

# Norway to Zanzibar as the Lark Flies: The Norway Connection<sup>(1)</sup>

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‘The busy lark, messenger of day’

(G. Chaucer, *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*)

This is the story of almost fifty sailing ships calling at the harbour of Zanzibar and her sister ports of Mombasa, Dar-es-Salaam and Tanga in the last years of the 19th century and the early years of the 20th. However, this is not a story about dhows, mtepes, baggalahs, and other lateen rigged vessels. The ships presented here were less exotic from a Northern European point of view, as they were barques, schooners and simple ships of no particular type, simply referred to as ‘iron ships’ or ‘steel ships.’ However, from the point of view of the Zanzibar harbour authorities, they were soon exotic enough, as they continued to arrive well into the years otherwise known as the ‘steam era’, when British, German, French, Belgian and Portuguese steamers had become regular sights in the port. They were Norwegian ships, travelling around the Cape of Good Hope and arriving probably somewhat the worse for wear after journeys of up to five months. Their cargo, if not exotic, was certainly useful; planks, timber and other building material to be utilised in the building of the new colonies of Kenya and Tanganyika as well as the Protectorate of Zanzibar. Their story is but a minor part of both Norwegian and Zanzibari economic history, but it is one which further demonstrates the manner in which European colonialism in Africa opened up new markets also for smaller and non-colonial European nations.

## **The Early Years of Norway East Africa Trading Company (NEAT), 1894-ca. 1914<sup>(2)</sup>**

It is worth starting this account with the first voyager, the ship *Lärkan* (‘The Lark’ in Swedish). She was a schooner built in Gothenburg, Sweden by master builder F. Bergstrom some time in the 1870. Her weight was registered at 228 Registered Tonns. The history of this particular ship would not have been significant from the Zanzibari point of view, if she had continued her trade in Swedish – and perhaps Baltic waters, as was the mainstay of Swedish shipping. However, in 1888, *Larkan* was sold to a joint venture company in the city of Halden (then known as Fredrikshald), in the extreme south east of Norway. At that time, Norway and Sweden were still a union – headed by the King of Sweden but with two separate bureaucracies constantly quarrelling over who should have the right to do what. Among the issues most disputed was the right to have separate consuls, i.e. to seek and develop separate trade and diplomatic contacts throughout the world, including the ever expanding colonial world of Africa.

The company that bought Lärkan was led by Mr. Wilhelm Klein. He was an immigrant to Norway, having arrived from Germany in 1877. In 1883, he was appointed ‘bureau chief’ for the firm Saugbrugsforeningen in Halden.<sup>(3)</sup> This was a union of forest- and saw-mill owners who together made up one of Norway’s largest producers of timber and wood at the time. From the docks in Halden, timber and cut wood was exported to England, France, Belgium, the Netherlands on a regular basis. Ships were also sailing to Russia and the Baltic countries to buy extra wood for further processing. By 1890, Lärkan was plying the route to and from St. Petersburg and the ports around the Baltic Sea, steadily bringing in timber for the sawmills at the Saugbrugsforening. She would probably have continued this trade for years, had a telegram not arrived from Zanzibar in 1894, indicating that substantial profits could be made by the right person who would be willing to risk exporting wood and planks to the new British possessions in East Africa. This telegram reached Mr. Klein, and the fate of Larken and its skipper was to change. It was also to start a new wave of sailing ships from Norway to East Africa lasting well into the 20th century.

In order to trace the origin of the fateful telegram, we must move to Zanzibar. On the 3rd of April 1894, a gentleman by the name of Jens J. Bull Anderssen stepped ashore from the German steamer S.S. Safari. At that time, the colonial newspaper *The Zanzibar Gazette* did not have all too much local news to report, and consequently every single European passenger who arrived in the Protectorate was certain to get his name in the paper. Some also got their title in print, or a brief account of their reason for coming to Zanzibar. About Mr. Anderssen, however, only the name is given, and nothing more.

Still, there is no doubt that Mr. Anderssen came to Zanzibar as a man on a mission. He had recently left another mission – the Norwegian Lutheran Mission in Madagascar, where he had been commissioned to build a school. Mr. Anderssen was an engineer, educated in England where he, amongst others, had studied the new field of telephones. Anderssen’s commitment to the missionary call seems to have been somewhat limited. After completing the school, he spent his time installing telephones in the royal palace in Antananarivo (Madagascar), before securing a position as ‘trade agent’ for the Norwegian state. As mentioned above, the Norwegian-Swedish union was becoming an increasingly uneasy one, and the Norwegian government responded to Swedish restrictions on foreign trade policy by appointing a corps of agents paid to seek out new trade opportunities for the expanding Norwegian merchant fleet.

