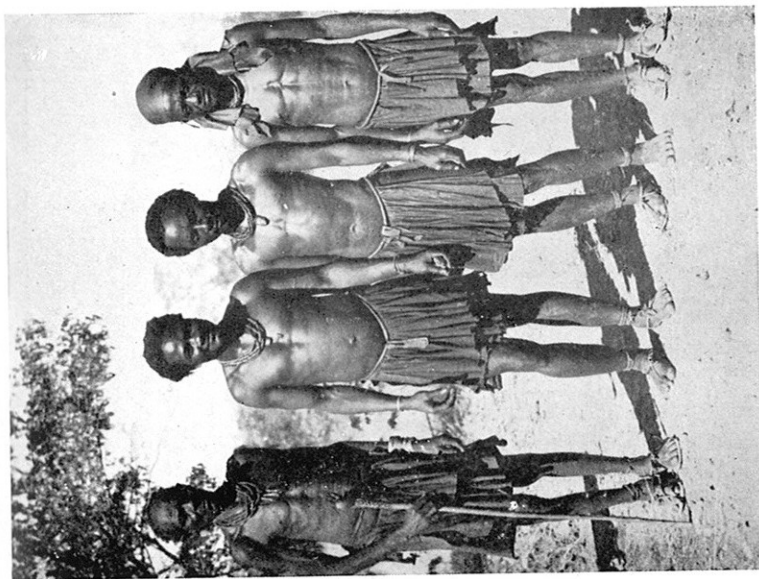
(b) Other Herero leaders.

77. About these I have little information. One of the most important was Martin Tjiheura who died in July 1945 aged over 70 years. He had been an evangelist of the Rheinische mission and fled with many others from Waterberg to Angola in 1904 during the Herero war. He had a Bible and acted as minister amongst the Herero in Angola, marrying couples and burying the dead. The Herero remained faithful to their creed, and did not turn Catholic whilst in Angola. Martin came into the Kaokoveld together with the rest in 1917, and was one of the leading headmen till his death.

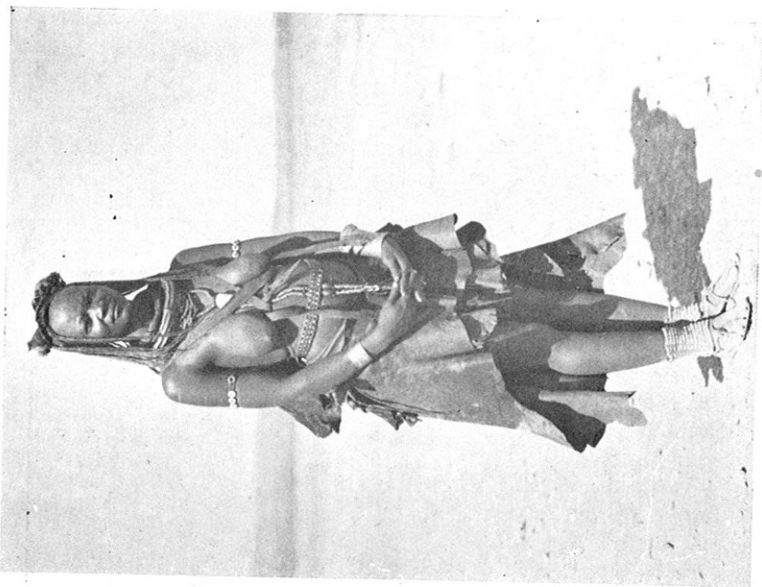
78. Moses Ndjai, who is now also very old, belongs to the same eanda as did the chief Kambazembi. His father was Kaihana, his mother Kambazembi. His father and grandfather had been important men under Kambazembi. He also fled to Angola and shared the experiences



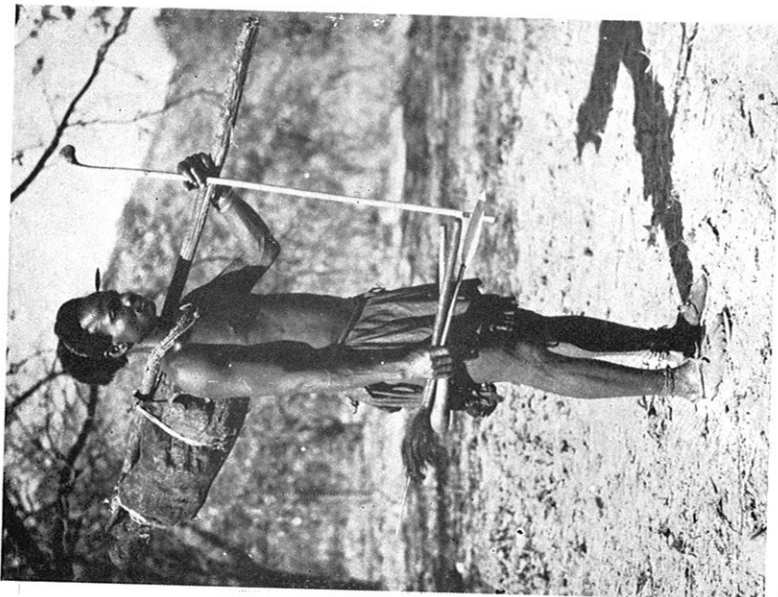
Himba women at Otjimuhaka.



Himba men at Ehomba.



Himba woman.

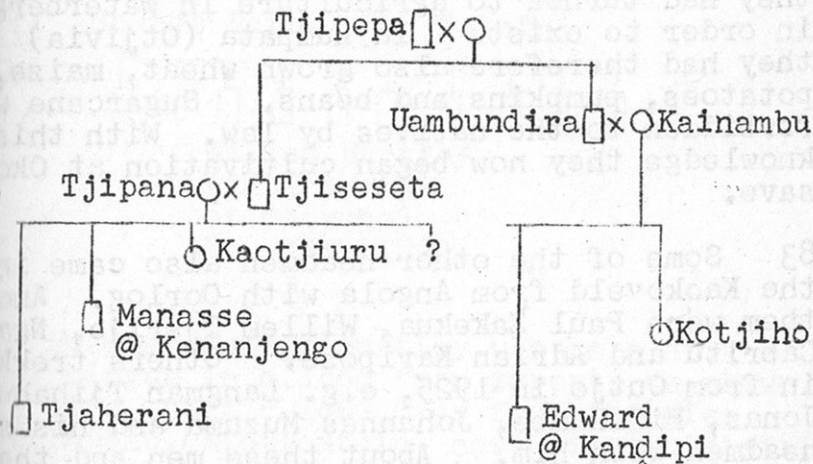


Himba man, on the road.

1⁶.

of the rest. In 1931 Major Hahn appointed him as headman. Owing to his age he is now assisted by Edward Tjipepa, who is not related to him in any way.

79 Edward Tjipepa (eanda: Omukuijuva) was born at Ozoserekaze near Okahandja in c.1882 since he was about 15 at the time of the rinderpest (opesa). He was related to Manasse as follows:



8C In the rinderpest Edward's people lost all their cattle at Otjiwarongo. In the Herero war they fled to Angola under the leadership of Kambazembi's son Salatiel, who afterwards returned to the police zone and died in Waterberg on 9th March, 1941. On their flight they trekked through Ondonga and went to Lubango and Humpata. The Portuguese received them well. They demanded no taxes. They only asked the leaders to give them young men to act as police. These they armed with guns and paid a monthly salary. As there were no schools, the parents taught their children themselves,

81. After crossing the Kunene into the Kaokoveld with Oorlog they lived for a while with

him at Otjijandjasemo, but when people began to die owing to the insalubrious climate they moved to Okorosave where they still are today. They found there an Angola Boer named Scholtz with his brother, mother, wife and family, who had lived there for some seasons. He left and sold them his gardens and the crops on them.

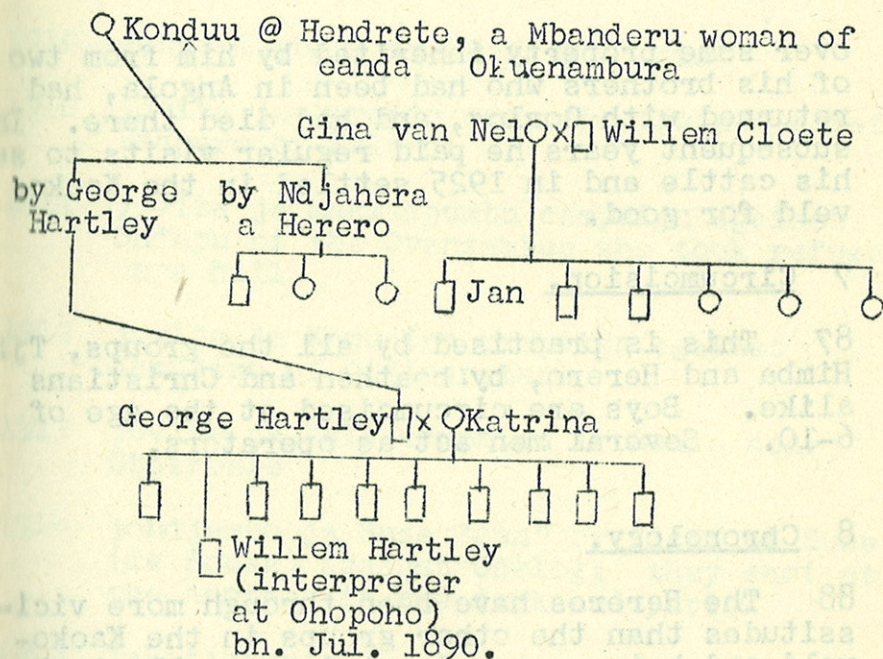
82. They had learnt to make gardens even before going to Angola as after the rinderpest they had turned to agriculture in Waterberg in order to exist. In Humpata (Otjivia) they had therefore also grown wheat, maize, potatoes, pumpkins and beans. Sugarcane was forbidden to the natives by law. With this knowledge they now began cultivation at Okorosave.

