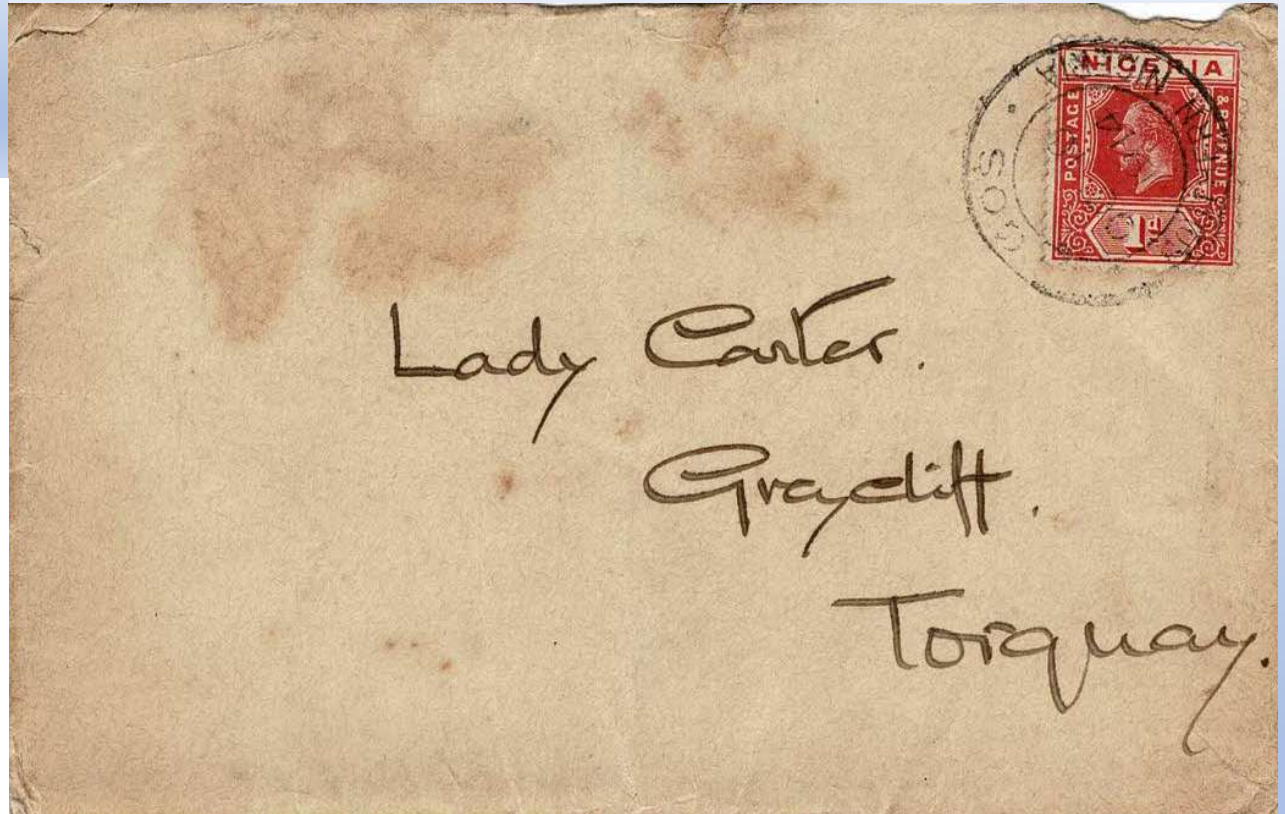


Letter from
Otho Carter in Nigeria in 1914

1914 War Prisoners' Bureau

Letter to Lady Carter in Torquay

This is a very ordinary envelope at 1d rate from Lagos. What sets it apart is the letter inside it



