Cover sheet for an interview conducted in Zambia:

Mr. Gordon Suckling

26th November 1976 at his home in Mwinilunga District

No bio sketch was created after the interview with Mr. Suckling. I was less interested in getting information about him than I was in seeking more information about and insight into his father, George Suckling, who was unquestionably the founder of modern education in Zambezi District and many other parts of the NWP.

Note: **Both Gordon and his wife, Peggy, were concerned about the confidentiality of the interview, probably because he spoke very frankly and openly on several controversial issues about his father. In the 20+ years that have intervened, Gordon has died. (I am not sure whether is his wife is still alive or not.) Because of this long intervening period, there is probably no longer a problem about the use of this interview transcript and correspondence.**

General note on all interviews and interviewees: These cover sheets were created from old notes 25 years ago. They contain key manuscript information in each interviewee's file. Often there is a short chronology of the interviewee's life written at the time of the interview. Most interviewees by this time (2006) are deceased; hence the huge potential value of this old interview. All interviews focused on education in the North West Province of Zambia mainly in the period from World War II until the 1970s. They often contain information on other topics that in some way related to education. All interviewees were in some way leaders of their own community or missionaries who had spent much of their life in the N.W.P Most interview transcripts contain rectangular boxes for, or with, 5 numbers. These were used to code key data for research and writing in this pre-computer era. These codes are now meaningless for me and for any one else. Unless noted otherwise, these interviewees can be used by scholars without restrictions.
7/15/2006

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CONFIDENTIAL

INTERVIEW WITH MR GORDON SUCKLING AT HIS HOME IN MWINILUNGA ON SATURDAY MORNING, 26TH NOVEMBER 1977 by David Wilkin

(N.B. The interview was informal and did not follow a set format but flowed loosely, with some repetition, over the central theme of education and his father's role therein.)

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Mr Suckling: My father was one of the first missionaries in Zambia. He started in Chitokoloki around about 1911 and after he married my mother, who was a nurse at Kalene Hill, my eldest brother Eddie was born in 1919 and in 1921, I was born. But by that time, they had decided to go on their first furlough and that is why I was born in Aberdeen. At the end of the furlough, I was brought out with Eddie back to Chitokoloki and the Balovale area and I've lived in Zambia for over 50 years.

I went back to England and Scotland for my education and then straight after school, I came out to help my father at Chitokoloki. By this time the whole station had grown tremendously, in the intervening years, from a station that had a few day schools and a little bit of medical work, as my mom was a nurse, into a big station with a big boarding school, hospital, leper colony and training for carpentry and other trades.

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When I came out in 1938, I found my father had started his first Standard IV. If I remember rightly, he had six students, who had already been teachers. (In the early days, of course, a man qualified to be a teacher as long as he could write well. He was then sent out, or kept at the station, to teach these small day schools.) By that time my father had increased the standard of education considerably, hence the first students in the Standard IV class were men who had already started teaching and wanted to go on in their education and be able to teach better their students. It was a very small class and incidently most of the students are now cabinet ministers in Lusaka and great friends of mine.

Mr. Wilkin: Would you give a few of their names.

Mr Suckling: Yes. Mr Samuel Mbilishi was one; Mr Willie Mwondela; Mr Willie Nkanza. Others are not ministers, but businessmen in the business world.

I helped my father teach the Standard IV and just after that he started a teacher training school which Mr Victor Reid taught.

Mr Wilkin: Would World War II have started by that time?

Mr Suckling: Yes.

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He began this teacher training school and straight after that he started a Standard VI. When he first started Standard VI, I taught it. I took over the complete class and taught them all subjects - geography, civics, arithmetic - we didn't teach any language other than English.

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became a government examination after a time. By that time my father was already accepting government grants because his boarding school had grown so much. It had become far too expensive. When he first started it - he charged practically nothing for the food and the expenses came out of his own pocket. I can remember the days when he had upwards of 700 boarders and he had no government grants.

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Mr Wilkin: Would all of them have been boys or some of them been girls?

Mr Suckling: No, both. We had girls' boarding and boys' boarding and they were separated on the station. This was, of course, one of the things that rather brought about the wrath of fellow missionaries. They felt that it was a very bad thing to have a boys' school and a girls' school on the same station. But my mother looked after the girls and I think the reputation of that girls' school was pretty good because a lot of them became the wives of top men in Zambia today. And they were very well trained. Not only did they get trained in academic work, but they were taught how to sew, how to knit and wash and iron also a certain amount of cooking was done.

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And, of course, everything starts small. It became better and better. My memory of my father was that he was always building. He was always tearing down a building that was not up to his standard and rebuilding it. The boarding school became really a big school as the government grants started.

Mr Wilkin: Of the 700 boarders approx. how many were girls?

Mr Suckling: In those days there weren't many girls. It was not the 'done thing' among the Lunda and Luvale tribe. They thought that it was a complete waste of time. They didn't mind them just learning to read, but to go on to Standard IV, they regarded as a complete waste of time. That was the age they got married. You see by the time a girl got to Standard IV she was of a marriagable age. But dad fought for them to stay on and he promised them that he would look after them. That they would not get in trouble morally if they came to his school. That he would watch them; so that they would become real mothers. Mothers that could teach their children and train their children properly and not just be able to read and write, but be educated and understand what was going on in the world, for instance. It paid off tremendously because a lot of their children then came to school. Once a parent had learned the worth of school, they were determined that their children would go to school, and some of the really fine students today are children or grandchildren of those original people who went to school. I remember Willie Mwondela, who is a very great friend of mine, and a Minister now,

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and Willie Nkanza when both of them were youngsters. (Willie Mwondela is really the same age as I am.) Mom helped at his birth and his father was a friend of my father's. He was one of the elders who helped him start Chitokoloki. He came down from Kalene. ~~Because~~ He had got a certain amount of education - all the men that Dad brought down from Kalene, he trained as well. Thomas Chinyama was so well trained that he was the first African who could read an English Bible and who actually had an English Concordance and could use it. He was the first preacher who could read an English Bible, although he had no standard of education, it was just through being with my father, wanting to learn, seeing the worth of learning. I think above everything, Dad showed the African, who didn't understand why he should learn anything, that it was worth learning. That education was worthwhile, that it would pay dividends in the future. And although he couldn't take them too far, his idea was not to train a few and take them to England to go to College, although that has sometimes been a criticism laid at his door - [redacted] - he felt that he should lay the foundation; others could do that later on. But if he could lay the foundation [redacted] the whole standard of living would be helped, if at grassroots people were educated, even to a certain extent. I've known some of the men he trained as teachers, that came through his training school; passed Standard VI, and became what we called "village" or "outschool teachers." In the end he had 30 centres round Chitokoloki, in the Kabompo - Zambezi area (called Balovale). He used to go to all these 30 outschools.* This would have been about 1945 to 1950. That is how I came to start my work.

I married in 1947, Peggy Fisher, granddaughter of Dr. Walter Fisher and daughter of Mr ffolliott Fisher, who had a ranch near Sakeji, at Hillwood Farm. When I married her in 1947, I took her back to Chitokoloki. She was a trained primary teacher and she helped in the girls' school there as I was still teaching Standard VI in those days.

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My father was a tremendous worker. I have never ever met anyone in Africa who could work the way he did. His schedule everyday was set. We had breakfast everyday at 6.00 o'clock - he and I. Then he would go to his office and put men on work - he always had vast numbers of men doing manual work because the houses on the place were always needing to be re-built or new buildings put up, roads needing repairs, carpentry needing to be done. We used to put men on to work at 7.00 o'clock in the morning and school started at 8.00 in the morning. Dad not only supervised the

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* In fact that later became my job. After I had been teaching Standard VI for some time, he made me Manager of Schools and I used to go to all these 30 outschools.

