

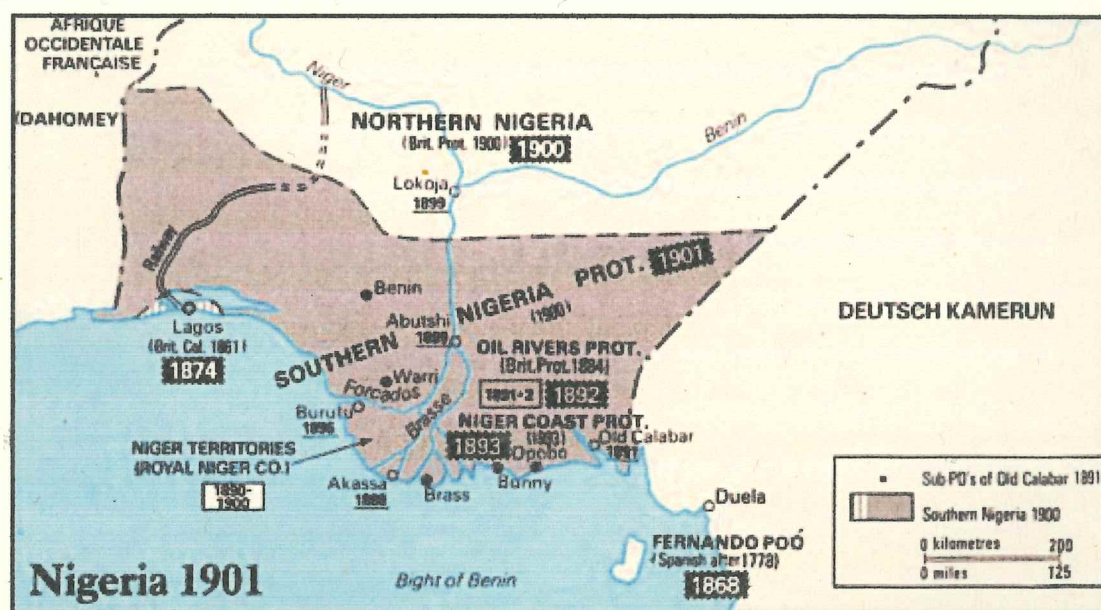
## Great Britain used abroad in the Royal Niger Company Territories

The Royal Niger Company was granted a charter in 1886 to administer territories along the rivers Niger and Benin over which a British protectorate had been proclaimed a year earlier. The Company's territories extended to the Niger delta to provide access to the interior.

In 1888 a special arrangement was made with the British GPO whereby mail franked with the company's hand stamps would be delivered at normal rates for mail from West Africa (instead of the standard double charge). This proved difficult to administer, so in 1888 the British Government agreed to supply British adhesive stamps to Company post offices, with cancellation by Company hand stamps at:

- Akassa (from 1888)
- Burutu (opened in 1896) on the coastal delta,
- Lokoja (opened in June 1899) at the confluence of the Niger and Benin Rivers
- Abutshi (opened in October 1899) on the Niger River.

On 1 January 1900 the territories were transferred to the British Government. There are examples in this display of mail from all four offices



Map showing the Royal Niger Company territories and Oil Rivers post offices. (Rossiter and Flower)

### Abutshi

Abutshi is on the east bank of the River Niger. At Abutshi, the customs and postal services were combined in one office and no special Post Office hand stamp was ordered, possibly because the Royal Niger Company's existence was about to come to an end. The date stamp used was inscribed "Customs Office", and is always found in violet. The office was in operation for only three months from October to December 1899, and the hand stamps are very rare.



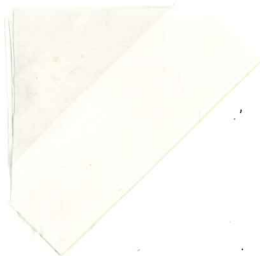
Stanley Gibbons Z2 -14<sup>th</sup> November 1899

#### Sources

Stanley Gibbons (published annually) *Commonwealth and British Empire Stamps 1840-1970* Stanley Gibbons, London and Ringwood  
Lowe, R 1<sup>st</sup> ed (1949) *The Encyclopaedia of British Postal Stamps VOLUME II The Empire in Africa* Robson Lowe, London  
Rossiter, S and Flower J (1986) *The Stamp Atlas* Macdonald, London

**1900 cover from Forcados River (Southern Nigeria) to GB with GB 1d lilac stamps**

1900 (Mar 9) cover posted from Forcados River to England franked by two G.B 1d lilacs: the "FORCADOS RIVER" c.d.s placed alongside the stamps, which were cancelled in transit at Plymouth (Mar 31) with Plymouth 620 obliterator and backstamped at Forcados River and Birmingham.



Forcados River was in Southern Nigeria and the GB 1d lilac was not valid. Niger Coast Protectorate stamps would be expected if there was a shortage of Southern Nigeria stamps.

The stamps were not cancelled at Forcados River, so were cancelled at Plymouth in transit.

One other 1900 cover from Forcados River with GB stamps is known; cancelled Forcados River on 20 April 1900, also with two GB 1d stamps. It was sold at the Colonel J R Danson 1971 Robson Lowe auction, fetching £85, now (2019) £1700.