The addressee - Lady Carter

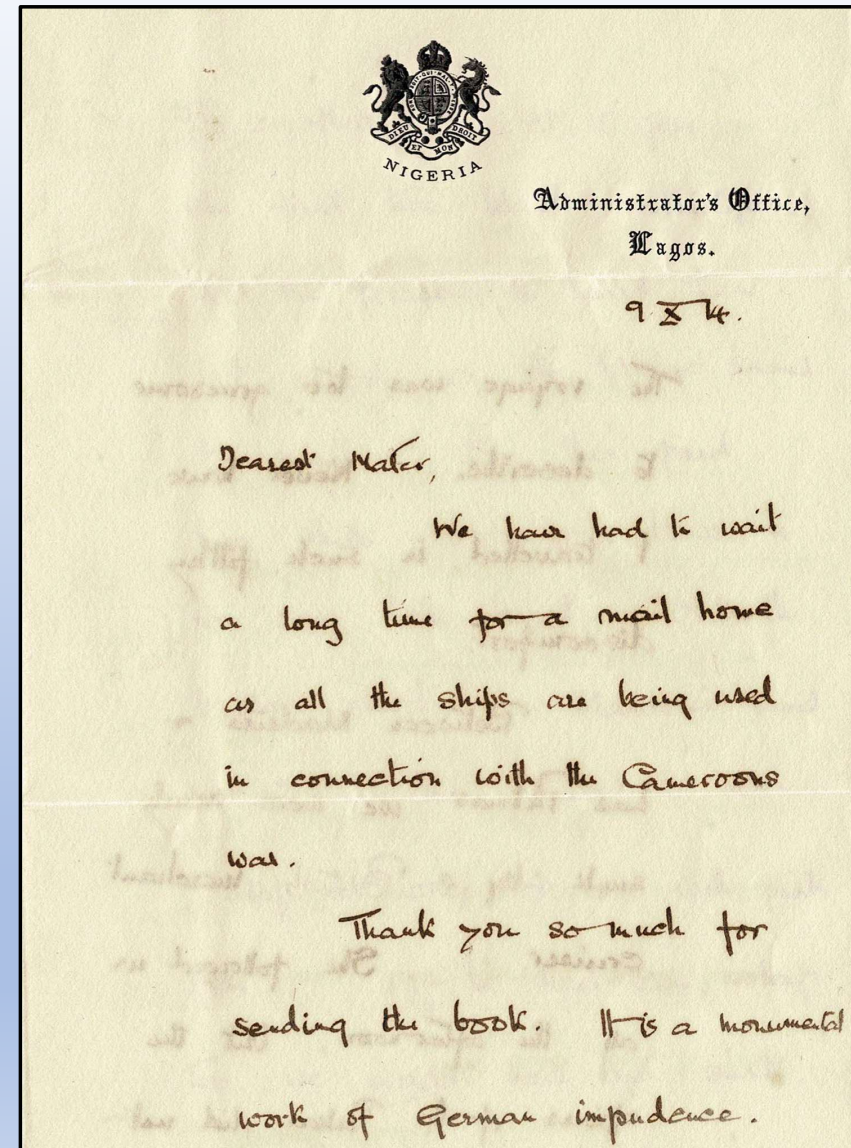
Second wife of Sir Thomas Gilbert-Carter who had been knighted on 3 June 1893 for service to the British Colonies.

She was American, met her future husband when he was Governor of Bahamas and married him in Boston, USA in 1903.

She was trained as an architect and was also a garden designer and artist. She designed the 1905 1d stamp of Barbados.

There were four living children from his first marriage and one son from this union.

Otho addresses his step-mother as "Dearest Mater"



Sir Thomas Gilbert-Carter, Otho's father.

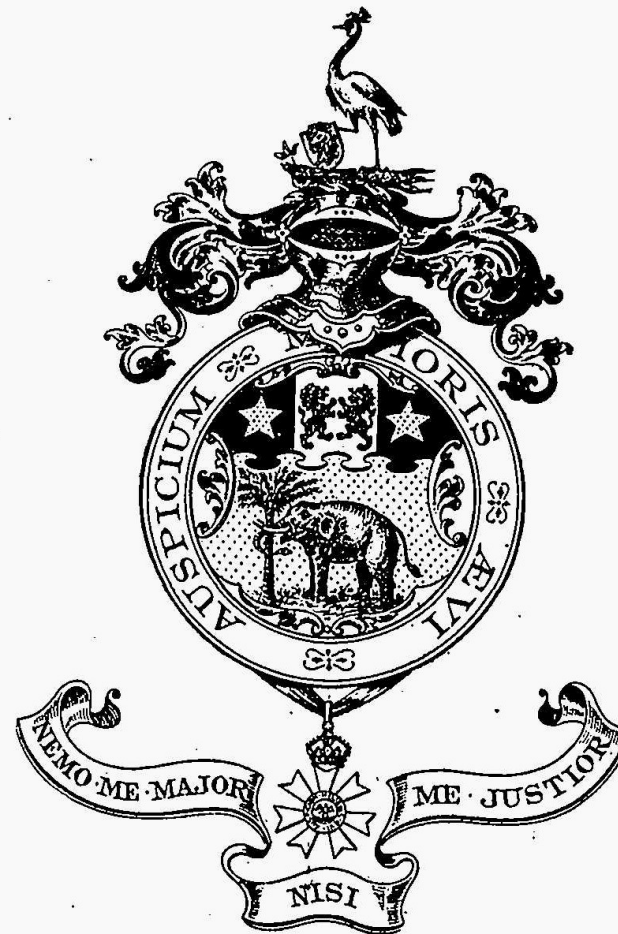
A high achiever from humble birth at Topsham, Devon

Thomas Gilbert Carter (later hyphenated to Sir Thomas Gilbert-Carter) was Postmaster and Administrator of Gambia in 1882-88, Governor of Lagos in 1891-96 (the Carter Bridge in Lagos bears his name), Governor of Bahamas in 1894 and Barbados from 1904, which he later made his retirement home.