83. Some of the other headmen also came into the Kaokoveld from Angola with Oorlog. Among them were Paul Zakekua, Willem Tjerije, Ngair Cabritu and Adrian Karipose. Others trekked in from Outjo in 1925, e.g. Langman Tjihahura Jonas, Fiaukambe, Johannes Muzuma and his sub-headmen with him. About these men and their history I have no information except that Willem Tjerije is a son of Tjerije, the brother of Kambazembi, and that his brother Reinhard was headman in Otjituo Reserve for a few years until his death in 1947, whilst his other brother Fritz is one of the leaders in the Waterberg East Reserve.

(v) Other groups.

84. A small number of people of miscellaneous origin from outside the Kaokoveld have found a haven there. Being folk of no consequence I have no information about them.

85. One person of considerable local standing deserving of mention is the headman George Hartley, now deceased. His kin was as follows



86. Headman George Hartley was born at Otjimbingue in c.1860 from parents as shown. His wife, born c.1862, was from the Mier settlement, Rietfontein, now Upington district. At an early age he went to Angola with his wife and first child, and the next four were born at Otjivia in Angola. Then he returned to Omaruru. In the Herero war he and his son Willem took part in the fight at Omaruru, then fled to Grootfontein. Four of Willem's uncles escaped to Walvis Bay with their families and thence by ship to the Cape whence they made their way to Johannesburg. One of them returned in 1915 with the Union forces. One uncle was to be hanged but shot himself. George and his son Willem were taken prisoner and spent two years in camps and gaol. After their release they worked in Grootfontein for some years, then in Usakes. When the 1st Great War broke out they were arrested, probably as suspected of disaffection, but were released after the occupation and went to Grootfontein. In 1917 George Hartley came to the Kaokoveld in order to take

over some property inherited by him from two of his brothers who had been in Angola, had returned with Oorlog, and had died there. In subsequent years he paid regular visits to see his cattle and in 1925 settled in the Kaokoveld for good.

7 Circumcision.

87 This is practised by all the groups, Tjimba and Herero, by heathen and Christians alike. Boys are circumcised at the age of 6-10. Several men act as operators.

8 Chronology.

88 The Hereros have been through more vicissitudes than the other groups in the Kaokoveld and being more educated were able to keep a better record of events. The eventful years at any rate are remembered by them as follows

1888 ombura jondimbu ja Maharero year of the big stump-tailed ox which Maharero had slaughtered for the boys of that year

1897 jopesa rinderpest
joRuarua Iruarua and Manasse died
Jokakuva "axes", the Germans inoculated cattle against lungsickness, so the Hereros burnt the marks with axes to make them disappear
jondjila jorutenda ozomahina railway
Swakopmund to Windhoek built

1904 jovita novandoitji year of the war against the Germans
jotjihuriro "of the capture" when they were taken prisoners and put in camps
jotumbo "of the camps". When these were opened, the fugitive Hereros were living in Ongandjera
jomea omengi much rain

1910 jonyosi yomutjira Halley's comet

1910 jovita ja Morondo campaign against chief Hangaro of Mulondo

1911 jovita ja Makwaipumbu campaign against Ondapu of the Ovangambue who took refuge on a hill

1912 jovita ja Kamusiru campaign against Kamusiru of Otjimuremure

1913 jovita ja Vale campaign in Evale near Otjirenge

1914 jondjembo ja Suse "gun" or fight of Suse (de Sousa) against Oorlog; they shot at one another in the dark and parted

1915 jakatjotuvjo
jotjikesa tja Samuera coffin with remains of Samuel Maharero brought from Bechuanaland for burial at Okahandja
jeue ra Samuera stone erected on grave of Samuel

1923 joutji ondenga first year of much honey

1924 joutji joitjavari second year of much honey

1925 jondjuo jaTjimuhaka house built for police post at Tshimhaka

1926 ja Kamapja year of Kamapja (Const. Cogill) who arrested the Himba Hizupo for making trouble with Oorlog

1927 jozombahu locust invasion

1928 ja ngovonea visit of Administrator

1928-9 jozomburu za Angora Angola Boers move to South West Africa

- 1932 ombura ja Impumbu trouble with Ipumbu ja Ipumbu tjakamburwa arrest of Ipumbu otutjindo "treks", when the Herero trekked from Outjo into Kaokoveld jakotumue many mosquitos jakaurumbu onjungu mezuko drought when famine compelled man and wife to eat by themselves
- 1933 jamekunu scarcity of seed
- 1933-4 jatjizize great rains
- 1935 jovahona "year of the great men", trial of Thomas Mutati and chief Oorlog at Otjiwarongo about the shooting of an elephant by Thomas who was arrested Decemb 1934
- 1936 jakaperauka gallamsiekte
- 1937 jozondjombo digging of wells
- 1938 Joenda jomuhona Tshongora first inoculation of cattle by Major Hahn.
- 1939 joenda jakomesara (Kavara-ozongombo @ Omuetje-Katjovinjuru) inoculation by Barnard
- 1940 tjituaja kEpupa when we went (with Barnard) to the Epupa Falls.
- 1941 jotjiposa tjetu nomuhona Barnard enquiry about Barnard
- 1941-2 jomakutu oruhere bags of meal sent in famine
- 1944 jozondera aeroplanes stationed at Ohopon
- 1945 johange ovita end of the war
- 1946 ndjakotoka ovandjoine return home of soldiers of Native Military Corps

- 1947 jotjipurero "questioning", Messrs. Hahn and Allen ask natives about incorporation with the Union.

9. Language.

89 All three groups, Tjimba, Himba and Herero use the same Herero language. There seem to be only the smallest dialectical differences between their speech.

10. Political organisation.

90. In the section on history it was shown that neither the Tjimba nor the Himba ever formed well-knit political groups, being organised more on a family basis and dispersed in such small units that a central authority could not arise. The Herero under the leadership of Oorlog had no real organisation, they were a band held together by the force of character of one man. For a time he and his Herero followers certainly lorded it over the Himba and Tjimba in the Kaokoveld, arrogating to themselves an authority never conceded them by these people, and sometimes overstepping the bounds altogether. At times the relations between Katiti and Oorlog were therefore strained.

91 After the death of Oorlog all this changed somewhat. The illtreatment of the Himba and Tjimba came to an end with more immediate control, but of course memory rankles and the Herero still, despite protestations that the Himba and Tjimba are their "brothers", tend to despise or look down upon the latter (as they do in fact, like true cattle people, on all men) and there is very little co-operation between them.

92 The present council of headmen is therefore very much a European-made device and one suspects that if left to itself it would not

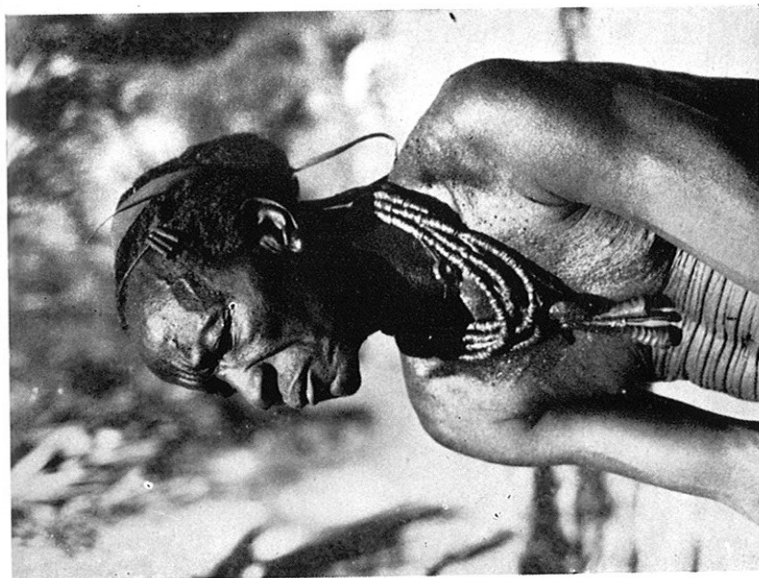
function for very long. But under the eye of the Officer-in-charge it works quite well. It is not only administrative but also a court with jurisdiction over all disputes and crimes save murder, treason and rape.

93 Disputes are first laid before the local subheadman or headman, and may then come before the council of headmen which sits at Ohopoho or elsewhere. From here appeal may be made to the Officer-in-charge assisted by two or more headmen or subheadmen, who have not previously taken part in the trial, as assessors.

