

# Mapping the “Eastern Frontier”: American Explorers around the African Waters during 1870s

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Following the end of the US Civil War (1861–1865), Egyptian Khedivate recruited American veterans (both the ex-Union and ex-Confederate), some of whom served as skillful cartographers in the modernized army units. Embodying post-war “American reconciliation” in the service of a foreign power, they contributed to the regional modernization. However, their accomplishments were well beyond these: They “discovered”, mapped and named the North/Central East African territories with its lakes and rivers as well as deserts. American-led expeditions and cartographic surveys into Sudan, Tanzania, Somalia and Red Sea coasts contributed much to introduce the old continent to the West scientifically, as well as reflecting another “frontier” fantasy as seen in the publications of *Khedival Geography Society* or personal accounts.

Among the most accomplished explorers/cartographers in the American mercenary group were Charles Chaille-Long and Samuel H. Lockett. General Long, who were given the highest Egyptian rank (*pasha*) for his accomplishments in the service of the *khedive*, discovered Lake Kyoga between the lakes Victoria and Albert which are all connected by the White Nile. His further missions included the exploration of Jubba River which flows from Somalia-Ethiopia border to the south, as well as the McKillop expedition to the Indian Ocean coast. *His Central Africa: Naked Truths of Naked People* recounts the adventures among the local tribes and terrain features. General Lockett, who completed the first accurate topographic map of Louisiana before the US Civil War, surveyed Eritrea between Mesewa and the Ethiopian Plateau. His greatest contribution to the geographical knowledge, however, is the “Great Map of Africa” which perfectly reflects the extent of geographical knowledge of Africa in the end of 1870s.

With brief references to other terrestrial and nautical missions of American community in Africa, this paper mainly focuses on Long and Lockett’s contribution to the exploration of North/Central Eastern African waters. Problematizing how the “encounters” with local landscapes shaped or reshaped the period’s geographical knowledge, it also presents the introduction of the “Eastern frontier” of Egypt in a historical/cultural context.

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