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labour but he actually taught full time in school. School was from 8 to 12 and from 2 to 4. After 4.00 o'clock, he would go around the place and find what work had been done. He trained a foreman to look after it because he couldn't be watching it all the time. In the evenings he had to do his correspondence; he had to mark papers, prepare for his lessons the next day. Also, there was also all the church matters that he had to see to. Very seldom did he ever get to bed before mid-night. It was such a tight scedule that he lived by the watch. He always had everything at exactly the same time. His bath in the late evening was always at the same time. He had tea always at the same time. His supper was exactly at the same time. ~~After supper, I remember very clearly that we ...~~ After supper we had prayers. We would say the Lord's Prayer, which is quite an unusual thing for a Brethren missionary, but we always used to say it together and then the news at 8.00 o'clock, was 'number one.' No one was allowed to interrupt that. Even if visitors came, they had to listen to the news at 8.00 o'clock. Then straight after the news we would go and do what we liked. He never. He always went back to the office. He would be in the office until mid-night and then be up the next day at 6.00 o'clock. He was a great writer. It is a great pity that a lot of his correspondence and articles are not available. Even at the age of post-50, he decided that he needed to have his education improved and he decided to do by a correspondence course, a degree. He wanted to be a B.A. in English or something like that, and the only reason that he failed to pass was that pressure of work literally stopped him and he became ill, which was a very, very unusual occurrence because I can never remember him being in bed, or ill. An interesting thing from the dental point of view, he lived his whole life without ever having to go to the dentist. He was tremendously virile and hard-working man who had a reputation sometimes as being very irritable with people who were foolish - he didn't suffer fools gladly - but was loved by the Africans because of his ability to say he was sorry when he lost his temper with people. He very, very easily asked people's forgiveness and people with whom he had got angry would always forget it because of the nice way he asked. 3781316

Because of his vision for education, it wasn't only on the academic side but he wanted to train them in the practical things such as carpentry. He had Mr Hansen there, who was a trained cabinet maker. He got a high carpentry shop put up so that during the rains they could continue the carpentry work. All the furniture on the place, including all the European houses and the school dormitories - beds, doors, windows - were made in his Carpentry shop.

This would all have been in his early days because he had already given up the carpentry shop when I came out in 1938. It had done its job. It had trained a lot of carpenters up to first class. They were really good. They could make a beautiful wardrobe and they were by this time dispersed - to the Copperbelt and to many of the villages around Chitokoloki itself because he always had carpentry work to be done. He had at least three or four carpenters on the mission station. But there were also the people who lived in their villages. He encouraged local Africans who were coming on in business and who were making money out of their crops to buy a door - not mats. (Of course, a door was cheap in those days - you could buy one for ten shillings.) "But also have a table, don't just eat off the floor, have a rough table and dining room chairs!"

He designed certain chairs. The famous one was the armed chair called the "Kabompo chair". That was a famous Chitokoloki chair. I've still got one in my house. The shape of it was called "the Kabompo chair". It was a famous chair, that was, I should think, bought by every District Commissioner and probably a lot of the Governors. It was made out of the beautiful mukwa, Rhodesian teak, of which there was plenty in Zambezi and still is today in Balovale District. All of his furniture was made out of this beautiful Rhodesian teak. They had a big settee that went with these two Kabompo chairs - a sitting room suite - with the same rounded arms and same design as on the Kabompo chair. Most of the chiefs in the area have them to this day. If You go to Ishinde's or Ndungu's, you will find all their beautiful furniture was made by my father's men in those days. Furniture in all the bomas was also made there. Furniture would go as far as Kasempa and a lot of it down to the Mongu area. It was just because he wanted to find a trade; to find some way of expanding the trading in the Balovale area, so that these men could find money to live with, and an interest in something to do - to take a pride in. He always was a perfectionist. And if a man did a job, he wanted him to do it well. There were other carpenters, for instance, up here in the Mwinilunga area, but I am sorry to say that their work was shoddy - the windows and doors that they made never fitted. Dad would have thrown it out. If it wasn't perfectly made, it wasn't worth having. And so his furniture stands to this day. I have a wardrobe that belonged to my mom. You couldn't fault it; there is not a crack in it. The joints, you wouldn't see where they were - it was beautifully made. That's the way he liked it. And even the designs on them, there are designs made by the print of a nail. He would have them made by tapping with a nail - just to have it look better. That was the sort of man he was; he liked them to do it perfectly.

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Mr Wilkin: You mentioned that he had given up the large carpentry shop by 1938, but did he keep carpentry on in the school with the academic education?

Mr Suckling: Yes that's right. By then what he did, was instead of having the huge carpentry shop, [illegible] - he had another carpentry shop which was to do with the school. He used to train the Standard VI boys and Standard IV boys in carpentry as part of their education. Some of them were not very good at it and were just told to do something else. But, I think, most of the students knew quite a bit about carpentry by the time they got through. He had two really excellent carpenters who were also good teachers. They were trained in how to make dining room chairs, and how to make a straight table.

They had to have planks. There were village men who were not interested in becoming carpenters, who were not good or able enough, so he encouraged [illegible] the business of sawing planks so that they could either sell them down in Barotseland where there were no trees or sell them to him, or sell them to the Boma - for tresses for buildings. In the old days, they made all the roofs out of poles, the type of poles they got out of litwi's (?). River-bed forest 3715

He also introduced tile-making for roofs. The first tiles they ever sold were made by him. (These were red tiles and used on the old Rudge's house that the secondary school took over in Balovale.) My uncle, Jim Caldwell, who also taught a lot in the school at Chitokoloki, was a very able man from the building point of view. He taught a lot of building in a new trades school that they started. In this trades school they were taught building as well as carpentry, and metal work. My uncle Jim took over that work. He was very capable builder and taught them a lot of building work. In those days, by that time, we were able to get a certain amount of cement but first of all they learned how to make kilns and burn brick which was an unusual thing.

He actually had a place where he made tiles, and on his own house he had tiles and the hospital as well. They made their own tiles out of beautiful clay which they brought up-river by barge from a spot about four miles down [illegible]. On the opposite side of the river, there was a beautiful, suitable type of clay for making pots. He found this out from the Africans who used to make a lot of their drinking pots. There was so much of this clay that they paddled it in barges up to the crossing-place and then they had a house with racks down there and they used to burn the clay into tiles. It made very good roofs. (That was before

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the days of corrugated iron, of course.)

Also black-smiths. He loved people to do things with their hands. He used to encourage them tremendously. All the old black-smiths knew him very well. During the war he called them in from all around and built houses for them at Chitokoloki. And he found iron ore, again about four miles away, near the place the clay was. He hacked it out, put it in barges and brought it up and had these fellows doing the African method of smelting. They smelted the iron ore. Then they made hoes and axes, which they knew how to do themselves, and also hinges. He had them make nails, hasps and staples and all sorts of useful things which we could not buy in those days because the war was on. A lot of those men, when the war was over and we could buy these things again from the Copperbelt, went back to their villages and continued this trade and it had increased their pride in their handiwork. They could now not just make a hoe, but also a hinge! In fact, there were a few people who became very good at making gun stocks and could mend guns - shotguns and muzzle loaders. A lot of muzzle-loaders were actually pretty well made in those days by these blacksmiths, who were excellent at being able to do all sorts of things.

Dad loved to see a man who was a good craftsman. Who could do a job well.

