



Zimbabwe Rhodesia's Colourful Place Names

THE tracing of place names in a country in Africa can be both fascinating and frustrating. One must know — or quickly learn — something about history, about geography and the origins of words and their meanings — in different dialects and even different languages. As the names fall into place, so one learns much that is new and revealing; facts which go far beyond textbook knowledge of those early people who came from all sorts of strange places to settle themselves in different parts of Zimbabwe Rhodesia.

From the meaning of the African names alone it is possible to see the country with new eyes. The place names hint at fresh and different descriptions. A range of hills, which when you fly over it looks almost small, was seen by the huntsman on foot as a barrier, a girdle encircling the waist of the whole country.

A river, which is no more than a stream flowing between grassy banks today, was once known as the place of the buffalo, because so many of these animals came down to the shallows to find water.

Hills, especially, had quaint names: *Makunguvu*, the hill where crows roost at night; *Gokomere*, a kopje with natural fortifications like a shell which could keep out the sound of battle; *Doma*, a place whose name it was forbidden to mention, perhaps because of the hidden, impolite meaning; and finally, a hill so high that the VaDumha people called it *Denga* — Heaven.

The names can also tell you where people came from: Enkeldoorn, an Afrikaans word; Penhalonga, from the Portuguese; English and Gaelic names, some of them nostalgic reminders of a home country, or a place well loved.

Sometimes the reasons for these names has been lost down the years. Who was Colleen Bawn? Was she a person, or was this the longing of a young man for his Irish colleen, whoever she might be? Read through the list. You may find the answers, or they may remain a mystery, waiting to be discovered through patient research or by a lucky chance.

You will learn from these names a little of the hopes, the fears and the difficulties of a people who came from all over Africa and the four corners of the world to settle and live together within the borders of Zimbabwe Rhodesia.

ALASKA. Copper mine, near Sinoia probably called after the rich goldfields which had been discovered about the same time in Alaska, North America.

AMANDAS. After a notorious old witch, Nyanda, who lived on a kopje beyond Mazoe, near Concession. She incited her people to take part in the Mashonaland Rebellion, was captured, tried and found guilty of murder and instigating others to commit barbarous crimes and was hanged in Salisbury Gaol in 1898.

AMANZA TUNQAYO. SiNdebele name for the Victoria Falls: it means "the water which rises".

AYRSHIRE. Takes its name from the old Ayrshire Mine. Once a source of plentiful gold, the reef faded out and was lost.



The broad, gracious streets of Bulawayo convey nothing of the violent origin of the city's name.

BEATRICE. A farming centre, named after Beatrice Borrow, sister of an officer in the Pioneer Corps. Beatrice Mine was pegged by another officer, Robert Beal, on October 6, 1890.

BEITBRIDGE. The border town on the Limpopo River, named after the Alfred Beit Bridge here which crosses the river, carrying road and rail traffic to and from South Africa. Sir Alfred Beit was a friend of Cecil Rhodes and a benefactor of the country.

BELINGWE. A corruption of the verb *berenga* — "to count". With the intrusion of the Matabele into the area, the letter "r" was exchanged for an "l" and the name became *Belingwe*.

BEZA RANGE. The word *beza* implies "sitting quietly".

BINDURA. Probably an anglicised version of the Shona phrase *pandura mhaka* meaning "turn the game". The word *bindura* also means "a bitch in season".

BINGA. The name has two meanings — "the enclosure surrounding a chief's village", or "thick forest country", both of which could apply.

BIKITA. Corrupted from *dikita*, named from a hill shaped like an antbear.

BIRCHENOUGH BRIDGE. After Sir Henry Birchrough, who is buried within the structure of the bridge.

BOPOMA. "Waterfall" — the name is idiosyncratic, and means the "roaring of waters".

BROMLEY. Originally Broomley, after a flower house on Tullishevan Estates on the banks of Loch Lomond.

BUBI. The name means "ugliness".

BUFFALO BEND. A well-known prominent bend on the Nuanetsi river in

the Gonarezhou National Park near the field headquarters and Rest Camp.

BUFFALO RANGE. The principal airport for Chiredzi and the South/East lowveld, named after the property on which it is situated.

BUHERA. The district of the *Vahera* tribe.

BUHWA (also Buchwa). This hill at 1 627, metres is one of the largest and highest in the Belingwe district and noted for its deposits of iron ore.

BULAWAYO. Originally *kuBulawayo*, meaning, in SiNdebele, "the place of killing", the name given by Lobengula, the last of the Matabele chiefs, to his first settlement. His reason for choosing such a name was that on his accession to the chieftainship, three regiments of the army refused to accept him. A battle took place, won by the Lobengula faction, after which he is believed to have said, "I have been killed by my people. I shall call my kraal *kuBulawayo*".

BUMI HILLS. The word in Chizezuru means "wild dog".

BULALIMA-MANGWE. A combination of *bulilima* — "the country in which the Balilima people live" and *mangwe* referring to the yellow-wood trees.

CASHEL. After Lt.-Col. R. Cashel, a former member of the British South Africa Police and the Rhodesian Volunteers, who retired to this area after World War I.

