STORYTELLING WITH PRIMARY SOURCE COLLECTIONS: LIVINGSTONE’S ZAMBEZI EXPEDITION

LIBER 2016
*Forum for Digital Cultural Heritage*
The Wood for the Trees: Discoverability of Digital Collections

29 June 2016
ITHAKA is a not-for-profit organization that helps the academic community use digital technologies to preserve the scholarly record and to advance research and teaching in sustainable ways.
Global Plants is the world’s largest database of digitized plant specimens and a locus for international scientific research and collaboration.
At JSTOR Labs, we get up each day with one goal: to shape the future of research and teaching, one project at a time. Working with partner publishers, libraries and labs, we aim to create tools for researchers, teachers and students that are immediately useful – and a little bit magical.
In 1858, Dr. David Livingstone, the British explorer, embarked on a journey up the Zambezi River in East Africa. The botanist John Kirk joined him to catalog new plant specimens.

labs.jstor.org/zambezi
GETTING THERE IS ½ THE FUN…*

**JSTOR Global Plants**

*Mission: partner with herbaria and botanical gardens to digitize vital information about plants*

- Collaborated with our content partners Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and Royal Geographical Society
- Mapped content using articles and books in JSTOR archive
- Set location and dates of journal articles and primary sources

**JSTOR Labs**

*Mission: partner with publishers, libraries and labs to build innovative tools for researchers and teachers.*

- Labs works quickly to test out new ideas with users
- Used a three-day “flash-build” to create core site
- Combined multiple tools (mapwarper, timeline.js, etc.) into a unique interface

*... is what Livingstone didn’t say. But we did!*

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*JSTOR*: Joint Steering Committee for Organic Research

*Livingstone*: David Livingstone, Scottish explorer and writer, known for his explorations and writings about Africa.
AND THERE ARE MORE STORIES TO TELL!

“...we have been dreaming of doing such a thing with our content on George Forrest, a plant explorer and hunter who collected throughout China in the early 20th century...”

--Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh

“This is an amazing use of secondary sources as primary sources and of combining the two...”

--Royal Geographical Society
THANK YOU

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APPENDIX
In 1858, Dr. David Livingstone, the British explorer, embarked on a journey up the Zambezi River in East Africa. The botanist John Kirk joined him to catalog new plant specimens.
August 1861 – October 1861

Kirk and Livingstone reach Lake Nyassa, fail to establish northernmost extent

Considered at the time the greatest failure of the expedition. In November they begin the journey back to the coast via the Shire River.