They also made a lot of canoes. Because there was a great demand for canoes, that was all right. But once they found Barotseland wanted canoes, Dad encouraged the people to make them out of the beautiful iron-wood trees which we have in Balovale. Then the other thing he encouraged them in, was the training of oxen. To use oxen for carrying things. To train oxen to plough and to pull these canoes from up to ten miles in the bush to the bank of the Zambezi. (Hugh trees and canoes) You could carry, I believe, thirty bags of cassava meal in one canoe. Four men would paddle them down to Barotseland and sell the canoe and sell the cassava meal and walk back. They would get a good price for it down there in Barotseland because they had no trees. Dad encouraged that too, and it became quite a trade. This would have been in the 1930s on into the 1950s. Selling canoes to Barotseland was a great (business). In fact there are some people who made it their business; they became experts. They used to hire men to do it. I know men who had a team of men making canoes in different areas and taking them down to Barotseland. They had contacts in Barotseland who would resell the canoes to the big men who had the money. Sometimes they would take their own

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canoes down as well and come back with fish, (because that was a great fish area) then resell the fish to the markets and the boma and other places. All this was part of educating the people just to raise their standard of living. We found them to be rather easy-going and tending to be very lazy; especially the men-folk who loved to drink and talk and sit around in the villages just doing nothing. They were great hunters. They weren't even very good cultivators. Dad encouraged them to change their ways and do something worthwhile, and then become proud of the fact that they were not just able to cut honey out of a tree or shoot an animal or dig a field, but they were one better - a carpenter, a blacksmith, a canoemaker and or something like that. I think that one thing he is remembered for more than anything else is his ability to teach them in this way

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Mr. Wilkin: Could you expand on how handcrafts and craftwork was worked in together into the curriculum of the upper primary school and teacher training?

Mr. Suckling: What they did was that after Standard IV, in Standard V there was just a part-time curriculum of education. In the mornings they did carpentry or metal work. We grew a lot of sisal at Chitokoloki - a vast area - and they used to shred and cook the sisal and then dry it and make mats out of sisal. They learned how to weave them. They made sisal mats that were bought all over the Province, and they dyed them red and black in designs and made them very pretty. Those are the sort of things that the Standard V boys learned to do - carpentry, a little metalwork, but mostly crafts to do with carvings or basketwork or mat-making out of sisal. Sisal is not indigenous, but they had a huge area on the slope down to the river from the mission. You can still see the remnants that are there.

Then in Standard VI, they went back to the pure academic because they were required to write a government examination. In the Standard VI he started, he co-operated with Mr Letchford and Ginger Wright (now in Ndola) at Mutanda, We used to go to Mutanda sometimes and sometimes they used to come to us for the Standard VI examinations. A lot of their teachers were trained at Chitokoloki Teacher Training School.

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Another thing that Dad was very keen on, was sport. He was a very strong disciplinarian in school, but he liked the boys to enjoy school and when he first started school, no one even had a football. They had never seen a football and knew nothing about it. They used to play a ball game of their own which consisted basically of throwing a ball in the air and seeing who could grab it when it came down. It was a "free for all" but it was a game they all liked and was good exercise. Then they used to play with a sort of pumpkin. They would roll it down a hill and on both

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idea was to see how many on each side could get their different coloured spears in the pumpkin as it rolled down - a very difficult thing to do. It usually ended up at the bottom with about two in as most of them broke off.

The girls had a vast number of African games culture which he used to encourage them to play.

The football was introduced by Sir Glyn Jones, who became governor of Northern Rhodesia. He was a young D.O. (My father married him actually to a nurse at Mwinilunga Boma.) He was an international football player and when he came to Chitokoloki and saw all that we were doing in the sport line, he said "Why don't you introduce them to football?" And he gave us a football. In fact he followed the game for a long time. I believe by then other people had got interested (on the Copperbelt) in introducing football to Zambians.

When I was at school, I had trained as an athlete and had the honour of breaking some of the Scottish records in some of the flat races. I had the record for the 440 when I was at school in Gordon's College at Aberdeen. And also our school taught us a lot of drill and gymnastics. So when I came out, I introduced gymnastics and drill to the school. We used to have a gymnastic and also an athletic team. We did everything including shot-putting, javelin, throwing the discus, long jump, high jump.

Because we had a fairly big school, we were interested in playing with other schools. I remember quite clearly going down to the Barotse National School in Mongu. We took a team down by barge. It took us a week to get down there. (This was in the early 40s.) In another year, they came up to us and we tried to start some sort of a school athletic competition for Barotse land and our province. There were not many Standard VIs. schools Mutanda was another one. We would go there and they would come to us. Mutanda, Mongu and Chitokoloki - together we had an athletic competition. I think mostly we used to beat them because when we started we had more interest in it. I was tremendously interested and used to train them in how to run and all that sort of thing.

They used to see pictures of me running with proper athletic shoes and they felt these would be a very good thing to have but they soon found that their toes were far superior and they could run very fast. In fact I really had to belt it to keep up with some of these fellows or to beat them. Some were very fast sprinters, high jump men and long jump men. Dad was very interested in that and encouraged it tremendously. We had an excellent drill team. We used to do a lot of pyramids. If there was any important visitor like the governor, we used to put on a show, either athletics, drill or football. 3718 Finlay 9 a

- Dad was one of the that started

because it looked as if he was asking the government to help with mission work. Dad refuted that by saying he was asking them to help us out with what they should be doing themselves. So they got grants for the mission. He never accepted it as part of his pay; always every penny of it was put into the school, but once he got grants he was able to increase the number of boarders. He was also able to give them a uniform, which they never really had before; a khaki uniform, really very simple. It was made by local tailors. The girls had a very nice uniform - a red dress that mother used to get the girls, themselves, trained in sewing to make.

The girls also did a lot of drill. A lot of new games; they learned netball, for instance, and had a net-ball team and tried competition against other schools.

All this was looking miles ahead. In this day everbody does it, in those days it was the first ever and was regarded even amongst many of our elder Africans as a little bit suspicious. Teaching girls to Fling themselves around in short skirts was not quite the thing done. (Greatly cheered by the boys I might say!)

Another thing encouraged was acting in school. We soon learned that the Africans were born actors. Dad loved to get them to act. He actually got them to act quite a number of Shakespeare's plays. I remember the "Merchant of Venice" being done by Standard VI students. He would also encourage them to make up their own plays for acting. I think that the one that raised the roof, was once when we had a governor out, and after we had the drill shows, we put on the "Merchant of Venice" or something fairly sophisticated like that. Then he once or twice that he had allowed them to make up themselves. (The girls once they could get away from their shyness, doing it in public, were very good actors, excellent. Usually very good voices so that you can clearly hear what they say.) The girls did an act, which was a skit on my father - the first day he ever came to Chitokoloki. Chitokoloki is on a hill overlooking the valley and they had made a big mound of earth and onto the scene came a girl, I think, wearing khaki shorts - most unheard of - and shirt. She was my father. She had a pith helmet on, a walking stick and a fly-whisk. She was walking the way my dad did with his elbows out, imitating him, which brought the place down, because everyone immediately recognized who she was talking about. Behind was a whole long trail of carriers with loads on their heads. The girl just behind with a paraffin lamp and a kettle - he was a cook Dad. Never carried anything else but a paraffin lamp and a kettle - the most important being the kettle because my father was a great lover of tea.) So here they walked up this mound and when they got to the top, this girl stood and surveyed the whole view like this, and said: "this is where I am going to build

Chitokoloki". Then she turned around to the cook and ~~says~~ said: "Boy, bring the tea!". The place went up in an absolute roar! This was one thing everyone knew dad well for, this business of making tea. This (skit) was done in Lunda.

This was the sort of thing he liked, to encourage all these sort of activities to help people in education and just enlarge their minds. So that their whole day was not taken up with cultivating and bringing up babies, etc. 3 7 8 2 1

Mr. Wilkin: Let us expand on a few points. You mentioned that by the late '40s there were 30 out-schools. Would these have been up to Standard II?