CHAMABONDA DRIVE. Meaning "where you have clapped your hands together in respect" (from *bonda* — "to clap the hands in greeting").

CHETE. A safari area on the shores of Lake



The soaring 304-metre span of the Birchenough Bridge, across the Sabi River.

BALLA BALLA. From the SiNdebele word *ibhalabhalabala*, meaning "kudu".

BANKET. The geological formation of gold-bearing rock on the Johannesburg reef was called a "banket". Early prospectors in Zimbabwe Rhodesia thought they had discovered a second similar reef, and hopefully christened the place Banket.

BASUTO BAY. A bay on Lake Kyle named after the Basuto people who came to Zimbabwe Rhodesia with the pioneers and lived there before moving to Gulu. The remains of their dwellings and the cemetery may still be seen.

BATTLEFIELDS. This name was given, not on account of any fighting which took place there, but because many of the mining claims and reefs were named after famous battles, e.g., Trafalgar, Tel-el-Kebr.



The massive Chimanimani Mountains on Zimbabwe Rhodesia's eastern border with Mocimabique.

Kariba: the word in Shona means "only", but in this case it is more than probable that the original word was *cheru*, an onomatopoeic word implying cutting across sharply or suddenly. This would apply where the river cuts through a deep gorge.

CHIBL Derived from the name of the local chief, Chivi. The word *chivi* means "dirt" or "sin", and was given to the original chief by the Rozwi Mambo, the senior chief of the Rozwi tribe, because of a crime committed by the first Chivi.

CHILIMANZI. At one time named *chirimuanzu* meaning "it is in the garment", because the first chief Chirimuanzu was the owner of a splendid garment made of dassie or rock rabbit skins.

CHIMANIMANI MOUNTAINS. The original name may have been *chimuenjemenje*, *muenje* being the word for a "light" or "torch". At certain times of the day these mountains look as if they are covered with fragments of light as the sun makes them sparkle. Alternate meaning: "a narrow defile".

CHIREDI. This means "a place for line fishing".

CHIRINDA FOREST. The "place of watching". It is said that the local people used to hide in the forest from raiders, and kept a watch from the trees (*-rinda* — "to watch").

CHIRUNDU. Means "people following one another in a line or queue", probably referring to the crossing of the Zambezi River by bridge at Chirundu.

CHIPINDA POOLS. The word *-pinda* means "enter" or "excel".

CHIPINGA. "A buttress", or "block" — the alternative meaning being "a forest pool".

Within Chirinda Forest is the country's tallest tree, a red mahogany 60 metres high.



CHISUMBANJE. Originally may have been *chjumbanjene* — "a place well known for marijuana (dagga) smoking"; alternative spelling *chisumbanjene* — "one who offers dagga".

CHIZARIRA. A national park near Lake Kariba. The word *zarira* means "to close" or "to be angry".

CHONGWE. Written by both Thomas Baines and Livingstone as *Shungwe*, the ancient name of the Victoria Falls, meaning "rainbow".

CHRISTMAS PASS. The well-known pass met before entering Umali on the road from Salisbury on whose summit stands the statue of Kingsley Fairbridge. Name believed to have been given by original road surveyors who camped at the summit on

ROBERTSON. The country's newest large water impoundment, supplementing and below Lake Mcllwaine on the Hunyani River in the Salisbury area.

DARWIN, MOUNT. Named by the hunter and explorer Frederick Courtney Selous after the British naturalist Darwin, author of "The Origin of Species".

DAWSON'S. After a trader who opened a store and trading station at Lobengula's kraal, before the Pioneer Column came to Rhodesia.

DEKA. In the Shona language the word can mean either "a flat depression" (which seems likely, as the banks are low lying there), or can suggest "a quick exit". Alternative meaning — "to scoop up water". At Deka the currents flow across



The brilliantly coloured altar at Cyrene Mission.

Christmas Day. The original name was *Chirumba Muenje* meaning — "forbidden to walk alone".

COLLEEN BAWN. Limestone claims registered by John Daly on March 28, 1895. Research has failed to disclose whether Colleen Bawn was an actual person or not, but the words *colleen bawn* in the Gaelic mean "white girl", and it is reasonable to suppose that a young man on his own in such rough country might be thinking about a colleen bawn.

CONCESSION. The more commonly used name for Amandas, derived from Moore's Concession. Cecil Rhodes granted a mining concession anywhere in Mashonaland to an American prospector, Henry Clay Moore, if he in turn would withdraw his claim to a similar concession in Matabeleland which had been granted him by Lobengula. Moore pegged his claims in the Mazoe Valley.

CYRENE. A well-known mission near Bulawayo, famous for its art works, frescoes, wood carvings, etc., which were inspired by the late Canon Edward Patterson.

DANDANDA. "Drum", made out of a hollow log, the name of a settlement.

DARWENDALE DAM or LAKE

one another where the Deka river joins the Zambezi.

DETT. The proper Shona spelling for this name should be *dete*, referring either to a "narrow place", or to "a clump of trees", most probably to the former.