**Pair of GB 1d lilac, cancelled at Bonny River (Niger Coast Protectorate Apr 16 1894**



## Royal Niger Company

### Royal Niger Company cancels on stamps of other countries

Royal Niger Company cancels were intended to be used on the stamps of Great Britain, but the territories of the Royal Niger Company and Niger Coast Protectorate overlap and the cancels can also be found on Niger Coast stamps. They are also more rarely found on the stamps of Lagos, Sierra Leone and Spain.

#### LAGOS



**Akassa** cancel (SG Type 4, Sacher Type 6)  
On Lagos 2d dull mauve and blue (1887)  
and GB ½d Vermilion.

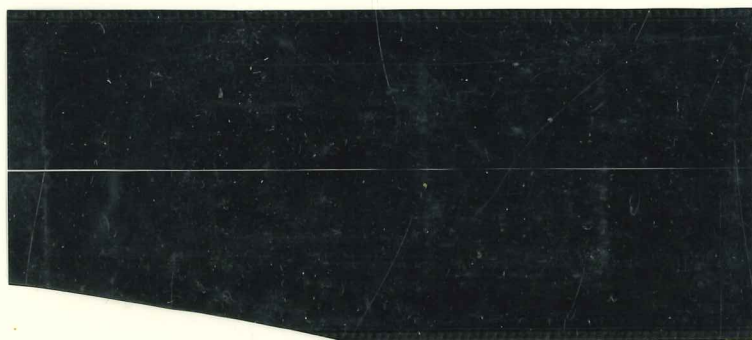
#### SIERRA LEONE



**Burutu** cancel (SG Type 6, Sacher Type 8)  
On Sierra Leone 2½d 1896 strip of 3

### NIGER COAST PROTECTORATE

#### Akassa cancels



#### Burutu cancels



## Royal Niger Company

### Akassa – stamps of Niger Coast

The Royal Niger Company set up a postal service in the Niger delta in 1886. At first there were no stamps available, the Company's office stamp being used and the British Post Office agreed not to charge the double postage for unpaid mail. However, surcharging did take place and in 1889 the Company decided to buy and issue current British stamps for use on external mail. There are also some stamps of other countries cancelled with the Akassa handstamp. The *John Sacher* Collection West Africa Auction had a cover with an 1894 2½d Niger Coast cancelled with a Sacher Type 9A. SG type 5 Akassa handstamp and the "Wilkin" collection had two Spanish stamps on a small piece cancelled by a Sacher Type 6. SG type 4 Akassa handstamp. Nicholson states that the Sacher Type 9A. SG type 5 Akassa handstamp is also known on the stamps of Sierra Leone.



### Akassa Sacher Type 9A. SG type 5 Akassa handstamp



#### Sources

Stanley Gibbons (published annually) *Commonwealth and British Empire Stamps 1840-1970* Stanley Gibbons, London and Ringwood  
Nicholson, MP (1981) *The Stamps and Postal History of the Niger Territories and the Niger Coast Protectorate* Cockrill Series  
Booklets no 29 Todd Nether Stowey, Somerset  
The "Wilkin" Collection of West Africa Postal History Auction Catalogue 8th December 2010 Spink London  
West Africa post-UPU Postal History The John Sacher Collection Auction Catalogue 12<sup>th</sup> November 2009 Spink, London



Niger Coast stamps  
with violet rectangular  
cancel - Akassa type 4  
or Bunttu.



Akassa type 4

THE NIGER TERRITORIES  
(The Royal Niger Company)

STAMPS OF THE NIGER COAST PROTECTORATE USED IN  
THE TERRITORIES

Since the area of the Niger Coast Protectorate embraced a large part of the Niger Territories, it is not surprising that examples exist of the Protectorate's stamps being used on mail posted through the Territories system especially in view of the difficulty in obtaining the G.B. stamps which were only on sale at the Company's main stations.



AKASSA  
Type 4  
Handstamp  
Niger Coast  
SG 54  
- AUG 1897

BURUTU  
Type 4 145  
Niger Coast  
SG 69  
- 17R 1898



BURUTU  
Type 4 145  
Niger Coast  
SG 52  
5 Feb 1899



BURUTU  
3 AUG 1898  
Type 7  
(Very rare)

## Niger Coast

### Brass River

1892-94



12.5.1893  
SR 20mm VIOLET



27.1.1894



22.2.1893

1894 (JANUARY) P15



9.9.1895  
SR 21mm 'A' SLUG

1894 (MAY) P14



5.5.1906

1894 (MAY) P14



29.10.1900

1894 (MAY) P14



10.1.1896  
SR 21mm

1897-98 P14

1897-98 P15



21.4.1899

1897-98 P14



24.5.1902

1897-98 P15



10.12.1898

1901-02 P14



6.8.1902  
SR 21mm

### Burutu

1897-98 P15



1897-98 P14.5x15



1897-98 P15

1897-98 P14x13.5



1907-11 P14



31.10.1911  
REGISTERED OVAL

1912 P14



3.3.1914