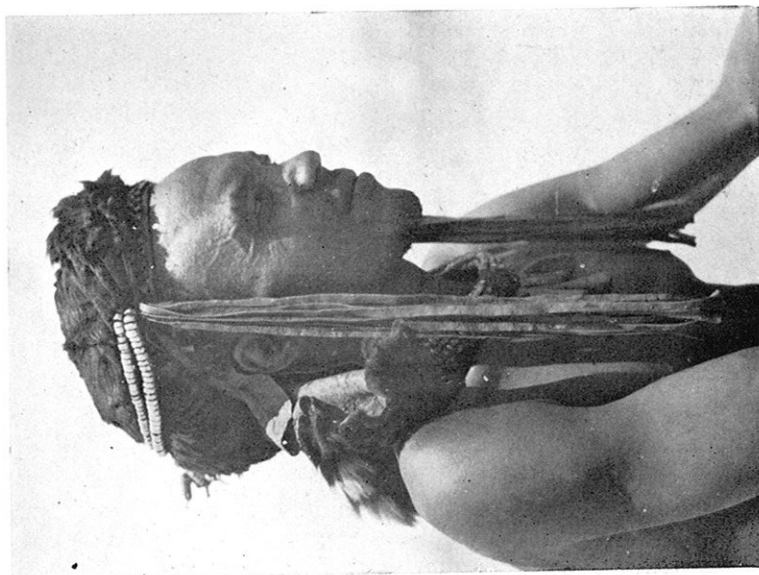
94 The council may order corporal punishment which is administered on the naked buttocks with a mopani switch or a sjambok, by any young man designated by the council. He does not refuse this office. Blood may not flow. It is rare for strokes to be ordered.

95 The headmen may also order strokes to be administered but always call in some of their colleagues to give more weight to their judgment. Women are not given strokes.

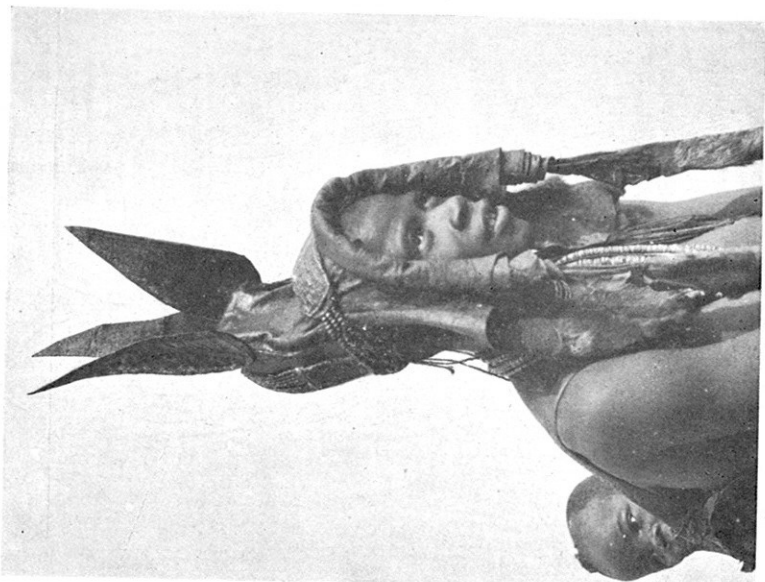
96 The Council is particularly stern in meting out punishment to those causing fires, whether wilfully or by accident. When one has seen the Kaakoveld and realised how vital it is to conserve the grazing this is easily understood. Despite the fact that traditionally all the Herero-speaking people regarded illicit sexual relations with a lenient if not exactly sympathetic eye (as is only too well known from the older literature), it appears that the council has decided to be severe with offenders and thus, in two adultery cases of some years ago, the men received eight lashes each and were each ordered to pay six beasts as compensation. The relatives of the women had to pay the husbands two beasts each. A thief who stole one goat was ordered to pay six goats as amends and got eight lashes as well.



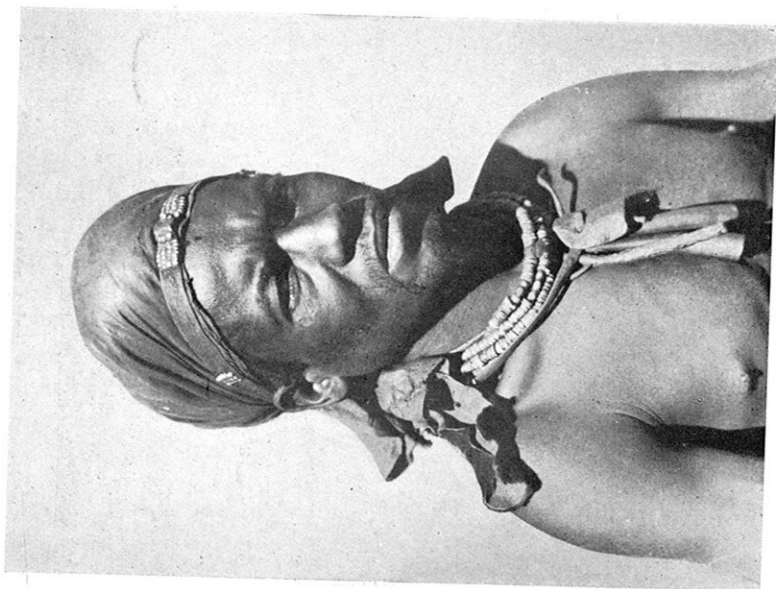
Himba headman of Otjimuhaka.



Himba man.



Tjimba woman.



Himba man.

11. Social.

97 The Tjimba and Himba have never been subject to missionary or educative influence. They have never had to go out to work. Their menfolk never left the country except, before the embargo on export, to do a little trading. They have therefore had very little reason to modify their traditional institutions, and these are very much the same as those described for the Herero of pre-European days. To say in how far their customs and institutions differ would require an investigation.

98 Owing to the scarcity of water and grazing the family units which live together are almost invariably very small and seasonally nomadic.

99 The Herero on the other hand, who were Christians before the Herero war and monogamists, did it is true not forsake their faith during their long years of exile in Angola and still regard themselves as Christians, but their practice of Christianity is somewhat peculiar. Only poor and young men now have only one wife. The wealthier men of standing all have more. This fact is given as one of the reasons why they have in the past been un-enthusiastic about wanting government (that is, secular) schools for their children but equally emphatic in wanting no missionaries in the Kaokoveld.

100 Amongst the Herero divorces are not uncommon, the wife being chased away or leaving on her own. But there is seldom much trouble about these matters, they are not made the subject of court cases. The children remain with the father. If they leave with the mother he may fetch them back, or just leave them in the hope that they will return later to get the cattle to which they are entitled. Only if the animals assigned to a child (ozongekera) were secreted at the mother's

place would the husband make a case about to get them back.

12 Beliefs.

101 Amongst the Tjimba and Himba the old ancestor cult is still to be found. The elder son has the holy fire, acts as priest and makes prayer when required.

102 In the deceased Karuvapa's homestead on Ehomba mountain where Kapute was living when visited, the graves of Karuvapa and another were to be seen next to one another, and marked according to Himba custom with poles planted upright. See illustration. I am told by Mr. Wessels that Katiti's grave is near Epeni.

103 The holy fireplace (okuruuo) was not far from it (see photo), but a fire is only made there on certain occasions, when the head of the family fetches the firesticks from his hut and makes a start with them, then handing them to a younger and stronger person to kindle a fire with. For less special occasions Kapute's "sister" Mbungo or Karuvapa's widow Ngero may fetch fire from any fireplace in the homestead.

104 Many Herero, for all that they call themselves Christians, have also again lit their holy fires. Of course the original fires were already out in Damaraland even before the Herero war, due to missionary influence. But in Angola they made new firesticks, and now these fires are kept going again by the wives and if they move they take the firesticks with them and kindle a new fire. If a fire should now go out it is not thought a serious matter. Certain of the old rules and tabus regarding sour milk in relation to the fire are still observed.

105. The Herero bury their dead in Christian fashion with reading of the Bible, prayers and hymns, but since the death of Martin Tjiheura

they have no one who can do this professionally, and it would seem that the finer points are being forgotten.

106 There are in the Kaokoveld quite a number of places where a large heap of stones lies beside a path. Each passer-by casts a stone or a twig on such a heap, which is called ombindi. Or he puts a stone into the fork of a tree nearby. If he forgets he may not go back to do it, but even so nothing untoward will befall him. The origin of these heaps is mostly not known but of the one at Okarundu kozombindi, on the road to Kaoko-Otavi, they relate that a doctor named Mbaatakana ja Kuhanga, a specialist in keeping enemies out of the country, lived there in the olden days, and that he ordered that all should do there as described because it was a sacred place.

13 Churches and education.

107 There are no missions or schools in the Kaokoveld proper, though there is one at Sesfontein, see paragraph 194. The Herero who learnt to read and write in the south passed on this knowledge to the younger generation and it is surprising to see how many of them can read and write their own language.

108 The Finnish Mission's applications for leave to work in the Kaokoveld, made more than once, have in the past been consistently opposed by both Christians and heathen. The more educated people want schools, but not mission schools and no missionaries.

14 Mode of settlement; dwellings.

109. The Himba and Tjimba, who must be prepared to move whenever the needs of their livestock or other exigencies make this necessary, do not spend much time providing shelter. A

climate which is always warm and where it rains so little renders house-building doubly unnecessary. I have failed to detect any regularity in the lay-out of their settlements though there probably are some rules. The huts stand around the cattle enclosures and mostly seem to face towards them.

110. In the olden days the Himba used to make only one type of hut, viz. the ordinary Herero beehive type built of sticks and plastered with mud. The conical structures now also seen, made of straight poles stacked towards an apex and plastered with mud and dung, were first built relatively recently. Nowadays all manner of structures are found, as may be seen from the illustrations.

111. The majority of the Herero now live in substantial rectangular mud dwellings, built on European lines and better and neater than many of the Herero houses to be seen in the police zone. They no longer build domed wattle and daub huts.

15 Material culture.

112. The visitor to an average Himba or Tjimba homestead is struck by the extreme dearth of utensils and other forms of material culture. A number of articles looked to me exactly like the Herero ones known to us from museums and literature, but only further study and comparison would enable one to say anything definite.

16 Tribal marks and dress.

113. The knocking out of the two middle incisors of the lower jaw and the notching of the two middle uppers, as shown in the illustrations, is today done by Himba and Tjimba, whereas among the Herero the young people are abandoning the custom.