DHLO DHLO RUINS. Either *uDhloDhlo* — "a person belonging to the Mpagazitha clan", or the name of a regiment, but in the *SiNdebele* language *indhloDhlo* means "head-ring", which was only worn by men who had earned it, similar to the old knightly custom of earning one's spurs.

DIANA'S POOLS. After Diana, wife of J. P. Richardson, one of the country's first district commissioners.

DOCTORS GIFT. Name of a road, leading to a farm, which was given to the original owner by Dr. Jameson.

DOMA Shona word for "name" or "list of names", it also means "a name not to be spoken about" and has an impolite meaning.

DOMBADA. *Dombo* — "a rock" and *dema* — "black".

DOMBOSHAWA. A hill near Salisbury with well-preserved Bushmen paintings and huge rocks covered in red and yellow lichen; *dombo* — "rock" and *shawa* — "red".

DOROWA. When the Matabele invaded the village, they forced the local women to

make beer, which unknown to them was poisoned. *Dorona* — "the beer of death".

DUTCHMAN'S POOL. Before the dam was built, the Sebake River contained a large sand bank and pool where people of Que Que used to picnic and camp. A photograph which appeared in the press earned the pool its name.

ENKELDOORN. The district was first settled by Afrikaans-speaking people from South Africa and the town's name was that of a farm near Humansdorp, in the Cape, from which Hendrik Ferreira, one of the early settlers, came. *Enkeldoorn* means in Afrikaans "single thorn" and the name may have been adopted because of the scarcity of thorn trees in the area. Today, the citizens of Enkeldoorn display a sense of humour, claiming that their town is the Republic of Enkeldoorn and demanding that visitors to the local pub acquire a visa. They also sell a "republican" tie, the design of which is a branch of the thorn tree.

EMPANDENI. A well-known mission station in Matabeleland, the name *empandeni* meaning "at the roots".

EIFEL FLATS. Named after a gold reef originally pegged by Dr. Leander Starr Jameson in December, 1890, and also named by him.

EWANRIGG. A national botanical garden, given to the nation by H. B. Christian, the first owner. It was called *Ewan* after Mr. Christian's elder brother who was killed in the First World War, and *rigg* is the Welsh word for a ridge or small hill.

FEATHERSTONE. After the name of a farm originally owned by the Tarr brothers, well known in the area.

FIGTREE. Named after a large figtree on the direct road from the Mangwe Pass to Bulawayo. Here, pre-pioneers had to outspan until Lobengula's permission to

proceed to his capital had been obtained. There is an old saying that wherever you find a figtree there you find an ancient gold working. This is because the Ancients would mark the place of their gold mines by planting a single fig tree.

FILABUSI. Derived from the SiNdebele *eMfelabuso* — *mpela* meaning "to make" or "death" and *buso* — meaning "face". A man was struck in the face by an arrow, and the correct word, *eMfelabuso* therefore means "death in the face", Filabus being a corruption of the original word.

FORT GIBBS. After Captain J. A. C. Gibbs, an Imperial officer in the West Riding Regiment, who was brought out by Rhodes as adjutant of the Rhodesia Horse in 1894. He was in charge of the Gwelo laager during the Matabele Rebellion in 1896 and built the fort which bears his name.

FORT INGWEYA. *Ingweya* is SiNdebele for "crocodile".

FORT RIXON. Built during the 1896 Rebellion, this small village took the name of Theodore Rixon, the owner of the farm on which it was built.

One of the two remaining towers of Fort Victoria's original fort.



FORT VICTORIA. Named after Queen Victoria, this is the oldest township in Zimbabwe Rhodesia. It was settled by the Pioneer Column in 1890 and was the second of four forts built at the time, the others being Fort Tuli, Fort Salisbury and Fort Charter.

FOTHERGILL ISLAND. Named after the late Rupert Fothergill of 'Operation Noah' fame.

GADZEMA. In Chizeturu dialect *kudzema* — "to put out fire" or "to dazzle". The old Africans call it *Gwadzema* — "a place that shines".

GAIREZI. Suggested spelling *kairuzi* meaning "a small swiftly flowing river".

GARAMAPUDZI. *Gara* — meaning "to live" or "stay", and *mapudzi* — "a type of gourd or pumpkin", thus, "live among the pumpkins".

GATOOMA. After a hill near Golden Valley called Kaduma — a corruption of the SiNdebele, meaning "it does not thunder or make a noise".

GLENCLOVA. A settlement which takes its name from a nearby farm.

GOKOMERE. *Goko* — meaning "outer shell", and *mere* meaning "noise" or "disturbance". The hill was strongly fortified both by its natural geography and its caves, providing a stronghold against invaders.

GOKWE. May be Tonga, meaning "a bee hive" or from *goko* — "outer shell".

GONAREZHOU. The name of a national park, the words are, appropriately, "the horn (tusk) of the elephant".

GOROMONZI. Alternative spellings are either Goromanzi or Goromondzi. Since none of these are easily translated, it may be either *koromondzi* — "tumble over" or "slide" (this could refer to the water tumbling over rocks into a pool) or it could be *goromondzi*, *gora* meaning "stay", "stop" or "live", and *mondzi* meaning "one". In the days of travel by Zeederberg's coaches, this was the last stop before Salisbury, and obviously, the first stage away.