Mr. Anderssen did not waste much time in Zanzibar. Less than a year after his arrival, a wooden ‘chalet’ arrived in parts from Norway and was set up at Chwaka on the east coast of Zanzibar – the site chosen by the British colonial administrators A. Hardinge and L. Matthews as the most suitable for a holiday retreat, the ‘Brighthon of Zanzibar’ as the *Zanzibar Gazette* called it.<sup>(4)</sup> The building came to be known as the ‘Norwegian Bungalow’, and served until 1964 as a holiday retreat for employees of the colonial administration – originally open to Europeans only, but from 1940 also to non-Europeans.

In addition, Mr. Anderssen must have observed the need for building material in the Zanzibar Protectorate, including timber and wood for new institutions like a court house, various administrative buildings and housing for colonial officers. Moreover, he must have watched closely the British plans to build a railway in the then East African Colony & Protectorate (Kenya). All in all, his conclusion must have been that Norwegian plank would find a ready market in East Africa, and this was what he transmitted to Mr. Klein at the

## The First Shipload of Norwegian Plank to Zanzibar

Mr. Klein cannot have been a man adverse to taking risks. Upon receiving Anderssen's telegram, he contacted the captain of *Lärkan*, which was then lying in Russia awaiting cargo for Halden. The captain's name was Oscar Christian Olsen, a native of Halden and the son of another sea-captain who had perished at sea while Olsen was still a boy. Young Olsen took responsibility for his mother and sisters and went to sea himself at around the age of sixteen. Soon, he reached the rank of captain and he entered the established trading routes between Halden, England, and the Baltic Sea. However, the suggestion from Mr. Klein was something else entirely.

Klein simply suggested that he himself, together with Olsen, finance a shipload of various sized planks and timber to Zanzibar, and that Olsen himself bring *Lärkan* there. It was a daring move, and one of which neither Klein nor Olsen could know the full implications.

By October 1894, the *Lärkan* was lying fully loaded at the docks in Halden. Onboard, under deck and on it, were about 450m<sup>3</sup> of various sizes and quality of plank in addition to four boats intended for sale in Zanzibar. Captain Olsen would later in his life describe this maiden voyage as anything but a graceful lark flight:

We had storm from the North-East, so forceful we were unable to keep water out of the cabins. I myself was tied to the wheel, wet and cold while all the men were struggling to keep the deck load strapped to the ship. After two days, we entered more friendly waters [...] When we reached the Canary Islands, the chronometer malfunctioned, which meant that we could no longer navigate properly. However, we managed as best as we could with the watch of the ship's carpenter.

Due to the lack of proper chronometer, Olsen ran into navigational problems north of Madagascar, but managed to reach the coast. Finally, after more than four months at sea, *Lärkan* could anchor off Zanzibar on March 9th 1895.

In Zanzibar, Olsen was met by Mr. Anderssen, who acted as the cargo's agent. In less than a week, the entire shipload was sold to the Indian-Zanzibari trader Muhammad Juma Thawar. The price was as good as Anderssen had predicted: 82 Rupees per ton. Despite unfavourable rates for Pounds Sterling, and despite the long transport, the pioneering project of Mr. Klein and Captain Olsen resulted in a considerable profit. Captain Olsen wrote that 'an entire army' of 'negroes' was needed to carry all the silver rupees to the bank where they were exchanged for sterling.

It should be noted that *Lärkan* was far from the first Norwegian ship to call at Zanzibar. The Lloyds Ships Register at Zanzibar shows Norwegian ships as far back as the register goes – i.e. until 1890.<sup>(5)</sup> The records show an average of two Norwegian registered ships a year, which indicates that Zanzibar had been a port of call also long before the register was started. This assumption is further underscored by the special place of Zanzibar in Norwegian maritime folklore, throughout the 20th century. In songs and shanties, Zanzibar is imagined as a place from which sailors did not return (presumably because they enjoyed it so much that they forgot their fiancées or girlfriends back home).

'He promised me a ring from Zanzibar.

But Zanzibar, where is that place?'