114. The dress of Himba and Tjimba men is best seen in the illustrations. The aprons (ombuku, both back and front) are of well dressed goat or sheep skins, but the Tjimba apron is long in front, that of the Himba shorter. Sandals are essential in this country. The hair is worn long, as shown, and a sheepskin or lamb-skin cap (ombuja) is worn, or a tuft (onjange) of ostrich feathers.

115. The average Tjimba male looks dressed as if he were trying to copy the best Himba fashion but went to a cheap tailor and also could not afford to buy better ornaments.

116. The females wear a back apron of sheep or calf skin called oruheke, and a front apron of the same material called oruhira, and when necessary a cloak called orupera. The Tjimba wear no beads of lead. Their headdress is identical, as far as I could see, with that of the Herero of the olden days. Not so the headdress (called ekori) of the Himba women, which looks very different, see pictures. An extraordinary headgear (called okarembe) is the bit of sheepskin they wear perched on top of the head when not wearing the more ceremonial ekori.

117. Some of the Tjimba and a very few Himba have taken to European clothing.

118. All the Herero in the Kaokoveld wear European clothing and the old Herero headdress of females is no longer to be seen amongst them.

17 Cattle.

119. In October 1947 the stock position in the Kaokoveld, exclusive of Sesfontein, was estimated to be as follows :

| | Herero | Himba | Tjimba | Total |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Large | 12,000 | 20,000 | 3,000 | 35,000 |
| Small | <u>17,000</u> | <u>26,000</u> | <u>7,000</u> | <u>50,000</u> |
| Cattle units | 15,400 | 25,200 | 4,400 | 45,000 |

120 There also are thought to be about 100 horses and 2,000 donkeys in the country. Their ownership is not certain.

121 Even some years ago it was considered that the country was fully stocked, bearing in mind the low rainfall, the uncertainty of the seasons, the disastrous effects of veld fires, and the general sparseness of the grazing.

122 If the above figures and those of population are correct they would give the following number of cattle units per 100 of population for the three groups:

Herero 1,040
Himba 1,440
Tjimba 224

123 Even allowing for considerable inaccuracy, these figures indicate the tremendous difference existing between the economies of the Kaokoveld and of Ovamboland, where the average ratio is more in the vicinity of 80 cattle units per 100 of population, less than half of the holding of the poor Tjimba nomads who at one time possessed nothing at all, and less than a tenth of the Herero and Himba holdings.

124 Owing to the prohibition on the export of stock there is no market for these cattle. However, the attitude towards cattle is only slightly utilitarian, for a man's standing is indicated not merely by the number of his cattle

but also by the age of his oxen and the spread of their horns. Hence the adherence to the old custom of slaughtering (which is done rarely) young animals in order to spare the fine old oxen and keep them to show off with.

125. All manner of stock diseases occur, and in the first place foot and mouth disease, lungsickness, gallsickness and anthrax.

126. Owing to an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Ombalantu the country was proclaimed a quarantine area under Government Notice No. 223 of 1946, and all trading between the Kaokoveld and Ovamboland was prohibited. The notice was partly rescinded on 27th January, 1948, but produce, small stock, dogs, and cattle may not be moved.

127. In 1938-9 a number of Himba, Veripaka's people, fearing to let their cattle be inoculated against lungsickness, fled across the Kunene into Angola with their stock. The Portuguese apparently wanted to seize some of these and there was a fight about it. At all events in 1941 they decided they had had enough of Angola and came back into the Kaokoveld with 517 head of cattle and 700 sheep and goats. As they refused to return to Angola, the animals were destroyed by order of the Administration.

128. With few exceptions the Kaokoveld cattle folk do not bother to sink wells and therefore concentrate with all their stock near the open waters, thereby over-grazing certain areas. Fortunately water collects in many places during the rainy season so that then the cattle can be dispersed all over the country.

18 Agriculture.

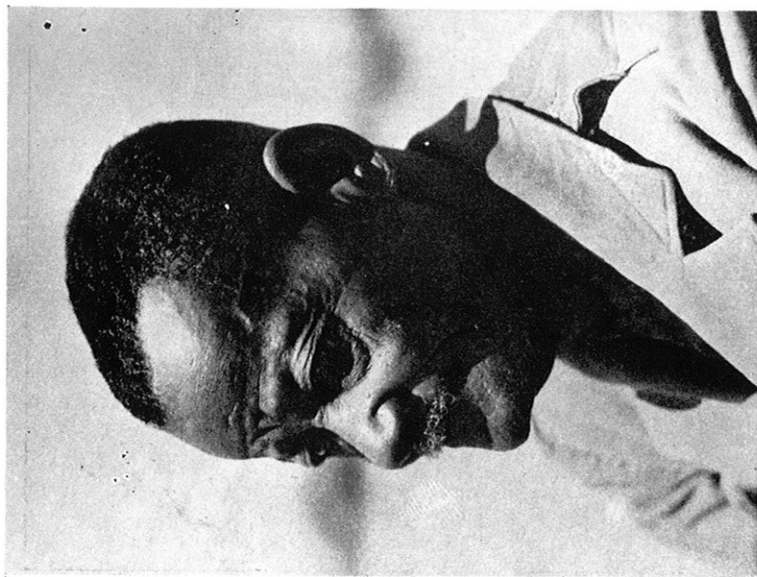
129 Before the Herero came into the Kaokoveld neither the Himba nor the Tjimba probably

knew anything about agriculture at all. Even today the Himba only grow some maize in a desultory fashion. The Herero, as described earlier, had knowledge of irrigation and the growing of various crops even before they left Damaraland, and some of them learnt still more in Angola. Though not at heart agriculturists they immediately began to make use of what water they found to grow maize and tobacco. At Kaoko-Otavi the Boers on their way to Angola had done so before them. It is likely that if the elephants did less damage to their crops the Herero might show even more interest in growing crops. As regards tobacco the trouble is now that none can be exported, whereas before the embargo the Ovambo used to bring in grain and other goods for barter and buy it.

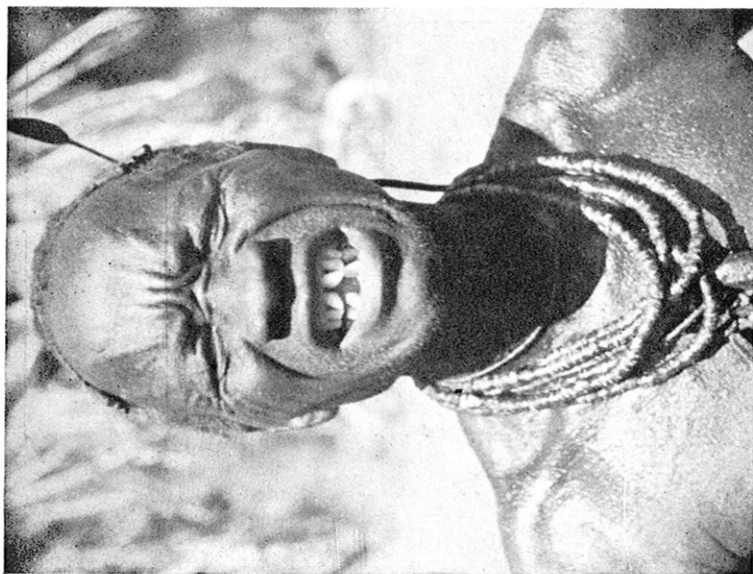
19 Economics.

130 There has for some time been a prohibition of the movement of cattle into and out of the Kaokoveld for fear of the spread of foot and mouth disease. More recently the movement of small stock and the export of vegetable products was also forbidden for the same reason. Prior to these restrictions there was a small but regular amount of trading done within the Kaokoveld itself and also with the outside world, but on the whole there existed an almost pure subsistence economy. There is no store in the Kaokoveld, the nearest in the south being at Kamanjab. The people used to trek down to Kamanjab and other stores in the Outjo district and also disposed of some of their produce to Ovambo who came in to obtain tobacco, buchu and stock or themselves went across to Ukwaluthi.

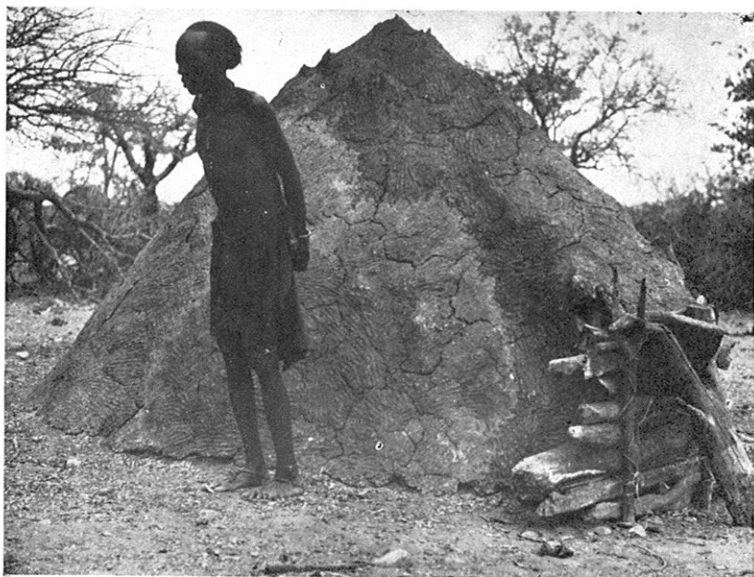
131 There is no recruiting in the Kaokoveld owing to the prevalence of dysentery and venereal disease. The economy being pastoral, the earnings of the few men who could go out



Herero headman.



