

Victoria Falls

Introduction

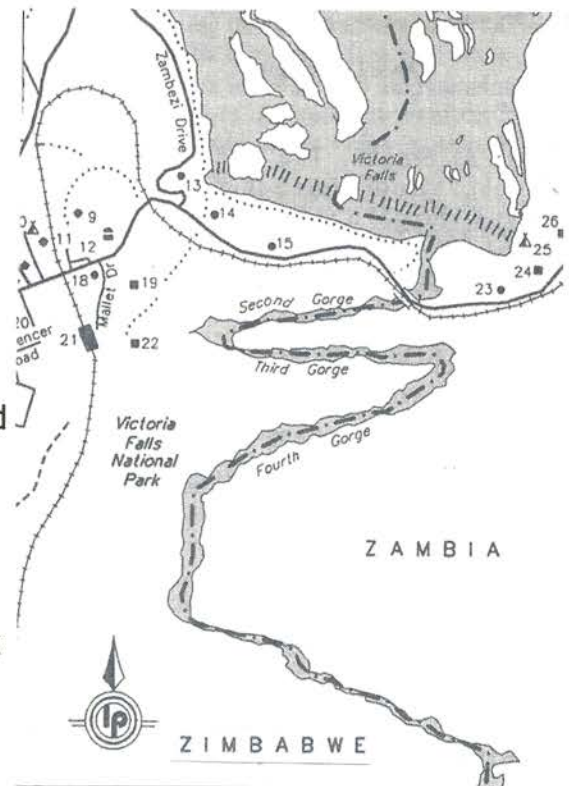
"Victoria Falls" is situated on the Zambezi in the NW corner of Zimbabwe on its border with Zambia. Its combined width (1,708m) and height (108m) produces the world's biggest sheet of falling water. Upstream, the Zambezi flows over a level sheet of basalt in a shallow valley. The falls are formed as the full width of the river plummets in a single vertical drop into a transverse chasm, called the "First Gorge".

There are two islands on the crest of the falls which divide the curtain of water even at full flood: Boaruka Island (or Cataract Island) near the western bank and Livingstone Island near the middle. At less than full flood, additional islets divide the curtain of water into separate parallel streams, named from West to East: Devil's Cataract, Main Falls, Rainbow Falls and the Eastern Cataract.

Formation

The Zambezi River originally drained south through present day Botswana to the Limpopo. However, an uplift of the land between Zimbabwe and the Kalahari about 2 million years ago blocked this route and a large lake formed with no outlet. About 20,000 years ago, this overflowed and began to drain eastwards cutting through fractures in the basalt layer.

The outlet to the "First Gorge" is a 110m wide gap about two-thirds of the way across from the western end, followed by a zigzagging series of five more gorges. Water entering the "Second Gorge" makes a sharp right turn into a deep pool there called the "Boiling Pot", which at high water is marked by enormous, slow swirls and heavy boiling turbulence. The falls may have already started cutting back the next major gorge at the western end where it is lowest carries the greatest concentration of water in flood.



Naming

Archaeological sites around the falls show that the area has been occupied at least since the early Stone Age. Various tribes have called the falls "Shungu na mutitima", "aManz' aThunqayo" and "Mosi-o-Tunya" all of which translate essentially as "the smoke that thunders".

The first European to see the falls was David Livingstone on 17th November 1855 who named them in honour of the Queen and wrote that, "No one can imagine the beauty of the view from anything witnessed in England. It had never been seen before by European eyes; but scenes so lovely must have been gazed upon by angels in their flight."

Since its discovery, Victoria Falls has featured on many stamps, particularly those of Zimbabwe, Zambia and their fore-bears.