(A Norwegian love song)

Nor were the ships carrying goods for NEAT the only Norwegian ships calling at Zanzibar. Among those bringing cargo for other companies were also Norwegian ships, especially those carrying Swedish plank from Gothenburg.

### **The Founding of NEAT**

One year later, in the spring of 1896, Olsen returned to Zanzibar. This time he was not tied to the wheel of Lärkan, but travelled comfortably through Suez on board the German steamer Kaizer. The 37-year old captain had become a trader – the Zanzibar agent for the newly started ‘Norway East Africa Trading Company’ (NEAT). The company consisted of Mr. Klein as representative at the Saugbrugsforening and of Mr. Olsen. The two together financed the transport and carried the risk.

Mr. Anderssen, who had set the whole thing in motion, had since tired of his role as Norwegian state agent, and had joined the British colonial service in Kenya where he became Assistant District Commissioner at Kipini and later Lamu. The departure of Anderssen meant that Olsen was the only Norwegian in Zanzibar.<sup>(6)</sup> Upon arrival, he was to establish an office for NEAT, storage facilities and not least a home for himself. During the first weeks, Olsen went to see several houses in Shangani, the district most favoured by Europeans, but none seems to have suited his purposes. Eventually he found an all-in-one solution in the Malindi quarter, next to the Smith & MacKenzie coal storage, slightly north of the Old Dispensary. The building was near, but not directly on the shore, close to the Customs Office and was – according to Olsen’s descriptions – a classic ‘go-down’ with storage area downstairs and office/living quarters upstairs.<sup>(7)</sup> Olsen took no heed of warnings from other Europeans who insisted that Malindi was ‘unhealthy’ and that Shangani would be a better option. Within September 1896, he was well installed in his new home and could express his satisfaction in letters to his partner Klein.

The next step was to learn KiSwahili. In his letters, Olsen repeatedly stressed the necessity of learning the language, as KiSwahili was ‘the language of trade’ and the single common language in a trading community where Arabic, Gujarati, Hindi, English, German, French, Portuguese and Italian were used on a regular basis. In 1902, Olsen gave the following advice to a young Norwegian man who wished to make a life for himself in East Africa: ‘[Swahili] is a very viable language, and even the British have had to learn it. In public offices and among Europeans, English is most commonly used, failing this, with a Greek or an Italian, Swahili is the language of choice.’

After its first year in Zanzibar, NEAT had become a company fully able to compete in East Africa. The books showed a healthy profit, and Olsen had every reason to be optimistic, despite heavy competition from the established German firms in Zanzibar,<sup>(8)</sup> notably Oswald & Co and Hansing & Co who traded in Swedish plank imported from Gothenburg and – not least – the French trader Leon Besson.<sup>(9)</sup>

### **Shipments from Norway to an Expanding Market**

From Olsen’s arrival in 1896, until the outbreak of the First World War, NEAT was operating continuously from its head office in Malindi, Zanzibar. In the same period, a total of 46 sailing ships were sent from Halden, destined for East Africa. In addition, seven cargo-loads were sent by steamer, from 1911 to 1914. Unfortunately, account books, charter parties or shipment papers are not among the papers remaining from NEAT. Thus it is difficult to get

an overview of exactly how much and what type of wood was sent. However, the average shipment seems to have consisted of approximately 300 std (i.e. 1,380 m<sup>3</sup>). This would make a total of 63,480 m<sup>3</sup> of wood during the period 1896-1914, or an average of 3,526m<sup>3</sup> per year.<sup>(10)</sup> The plank was planed and unplaned, pine and spruce in approximately equal amounts. Dimensions could vary significantly, depending on customers' demands, but were mostly long, designed for carrying constructions or ceilings.

NEAT continued to trade throughout the war, but with considerable difficulties. Only two cargo-loads arrived out from Norway, both on the Norwegian-owned 'Scandinavian East Africa Line' (SEAL). Olsen and his crew were forced to sell out from whatever they had in store, and the German coast was cut off for long periods. In 1918, when peace finally came, the company was sold to Norwegian investors, including Mr. Thor Thoresen, the owner of SEAL. Olsen, long since known in his home town as 'Zanizbar-Olsen', returned home a very rich man, but lived only until 1925, when he died at age 68. NEAT continued to operate in East Africa until 1928, but by the end of the World War, the era of the sailing ship were definitely over, even in Norway. From then on, plank and other goods were shipped out from Norway on steamers owned by large-scale corporations who also held commercial interests in other parts of colonial Africa.<sup>(11)</sup>

Joseph Conrad, writing in 1905 and clearly nostalgic for his own period at sea, described the steamer as a 'beating, throbbing' monster with a 'pulsating heart within her iron ribs.' The sailing ship, on the other hand, 'seemed to lead mysteriously a sort of unearthly existence, bordering upon the magic of invisible forces.'<sup>(12)</sup> If they were driven by magic forces, the sails of history that transported Norwegian wood to Zanzibar were also aided by a strict and cost-efficient management, a keen eye for possibilities and by a not insignificant dose of pure stubbornness.