Incisors filed or knocked out (Himba).



Himba dwelling of poles and dung.



Himba men at okuruuo (sacred hearth).

would in any case not compensate for the loss of able-bodied men who are needed to tend the herds. The position at Sesfontein is referred to in paragraph 220.

132 The foregoing gives a very incomplete picture of the economics of the Kaokoveld.

133 The dominating feature of this economy is uncertainty and instability. Everything depends on the season. Nobody knows in advance what will be the best way of getting through the next year. So they sit and wait. In olden times the only way to scrape through very bad times was to go away as far as possible. Nowadays the government sometimes helps with food. It is of course always willing to, and does in fact help when the local officer considers that such help is needed. In 1941 it gave 225 bags of maize to alleviate distress. In 1946, which was a bad year, the people and especially the Himba who had much cattle trekked to distant areas, and went to places like Orupembe which normally are not occupied. Food became so scarce that the headmen asked for assistance and this time the Administration distributed 166 bags of maize meal.

134 A country so much at the mercy of a fickle rainfall obviously requires careful supervision of stock and population, and overstocking must be avoided like the plague.

20. Health.

135. Many diseases occur, including some rarer ones like Malta fever which prevents Europeans from using local milk, and the care and experience required to grow vegetables cause a lack of greens which may easily cause scurvy in those who do not live entirely like the natives. These latter, especially the Himba who get sufficient milk from their large

herds, give an impression of spare physique combined with great toughness. Their teeth are good, their bare bodies glisten with plentiful applications of fat except where the thick layer of ochre produces a duller red, their lean sinewy limbs give promise of the prodigious feats of marching and endurance of which they are capable. Altogether one can see in them primitive man of the age-old dietistic equilibrium with his environment in which he has survived in Africa all these centuries. The Herero are different. They have already drunk of the cup of civilisation, and probably ought to be glad of the difficulties which put sugar, coffee and all the rest virtually out of their reach.

136 The trouble really starts with those who, like a certain native who learnt all manner of vegetable gardening in Angola, live neither the native nor the white man's way and seem to get more than their share of the physical ills of both. These observations give food for thought. It is so easy to upset the balance of things, so difficult to restore it.

21 Sources.

137 The foregoing is mostly based on what I saw for myself during the brief time at my disposal, and secondly derived from some official reports and the local knowledge of officials and inhabitants of the country. There is not much literature on the Kaokoveld, but see the bibliography at the end.

S E S F O N T E I N

22 Definition of area:

138 Government Notice No.122 of 1923 confirmed the grant of land made by the German Government:

(4) The farm Zesfontein in the district of Outjo, in extent approximately 31,416 hectares, being the area assigned to the use of the Topnaar Swartbooi Hottentots for grazing purposes by the German Government after the confiscation of their tribal property under the Ordinance of the Governor dated the 23rd March 1906, and bounded as follows:-

10 kilometre radius from Waterhole ZESSFONTEIN.

139 Government Notice No.42/1941 adds 200 qm to Zesfontein.

140 Sesfontein itself is only occupied by the settled community living there. One of the "voormanne", Jafta Hendrik, with a small number of people lives outside the 10 km radius on the European-owned farm Warmbad, which originally belonged to Schlettwein. The Sesfontein people make use of the grazing for many miles around and have a few posts for their cattle. A number of Herero, Himba and Tjimba live a semi-nomadic life in the country north-east and north-west of Sesfontein and these also form part, in a loose sense, of the Sesfontein social and economic unit. There is a sort of no-man's land zone around the Sesfontein sphere of influence which integrates these

cattle nomads with the oasis dwellers. The unit is thus much larger than the reserve.

23 Administration and control:

141 Administratively the Sesfontein community forms a self-contained entity apart from the rest of the Kaakoveld. The traditional leadership of the old Hottentot "kapteins", a hereditary position, has gradually weakened until some time ago a person other than a member of the family was appointed, and the title "kaptein" now seems inappropriate. "Senior voorman" would probably be more accurate. Officially, in English at least, he is a Headman. He has a small number of "voormanne" (officially: Sub-headmen), known to and approved by the government, to assist him.

142 These Sesfontein leaders have the right to attend the meetings of the council of headmen of the Kaakoveld and to lay matters before it but they would probably never dream of doing so. Though they might listen to proceedings of the council if they should happen to be at Ohopoho at the time of a session, they would hardly concede the right to decide about Sesfontein matters to any but the government. In spite of a considerable community of interest between Sesfontein and the rest of the country, the separation between them in matters of control is therefore complete.

143 There are no enactments relating to the administration of Sesfontein only.

24 Description of country:

144 Almost on the edge of the Namib, in a large level sandy basin, surrounded by bleak and broken mountains, lies the desert oasis Inani /ous or Sesfontein, so-called because of the six strong perennial springs issuing there.

A few black bare hills stand within the basin. The oasis itself presents a refreshing picture of wheat, tobacco and vegetable gardens, enormous fig and thorn trees in luscious green leaf, a stately row of date palms planted by the Germans and the white walls of their old fort now fallen into ruins. The whole surrounding area has been overgrazed so thoroughly that only the large trees remain in a level plain of bare sand. There are no young trees nor can any raise its head owing to the intensive browsing of the numerous cattle, goats and donkeys perpetually on the look-out for a nibble of green leaf or twig. In course of time, as the large trees die off one by one and no others take their place, it seems that all vegetation must eventually disappear, and leave only the enclosed gardens. Needless to say, this over-stocking is the result of a long period of peace and freedom from raiding since the establishment of European control, and an utter disregard of the exhortations of officials urging wider dispersal of livestock and avoidance of concentration at Sesfontein.

145 About the rainfall I have no information as no record exists. Whether the springs are likely to be affected by the denudation of the countryside all around is hard to say. The springs probably owe their flow much more to the geological formation than to any retarding effect of a surface humus sponge. The flow does not seem to fluctuate much. The more exact nature of this flow is not known. For the continued existence of the Sesfontein community the springs are of course vital and it may prove worth while to measure the flow at intervals over the years and so build up a record to show the trend. This is of course neither easy nor inexpensive in view of the remoteness of the spot. Fortunately for Sesfontein the rivers passing nearby drain off rainfall from a very large area, a very important matter in a country where the rain falls so erratically.

146 There is only one road which winds through the mountains into Sesfontein. To get to Ohopoho or Kamanjab with pack animals the people can of course take shorter routes. The former journey takes them about three days, the latter about four. But there is no travel at all between Sesfontein and the country south and south-west of it in the police zone owing to the arid wastes to be traversed. There is no road leading from it further west and in fact nowhere to go in that direction.

25 Strength and distribution of population.

147 According to figures submitted in 1947 there was the following population at that time.

| | Men | Women | Children | Total |
|-----------------------------|-----|-------|----------|-------|
| Hottentots | 33 | 41 | 50 | 124 |
| Bastards and Coloureds | 6 | - | - | 6 |
| Herero | 27 | 28 | 32 | 87 |
| Himba | 26 | 39 | 87 | 152 |
| Tjimba | 8 | 6 | 9 | 23 |
| Bergdama | 91 | 111 | 172 | 374 |
| Ovambo | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Bushmen (including hybrids) | 4 | 9 | 5 | 18 |
| | 196 | 234 | 355 | 785 |

148 The Herero, Himba and Tjimba (totalling 252 according to this table) are usually to be found in the veld outside Sesfontein. Their whereabouts are dictated by the whereabouts of grazing which in turn is determined by the way the rains fell some time before.

149 The rest of the population would then, according to the table, number 533. Of these, about one fifth (say 100 persons) is normally also not at Sesfontein but in the vicinity, that is, at Warmbad, at Puros (WNW of Sesfontein), and in between these two places. The

remainder (say 433 persons) would then constitute the actual permanent population of Sesfontein itself.

26 History

150 The earliest occupation of Sesfontein was probably by the ubiquitous Bushman, of whom, however, little trace or record remains. He was ousted long ago by Bergdama, and these were in turn subjected by Herero cattle nomads from the north. These two lived together in a symbiosis already familiar from elsewhere in South West Africa, the Herero being the acknowledged masters and living on their herds, the Bergdama hunting, collecting and working for them. Some Himba relate that the last Omuhimba to lord it over Sesfontein was a man named Omusema.

151 This state of affairs ended with the arrival of the Hottentots who are now the dominant element at Sesfontein. Two groups of them arrived, at different times. The first and largest were !omen or Topnaars, the later arrivals were a much smaller group of //kou /goan or Swartboois.

(i) !omen or Topnaars

152 The Topnaars say the first chief they can remember was /uichab, under whom they lived somewhere far to the south, in a place away from the sea. There /uichab died. Under the leadership of his son Anibab @ Hendrik /uichamab they came to Sesfontein and drove out both the Herero and the Bergdama.

153 After the death of Anibab @ Hendrik his full brother /unuweb @ Jan @ Petrus /uichamab succeeded. He was chief from before 1875, it seems.

154 In his time the Germans established a military post at Sesfontein. They built a fort the remains of which still stand. It was built

in 1902 after the war with the Swartboois. The garrison consisted of Germans and Hottentot soldiers or police. After a time the Germans withdrew most of the garrison and only three men were left by the time the war broke out in 1914.

155 In a cemetery near the fort there are three graves, of Unteroffiz. Karl Pietrowski who died 18.9.04 and Gefr. K. Gieseke who died 25.3.08; the third grave has no stone.

156 When the war broke out in August, 1914, the Germans arrested the chief Jan and took him with them to Outjo. On the way from Outjo to some other destination he died on the road and was buried at Palafontein 6 miles from Outjo.