Victoria Falls



British South Africa Company 1905 (13 July)
Visit of British Association & Opening of Victoria Falls Bridge



Southern Rhodesia 1931 (1 April)-'37
George V "Marshall" Definitive Issue



Southern Rhodesia 1932 (1 May)
Victoria Falls

Southern Rhodesia 1935-41
Victoria Falls (POSTAGE AND REVENUE)



Southern Rhodesia 1935 (6 May), George V Silver Jubilee

Victoria Falls



Southern Rhodesia 1937 (12 May), George VI Coronation



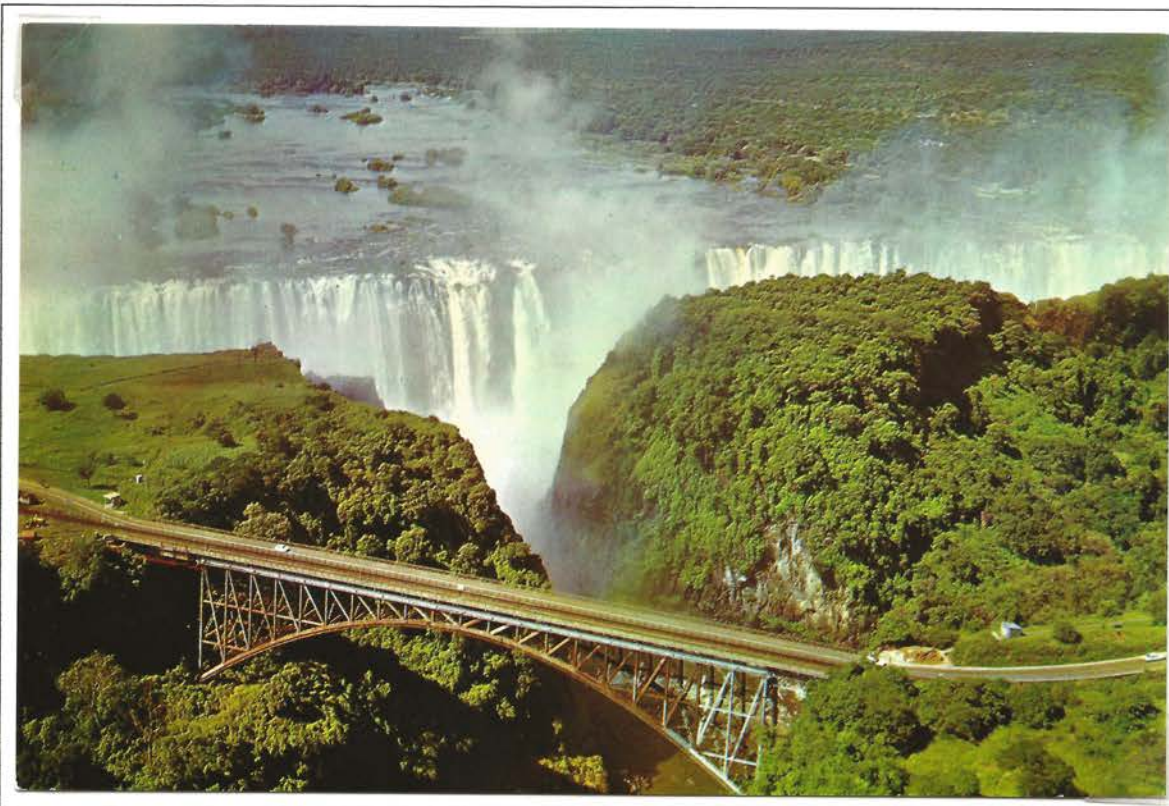
Victoria Falls



Victoria Falls Railway Bridge (Unused Postcard)



Southern Rhodesia 1940
(3 June)
BSAC Golden Jubilee



Victoria Falls Railway Bridge and Armchair (Unused Postcard)