Mr. Suckling: Yes, by 1947, when I got married, they already had one or two - I can't remember how many - Standard IV in those out-schools. One of them was at Ishinde's at Makonde. They had at least six out-schools in the Kabompo area up to the Manyinga River. Most of them were at chief's capitals. Strategic places which had big populations. The chiefs' were very interested. They were very, very much behind dad's efforts. In fact nearly every chief had an out-school of some sort. They were also were church centres, because the teachers themselves were mostly Christian preachers. But by 1950 ~~[illegible]~~ I left to come to Kabompo - ~~I started a~~ new mission station at Loloma. The reason for doing that - ~~I came with [illegible] there~~ - was that I wanted to be manager of the Kabompo schools. By then they had just started this Kabompo District; they had just cut off a big slab from Balovale and a smaller slab from Mwinilunga and made it into Kabompo District and a new boma had started. So I came to live on the Manyinga at a place called Loloma. My whole job was just to go around the district schools. By that time there was already a Standard IV school at Loloma. It was on the other side of the Manyinga River. It was the biggest school in their area. ~~In fact we had an Manager of schools~~ - I was overall Manager - but there was also an African Manager of schools who, ~~was~~ in those days, was Mr. Samuel Mbilishi. He was there when I went in 1950. 3 7 8 2 3

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Mr. Wilkin: Would many of those schools have had weekly boarders ~~come in~~?

Mr. Suckling: Yes, they would all have had places for weekly boarders to stay; a small dormitory, probably two rooms, ~~put up~~. Also, a fairly good classroom. They had a fair amount of equipment. Most of it was slates, exercise books, pencils, ink, chalk, blackboards and that sort of thing. Fairly good airy classrooms. They weren't burnt brick or anything, but well built.

Mr. Wilkin: Would some of them have had girls as weekly boarders?

Mr. Suckling: No, not as weekly boarders, ~~but~~ there were girls in the schools, but they were all day girls.

The ~~incidence~~ incidence of absenteeism was very high in those days. It was one

biggest problem was with their parents; they were always dragging them off to go into the bush with them for hunting or [redacted] taking them off to go with them to the Copperbelt or elsewhere. They couldn't understand why a child's priority should be to finish his school term and pass his examination. They reckoned as long as he was at school, it was all right if they took him away for a week. It was a big battle. 3 7 8 2 4

Mr. Wilkin: Would there also have been a big problem of them taking them away for long periods for traditional rituals, such as mukanda and so forth? Would your father have had to battle greatly over this?

Mr. Suckling: Not too badly because the mukanda was held during the cold season and they had a fairly long cold season holiday. Because it was so cold, it was not regarded as a good idea to bring the boys to school, because there were no heating facilities, no glass windows in the classrooms - all open - so the very cold weather was the school holiday. Also it gave dad the opportunity to visit round the out-schools (although they might not have been in session.) He needed to go around and do [redacted] village preaching and visiting and also a lot of his building work was done at that time so the very cold period was when they had the mukanda.

The main trouble was with the girls, because all too often they were taken away before they could pass a decent examination and to get girls to pass Standard I V was an absolute battle of the first order. In fact I think I am right in saying that most of the girls who went through originally Standard IV were the daughters of Christians, who could see the value of education, and also who wanted to keep their girls morally right in order to marry them off as decent girls. Another thing was that in the school [redacted], they were taught to sew, to cook to a certain extent. Those things made a girl a worthy bride for any sort of high official or anyone like that and I think the parents very quickly realized that it was worth putting their girls through Standard IV. 3 7 8 2 5 a

Mr. Wilkin: Now in the late '40s, just before you went to open Loloma, were there any other Native Authority or Mission Schools besides those 30 and the main school at Chitokoloki, in what is now Zambezi and Kabompo areas? Had any other mission stations opened any at all?

Mr. Suckling: Other missions, oh yes. The 30 schools were pretty well in a circle around Chitokoloki and they included the opposite side of the river. I think that dad was the first and only missionary to start schools on the Luvale side of the river, except perhaps Chavuma. I am not quite certain when they started their schools on the other side. Dad was certainly the first and for a long time the only one.

Then Chavuma started schools. Dipilata had a school, but Dipilata had

3 7 8 2 5 b

Mr. Wilkin: Would this have been before the missionaries were there, or before?

Mr. Suckling: I am not certain, but during the war there were no missionaries at Dipilata and during the war dad ran the school. When they came back after the war, with their vastly increased number of missionaries, they found the school in session there and I think - I am not quite sure how interested they were in the continuation of it - it went on being run by dad. The teacher was paid by dad and all the facilities, the books and things, were sent by him.

3 7 8 2 6

He did another thing that I have not mentioned before, a big printing work. He had a printing machine at Chitokoloki right from the earliest days. A lot of printing work was done hymn books and a magazine for the Christians who could read and which was in both Luvale and Lunda. He used to write it himself. He trained African men to print it. That worked for many years until other people in Zaire got a much more efficient printing machine and he turned over all his stuff. (That was at Muchacha.)

3 7 8 2 7

Mr. Wilkin: Can you think of anything else with regard to his relationship and co-operation with Peter Letchford, especially with any proposals for a secondary school?

Mr. Suckling: He was very, very keen to start a secondary school. He was on the Christian Council. In fact he was Chairman of the Christian Council, which was an advisory board to the Government of Northern Rhodesia in the 1940s. It was medical as well as educational, but mostly to do with educational work and it was that that brought together not just the Brethren, of which he was the only representative, but all the different missions that were interested in educational work, including the Roman Catholics. He was also a member of the Advisory Board. He was held in great esteem by the educational people in the government because of his knowledge, ability and background of experience in educational work, and it was in the Christian Council that he saw the government moving towards secondary school education. He therefore determined that the Brethren should join with the AEF (or SAGM as then called) to form a secondary school. In fact the plan went ahead very well. In the end I think they decided to have it in Bembaland and not even in this province. At first they wanted to have it, in co-operation with Mr Letchford, (in the province) possibly in Kabompo District, half way between Mutanda and Chitokoloki. But in the end when he found that there was also an increasing amount of education going on in Bembaland, in the Northern Province, he was quite keen on having it at one of the big mission stations there.

Mr. Wilkin: Would Stokes have come in among the Brethren educators, in Luapula?

Mr. Suckling: Stokes, I believe, had left by then. Fort Rosebery was where Dad wanted to have the Sec Sch., because I can remember going with him to Fort Rosebery and actually choosing a site for the school. I am not quite certain why it fizzled out; why they did not have it. I think it was the government; the plans did not go ahead; either it was the government or they couldn't raise the funds. I can't remember now why they didn't have it.

3 7 8 2 8

One of the most important things that you have to remember about my father's attitude towards education was that he was the first missionary that I know of who was willing to hand his outschools over to the Native Authority. The Government was eager to take over the education from the missions. They wanted first to take over the schools in chief's (capitals) under the Native Authorities. That way the chief would be responsible for his own school. Most missionaries fought it; but dad saw ~~the thing was getting too big~~, that it ought to be handled by the Native Authority and the Government. So He was the first to hand over his schools. He turned over the first schools at the end of the '40s ~~and now the beginning of 50s that he handed over, I think that the Standard IV school at Loloma may have been handed over to the Native Authority when I went there. But I am fairly certain that Samuel Moonlight was no longer a mission employee. But dad saw that this was the right thing and he was definitely the first to hand over.~~ By the time I left Loloma in 1952, I think I am right in saying that all the outschools were Native Authority. (I was only at Loloma for two years because our first daughter had developed cancer of the eyes and had to have both eyes removed and the doctor said we had to live near a hospital. And We lived 110 miles from the nearest doctor, with no car ~~on any thing and~~ so we decided, Peggy and I, to come up to live with her parents and I lived with and worked for her parents for seven years (until 1959) in the store business ~~and that was~~ so we could be near Kalene Hospital.

