William Balfour Baikie Encyclopedia Article

William Balfour Baikie

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William Balfour Baikie

1825-1864

Scottish explorer, naturalist, and linguist who explored West Africa, studying its botany, anthropology, and languages. Baikie became a naval surgeon in 1848 and, between 1854 and 1864, served the British government on the Niger, opening navigation of the river, constructing roads, and eventually becoming Consul of British Nigeria. Before his death Baikie collected native vocabularies of 50 dialects and translated portions of the Bible and Book of Prayer into Hausa.