Southern Rhodesia 1953
(31 August)
First Definitive Issue

Victoria Falls



Rhodesia & Nyasaland 1955 (June 15), Centenary of Discovery of Victoria Falls



Proofs

"Wing Flaw" on Lefthand Stamp

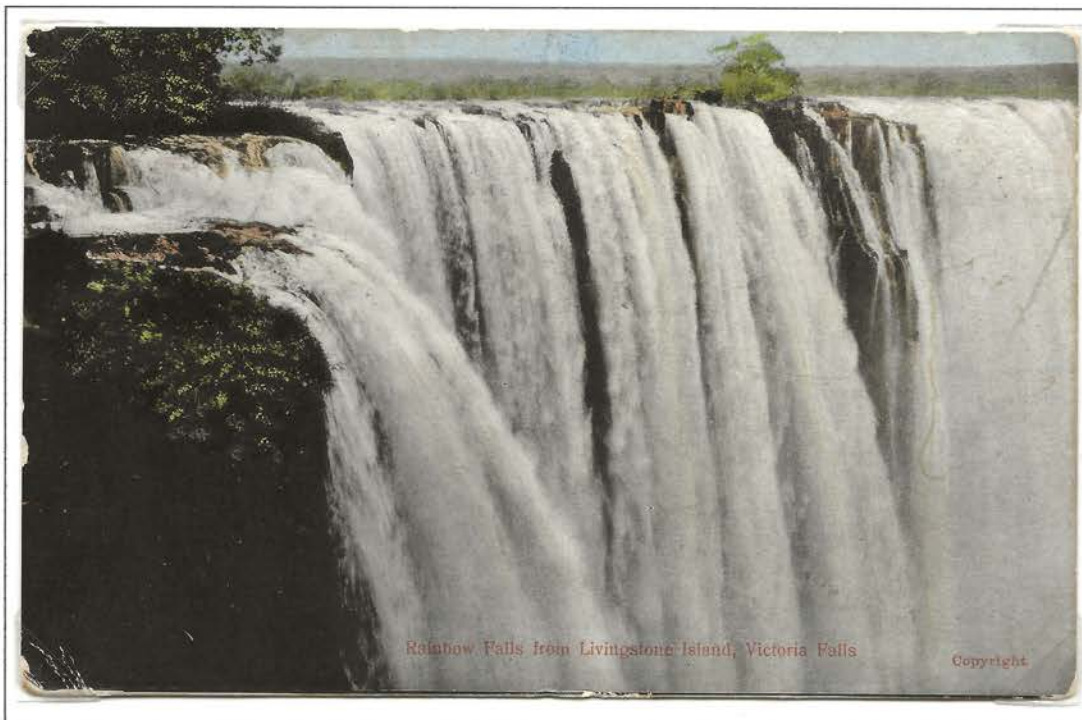
Victoria Falls



Victoria Falls – The Rainbow Falls (Unused Postcard)