GUMBORIMWE. Derived from *gumba* meaning "leg" and *rimwe* meaning "one", the name of this river suggests that it was full of crocodiles and there was danger of losing a limb to the reptiles.

GUTU. After the local chief, in its complete form *guta rimiseve*, meaning "sheath full of arrows". It is also the name of a certain species of caterpillar with spiky hairs sticking out of its back like arrows.

GUVALALA. Famous waterhole in the Wankie National Park. If derived from the SiNdebele, it should be spelt *hubulala* — meaning "there is killing". If, however, it was named by the first tribe in the area, the Ndzanza, who are basically Shona speaking, the name may have been *gusuvu* referring to the "sloughing off of skin", mispronounced over the years to *gusuvu* and eventually *guvalala*. The first game guards were Bushmen and Matabele, and they use the letter "I" to replace "r". The sloughing of skin may refer to the fact that certain species of snakes slough skins near water; or it may refer allegorically to the fact that people who washed at a waterhole in a dusty area would emerge clean, having, like the reptiles, sloughed off an outer covering.

GWAALI. The name is not, as sometimes suggested, a reference to the wild tobacco paid by the local tribes as tithe to the marauding Matabele, but comes from the Sesutu word *uwayi* meaning "where".

GWANDA. Derived from the name of the local chief. A couple of miles out of the town is a hill named Jahunda's Hill. In Karanga dialect *jaunda* means "water melon".

GWELE. The name suggests that it comes from the Shona language, meaning "hairless", as a skin blanket or kaross would become when old and worn out. It refers to the sparse vegetation.

GWELO. When the Matabele settled in the district, the women found it difficult to

Aloes in bloom at Ewanrigg Botanical Garden, near Salisbury.





Trout fishing among the mountain peaks of the Inyanga National Park.

draw water from the river because of the steep banks. It became known as *tKwelo* — "the steep place".

GWENORO DAM. In the Selukwe district and named after the farm of Mr I. D. Smith, the spelling being accepted. Strictly speaking the word should be spelt *Gwenhoro* — meaning "place of many antelope".

HAMPDEN, MOUNT. The original destination of the Pioneer Column in 1890. Named by Frederick Courtney Selous, the hunter, in 1880 "after that good Englishman, John Hampden, who struggled so manfully for, and eventually gave his life in defence of, the liberties of his countrymen...". In his contract with Rhodes, Frank Johnson undertook "to build a fort on Mount Hampden or other suitable place in its vicinity". The Pioneer Column settled some 19 km to the south, in what is now Salisbury.

HARARI. African township, after the African name for Salisbury's Kopje. One theory is that it was named after Chief Neharawa, who lived there, another that it was called after the Havata tribe. However, there is a legend which claims that a famous witch doctor lived there in days gone by, and that he never slept. When ordinary mortals passed the hill, they would say "Ha-a-rare", — "He does not sleep".

HARTLEY. After Henry Hartley, famous hunter, the first man to discover gold in the district. Hartley township was settled in 1891, but the original site was abandoned and moved 25 km to the west.

HEANY. After Captain Maurice Heany, an officer in the Pioneer Corps.

HUNYANI ROAD. An early road which led from Bechuanaland, through Inyati to the Hunyani.

HUNYANI RIVER. The word was originally *manyani* — "an edible root".

INSIZA. Derived from the SiNdebele verb *ukanza*, referring to the fact that water is greatly appreciated in this area.

INYANGA. Either "the place of the witchdoctor", or "it is the horn".

INYANGANI MOUNTAIN. Means "the horn of the cattle". The highest point in the country at 2 591,8 metres.

INYANGOMBE FALLS. Probably a more exact spelling of Inyangani. A popular beauty spot on the Inyangombe River, in the Claremont Estate bordering the Rhodes Inyanga National Park.

INYATI. Means "buffalo" in SiNdebele. A large mission station, one of the first in the Bubi district in Matabeleland, it was named after the Enyatini royal kraal where one of Mzilikazi's queens, Loziba, lived. *Enyatini* means "the place of the buffalo".

INYAZURA. Correct spelling should be *nyazure* or *nyazure*, meaning "the place for looking around cautiously".

KABANGA. A bombing range built during World War II, and still in use today. The name was given to it by the pilots who used it, and derives from the *fonikalo* word *habanga* meaning "may be", but implying "unlikely".

KAMATIVI. The word *mativi* means "sides", "embankments" or "valleys", and the prefix "ka" though not grammatically correct, is a diminutive — therefore "little valleys".

KANDAHAR ISLAND. One of the islands above the Victoria Falls, named after Lord Roberts of Kandahar, on the occasion of his visit to the Falls in 1905.

KARIBA. A corruption of *karisa*, meaning in Shona "a little trap". The Zambezi River narrows at the Kariba Gorge and the old people say that at one time there were two huge boulders on either side of the gorge which created a bridge. *Rrwa* can also mean "bridge" or "lintel".