157 By his wife //gaubes the chief Jan had left a daughter Kukus @ Albertina and a son /nabeb @ Levi /uichamab who now became chief. He died in 1918.

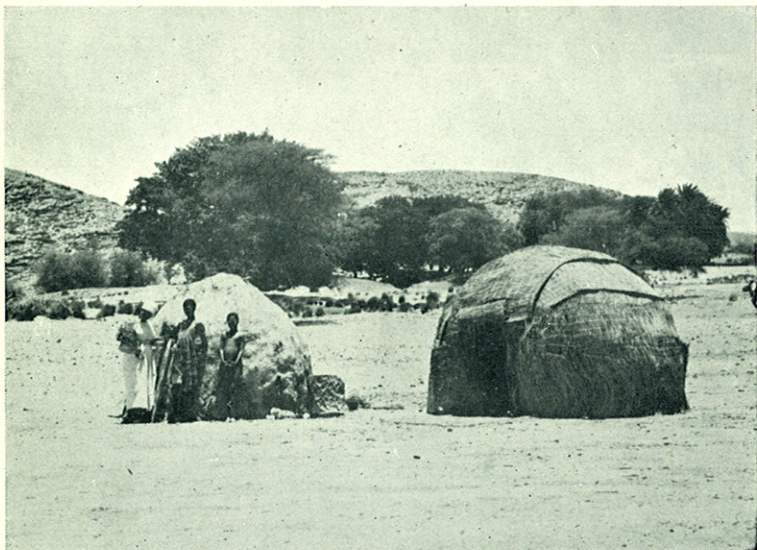
158 Levi had a wife //āwes @ Katrina @ Maria who bore him a son Husa @ Nathanael /uichamab. The latter now succeeded as chief. He was mauled by a lion and died on 28th February 1941, leaving no issue.



Date palms at Sesfontein.



Mountains east of Sesfontein.

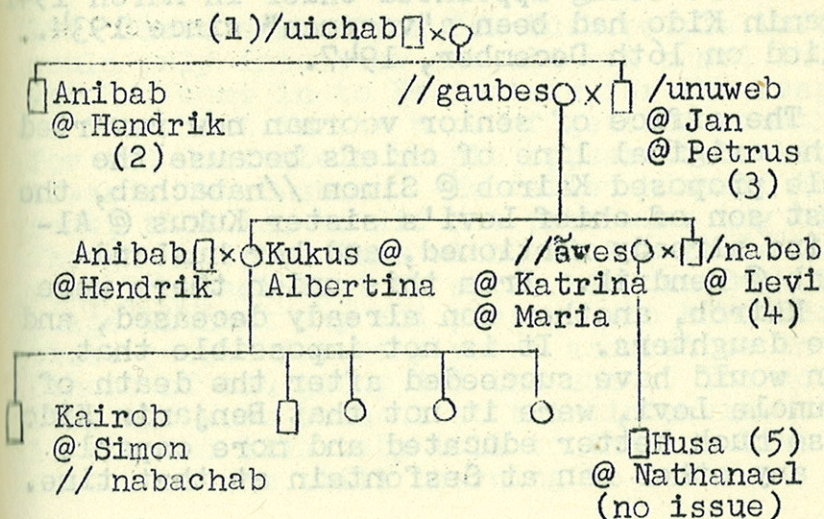


Topnaar huts at Sesfontein.



Bergdama women winnowing wheat.

159 Genealogy of !omen (Topnaar) leaders



Kristina ○ □ !naistab @
Nicodemus Kido

□ Min-#hab @
Benjamin Kido
(6)

160 There was now no one left in the male line to take office. For various reasons about which I have insufficient information the choice now fell on Min-#hab @ Benjamin Kido. He was the son of !naistab @ Nicodemus Kido and his wife Kristina Kido, both Hottentots from Franzfontein, where Nicodemus had been an evangelist of the Rheinische Mission until in c.1898 the chief Jan fetched him, with the consent of the mission, to come and teach his people. The people had just lost their cattle through the rinderpest and were in a bad way. They knew nothing of agriculture or irrigation, and were living on what they could find. Nicodemus Kido taught them how to make lands, sow wheat and irrigate, and gave religious and other instruction.

161 Before being appointed chief in March 1941 Benjamin Kido had been a "voorman" since 1934. He died on 16th December, 1947.

162 The office of senior voorman now reverted to the original line of chiefs because the people proposed Kairob @ Simon //nabachab, the eldest son of chief Levi's sister Kukus @ Albertina already mentioned, and her husband Anibab @ Hendrik. From this union there were born Kairob, another son already deceased, and three daughters. It is not impossible that Simon would have succeeded after the death of his uncle Levi, were it not that Benjamin Kido was so much better educated and more capable than any other man at Sesfontein at that time.

(ii) //kou /gōan or Swartboois

163 The Swartboois at Sesfontein came from Franzfontein and were a section of the tribe living there under the chief /hoān /arab @ Cornelius Swartbooi.

(iii) Bergdama

164 In course of time the Bergdama who had been driven out of Sesfontein slowly came back and were allowed to make a living there on sufferance.

(iv) Herero

165 If the cattle people whom the Hottentots drove out really were Herero, only a few ever came back, because there are only a few now. Those few resident in the vicinity live, like the Himba, a pastoral life and take little or no part in the life of the Sesfontein oasis itself.

(v) Bushmen

166 There are only a few Bush people left. I could only interview one old man named !hu-gaob who had come in to Sesfontein for the reaping of the wheat in the hope of getting something, for the Sesfontein people appear to be kindly towards the Bushmen. He called himself Khu-gaob, that is, he did not pronounce any clicks. Though he spoke Nama with clicks, it is a remarkable fact that he spoke his own Bush language without any and persons who have known these people for many years assured me that the others of the group did the same. The councillors who were present at this interview said it sounded like baby talk to them or like the speech of one still learning to talk.

167 This group of Bushmen calls itself Kubun (with click //ubun). The informant said they originally came from a place called !kuiseb which is south of Walvis Bay, near the sea. He himself was born where the !uniab flows into the sea, about seven days walk south west from Sesfontein.

168 A young man named /namimab, son of informant's brother and a Bergdama mother, was also present. He had also been born on the !uniab. There are none of this group left there now.

169 The informant, like his brother, had a Bergdama wife by whom he had several children, amongst them three daughters all living in Sesfontein. One of the daughters was married to a Hottentot, another to a Bergdama, now dead, the third though old enough to be married had not yet found a husband and was living with her brothers.

170 Informant never had a Bush wife. It seems there is only one pure Bush woman of this group still surviving. She also lives in Sesfontein and is married to a Bergdama. Two other pure Bushmen of this group survive. Like

the informant they normally live out in the Namib and along the coast, eating what veldkos they can get and especially fish found along the shore. !hu-!gaob said he possessed no bow or arrows and had last used these as a young man.

27 Language.

171 The language of Sesfontein is Nama Hottentot, which is used by both the dominant Hottentot section and by the poorer Bergdama. There seem to be some differences between speech of these two groups. The Hottentot men have some knowledge of Herero. Their knowledge of either English or Afrikaans is slight. Some know a little German. Many of the Hottentots, especially the women, have no knowledge of any European language. The Himba and Tjimba, even their wives and children, are said to understand Nama to some extent.

28 Political organisation.

172 In 1947 when I first visited Sesfontein, the headman Benjamin Kido was still alive, though ill. He then had four "voormanne" or councillors, namely (1) Kairob @ Simon //nabachab, born c.1902, in office since c.1936 (2) Ephraim Abob, born c.1870, voorman since 1918, (3) Manasse Adam, born c.1880, voorman since 1923 (4) Jafta Hendrik, born c.1892, voorman since c.1936, and resident on the farm Warmbad adjoining Sesfontein.

173 When Benjamin Kido had been appointed he called the people, both men and women, together and told them he had chosen the four men named above to be his councillors, and invited objections. There were none. Not many Himba attended this meeting. As Benjamin himself had actually made no choice or change, but merely announced his intention of carrying on with the

men already long in office, it was not likely there would be any protest. There have been no changes since.

174 After the death of Benjamin it was proposed by the voormanne that Simon should succeed. It was then put to them, that it might be advisable to have some Bergdama councillors also, to represent their own people. At a subsequent meeting which I attended in September 1948, two men Levi Ganuseb and Elias Amchab were accordingly put forward in response to this suggestion. But the further step was taken of proposing two Himba councillors also, namely Uerimunga Kasaona and Hivetira Karutjaiva.

175 From having a Hottentot headman and four Hottentot councillors, they were now preparing to have a Hottentot headman with only three Hottentot councillors, and no less than four non-Hottentot councillors. To me it seemed that either the Hottentots had not quite realised the implications, for themselves, of this new arrangement, or else that they must have considered the Bergdama as having identical interests with them, so as to outweigh the Himba vote, or else again that they may have thought that in practice they, being on the spot and having the numbers and influence there would always be able to manage affairs to their own satisfaction. The proposal to have more, and non-Hottentot, councillors, still had to be approved by the government.

176 An illustration of the difference of interest that might conceivably arise in the council as proposed was given in the very same meeting, when the Himba leader asked for permission to bring stock from the northern lung-sickness-infected area into the vicinity of Sesfontein. To this the council would not agree.

177 At the same meeting no less than seven men were produced as "policemen" ("messengers" would

have been more accurate) chosen by the council. Actually the "voormanne" are not much better than policemen themselves, by their own account for they have no territorial control, and neither the land nor the people are divided into wards or groups under individual councillors. Crimes, complaints, etc. may be reported to the headman through any "voorman", but no trouble, however small, may be settled by a "voorman" on his own. It has to be decided by the headman who again is careful to consult his council in everything of importance. This is how the councillors themselves described the system. I had no means of checking the accuracy of this account.