3 7 8 2 9

Mr. Wilkin: Although you were away from your father in the 1950s, do you recall anything further about his work before his death, or were the '40s his high days.

Mr. Suckling: The '40s were his high days as, you see, he died in 1953. ~~The~~ The school work was being carried on by Mr. Caldwell and of course by then they had got Dr Worsfold, Mr Deubler, who became head of the Mission station. (It had become enormous by then.) Nisbet was there then as well. There was a full and a very well run Standard V and Standard VI, "upper middle", as they called it. That was boarding and still under the mission. That remained under the mission for a long time. It was the last to go. The

 37830

Mr. Wilkin: You mentioned earlier "Uncle Jim Caldwell" and now again.

Mr. Suckling: Yes, he was my uncle because he married my mother's youngest sister who came out to Chitokoloki as a nurse. [redacted] Jim Caldwell came out to do educational work and handiwork. They are now retired in New Zealand.

Mr. Wilkin: We have ignored the topic of the Jeannes teachers. Your father sent several, I believe for training. What did they do? 37831

Mr. Suckling: The Jeannes ~~School~~ was an effort to train ~~the~~ best teachers to become Managers of schools. These were Teachers who would visit around and supervise the out-schools. ~~That was the point of trying to get help to the most~~ The work just became too much at Chitokoloki for us to be constantly moving around looking after these out-schools, so he wanted to train the best teachers he had, to become Jeannes teachers so that they could be free ~~to go around to all those other schools~~ to do this specific work. John Mwondela was the first - a very, very capable man with a real gift for art and music. He was the first African I ever knew ~~[redacted]~~ who could play the organ, and he played it beautifully. He played it by ear, but I think it is likely my Aunt Nora ~~[redacted]~~ taught him, because she and my uncle Jim were very musical. (My uncle was a great singer and trained a choir, both in Lunda and Luvale and later in English. As the school was up-graded, Dad ~~also~~ used a lot of English, for instance in school prayers in the morning. He actually did a rather brave thing, he chose some of the best, most beloved hymns that were suitable for school boys to sing. Since some contained words that were vague and difficult to understand, he deliberately simplified them. I don't know whether he ever got a copyright for doing this, but he had a Chitokoloki hymnbook, which he printed himself, and it contained upwards of a dozen or nearly twenty English hymns that he had simplified, and they were sung. Also, the Lord's Prayer was always said with the school standing at attention and school prayers was always quite a thing in the morning - held in the church. 37832a

Dad originally came from the Church of England and went to a Church of England school and a lot of these sort of things (he liked). He would have loved to use the Prayer Book but it wasn't exactly very well accepted! ~~So this was difficult~~; He used to have set prayers and these hymns - and of course, they used both Lunda and Luvale - and the choir used to sing in both. They really had an excellent choir.

My uncle Jim was very good at training. He was the first to try and introduce African tunes, which was again very, ~~very~~ much frowned upon, which was a great pity. My father loved music but he was not very musical himself. ~~I [redacted]~~. Because he was such a pioneer, he refused to abide by the fears of other people. If he felt a thing was right, he

 3783 26

he would go out and do it. If only he had been musical, I think that music of the church in Zambia would be very different to-day. It is only now introducing its own tunes. I encourage it ~~wonderfully~~ as a very good thing. A lot of ~~the~~ The Africans are making up not only their hymn tunes but also their hymns and this could have been done years ago. ~~Africans that we thought like our own hymns.~~

My father, also, was one of the ~~first~~ foremost workers in interpretation. He was very, ~~very~~ fluent in both Luvale and Lunda and translated a lot of the Bible in ~~connection~~ conjunction with other people, like Singleton Fisher and Tom Rae. ~~He~~ Also a lot of the Lunda and Luvale hymns were translated by him from English to Lunda.

3783 3

Mr. Wilkin: Can you recall anything more about the Jeannes Teachers?

Mr. Suckling: Well, he gave them a very free hand. He loved to be able to see the ~~African~~ African teachers taking over more and more responsibility. I think he was very good in his choice of John Mwondela, a ~~chap~~ man who had a gift for administration, who was a nice, quiet, friendly man and yet a man who had a real presence about him. Dad encouraged them ~~wonderfully~~ to take responsibility even where making reports on the teachers were concerned. For instance, if the Jeannes teacher reported that teachers were very ineffective they would get a warning and be sacked on (their recommendation). He gave them that sort of responsibility. If the Jeannes teacher came back and said that ~~such and such~~ a certain school was in a very bad way, he gave them the authority to sack ~~them~~ or change teachers. ~~That was a thing;~~ They very quickly learnt to move teachers around, sometimes for illness or for other reasons. ~~Sometimes a man's wife was ill and he had to go into the hospital for a long period and he would have to get a teacher in to take his place.~~ Also if he saw a young teacher coming on and ~~he~~ needing ~~to take~~ the responsibility of being Headmaster of another school, he would be moved around. So he loved to see men taking responsibility. This, of course, carried over into the church and not just to education. I think that probably some of the finest elders that are in the church in this province became that way because dad gave them responsibility and pushed them into taking their own decisions. He loathed the Africans doing everything just because he told them to. He wanted them to stand on their own feet and make their own decisions.

Mr. Wilkin: I think that every African that I have talked to would agree with you on this point.

3784

Let me side-track just a little and ask about your father and Mr. Caldwell in relation to the secession issue of excising Balovale from Barotseland. I know you said he said he stayed at the boma for

six months. The Zambians have said they wanted him to be their interpreter and represent them. So they seem to have been deeply involved in this.

Mr. Suckling: That's right. What he did actually was to help write a history of the Lunda tribe. How the Lunda and Luvale settled in Zambezi District. Because you see it was a legal thing and they had a lawyer and a judge ~~[illegible]~~ to help. Dad was really the legal representative of the Lunda and Luvale people and Mr. Clay, who was the D.C. of Mongu, was the legal representative for Barotseland. (Dad) was able to produce written documentation which I am pretty certain can be ~~[illegible]~~ seen in the government records. ~~That is what it was based on.~~ He did all the work of interviewing elders and chiefs, and getting the facts of their history of what happened, so that he could argue the case. The case was that the Barotse ~~they~~ regarded the Lunda and Luvale people as their ~~people~~ property. They used to give presents to Lewanika. They were their slaves and, of course, they had a Barotse ~~presence~~ overlord; a prince of the royal (court) living in Balovale. He was there as sort of a legal representative of Lewanika's and this is what made them so angry. They pointed out that the gifts that they gave were only the gifts of one chief to another. That they weren't to be regarded as payment. I can't remember all the legal things, but dad was very interested in the whole legal set-up. He was able to get from F.S. Arnot's and other history books what the situation was in the days gone by. ~~The not court [illegible]~~ So that when they had the judge come up to Balovale, they used to sit through session after session and bring in witnesses. Dad did all the translating, of course, and the result was that he won. The Barotse failed to hold their case. That is why Balovale seceded from Barotseland.

Mr. Wilkin: A related question to this is that one Zambian said, "his door was always open" and in connection with this he went on later to say that at times he was willing to protect the Zambians' interests against the administration, even if it was not very popular to do so with the fellow Europeans.