KAROL. Contraction of the Shona word *kamurayi* — "little witch". At one time witches were given a form of trial by ordeal by immersion in the local river.

KAZUNGULA. Probably means "to rotate", the waters of the Zambezi move slowly at this point with cross currents. The Shona word *kuungula* means "to rotate".

KEZI. Probably a shortened form of *mukkeni* — "maize plants which have not yet tasselled".

KHAMI. Originally *khame* in Sesutu meaning "very slow", or almost not moving". The river, after which the Khami Ruins are named, is very sluggish.

KUMALO. Bulawayo suburb. Originally spelt *khumalo*, the honorific name for Lobengula, and his family name.

KYLE, LAKE. Thought to have been named after the Kyle district in Scotland, from which pioneer of the Lowveld, Tom Murray MacDougall, came originally.



Flood waters pour over the dam wall at Lake Kyle.

LALAPANZI. Transport riders in the early days often had difficulty getting their oxen through a vlel in the region, as the animals sank to their bellies in the thick mud and it looked as if they were lying down — hence *lala* — "to lie" and *panzi* — "down".

LUBIMBI. Thought to have been originally *rubimbi* — "a long portion which has been cut off something".

LUNDI. Derived from the word *-runda* — "to be high or steep" referring to the flow of a full river. The Lundi River often flows bank high and has been known to block road travel.

LUTOPE. The original Shona word for this river was *lutope*, meaning "a long stretch of mud". This describes the river well for it appears to be no more than a stretch of mud with reeds growing out of it.

LWIZILUKULU. A river, previously the Ruziruhura, which rises on the plateau of the Chuzara National Park, flows through spectacular gorges to the Siabuwa Tribal Trust Land and the Chete Safari Area, where it enters Lake Kariba in an area well known for crocodiles.



The building of the Kariba Dam has created a 5 000-square-kilometre lake, which is one of the country's most popular tourist areas.



Cecil Rhodes's grave, on the summit of one of the granite hills of the Matopos.

MABIKWA. Means "you have been cooked", implying a feast.

MACHEKE. There are two possible derivations for this name: that it was originally *Nyacheke* — "the place of the division", referring to some long-forgotten division of land; and that it comes from the Shona word *macheke* — "gardens".

MCLWANE, LAKE. Called after Judge McIlwaine, who was founder of the Water Court in Rhodesia, this lake is edged on the south by a game park.

MADZIMUDZANGARA. A complex of ruins near Mtoko, it means either "pool", or "mountain spirit" or "mirage", possibly a combination of all three together.

MAFUNGABUSI. Meaning "seat of the rain". The name of a plateau and forest area in the Gokwe district.

MAKORI RANGE. Probably derives from the Shona word for "clouds" — *makore*. The word also means "years".

MAKUTI. Means "wet mist" or "a persistent drizzle".

MAKWIRO. Corruption of the Shona word *makwira* meaning "you have climbed". A certain Chief Zwimba, on first coming to the country from the Zambezi Valley, developed a limp and was slow in climbing the hill known now as Makwiro. On arrival he was greeted with the words *makwira* — "you have climbed".

MAJENJERE HILLS. The word refers to "a variety of fish", the plural being *majenjere*, the singular *jenjere*.

MANA POOLS. A group of pools, an extension of the Zambezi River, lying east of Chirundu, the word *mana* meaning "four". The surrounding area has been turned into a game reserve.

MANGULA. Kalanga for "copper". The Shona word is nearly the same, *mangura* — "base metal".

MANGWE. A river and settlement — *mangwe* being the name in SiNdebele of the yellow wood trees which grow nearby.

MANGWENDE. The district takes its

name from the chief — *ngwenda* meaning "to tremble".

MANGWINDI GORGE. On the Millikwe River below the wall of Lake Kyle, is alleged to contain hippo pools. *Mangwindi* — "hippo" (Karanga).

MANJERENJE DAM or LAKE MACDOUGALL. On the Chiredzi River in the Ndonga district. *Manjerenje* hill — "natural stone walls set in such a way they cannot be trod on".

MANZAMYAMA. SiNdebele for "black waters", the river being full of deep dark pools.

MARANDELLAS. An Anglicisation of the name of the man who was once local headman in the area — *Marondera*, derived from the Shona meaning "to follow".

MARKWE. It is thought that this name was originally corrupted from *mayewe* meaning "rocks".

MARULA. The name is taken from the marula trees in the vicinity, which bear fruit similar to plums.

MASHABA. The African name for this town was at one time *maru mashaba* — "the red soils", but today only the name Mashaba remains in an Anglicised form. A second explanation is that the word *mashaba* is of Venda origin also meaning "red".

MASHONALAND. Comprising roughly half of Zimbabwe Rhodesia, this name probably comes from the Zulu phrase *ashona langa*, meaning "the setting sun", but the phrase later became distorted. The verb *shona* in Chizuru dialect means "to speak contemptuously".

MATABELERLAND. Part of Zimbabwe Rhodesia, originally under the control of the Matabele chiefs.