### **The Chartering of Ships**

The system operated by NEAT was simple and straightforward. In Zanzibar, Olsen estimated the need for plank and timber according to information from his (mostly Indian) sub-agents, and according to news about colonial building projects, etc. A message was then sent to Klein who chartered a suitable ship and loaded it with goods from Saugbrugsforeningen. The charter agreement was sent in copy to Olsen by mail steamer, as well as a note upon the ship's departure, and Olsen could expect the load 3-4 months later.

The ships that were used by NEAT were all, without exception until 1911, sailing vessels of about 500-800 Registered Tonns. By the 1890s, Norway had already begun to build a fleet of steam vessels. However, Norway's transition from sail to steam was late compared to other shipping nations, and the reasons for this has been a topic for much scholarly debate. What is certain is that for owners of medium-size sailing vessels in tramp trade there existed little incentive to make the transition to steam, as they made solid profits, within the North Sea zone, in Mediterranean waters and even – like Larken – globally.

In the case of NEAT, which must be considered fairly typical, the ship was chartered without return freight, meaning that the captain of the ship would be responsible for contracting the next charter party – either home or to another destination. Olsen himself, on his initial voyage with Larken, was without return freight. He ended up with a cargo of rum ('taifa' – a coconut based, alcoholic drink) from Mauritius to Dahomey in West Africa.

As mentioned above, owners of small/medium sized ships in tramp trade could make

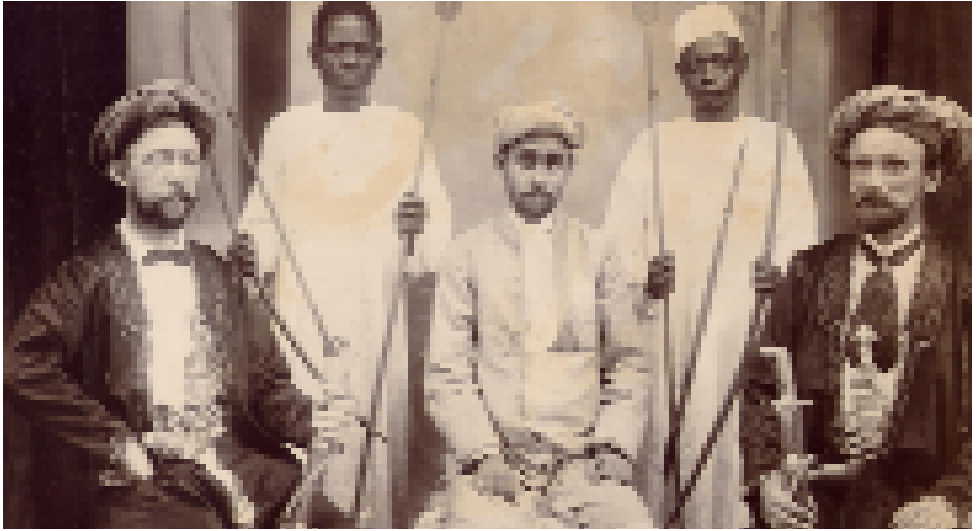


Fig. 1. Anderson and Olson in Omani costume with a local Indian counterpart, and their African employees. (Courtesy: Holm-Olsen family for all photographs except Fig.2)



Fig. 2. The Chwaka chalet. (Courtesy: Zanzibar Archives)

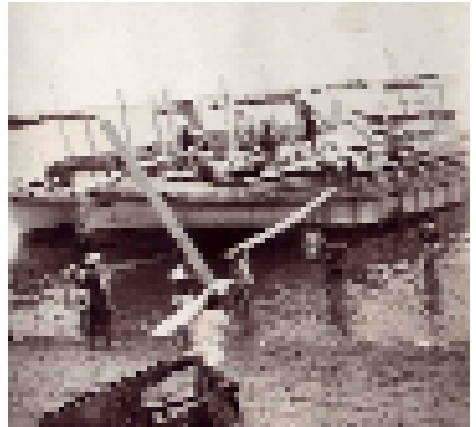


Fig. 3. Unloading Norwegian planks at Zanzibar



Fig. 4. The NEAT establishment at Malindi, Zanzibar.