178 The headman and his council are in authority over all the people at Sesfontein, no matter of what nation. How far their power extends over the semi-nomadic Herero, Himba and Tjimba I could not discover. The fact that the Himba leader thought it necessary to get the permission of the council to bring in stock into the veld around Sesfontein indicates that the Himba acknowledge the council's power there.

179 In the olden days the "kaptein" always merely informed the people of his choice of councillors; he never asked them to nominate any. There never was any objection to his choice.

180 Nobody has ever yet been expelled from Sesfontein as an undesirable.

181 The council meets under a large tree not far from the school. Meetings are only held when necessary. Sometimes even months elapse without any trouble occurring to warrant calling the members together.

182 A person found guilty may be fined, or given strokes (rare), and is allowed to pay his fine in money, wheat or livestock. There

is a written record of the fines so collected; they are kept to supply food for road repair parties.

183 Neither the headman nor any other functionary receives remuneration. They probably perform their duties, which do not seem very onerous, for the sake of the additional power and status achieved thereby. Self-government thus costs the Sesfontein community very little in overhead charges.

184 The council sometimes decides Himba troubles also. Whilst conceding that the Himba and other Herero had their own customs, the council could not recall any case involving Herero-speaking parties which had been difficult to settle on that account. Possibly no intricate questions of Herero custom were ever brought before them.

29 Social

185 Since virtually the whole of the settled Sesfontein community is Christian, monogamy is the rule. Most couples were married by church rites, by a missionary of the Rheinische Mission from Outjo, who used to visit Sesfontein at intervals. During the war years however he was not allowed to come and some couples were married by the teacher Nicodemus Hendrik. The legality of all these unions is thus open to question.

186 No case of a divorce could be recalled by my informants, who said divorce was rare. They added that though a husband might beat his wife, it rarely happened.

187 The two sections, Topnaar and Swartbooi, are said now to have virtually merged into one. The Bergdama have advanced tremendously in status, and are now allowed to marry Hottentot girls. To what extent this actually happens,

and what public opinion really thinks of it I am unable to judge. But Hottentots do not intermarry with Herero and Himba, owing it is said to the language difficulty. I am inclined to believe that the brakes on this type of intermarriage are not in the main linguistical but that the difference in language is merely the most visible expression of the underlying differences in tradition, culture and character. There are Herero at Puros for example who have married Bergdama women.

188 Sons who marry are expected to continue to live with their fathers. They have their own dwellings, of course; a very simple matter. As may be seen from the illustrations, there is not much difficulty about starting an establishment of one's own. They cut some wood and the wife does the rest. When a son wishes to live somewhere else, he merely goes away and settles where he likes. He does not require the permission of the headman, or of anybody else. Nor may anyone object to his settling where he likes, providee he does not cause trouble and inconvenience by his proximity.

189 Assaults and other crimes are extremely rare

190 The inheritance of irrigable lands goes from father to son, and all sons get equal shares. A daughter does not inherit a land if there is a son because the latter must provide for her until she marries. However, two daughters may in the absence of sons inherit their father's land, and a widow may inherit her husband's land. An unmarried girl who inherits a land does not lose it upon her marriage, but her husband becomes the owner. Should she be divorced she would get back the land, but no such case could be quoted.

30 Churches, education and schools.

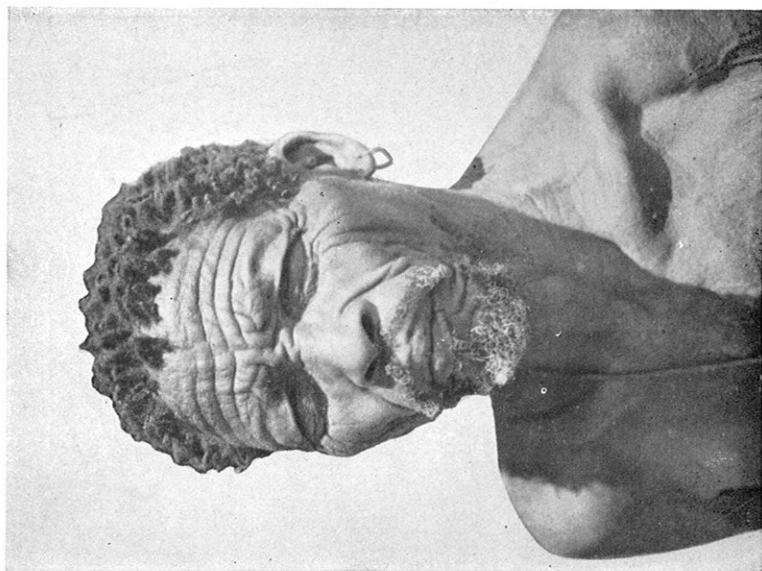
191 In so far as the people are Christian, which most of them are, they belong to the



A Topnaar of Sesfontein.



A Topnaar of Sesfontein.



Hu-Igaob, a Bushman of Sesfontein.



Topnaar female of Sesfontein.

Rheinische Mission. No other confessions are represented.

192 There is a school building, which also serves as church.

193 As stated elsewhere, Nicodemus Kido came to work amongst these people in 1898, as evangelist of the Rheinische Mission, and the mission has maintained contact by periodical visits.

194 The majority of the men, not to mention the women, cannot read. A minority can read Nama a little, but it is said they cannot write. Very few indeed can write, excepting the school children, who are Hottentot and Bergdama. These now number 45, and go up to Standard III. Afrikaans is taught as European language. The good progress made in recent years in this school goes entirely to the credit of the excellent teacher, Nicodemus Hendrik, a relation of the late Benjamin Kido, and a product of the Augustineum in Okahandja.

31 Mode of settlement

195 The Hottentot population was forced to become settled when it took to relying on irrigation for a living. The fields require so much constant attention and the necessity of utilising the water supply all the year round is so great that they must remain near their lands all the time. But though they have been doing this for decades now, it has effected little change in their mode of settlement. Their nomadic instincts and tradition are abundantly demonstrated by the flimsy beehive-type huts in which so many of them still live. Many of these have hardly any covering during the dry season which is after all most of the year. Other huts are covered with mats in true Hottentot style. Some people live in rectangular European-type shacks of the simplest sort.

196 All dwellings indicate that the climate is a hot and dry one, rendering the barest bit of shelter sufficient. When harvesting time approaches and the corn must be guarded against birds, primitive reed and grass shelters are erected in the lands, and people live there until they have brought in and threshed the crop. Some of these shelters are little better than dog kennels. Others who happen to have a good shady tree dispense with such bother, and simply live under them in the open.

197 The Bergdama live like the Hottentots, if possible in still greater simplicity. The Himba and Tjimba in the environs of Sesfontein of course live as their fathers did before the

32 Material culture.

198 As nomads the Hottentots never had many belongings, nor has their present more settled way of life altered much at Sesfontein in this respect. Their material equipment is still extremely simple. Karosses, milk pails, calabashes, dishes, goatskin sacks, hatchets, knives and of course spades, are the main items. Remoteness from civilisation and, during the past few years, certain difficulties in the way of trade have contributed to their poverty in material things.

33 Tribal marks and dress.

199 It is not necessary to refer to the Herero, Himba and Tjimba in this connection as they do not differ from their fellows elsewhere. The Hottentots dress European fashion in whatever they can get. Hats, mostly felt hats, are worn and nowadays also battered helmets; shirts, jackets, trousers; long old-fashioned dresses and head cloths; sandals, shoes, or boots. Quite good karosses are sewn with sin in the traditional manner. Many of the less well-to-do inhabitants wear very little.

200 Tribal marks by which these people could be distinguished there are none.

34 Cattle.

201 It was officially estimated in 1947 that stock is owned by the Sesfontein community as follows:

| | Owners Hot- tentots and Bergdama | Owners Himba | Total |
|--------------|--|-----------------|-------|
| Large stock | 900 | 600 | 1,500 |
| Small stock | 5,000 | 4,000 | 9,000 |
| Donkeys | 190 | nil | 190 |
| Cattle units | 2,090 | 1,400 | 3,490 |

202 How accurate these figures are I cannot say. It is not possible to say how stock is owned by individuals. A few things however are certain.

203 Firstly, the Bergdama now not only possess stock, as shown in the above return, but several of them own large stock. This was impossible in the olden days when it was a crime for a Bergdama to own large stock and in fact to own any wealth at all.

204 The Hottentots lost their cattle in the rinderpest 1897 and say there was another disease which later wiped out all their goats also. Nevertheless they managed, partly by their old method of robbing their neighbours, to build up their herds again. On these they are very dependent for milk and for barter. Some men own no large stock. All however are said to have some small stock.

205 There are cattle posts on the Kowarib 21 miles east of Sesfontein, and at some other small places. At Puros there are only Herero.

A few men at these cattle posts herd the stock of many owners.

206 The Himba of course are a cattle people and their whole existence is bound up with their stock. Whether they lost all their animals in the rinderpest and how they recovered from their losses in that disaster I cannot say.

207 The price of a goat is said to be five shillings, of a sheep ten shillings.

208 Of late years there has been only a small increase in the number of donkeys, which are used for transport.

209 There is a strict quarantine imposed on the movement of stock into the police zone. Sesfontein has so far been spared stock epidemics such as of lungsickness, and the introduction of stock from adjoining areas of the Kaokoveld is a matter over which the council arrogates to itself a great deal of say, because of the menace to the wealth of the whole community.