MATEKE. The main hill of a range of the same name in the south of the Nuanetsi district, called after the first Shangan from Mocambique who settled there. A notorious area for poaching.

MATETSI. It is possible that the original spelling of this word was *madedza*, meaning "a slippery place".

MATOPOS. either derived from the SiNdebele word *matobo*, meaning "bald heads", or *matombo*, meaning "rocks".

MATSHUHLHOPE. (more correctly *Amatshuhlhope*) SiNdebele name meaning "white stones" — the name for a small river which runs through the centre of Bulawayo, describing the whitish stony hills at the source of the stream.

MATUSDADONA. (more correctly *Matwadiadonha*) National Park. Literally means "the dung has fallen". The word in Chizuru is a combination of the verb *tura* meaning "to push ahead", and/or "deep in front", and the word *dona*, an onomatopoeic word implies "stretching towards something".

MAYURADONA MOUNTAINS (more correctly *Mashuradonha*), meaning "where the rain falls".

MAZOE. A corruption of the word *manzou*, or *nyanzou*, meaning the "place of the elephants".

MCHEKA WAKASUNGABETA. Means "the girdle which holds the country together".

MCHINGWE. A river in the Bulawayo area along the banks of which grow a large number of palms called *mchingwe*.

MELSETTER. After Melsetter on Long Hope Sound, Isle of Hoy, Orkney, the original settlement having been founded by the brothers Thomas and Dunbar Moodie, who named it after their family home in the Orkneys.

MIAMI. From the river Mwami, flowing in the vicinity. *Mwami*, in the Makorekore dialect, means "warhog".

MKWASENI. The correct spelling for this river is *mukwasini*, but it could also be *mukwasini*, meaning "the one which gathers spear grass".

MOSI-OA-TUNYA. "the smoke that thunders", the name given to the Victoria Falls by the Makololo and Batonga people living in the vicinity.

MREWA. Originally *murehwa* meaning "the one spoken of".

MSONNEDDI. A large plain in the Umvukwes district. The elders of the tribe believe the word to have been *muswotedede* — "the tail of the baboon", this being a description of the plain, which twists and winds across the countryside.

MSUNA RIVER MOUTH. Probably a corruption of the word *masunda*, or of the word *masundirindi*, the first meaning "a backward motion", and the second meaning "waves", or "ripples".

MTOKO. After the local Chief of the area — Chief Mtoko. *Mutoko* means "bambarra nut".

MTILIKWE. A river which rises in the Gutu district and is very swift flowing. As it passes over the rocky course there are waves which are described by the people in the district as being like "a shimmering mirage" — called *inkwe inkwe*. Through usage the name has changed.

MTOROSHANGA. From the Shona word *mtoroshanga* — "you have fetched the old maize stalks". Alternative spelling, *mtoroshangu* — "you have fetched the shoes".

MUPATA GORGE. *Mupata* means "a pass or defile".

MURRAY MACDOUGALL DRIVE. After Thomas Murray McDougall, the original owner of the Triangle Sugar Estates and a pioneer in the development and irrigation of the Lowveld.

MUSHANDIKE. Meaning "one who shifts around". Named after the winding river which flows into the dam in Mushandike Sanctuary.

MUSIKAVANHU. Means "the one who creates people". It is an alternative word for the Shona god, Mwari.

MUTAMBARA. Takes its name from the chief and his tribe. *Mutambara* means "you spread out".

MUTANDAPFUSI. Derived from *fusi* a "tiny fish", and meaning "the place where you net fish".

MUTARAHUNGWE. Means "river of fish eagles".

MUTARAZI FALLS. Meaning "the sound of falling water". The highest waterfalls in the country, leaping from the tip of the Inyanga escarpment into the Honde Valley.

MUTASA. The name means "straight" in the physical sense.

MUTEMWA. The name of the highest mountain in the Mtoko area, meaning "you have been cut", or "the one who is cut".

NANTWICH. A camp in the Wankie National Park, after the farm of this name that forms part of the park.

NALETALE RUINS. Originally spelt *nyaletele*, meaning "that which has been bought".

NDANGA. From the local chief, Ndanga. Either a shortened form of the word *ndatanga* — "I began", or *ndanga ndiri pano* — "I was here (first)". Recalls an ancient quarrel between the first Chief Gura and his elder brother, then called Mtshuni, but later Ndanga.

NGEZI. The Shona word for the English language is *chiNgezi*.

NGOMAHURA. Ngoma — "drum", *hura* — "big".

NORTON. After Joseph Norton, who, with his wife and child and three European employees, were murdered at the outbreak of the Mashona Rebellion in 1896.

NTABAZINDUNA. more correctly *Intabazinduna*. A flat-topped hill near Bulawayo, the name meaning "the hill of the chieftains", in SiNdebele.

NUANETSI. Originally *nyanetsi* — "place of weariness or affliction".

NYAHOKWE RUINS. The word was probably spelt *nyanhokwe*, meaning "the place of reed grass".

NYABIRA. "The place where a river is forded"; alternative meaning — "the place of feasting", from *bira* — "feast".

