

Introduction

The women who wrote these stories reveal a world more isolated than any we can know. A world where communication was by hand-carried letter, there were no guidebooks and few people to give advice. In addition, supplies and their transport needed military-type planning to ensure there was enough food, camping equipment and trading goods for the entire party, which included guides and porters. Disease and death closely stalked these travellers, and all the women saw fatalities. Two had direct contact with slavery and the misery that trade created.

In a few chapters, word usage has been simplified and some religious exhortations have been removed, but great care has been taken to ensure the spirit of the writing remains. For the experiences of Eliza Bradley, Annie Hore and Helen Caddick are raw and reveal a world with little cultural diversity. But it is, I think, their practical problems that engage us. How many of us would put up with rats running over our hair, cockroaches in our beds and cooks who clean dishes with spit?

The bravery of these women cannot be denied.

Yvonne Barlow, Editor

To Lake Tanganyika In A Bath Chair

By

Annie Hore

Editor's note:

Annie Hore had a three-month-old baby when she first set out across Africa with her husband. Captain Hore was with the London Missionary Society and his task was to discover an economic way of transporting Europeans and their goods to the banks of Lake Tanganyika, a journey of 830 miles.

The conventional method of transporting goods in Africa was by using porters, but this was expensive as each porter could only carry 60 pounds. Captain Hore was convinced that wheels were necessary for the mass transportation of goods, and he declared at a public meeting in London that he would use wheels even if it meant taking his wife to Ujiji in a wheelbarrow.

The vehicle Captain Hore shipped to Africa was a Carter wicker bath chair with broad double wheels, and poles that could be used to lift it through difficult terrain. The Hore family travelled on a series of paths that led between villages. For many years these paths had been the route of the slave trade. Annie Hore commenced the trip to Lake Tanganyika just 11 years after Henry Stanley took almost the same route in his search for Dr. David Livingstone. The two men met at the Hores' destination, Ujiji.

Chapter 1

Many interesting books have been written of travel in central Africa, and it is by no means my intention, nor is it in my power to compete with them, but I have been urged to give my views of scenes and adventures.

In 1877 my husband was appointed Scientific Officer of a large expedition bound to Lake Tanganyika to establish a mission station that would include schools and industries necessary for the maintenance of a European settlement there.

After surveying the shores of the lake in a large canoe fitted with European sails, he returned to England full of plans for transport and work.

The London Missionary Society accepted the plans for the settlement of their missionaries around the 1000 miles of coastline surrounding the lake, and they fitted out a still larger expedition. They commissioned the erection of a small sailing vessel with auxiliary steam that could be carried to Lake Tanganyika in sections. This was the special invention of my husband. Lastly, to my great joy, the Missionary Society granted permission that I could also go.

The subject of African transport is a knotty question. The expedition of 1877 had worked hard for nearly a year trying to introduce the use of South African bullock-wagon for transporting goods to the region; but there were fatal attacks of the tsetse flies upon the oxen. Recourse was then to the old Central African method of carriage by porters, which although expensive is well adapted to the country. However each

porter can carry only around 60 pounds in goods.

Captain Hore was convinced that wheels were necessary and he declared at a public meeting, "If he could succeed in getting no other vehicle he would at least take his wife to Ujiji in a wheelbarrow".