Mr. Suckling: What particularly annoyed him was when local administrations used messengers, as they were called in those days, for the collection of local tax. (This was the very early period.) They used to go around and collect this "hut tax" as they called it. If people had not paid their tax, they were arrested and made to work as labourers at the boma. Fair enough, if that was the law, that was the law, but what he did not like was that the messengers used to overstep their authority and cruelly treat people. The best example, the famous one, that got him into an awful lot of trouble with the administration, but what he is

famous for all over Northern Rhodesia, was when one day he found a whole line of miserable men and women and quite old men and women actually chained together, with slave chains of wooden halters around their necks, and a messenger with a shambok in charge. The messenger had brought these people over the Zambezi River and they were seated in the blazing hot sun. Dad was told they had arrived and went down - they were not even in the shade and desperately hungry - and this messenger was eating his food [redacted] with his fellow messengers. Dad was so furious that he went and broke all the chains that were around them and set them all free and then told them that they couldn't go because they had been arrested, but that he would see to it that he, himself, took them up to the boma. He gave them a good meal.

The messengers were so angry that they went and reported to the local European administrator and told them a vastly exaggerated story and the administrator was furious. This would have been the D.C. in Balovale and in the 1920s. He reported that to the Governor and actually the Governor was a very good man and when they judged the case, they found that dad had been right, that the messengers had no right whatsoever to do that sort of thing.

But it got to the stage that [redacted] at the boma, if dad arrived on his bicycle or his large motorbike, the messengers used to get very afraid of what he had come for! Was it something else that they had done? They really were atrocious in what they used to do in the villages and when dad heard about it, if it was particularly bad, he used to go and report it.

Mr. Wilkin: Why, would you very concisely say, that I have got almost a veneration from the Africans for your father, when at times they have spoken very, very harshly of some of his fellow missionaries - speaking educationally now? You have really answered it indirectly, but would you like to add anything more?

Also, why have some of the only negative comments about your father that I have got at all, come from fellow missionaries, even some close workers in the mission?

Mr. Suckling: The reason I think is quite simple and that is that his fellow missionaries felt that he was going too far and too quickly in the education line. They felt that there was no necessity to educate the Africans at the speed at which dad was doing. He felt convinced that he was right and when he was convinced of a thing like that he just went ahead with it! He was not a particularly hard man, but he was very stubborn and when he decided that he was right, he just went

3783 6b

on with it and if anybody wanted an explanation they got it very politely, but he wasn't very interested in changing it. He did get into trouble with other missionaries about the speed with which he was educating people but after all it is history which has proved him right.

I think to ~~and it is difficult to say this, but I knowing him and having lived in this area all my life~~, basically he was a man who loved Africans. That may sound simple and a little bit oversimplified but the fact of the matter is that this is what they recognised. They recognised that although he was a big man amongst them, although he was their leader, he was not king nor lord; they could speak to him, he could comfort them and he was perhaps a pioneer against what they today would regard as "colour bar".

I should think that he was the first missionary that allowed Africans to eat at his table; let's put it that way. Chiefs who used to come visit him, instead of being given a mush in the kitchen, would be given a cup of tea in the sitting room. And I think that this is one of the things that the educated African would appreciate today, that he was the pioneer of the "educated culture" that the African is used to today. For instance, all our local teachers were my age or older, and I used to have them in for a dinner at my house. Peggy, my wife, was very unhappy about it at first, for she had come from a home where she had never even shaken hands with an African until she got married to me. ~~She was not at all happy about having them for dinner and~~ When they came to dinner they did not know how to use a knife and fork, but because we were in very good relationship, we all laughed about it and there was no sense of shame. The whole idea was to learn how to use a knife and fork and that you had different courses, that you used a spoon for pudding and and not a knife and things like that.

Then another thing that dad and I both tried to teach them, was to eat with their families. He taught his teachers to eat with their wives, a thing that they had never ever done. I think that you will find the first Zambians to ever eat with their wives were the Chitokoloki people.

Mr. Wilkin: Is there anything else, educational or otherwise, that you would like to add about your father. I can't think of anything else that I want to ask you.

3783 7a

Mr. Suckling: My memory of him was that he was a giant of a man in every way and yet a very humble and loving man. Tremendously capable. A man who would have been at the top of his tree in any business line. He was, of couse, a businessman before he came out to be a missionary. That is what he was well known for amongst the government. I think the

3 7 8 3 7 b

government regarded him as being the best missionary administrator. He was a man who could see ahead, had tremendous vision and who was a very, very hardworker. But I also think that that he had a gift of getting other people to work together with him. That is a very difficult thing, to be able to get doctors and teachers to work with you and to be their leader. I have been on other mission stations and of course they all had their leaders, and I think the same that can be said of my father could be said of Dr. Walter Fisher, and that is that the missionaries who worked for him all loved him. 3 7 8 3 8 c

Mr. Wilkin: I think everything that you have said at the end has been said to me in even greater praise words by Zambians that I have talked to.

Now I would like to ask you as my final big question about your own work of founding The Bible School. One person said: "The late Mr. Suckling was the first to help us get basic education and the only one who has really helped us in Bible training has been his son." So they brought you in at the very end. Thus, I would like you to make a few comments on how you happened to start, what your aims are and what you feel your achievements have been in the last decade and a half.

Mr. Suckling: You see here again it was against missionary tradition which is that all teaching of the Bible should be done in church. I am not saying that it was not done, but I maintained that it was not being done effectively because the local Christians who came to Sunday service would receive a certain amount of teaching but there was nothing consecutive about it. So they never ever really learnt the facts of the Bible, or the truths of Salvation, in a consecutive manner that they could grasp, or that would be meaningful to them and help them in their Christian work. I felt that we should not give up what was going on in the church but that there was a tremendous crying need, especially now that so many were educated, to help the average African Christian, [illegible], who could read, to know his Bible better and that way to come to know his Lord better. Now I knew that there were Bible Schools of a very academic order in Zambia - not in our mission - in other missions that were very good and I would have been happy to have sent any of our bright young Christians to them, but they were all in English and they were all issued a diploma. You have to have Form I and Form II education quite naturally if you are going to work in English and they were of the standard of a Bible School in England. But then all that did was to reach about one percent or less of the Christians in the area. I thought there was a tremendous need just to help the ordinary, average African at grass-roots level. I was again laying a foundation that could be built on later

on and trying to get the Africans to be interested in learning more about the Bible, coming for longer periods.

When we first started, the idea was to have just a few for a period of four months and really teach them something. Now I couldn't force anyone to come. I didn't want to even invite certain people to come, in case they became my disciples. I wanted to leave it open to any Christian who felt he wanted to come and could spare the time. And so in the first year in 1960, we only had seven students. We had them for four months and I had worked flat out to get a lot of buildings up and it was rather disappointing that only seven came. ~~Then we had another few.~~ But we pressed on.

We had houses so they could come with their wives and they worked for their fees in the morning and then we had lessons in the afternnon and evening. I soon got away from that, because too few people could come. By this time a lot of the Christians were at work, especially the educated ones holding jobs and they were the fellows who needed to be helped. Also, I found the uneducated ones, although they could read and write, could not really take in four solid months study. They had never done it in their lives before. So we started to curtail it to one month and now we have two weeks. It doesn't seem very much, but we have them again and again and again.