Fig. 5. 'Zanzibar Olson' travelling in style in a rickshaw.



Fig. 6. A typical bazaar street in Zanzibar town.



Fig. 7. The staff of the Olson establishment at Zanzibar.

good profits throughout the 1890s and well into the 1900s. The competition for tonnage was stiff in Norway, despite an ever-expanding fleet. For NEAT, the main problem was that owners, given the choice, preferred to charter their ships to South African harbours (Cape Town, Port Elizabeth or Durban). Return freight was easier to obtain from South Africa and the longer journey, around the Cape and along the East African coast, was less profitable from the ship-owners' point of view. From 1898 to 1900 letters between Olsen and Klein are filled with complaints about greedy owners who demand 'unreasonable' rates, being full well aware that they controlled the market. Despite this, Olsen and Klein remained in perfect agreement that sails were preferable to steam.

In 1906, the freight market was particularly difficult, and in a letter to Olsen of 6th July 1906, Klein noted (not without an air of exasperation): 'We may have to consider steam as an option....' Three years and ten sailing-ships later, Klein was still reluctant to consider steamer as an option: 'Sails are much cheaper and not least much more convenient.' By using relatively small sailing vessels, NEAT could charter and load fairly quickly, and thus respond more directly to market demands than they could with pre-booked tonnage onboard steam liners. Only in late 1909 did Klein condescend to contact *Deutsche Ost-Afrika Linie (DOAL)* in Hamburg to enquire about prices for plank shipment to Zanzibar. However, the transition was very gradual. In 1912 and 1913, four shipments were sent by steamer from Halden to Zanzibar. In the same years, five sailing ships departed on the same route.

### **The Management in East Africa**

During the first year in Zanzibar, Olsen managed the business himself. He was aided by his Indian ('Hindu', as Olsen writes) clerk who according to Olsen did an excellent job. The clerk was evidently a Hindu Banya, as Olsen describes him as being completely vegetarian. In addition, Olsen employed a number of 'boys' for the storage, two servants for his own home and a cook, Mabruki, who was to stay with him for many years. Nevertheless, Olsen was extremely overworked and, according to himself, 'tied to the office like a dog in chain.' More importantly, he was unable to travel to for example Mombasa to establish new contacts there and other places. The solution came in 1898, when Olsen brought out his younger sister

Agnes, unmarried, aged 33. She arrived in Zanzibar on 15 June 1898 and was employed as 'assistant' in the office. This left Olsen free to travel to set up sub-agencies along the coast and to network for new customers, while Agnes would manage the firm and sell wood from the store in Zanzibar. She was, as Olsen pointed out, 'the first female secretary employed in British East Africa.'

However, by 1902, Olsen's mother had become old and frail, and Agnes (whose life seems to have been completely tied to that of her brother) was sent home to nurse her. In her place, a new assistant was sent out from Norway, Christian Janssen, who was to stay with NEAT until 1920, and who, when the Norwegian-Swedish union was dissolved in 1905, became the first Norwegian Consul to Zanzibar. When Janssen went home for leave in 1904, Agnes returned for another year of service in NEAT.

By 1910, the local trade of NEAT had expanded to include also German East Africa. A third man was needed, and Mr. Olaf Dahl was sent out. He suffered badly from the climate and was sent home in 1912, and a new man arrived, only to last less than two years. From 1914, the third assistant was named Christian Hejer, and eventually it was he who was to lead NEAT into the post-war years.

### **Customers and Agents: an Inter-East African Network**

The first shipment to arrive to NEAT came with the barque Sigrid. Her journey took even longer than that of Larken – almost 5 months, around the Cape of Good Hope. Despite Olsen's best efforts, the entire load was not sold by the time Sigrid arrived on 5th January 1897. The cargo was unloaded to NEAT's godown and custom-cleared there – a special service from the director of customs who had been given a present of an especially finely carved Norwegian knife.