NYAMAPANDA. Either "the place where roofing poles are found", or "the place that divides", or "the place of Chief Mapanda". A Customs post on the north-eastern border with Mozambique.

NYAMANDHLOVU. Correct spelling in SiNdebele: *nyamayendhlovu* — "the flesh of the elephant". It is said that when Mzilikazi, breakaway Zulu chief, came north, he arrived at a pan shaped like the head of an elephant, and named the surrounding country *Nyamayendhlovu*.

NYUNI. Derived, perhaps, from the SiNdebele word *nyoni* meaning "bird".

ODZI. Derived from ChiManyika dialect, *odza* — meaning "cause to rot". The Odzi River is subject to flash floods and a number of rotting carcasses are brought down by the flood water.

PANDAMATENGA. Name of a road and township on the north-west border with Botswana. After the name of Westbeech's old trading station. The words come from the Munhanzwa tribe; they mean "to invite trade", *panda* being "to seek" or "look for", and *matenga* "you have bought".

PENHALONGA. Named after a Portuguese aristocrat, Count Penhalonga, who, with Baron Rezende, formed a mining

company. *Pena* means "rocky mountain", and *longa* "long or tall", in Portuguese.

PHLENDARA. Meaning "the matter is finished" in SiNdebele. A village in the Tjolotojo Tribal Trust Land, also suburb in Bulawayo.

PLUMTREE. The marula trees in the neighbourhood reminded the early settlers of plum trees, bearing a similar fruit.

POKOTEKE. Meaning "a place to draw water".

PUNGWE RIVER AND FALLS. Rising beneath Mount Inyangani the river cuts through Inyanganga downland, and leaps into the spectacular Pungwe gorge, from whence it flows through Mozambique and into the Indian Ocean at Beira.

QUE QUE. Either Shona onomatopoeic word for the sound made by frogs, written *kwe-kwe* and anglicised to Que Que, or from the SiNdebele, meaning "a crowd". The nearby river is named Kwe Kwe.

REDCLIFF. The site of the country's steel works and most rapidly growing town.

RUPISE. A group of hot springs — the name means "a thin, hot place".

RUSAPE. In the VaHlungwe dialect "the place of sandy soil", or "a storage hut for grain".

RUTENGA. A long cave with a high rocky roof.

RUWA. In Chizezuru, "inhabited country", or "a district".

SABI. Corrupted from *shave* or *shavi*, meaning either "an alien spirit", or the "fruit of the Rhodesian fig tree".

SALISBURY. After Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, Third Marquess of Salisbury, Prime Minister of Britain in 1890.

SANYATI. Meaning "the place of many buffaloes". The name given to the large river flowing north through Mashonaland and entering Lake Kariba through the impressive gorge of the same name.

SEBAKWE. Originally either *chiseke* — "that which is built up", referring to a barrier built during the Rebellion, or *chibake* — "a maize plant".

SELINDA, MOUNT. The original word is *chinda* — "please keep watch". It was in the forests that the local tribesmen used to hide and keep a look out against invasion.

SELOUS. After the early hunter and explorer, Frederick Courteney Selous.

SELUKWE. Outside the town is a bare oval granite kopie, in the same shape as the pig pens that the BaVenda people used to build. The Venda word for "pig pen" is *chirugwe*, varied by the Matabele to Selukwe.

SHABANI. Correct spelling should be *sharani*, meaning either "finger miller", or "trading together", in which case it would be spelt *sharona*.

SHAMVA. Was originally Abercorn, but altered to avoid confusion with a district in what was then Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia. The present name, derived from Shona — "to become friendly" or, perhaps, from *shambani*, a species of fig.

SHANGANI. Corruption of the Kalanga word *hankano* — "a junction". It was changed by the Matabele to Shangani, and was at one time applied only to the junction of the Gwaai and Shangani rivers. Alternative: *sanganana* — "to meet together".

SHASHANI. Should be spelt *shashani*, meaning in SiNdebele "a basket of grass".

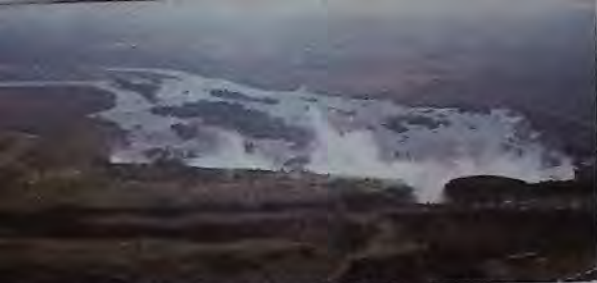
SHASHI. There are two names, one spelt *Shashi*, the other *Shasha*. Correct spelling is *shayashi*, meaning "death of a chief", or "lacking a chief".

SINAMATELLA. This farm was originally registered by a Greek surveyor. It appears to be an African name. The tribe in the Wankie area are basically Shona speaking (the Nharwa) so that this word would have been spelt *sinamati* — "without slopes". It was mispronounced by the Bushman and Matabele game guards who first worked in the Wankie National Park.