Although we have only two or three sessions a year actually on this place for two week periods, we have them now all over the district and call them Bible Camps. It is again an encouragement to reach the grass roots. We have 55 village churches in this district in different areas. We encourage the elders of the churches in one area to organize a Bible Camp every year and either I would go or Barry, my colleague, will go, or we even have Africans now who can teach sufficiently well to really be a blessing. That has not happened through any education diploma, but they just kept coming back and coming back. Of course, it is a spiritual thing too; it is not just an academic thing. We found the spiritual value has been tremendous. It has transformed the lives of a lot of people. I find it a very, very worthwhile work. They have learnt a lot. We also do practical courses. For instance, my colleague down in Balovale, who has started now, Mr. Lorna Ferguson, is just now doing a two week period and he is taking a series on marriage, which is just about the best series that I have ever heard in English or Luvale. This is the fourth time he has done it and it has opened the eyes of many. It is a real education apart from the Christian value of it. ~~The actual education physically. The nonsense that is believed by the African person in the village - about the process of birth and how to bring a child up and~~

~~all this, from a medical point of view, this is itself an education, but it is a spiritual education.~~

Although dad never saw this day, I am absolutely convinced that he would have been very happy about it, because he had the ~~from~~ beginnings of it in the magazine he produced. He used, also to bring in teachers for refresher courses and although the refresher courses were from the point of view of education, he also included a spiritual time of retreat. But ~~this is~~ our Bible courses are something more than that and we have found that ~~it has~~ they have been of tremendous value spiritually and nowadays because it is only for two weeks, they pay a very small fee. Also, Peggy is training the African women in organizing cooking for a big group. (The African woman is an expert cook, so you have to qualify that statement.) But it is in the organizing for many people that ~~they don't know.~~ they are not experienced They cannot handle it. At the last Bible School, we had 250 for two weeks and to cook for that huge crowd, Peggy had to organize a team of ten women every day. She now has leaders so that she can literally leave the ~~thing~~ work to the leaders to do. ~~We~~ We have excellent Christian women who can do ~~that~~ the cooking and all she needs to do is produce the food and they can organise it.

Many of the people coming are not elders but younger men. Some of the older ~~elders~~ men are just past it, they just can't grasp the new teaching. It is for the younger men, really, and already we have leaders now, who are elders, who have been in the Bible Schools for ten years. We are not trying to produce ministers or even evangelists or African missionaries. From the Bible School, evangelists have ~~appeared because they have come~~ gone out, even full-time African missionaries, who are doing a very good job in their area, teaching, evangelising, etc. They are in full-time work receiving gifts from their fellow Africans, same as we are - not "paid". Most of ~~these~~ has come forth from the Bible Schools and they have become people who are completely taken up with the work of the church and who are sufficiently trained to be effective. You can make a man into an evangelist but if he has no training whatsoever, his work is very ineffective because he doesn't know what to say. People get very tired of listening to the same sermon over and over again. A ~~fellow~~ man has to have something to be able to give out and that is where ~~it~~ Bible School becomes effective. ~~They~~ These men are becoming my very great friends. ~~When I go around~~, I spend most of my time off this place and always take one or two with me and together we share the work Even on the Copperbelt this idea of two week Bible Schools is spreading. Just recently I went with one of my local African missionaries who had been to the Bible School ~~several~~ many times right from the very beginning and we shared two sessions for ten days each, and he was far more effective

than I was in the teaching and really went down very well.

Mr. Wilkin: I think you have answered all the questions that I can think of at this time. Thank you very much.

Additional materials resulting from the interview

Mr. Gordon Suckling

Interviewed on: 26th November 1977
at his home in Mwinilunga District

Note: Quite a lot of correspondence and contact between us occurred after this interview. Both Gordon and his wife were very concerned about his speaking very freely and even about grammar. I assured them about confidentiality and that in such an interview grammar was not really important. Even drafts of my dissertation material were send and exchanged. He possibly expected a more usual-looking book and not a dissertation. After a final copy sent to him, he did not repeat his request for more copies.

17 items of correspondence followed this interview

- **6 items were exchanged in the period Nov. 1977 to Sept. 1978 while I was living in Solwezi.**
- **11 items were exchanged between April 1982 and January 1984.**

V

61-15 98th St., #4E
Rego Park, New York 11374
9 January 1984

Dear Gordon

Thank you for your letter several months ago. I am pleased to tell you that on Christmas Eve I received "xerograph" copies of my dissertation for you and for other interviewees who responded to my letter last July.

Within the next ~~fortnight~~ week, I shall get these copies into the post using parcel post surface mail. The post office tells me that the copies to Britain should arrive by mid-February and the copies to Zambia should arrive in late April or May. From experience, however, I suspect that those to the former may take until the end of February and those to Zambia until the end of June. Should you not get your copy by my latter estimate, please let me know.

Along with each copy, I shall enclose a note. I shall also enclose forms instructing everybody how to get additional copies, if desired. American and Canadian dissertations (except for those from a tiny handful of universities) have really become a new type of book as you shall see -- one of the many new by-products of the modern age!

I hope that you have a wonderful New Year, with good health and much happiness.

He often struggled valiantly forward with very little resources + money.

Very sincerely,

* Please keep in mind above, all that from my studies + from the little information I have gleaned on your father, I greatly admire him. "Even when he did not succeed the ~~missing~~ ~~picture~~ ~~has~~ ~~depths~~ ~~+~~ ~~spirit~~ ~~—~~ no small feat. Above all ~~the~~ ~~point~~ ~~is~~ ~~that~~ ~~he~~ ~~did~~ ~~things~~ ~~no~~ ~~one~~ ~~else~~ considered impossible.

David Wilkin

P.S. Thanks for your letter dated 2 April, postmarked 7 July + received late July. Your points of criticism were ~~in many ways~~ valid. Until 1 May I reserved the last page of the diss. for a final appendix for such points as you raised. Anyway, I am sure that you will eventually want to raise many more points with me on details + interpretation + I hope you will + eventually do so. * ~~Pit~~ absolute frankness. *

Box 175
Rego Park, NY
11374
10 July 1983

Dear Gordon,

Enclosed is the personalized "form letter" that has been sent to all interviewees — most of whom I have not contacted from America. Since we have already been corresponding, a copy will be sent to you later this year whether you find time to write or not.

I am also sending you an extra copy of the abstract. This is the part that potential buyers read first to decide if they need the dissertation. It receives wide publicity in academic circles around the world.

Hopefully you received the extracts from the two chapters that I sent to you in late March, if I recall correctly.

Very sincerely,

David

As from. Sachibondo Bible School
P. O. Box 38.
Mwinilunga
N. W. Province
Zambia.
2nd April 1983.

Dear David.

I am on the Copper Belt and your letter arrived yesterday from Mwinilunga. I hasten to reply and am sorry that I will have to be very brief as I am snowed under with work here.

First of all my Aunt's name was Nora not Nellie.

Secondly your interpretation of the facts is fair enough, but I feel that in the criticism made on page 39 by the D.C. two things need to be pointed out. Dad's inability to visit his outschools stemmed not from lack of interest but from over-work. Your thesis is on Education but I think it would be fair to comment that Dad was not only short-staffed - through no fault of his own - but was involved in developing the medical side of the work at Chitokoloki as well. His decision to get the D.C. to help him force the children to come to School was a mistake - I agree. But again it may be important

to point out at this juncture (for the sake of the present generation of Zambians) that the children and adults of those early days were not interested in being educated. Dad having seen the vision and the need was frustrated by their blindness and by their lack of commitment. So many Zambians today blame the early missionaries for not educating the African (and in many cases this was because they did not share Dad's vision) and then forget that that generation could not have cared less if they were not educated.

I must close. I am looking forward to the finished product.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon

P.O. Box 175
Rego Park, New York 11374
20th March 1983

Dear Gordon,

If I take the time to write you a long letter with this final bit of material, you will never get the script. I am being pushed by frantic deadlines. It is, however, the 3rd and 4th sections of Ch. XI--consult the outline.

Anyway, I am least happy with this material on your father. I explain the dilemma in fn. 61. For details I have been forced to depend on at times hostile government officers' reports.