His escutcheon for his promotion to KCMG is familiar to WASC members' eyes!

Deceased WASC member Nick Carter was his grandson from Otho's youngest brother who was born of Gertrude, the second wife. Thus, Otho's nephew.

Cameo references #86, June 2012, p117 and #78, October 2009, p147 by Bob Maddocks



No-one is greater than me unless they are more just than me

The writer Otho Carter

Born in 1882 at Teignmouth

He had two older sisters and two younger brothers, the last of them from his step-mother. His eldest sister was born in Antigua when his father was 30, in Naval service.

His own mother died in 1895 soon after arriving at Lagos, when Otho was 13 years old.

He does not appear in the UK 1901 or 1911 censuses; probably in Bahamas with his father in 1901 and in his Colonial service in 1911.

Aged 25, he arrived at London aboard "Tagus" on 29 June 1908 from Bahamas with parents. He probably took the Colonial Service exams soon after.

I need to search his name in the S. Nigeria Gazettes . I have not found an image of him.

His final note in the corner of the back page says he is no longer an Asst D.C as from 1 January 1914 and is not sure what title he has.

England shortly. They are a
great nuisance here.

I now have to go to
a meeting of German traders
as "Kerpinter" to the Administrator
& after that a meeting of the
Municipal Board when there are
200 prisoners to be examined.

My best love to
Father, yourself, & John.

Your affectionate
Otho

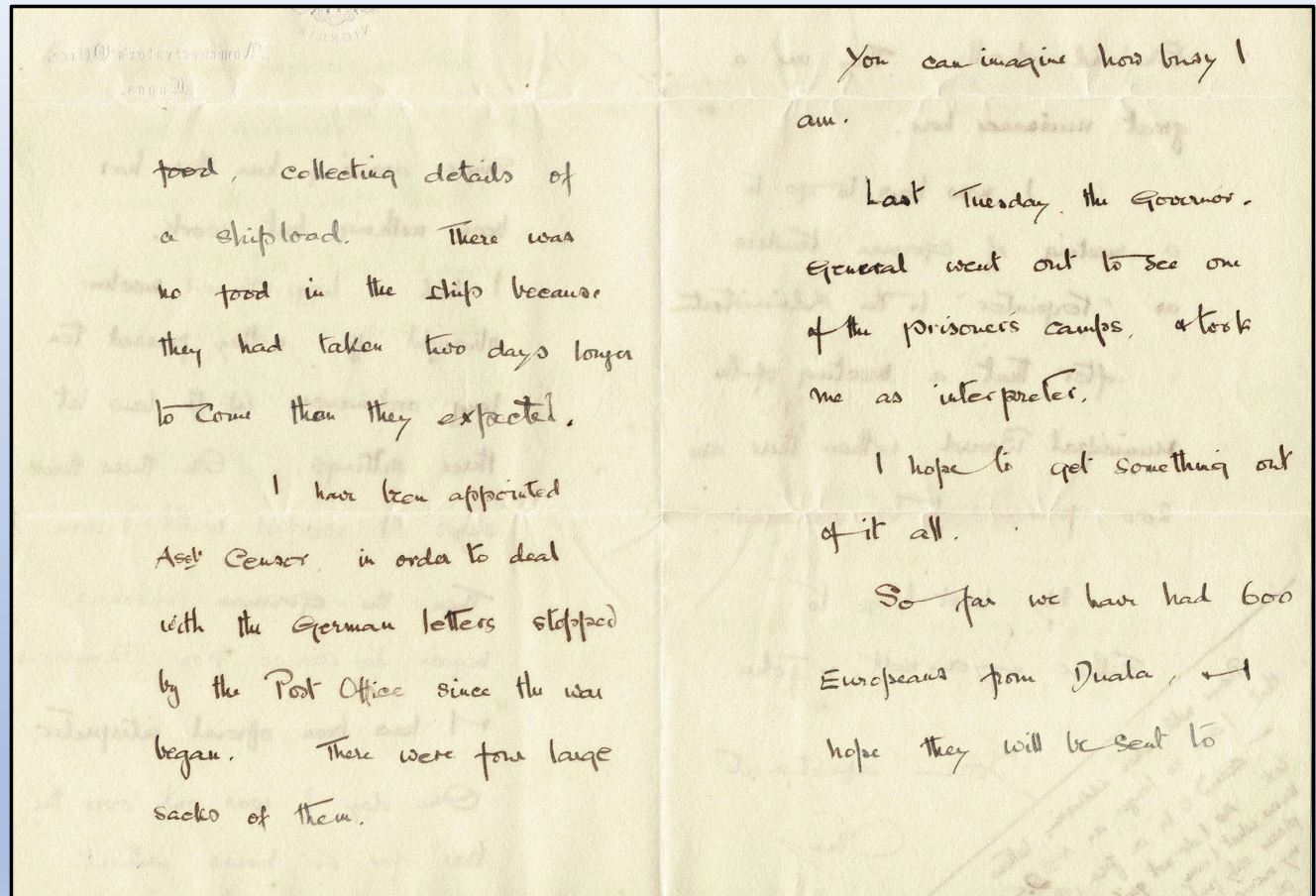
Please note when addressing letters
that I am no longer an Asst. D.C.
— ceased to be on Jan 1st
last. As I do not quite
know what I am
please only put
my name
on