Sigrid then continued onwards to Mombasa where the main bulk of her cargo was to be sold to NEAT's most important customer by far in the years 1896-1900: The Uganda Railway. In Mombasa, Olsen had entered into an agency contract with A.K. Jeevanjee, a relative of the famous Alibhai Mulla Jeevanjee, founder of the East African Standard newspaper and chief buyer for the Uganda Railway. According to Olsen's correspondence, the partnership worked very well; the Jeevanjees paid on time, or 'even before', as Olsen reported to Klein. The cargo delivered to the Uganda Railway consisted mostly of rough planks, so-called 'scantlings' and 'ceilings' to be used for scaffolding, fences, walkways and barracks. In addition, NEAT provided doors and windows, which implies that they were used for barracks and/or stations. These were most likely used on the stretch from Nairobi onwards - constructed after 1896 - which was the time when NEAT started delivering to the railway company.

In 1898, the British company Boustead & Ridley replaced the Jeevanjees as agents in Mombasa. A few years later (probably around 1902), the company Smith & MacKenzie became NEAT's agents in Mombasa, the contract including the provision that Smith & MacKenzie would provide storage for the goods. This agreement continued as such until 1918, albeit with some intermittent conflicts concerning the price of storage facilities etc. The ships from Norway would unload cargo in Mombasa directly, from 1896 onwards. However, on occasions Olsen would charter local dhows to bring cargo from Zanzibar to Mombasa destined for the railway.

In 1903, Olsen finally found the time to travel with the railway he had sold building material to for several years. His report to Klein is filled with panegyric descriptions of bridges, station-buildings and not least, the punctuality of the train. Some years later, Olsen travelled



on the newly built Bergen line in Norway, the very badge of modernity for the young, now independent nation. However, according to Olsen, the journey compared badly with the Mombasa-Kisumu line, which was, in his estimation, 'overall much better.'

In Dar-es-Salaam, NEAT entered into an agency agreement with the Hamburg trader Max Steffens. From 1906, ships arriving for NEAT were directed to Dar-es-Salaam directly to offload goods on consignment for Max Steffens who would provide storage himself.<sup>(13)</sup> Furthermore, NEAT sold wood directly to Tanga, where they at times kept the 'third assistant' permanently employed – at other times relied on local agents.

In Zanzibar itself, NEAT depended on the network of Indian traders who bought wholesale directly from NEAT's storage. A number of names fill the pages of Olsen's letters, but unfortunately, I have not been able to find any further identification. Muhammad Juma Thawar has been mentioned, others were Adani Versi, one Hasan Ismailjee, Jamal Teja and others. They would sell the goods onwards as retail to the local market from their own outlets.

Occasional customers were the various missions, in Zanzibar itself and on the mainland. The Swedish Mission in Bagamoyo was a regular, as was the French White Fathers Mission in the same place. In Zanzibar, the Catholic Mission was, for a period, the 'best private customer' NEAT had. Plank was also sold to ships in harbour, for repair and construction of boxes and other storage vessels.

Finally, goods were sold to the most important purchaser in Zanzibar, i.e. the British-Bu Saidi Government. Here, NEAT had some problems to get into the market, delivering offer after offer to government building projects, only to be under-priced by others. However, NEAT gradually worked its way into the list of suppliers to the Zanzibar Government.

## Epilogue

After almost two years of constant work in Zanzibar, Olsen was optimistic about the future. 'People here are beginning to take note that a serious competitor has arrived,' he wrote in January 1897. He added: 'I hear that even the Indians believe I will make good business here.' A better recommendation could hardly be had in Zanzibar around the turn of the century.

It proved to be a correct prediction. When the company was sold in 1918, it was for 240,000 Kroner. Of this, Olsen received 140,000, with a later additional bonus of 20,000 Kroner, a total 160,000 Kroner. This equals about 2 million Kroner or about US\$ 330,000 in present day value.<sup>(14)</sup> Sitting in his inherited family home at Sauøen, an island outside Halden, it was more than enough that 'Zanzibar-Olsen' for the remaining seven years of his life could entitle himself as 'rentier.'

In his retirement, Olsen corresponded frequently with Mr. Hejer, the new manager in Zanzibar. Upon learning about the new harbour being built there, he often expressed his wish to see his 'second home' again, and he even made some tentative plans for a journey. However, he added: 'It may be, by that time, that I have embarked on a much longer journey to a destination we all must reach eventually.' For 'Zanzibar-Olsen', only two destinations could possibly lure him from his comfortable retirement; Zanzibar or death. It was a fitting observation from a man whose entire fortune was built upon the expansion of European colonialism into Africa.