SINOIA. After the local chief *Chino*, who used to hide in a large cave complex now known as the Sinoia Caves to avoid attack by Matabele raiders.

Visitors may view game from a platform at Nyamandhlovu Pan in Wankie National Park.





The rising clouds of spray at the Victoria Falls are aptly described in the local African name for the cataract – Most oa Tunya, “the smoke that thunders”.

SIPOLILLO. A corruption of the name of the local chief, Chipolillo, originally *chipuriro* — “the place where the threshing of grain is done”.

SOMABULA. Probably *shamaburo*, referring to a renowned elephant hunter of this name, *shama* — “wonder at” and *buro* — “the sharp stake used in a game pit”; alternatively, *buru*, corruption of the English word *bull*.

SOMAVUNDHLA PAN. Meaning “the place of hares”, in the Wankie National Park.

TEGWANI. A missionary station and big secondary school for Africans, the name means “hammerkop”.

THOMBORUTEDZA. A river and spectacular waterfall in the Rhodes Inyananga National Park — from *dumbo* — “rock” and *tedza* — “be slippery” — A slippery rock.

TJOLOTJO. At Tjolotjo is a pan shaped in the form of an elephant's head, as seen by Mzilikazi. The local people told the Zulu raiders that their name for the pan was *ishololenhova* — “the head of the elephant”.

TOKWE. The original spelling is *turi* implying “wandering”.

TRIANGLE. The sugar estates were so called because Tom McDougall had great difficulty in acquiring his first cane cuttings, and was only able to obtain three small pieces which were then planted in the lie of a triangle.

TSETSE ISLAND. An island off Gachepache at Lake Kariba which was infested with tsetse fly during the animal recovery of ‘Operation Noah’.

TULL. An African name meaning “grey” or “ghostly”, *aNthuli* — “dust”.

UMVUMA. Originally spelt *mvumi*, meaning “thunder cloud”, or “thick blanket”.

UMZINGWANE. “A river with small beginnings.” One of the largest rivers in the south-west of the country, rising near Fort Usher in the Matopos and flowing into the Limpopo near Beitbridge. Notorious for sudden heavy floods in its southern reaches.

UMNIATI. Spelling corrupted from *manyati* meaning “many buffalo in the area”.

UMSWESWE. Derived from the onomatopoeic word *sweswe* — “the sound of dragging feet”. This refers to the slow movement of the river.

UMTALI. A corruption of the ChiManyika word *mutari* meaning “metal”, and probably referring to the finding of gold in the ancient workings near Penhalonga.

UMVUKWES. Originally spelt *murusi*, meaning “a heap of pieces”.

VAJECH. *Jecha* is the word for sand.

VAN NIEKERK RUINS. After Major Pompey Van Niekerk, a distinguished soldier who was second in command of the Afrikaaner Corps and fought during the Matabele Rebellion.

VICTORIA FALLS. Named by David Livingstone after Queen Victoria. Livingstone was the first white man to see the Falls — on November 16, 1855.

VILA SALAZAR. The Zimbabwe Rhodesia railway station on the Mocabane border, facing Malvern on the Maputo railway line.

VUMBA. The Vumba Mountains, in the African dialect, are the “mountains of mist”.

VUTI. *Vuta* means “blow” and the word is derived from it to mean “bellows” or “place where there is constant wind”.

WANKIE. Is a corruption of the name of Chief Wangi, *Wangi* meaning “it is this one”.

WATSOMBA. *Tsomba* — “a species of fish”; the original spelling was *kwatsomba* — “where there are *tsomba* fish”.

WEDZA. Of Shona origin, contracted from the word *kuserehWedza* — “always tomorrow”. There are a number of high mountains in the district and the name *wedza* is given to the area because the other side of the mountains will only be reached “the day after tomorrow”.

WEST NICHOLSON. After Andy Nicholson, an early prospector who entered Zimbabwe Rhodesia as a civilian attached to the Pioneer Column and was responsible for mining exploration in this area.

WHITE'S RUN. White was a trooper, who, with two others, was placed on mounted picket duty at the Bembezi, where the force under Major Forbes that was about to attack Bulawayo was laagered on November 1, 1893. One trooper went in to get his dinner. The other two, White and Thompson, dismounted and were sitting under a bush when the Matabele surprised them. Thompson, failing to catch his horse was stabbed. White mounted but fell off and then ran on beside his horse into the camp, falling down from exhaustion as he reached it. White's Run is the name of the farm where the incident took place. A small landing ground on the farm was used during World War II, and was also known as White's Run.

ZAKA. The site of the District Commissioner's office in Ndanga district, the name means “district which is very low lying”, and is derived from the word *kwakazaka* — “where it is going down”.

ZAMBEZI. Originally *zambazi*, the SiNdebele word being *egwembem* — “the place of boats”.

ZAWI. There are two places of this name near one another, a village and a hill, the correct spelling being *zawe* and refers to the name of the headman in the area.

ZIMBABWE. Originally *dzimbadze-mabwe* — “great houses of stone” — an apt name for the Zimbabwe Ruins.

The Conical Tower, within the Great Enclosure at the Zimbabwe Ruins.