The letter describes his role in Sept. 1914

...the German prisoners began to arrive from Cameroons and I have been official interpreter. One day I was out over the bar for six hours without food, collecting details of a shipload. There was no food in the ship because they had taken two days longer to come than they expected. (he said 600 Europeans were shipped out of Duala)

I have been appointed Asst Censor in order to deal with the German letters stopped by the post office since the war began. There were four large sacks of them.

I now have to go to a meeting of German traders as "terpinter"... and then there are 200 prisoners to be examined.



War Prisoners' Bureau

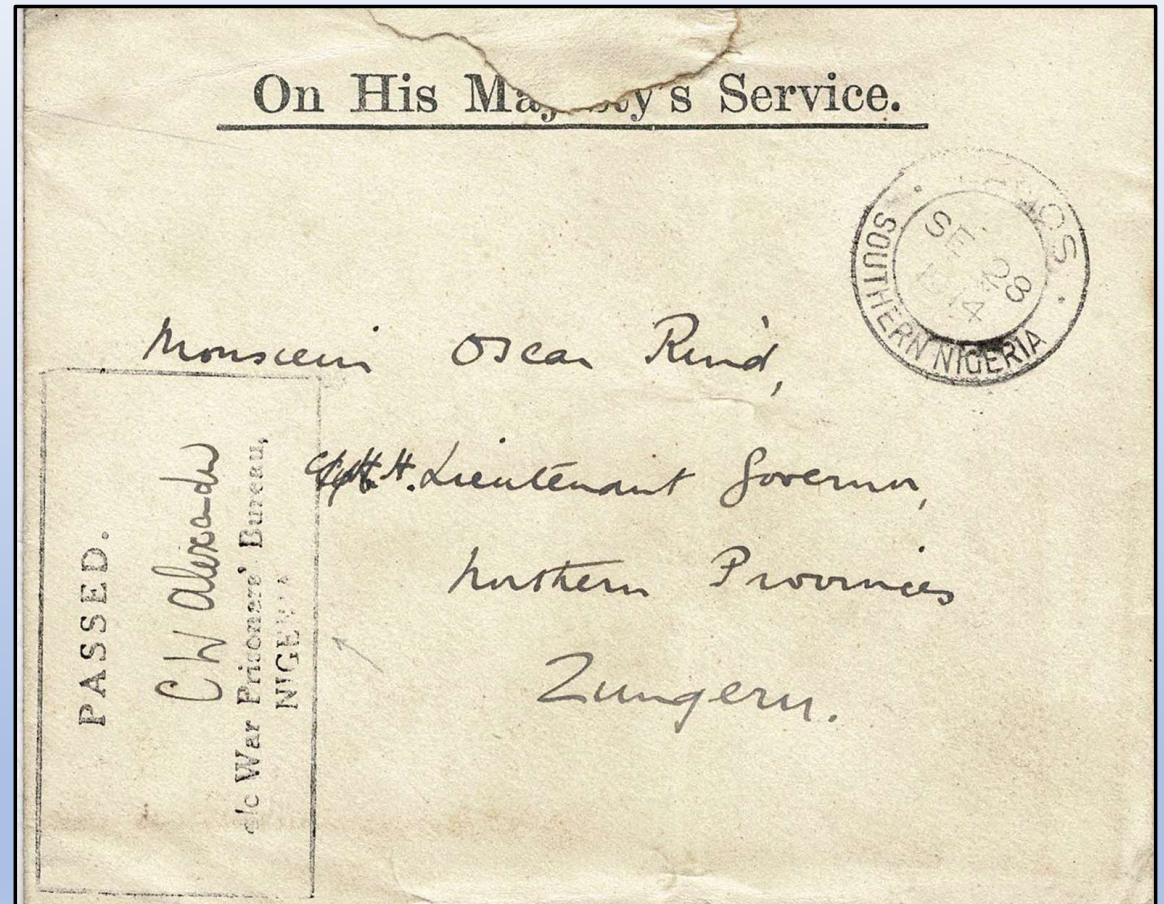
This cover is a recent purchase by me from a dealer's stock at Europhilex.

