

BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA COMPANY

MASHONALAND POSTS 1890 – 1893

Frederick Courtney Selous, hunter, author and explorer, was responsible for guiding the **Pioneer Column** into Mashonaland in 1890. He chose an easterly route from **Tuli** on the border with **Bechuanaland** to avoid **Lobengula's** warlike **Matabele**. After 150 miles he led the column northwards up what became known as **Providential Pass** onto the highveld where **(Fort) Victoria** was established. Fort Salisbury was reached a further 180 miles north where the Union Jack was raised on 13th September 1890 signifying the occupation of Mashonaland in the name of **Queen Victoria**. The route became known as the **Selous Road**. Early posts and supplies were carried by horse and rider or latterly horse and cart on this route. The attached cover posted at Victoria on 8th January 1893, backstamped Tuli 16th January 1893 proves transport down the Selous Road. The stamp is SG 2 6d ultramarine (rare on cover) the correct overseas postage rate. The stamp is cancelled by a faint diamond "F" for Victoria. It is believed that the letter is from Stewart's Store, Victoria, to Andrew Stewart on a farm near Glasgow backstamped Glasgow 20th February 1893.



It is likely that Stewart Store in Victoria is the initial trading store set up by the Meikles brothers, Thomas, John (Jack) and Stewart, who came to Mashonaland in May 1891 with 8 ox wagons laden with resalable goods, groceries and liquor. Stewart was responsible for the Victoria store. The brothers went on to establish the conglomerate Thomas Meikles and Sons Ltd with mines, hotels, stores, ranches, farms and estates. The link to the addressee of this letter has yet to be established.