35 Agriculture

210 At Sesfontein everything depends on one thing alone: the volume of water from the springs. This flow seems to be fairly even. There are no records nor has the daily yield ever been measured as far as I know. It is probably no more than a few cubic feet per second but it is, for this country, a wonderful supply of water. It is certain however that it is the water that limits the extent of land under cultivation. How much land is being cultivated at any one time still has to be measured. Six men irrigate from the main furrow during the day, the one after the other, therefore an approximate two hours each, and four men during the night. There are no dams of any size to conserve water. These are unnecessary because all the water is used up as it is.

211 Each land only gets a turn once a week. The methods are probably as good as they might be under the circumstances. A large proportion of the water is lost in the channels which are just made in the ground and which moreover are dry at short intervals so that they absorb a great deal of water every time they are used. The facing of furrows with stone or wood, and covering them over, as done in other desert countries to prevent losses and to keep the water cool, has not yet occurred to the people. Bearing in mind that these are folk with a completely nomadic tradition, an improvident character, and never taught by experts, their achievement is worthy of note.

212 Apart from the three staple crops of wheat, maize and tobacco, they cultivate pumpkins, calabashes and a few watermelons, sweet melons (spaanspek) and tomatoes. Millets and sorghums are unknown. Vegetables like beans, onions, carrots, spinach and cabbage have likewise up to now not been grown.

213 Some pawpaws have been grown since 1930. Prickly pear and figs were introduced by the Germans who also planted the datepalms. The fruit are highly prized but the trees grow too slowly for the natives to care about planting more of them.

214 In an annual report of some years ago it is stated that almost all the men produced 2, 3 to 4 bags of wheat each whilst a few produced 5, 6, to 8, and 3 men produced 10, 18, and 21 bags respectively. Whilst 22 men together produced 80 bags, 3 men together produced 50 bags. Again, 25 men produced 47 bags of tobacco, but one man produced 5 bags. If these are in any way representative figures, the yield is low per man. One of the reasons must be the limited quantity of water available. Possibly the absence of a market may also now be a limiting factor.

215. The keeping of stock is an absolute necessity at Sesfontein, firstly to get the indispensable manure, and secondly to get the milk and meat for a balanced diet. Should all vegetation in the vicinity therefore be destroyed the lands would have to bear the additional burden of producing fodder, or manure would have to be transported for long distances, both of them uneconomical measures and hardly to be thought of. The dangers of denuding the surrounding country have, in spite of warning and advice to the contrary, apparently not yet been fully realised by the inhabitants.

216 Before the German garrison was withdrawn in 1908, the Germans measured out and gave to the Sesfontein people certain lands, one to each man. Young men got larger portions, females got nothing. But no written record exists of title to land. Some of the present inhabitants have still got the original lands given them at that time.

217 After the Germans had left, the inhabitants parcelled out more land amongst themselves, so that a number of persons got lands in various places.

218 The ownership to land is a matter of common knowledge. There never are disputes about gardens. Most of the land is always used. If a man neglects a land for two to three years it is taken from him and allotted to another. The last time this actually happened was in 1946. A man had three lands and worked only one, because he had consumption and could not work more. The council warned him in 1945 and the following year took his unused gardens away. There was no injustice in this because a man may get another to work his land for him and reward him with part of the crop.

36 Economics

219 The economics of Sesfontein, as of the Kaokoveld as a whole, have been affected by the

regulations imposed as a precaution against the spread of foot and mouth disease, see para 126. The surplus of wheat, maize and tobacco formerly grown for sale both in the Kaokoveld and outside can now only be disposed of inside. Despite the resulting difficulties in the way of obtaining certain products of civilisation, there is however no attempt to make, for example, leather shirts and trousers, such as one saw in Bechuanaland during the great depression of the early thirties, though neither the materials nor the skill are lacking and such home-made articles are exceedingly durable. Part of the tobacco crop is bartered to Kaokoveld natives for stock, the only equivalent they have to offer. Formerly people used to trek down from Ovamboland to Sesfontein to buy tobacco there, or the Sesfontein producers sold their tobacco in Ovamboland themselves, or went into the police zone.

220 There is no regular export of labour because every man has his land which requires his presence all the year round, but young men go out now and then. Practically all of the men have worked in the police zone at one time or another, but some have never been out more than once or twice. Some for example went as drovers for the Angola Boers, and got as far as Windhoek and Gobabis.

221 Sesfontein thus has a simple subsistence economy, with every man growing his own wheat, maize and tobacco, building his own huts and kraals, and making many of his other requirements. Of specialisation there is little to be seen. There do not appear to be any tradesmen at all. There are appreciable differences between the well-to-do and the poorest individuals, as also in productivity, but whether this is due to social stratification and privilege, or individual industry and merit, is hard to say without further study.

37 Health.

222 About the general state of health of the Sesfontein community I have no information. One sees a number of quite old people apparently in sound health. Owing to its remoteness from all the amenities of civilisation, Sesfontein is not likely to find its population augmented by immigrants from outside and therefore must maintain its population by local births. It would seem that the number of Hottentots has declined since they first settled here, but the community as a whole is more likely to be on the increase, albeit slowly. Despite the heat, which can be very great, Sesfontein is not an unhealthy spot for a people with the right physique.

223 Sesfontein is not exempt from the diseases also found in the rest of the Kaokoveld. At official visits, which take place at intervals, sundry everyday medicines are supplied free to those who come and ask for them.

38 Sources

224 The foregoing was obtained in November 1947 and September 1948 from the voormanne and others at Sesfontein, from some official reports, and from Mr. J.B. Wessels. The published material about Sesfontein is meagre, but see the bibliography of the Kaokoveld which now follows.



Sesfontein huts and gardens.

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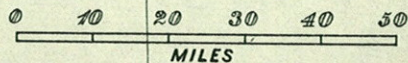
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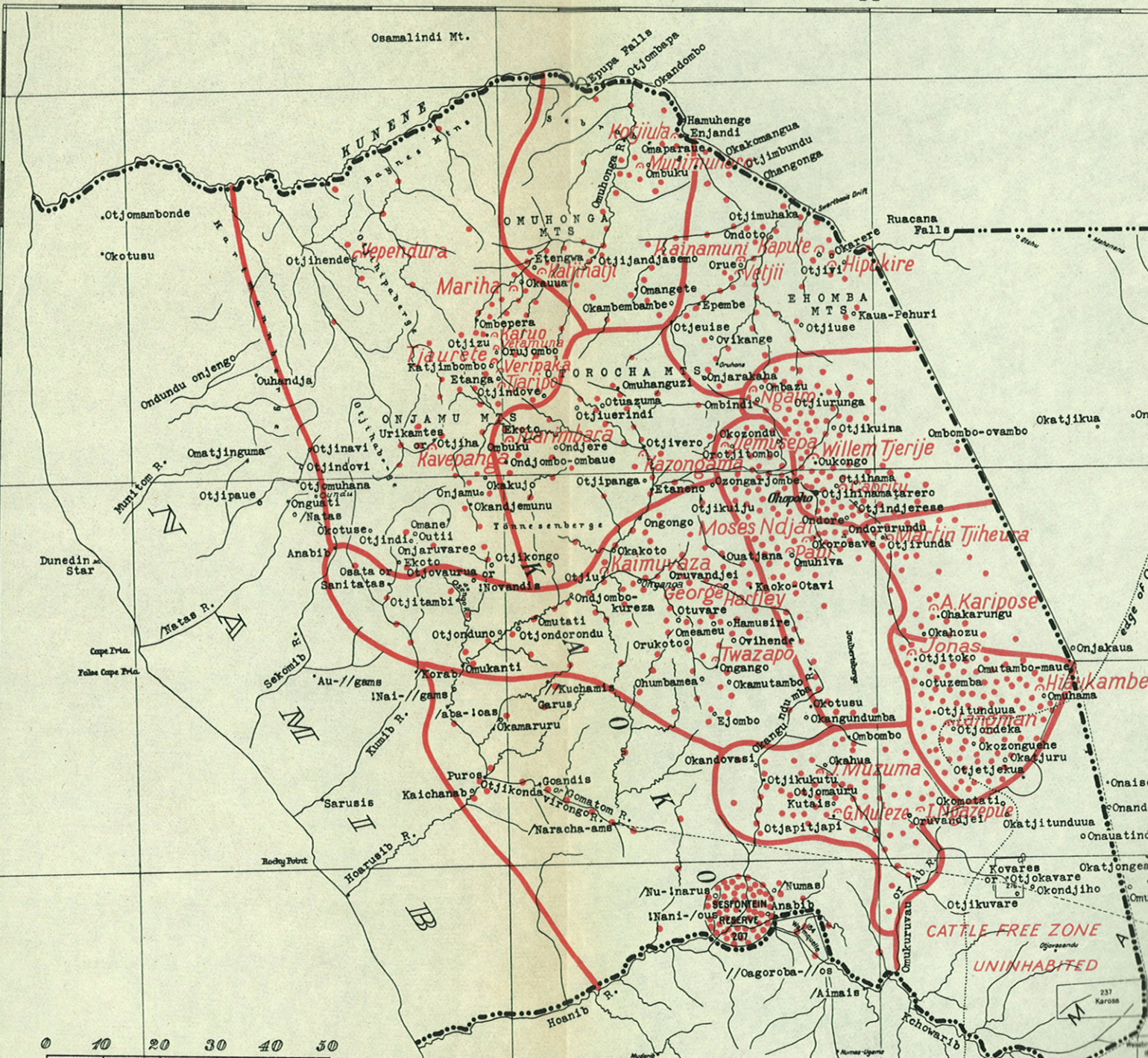
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