This cachet is recorded by Martin, Walton & Harris as type PW1; one example recorded, signed by C W Alexander dated 7 Sep 1914.

Now there is a second record, also signed by C W Alexander but dated 28 Sep 1914.

It is very likely this is the temporary bureau into which Otho Carter, apparently fluent in German language, had been placed.

Charles Lindsay Temple was the Lieutenant Governor of Northern Nigeria 1914-17. This letter to Oscar Rind is addressed care of the Lieutenant Governor. I have found nothing on line about Oscar Rind.



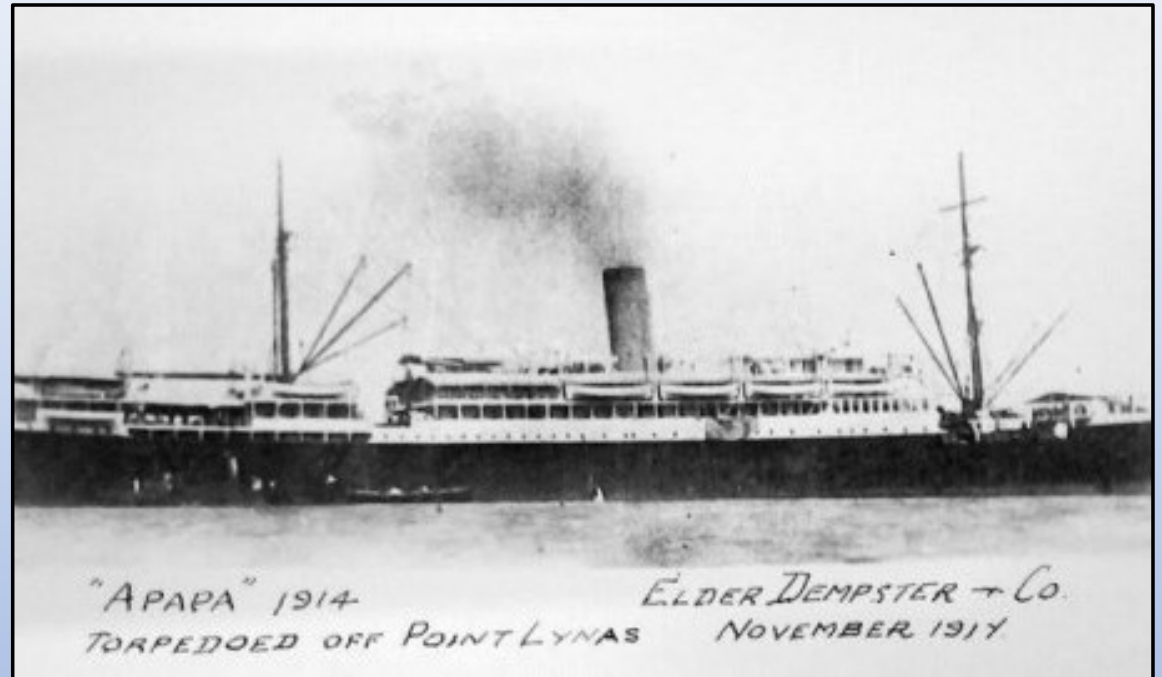
Death of Otho Carter, aged 35

He was on his way home on leave in November 1917 aboard SS *Apapa* when it was torpedoed off Anglesey.

Only two passengers went down with the ship – Mr & Mrs Harragin – as the wife was too sick in bed to get onto deck. Otherwise all the crew and passengers got into lifeboats in the dark.

Then their luck ran out. A second torpedo smashed one of the lifeboats before hitting the ship, which heeled over crushing one other lifeboat under the funnel. Others were hit by masts and rigging.

Of 251 passengers and crew, about 70 died in lifeboats, one of whom was Otho Carter.



Otho's body must have been recovered because he is buried at Ottery St Mary, Devon; near his home address, The Lodge.