## Footnotes

1. The present paper is a partial extract from a forthcoming book entitled 'Norwegian Wood. Norway East Africa Trading Company, 1894-1926' to be published in Norwegian in 2006. Hopefully, an abridged English version will follow soon thereafter. Field work for this project was conducted during repeated visits to Zanzibar and the Zanzibar National Archives (hereafter ZNA) in the period 2001-2006, during my period as a post-doctoral research fellow at the Department of History, University of Bergen and later as researcher on the project 'In the Wake of Colonialism. Norwegian Commercial Interest in Africa and Oceania', funded by the Norwegian Research Council and administered by the Centre for Development Studies, University of Bergen. Some of the data used here originate in archival research in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway, National Archives of Norway. In addition to the Norwegian research Council, field work for this project has also been funded by the Nansen Foundation of Norway and the Norwegian Non-Fiction Writers' Association.

2. A major source for the study are five volumes of copybooks (approx 1000 pages each) containing the letters of O.Chr. Olsen in the period 1894-1922, the bulk of which he spent in Zanzibar. The majority of the letters are in Norwegian and addressed to his partner W. Klein, to his sister, and later his wife Maiken Olsen, as well as to friends and others in Norway. Some letters are in English, mainly to British personnel in the Colonial Administration, or to managers of various firms, including Smith & MacKenzie and Boustead & Ridley, and the Uganda Railway. Some are in German, addressed to partners in German East Africa. For the sake of simplicity, detailed references to the Norwegian originals are not given here. The letters are in the possession of the descendants of O. Chr. Olsen, Wenche Koren, Tore Holm-Olsen, Petter Koren. I am grateful for the generosity they have shown in providing copies for me, for oral information and photographic material.

3. Copybooks of outgoing letters from the Saugbrugsforening, Halden from W. Klein (and others in his absence) to NEAT in the period 1896-1918, are stored in the archive of the company, presently Norske Skog Saugbrugsforeningen, Halden, Norway.

4. For more about the development of Chwaka as a resort for the colonial administration and the various well-to-do groups in Zanzibar, see A.K. Bang, 'Cosmopolitanism Colonized? Three Cases from Zanzibar 1890-1925', in: K. Kresse & E. Simpson (eds.), *Cosmopolitanism Contested: The Confluence of History and Anthropology in the Indian Ocean*, Hurst & Co, London, 2006.

5. Lloyds Register kept by Zanzibar Agents, ZNA-ARC4/28.

6. He was, however, not the only Scandinavian. The manager of the English Club at that time was a Swedish ex-Captain, Mr. Sjøgren, who, according to Olsen, 'did very well in his job.' Olsen himself was a man who looked twice at every penny, and he considered membership in the club way too expensive. However, after a year in Zanzibar, he realized that good contacts could be made in the club, and he grudgingly paid the membership fee.

7. ZNA: Assessment Files 1. NEAT's go-down was house No. 976, Malindi. This was among the buildings demolished for the harbour extensions in the 1920s.

8. On the history of the German trading firms in Zanzibar, see Schneppen, H. 2003. *Sansibar und die Deutschen. Ein besonderes Verhältnis, 1844-1966*, Munster (LIT Verlag).

9. Leon Besson first established himself in Zanzibar in 1886, trading in everything from building materials (wood, iron, cement) to consumer items like soap, kitchenware etc. See S.J. North, *Europeans in British Administered East Africa*, 3rd edition, Privately published, S.J. North, Oxford, 2005.

10. As a footnote, it should be mentioned that the total Norwegian wood export for the same years averaged ca. 1.7 million m<sup>3</sup>/year. This makes the export to East Africa from the Saugbrugsforening about 0.25% of the total Norwegian export. Statistical Yearbook of Norway, Wood export.

11. The network of Norwegian commercial interest in Africa during the inter-war years is the topic of two forthcoming studies of the 'In the Wake of Colonialism Project.' See K.A. Kjerland and E. Reiersen, forthcoming, 2007/2008,

12. J. Conrad, *The Mirror of the Sea*, Oxford University Press, 1988 (ed. Zdzislaw Najder), 64.

13. During the First World War, both the storage in Dar-es-Salaam, all the wood within it, as well as Steffens himself, vanished. NEAT was prepared to write off a very heavy loss, when, in 1919, Steffens showed up again in Hamburg, prepared to offer compensation for the loss.

14. Norwegian Statistical Bureau, Wholesale Price Index corrected for purchasing power.