Rhodesia &
Nyasaland
1959 (12
August)-'59
Second
Definitive
Issue

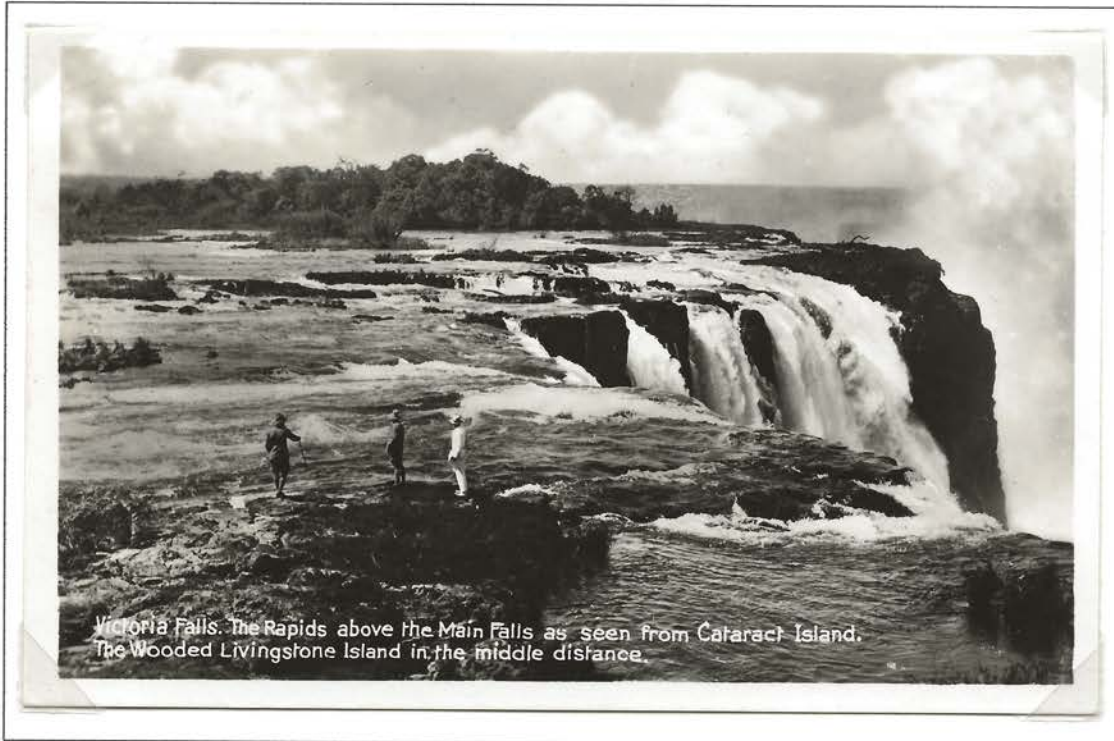


Victoria Falls – The Rainbow Falls (Posted to London 14 July 1914)



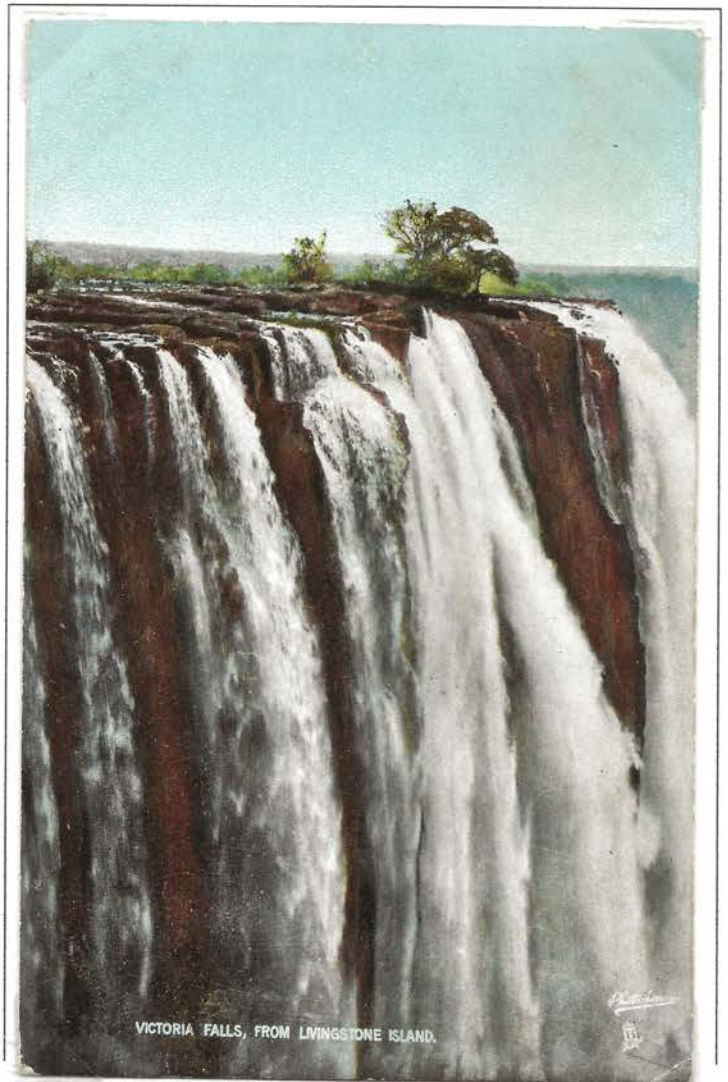
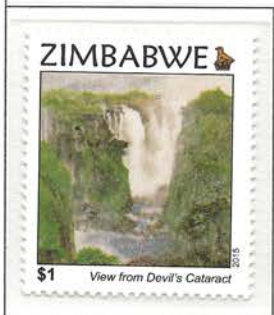
Rhodesia 1970
(17 Feb.)-'73
Decimal
Currency
Definitive Issue

Victoria Falls



RHODESIA 1978
and ZIMBABWE
1980 (16 August)
Definitive Issues

Victoria Falls – The Rapids above the Main Falls as seen from Cataract Island with wooded Livingstone Island in the distance (Unused Postcard)



Victoria Falls

The Victoria Falls has also appeared on stamps issued in Northern Rhodesia/Zambia on the other side of the falls, as illustrated below.



Northern Rhodesia 1953 (30 May), Birth Centenary of Cecil Rhodes