This is an era you will no doubt recall well, and indeed I mention you in the text. This script will no doubt stimulate your memories of some of these events. Please do write me of any errors and suggestions. If the mails are quick each direction I will be able to make suitable corrections and/or acknowledgements.

Although not everything will please you, I think you will like my summing up of Chitokoloki and your father on pages 47-8. These are some of my most flattering comments anywhere in the thesis on anyone!

I look forward to hearing from you. Use my Syracuse address: 119 College Place
Syracuse, New York ~~XXXX~~ 13210

Very sincerely,

David

David Wilkin

P.S. I finally found your aunt's ~~XXXXXXXXX~~ first name, Nora! But do you recall Mrs. Rudge's first name and maiden name?

12 March 1983

Dear Gordon,

In great haste I am sending you the section of Chapter X that specifically deals with your father. As this is still a bit before your time of active missionary work at Chitokoloki, you may not have much to say. If possible, however, at least quickly confirm its having reached you safely.

By the time your reply reaches me, I will probably be in Syracuse once again working on the word processor and preparing to defend my thesis. Thus, instead of my NYC address, please use the one above, i.e. Foreign and Comparative Studies Program, 119 College Place, Syracuse, New York 13210.

Much more important to you will be the section of Chapter XI on your father. In many ways your father is an enigma to me between 1933-45, the last period of my study. I suspect that if I err in my interpretation it will be during this period. Hopefully I will get this material off to you this week. It will take a great of luck to get your reply in time, but we shall hope! The computer will help, even if I get a word from you a day before, I could rush in a change or so. I must submit a final copy to the university in late April or the first days of May.

I appreciate you and your son's kind comments on Chapter VIII. Do keep in mind, however, that this is only a dissertation, a book may, with lots of luck, follow later. Nonetheless you can get multiple copies. But let us discuss this later!

Very sincerely

SACHIBONDU BIBLE SCHOOL

Box 38
P.O. MWINILUNGA
ZAMBIA

20th.Feb.1983.

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of the 25th.January, and for sending the draft chapter on my father's involvement in the immergance of class-room education in the N.W.Province. It makes very interesting reading.
In all honesty I find it difficult to criticise what you have written, as I was totally ignorant of the facts you have presented until I read of them in this paper. My father and mother hardly ever refered to that part of their history, and my information up till now has come from rather skimpy references by the Africans who were actually with him in those days.
One of the young men you refer to, that went to Chitokoloki with Dad from Kalene, is in fact still alive today and lives in Lusaka. Chivivi the wife of Thomas to whom you refer on page 12, is ~~xxiii~~ also still alive, but is so old that she would not remember much of the details of those days.

I feel you have written sensitively about my father, and your assessment of his character on page 2 is accurate. I agree it is inevitable that you and I look at him from different perspectives, but I challenge you to produce many "oak trees" that approached anything like his stature.
I am probably speaking from ignorance of the facts in an overall picture of Zambia in those days, but certainly in the N.W. Province there was no one to touch him.

You say on page 7 that he was no revolutionary, and yet where traditional "Brethren" attitudes and methods were concerned, he was. He was a man of true vision, but no mere visionary, because he implemented his vision with tremendous energy, courage, and determination. The chapter you have written on him ends on a sad defeated note, but that was not true of his ~~xxx~~ life or work. Surely when you come to Chapter XI you will be telling the tremendous story of his success in education. I joined him as a lad out of school in 1938, and already the education process had developed to a degree greater than anywhere else in the Province. I taught a small class of picked students in what was the first Standard VI. of the Province. Some of those students are now in ~~xxxxxxxx~~ in the Government whose children are doctors, ~~xxxxx~~ teachers, or engineers. When Chitokoloki was at its peak educationally, there was not only a large and well organised Boys and Girls Boarding School, but a Teacher Training School, and a Trades School as well. Even in the Medical work, my father was determined to train as many Africans as possible, proving that Africans could hold down these jobs. That first training work was to be the inspiration and foundation of the present day Nurses Training Schools

that now produce fully qualified nurses. Because father was not a medical man, or for that matter a trained teacher, he drew to himself qualified men of real ability to help him in his educational programme. Men like Victor Reed, Alex Misbet, Theo Doubler, and Jim Worsfold. His faith in the African has been well rewarded, and it is interesting to note that his vision of the developement of village industries is now one of the top prorities of the Zambian Government. Above all he had an unwavering faith in God, who he knew could do the impossible. This was the anchor to his optimism, drive, and unceasing labour. I share his faith with him, and know that if he was still alive he would be thrilled with the expansion, maturity, and independance of the indigenous church in these days.

My son Kenneth who is here with us at Mchibondu these days has read yor paper and is very interested. He asks if you would send us ten copies (which of course we would pay for) of your completed work, with four of these copies autographed by yourself. He says he knows top Government officials who will be very interested. In fact he suggest that we give a copy to the President!

Thank you for your work. With greetings.

Yours,

Gordon

25 January 1983

Dear Gordon,

At long last here is the chapter that I promised to send you. I am also sending you a chapter outline of the dissertation so that you can get some idea how it fits into the whole work.

As you can gtell, I am working on the new word dprocessors. Even though they make scripts look very fancy, this is still a draft. I must do the final copy in early March, but I can make changes until then. After the dissertation is completed, I will have a copy especially made for you. Also, under new university rules here in America and with special arrangements with the Xerox company, other people can also purchase copies for about $20, almost like buying a book.

You do not need to return this copy but when writing back please do the following: 1) clearly specify the word, passage, etc. you are referring to; and 2) make you comments quotable. The latter is especially true if and when (or when and if!) you object violently to part of, or my whole, interpretation. Should you object strongly to some part and if I do not alter the text accordingly, I will try hard to quote your viewpoint in the preface, a footnote, an appendix, or some such place.

Needless to say, we look at your father from extremely different perceptives. You will naturally recall him very vividly as a very fine oak tree, which he was. I am looking at him as one exceptional tree in a whole forest!

I would also especially call your attention to footnote twelve (page nine). I have become very interested in you father as ansignificant historical figure and so has my main professor--who is a student of Proof. Shepperson at the University of Edinburgh. I fear, however, that too few letters and writings by your father still exist for any scholar to ever write much about him beyond an article. Do think this over, however, and give me you opinion.

Last, please remember that this is a draft. It is intended only for you and for your family to read at this time. Other people will have a change later when it is completed. Under no circumstances should it be reproduced by any means whatsoever.

I look forward to your commentary. Please be frank.

All the best.

David Wilkin

P.S. I am sure that your wife will be interested in Chapter VII later. I almost sent it but postage is shocking to Zambia! Your father will also appear in many other chapters but this is his peak in my work.

P. O. Box 38.
Mwinilunga
N. W. Province
Zambia.

18 Oct. 1982.

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter which has just arrived. As we leave in two days time for a month in England and America I hasten to answer it now.

My Uncle became Principal of Dr. Barnado's Homes in England and then for the last years of his life was a Canon of the Church of England. He died around 1960 of the same sort of cancer that my Father had. He had two children, a boy and a girl, and when the boy was at a Public School my Uncle changed his name by Deed-poll from Suckling to [redacted] McDonald. He did this in order to preserve his son from being teased by the other boys, only to find that there were three other boys of the name Suckling already at the School! Looking back it would seem that my Father was the more dominant personality while Uncle was always rather a pale reflection of him. However, he was a good man, and although I seldom [redacted] saw him I regarded him with [redacted] affection. Just [redacted] before he died

"Peggy and I visited him and his wife in their lovely home in England. It was rather a painfull experience for me as Uncles voice and mannerism were so very like his twin brother my Dad.

Hope this will be some help!
Looking forward to reading your eighth chapter!
All the best.

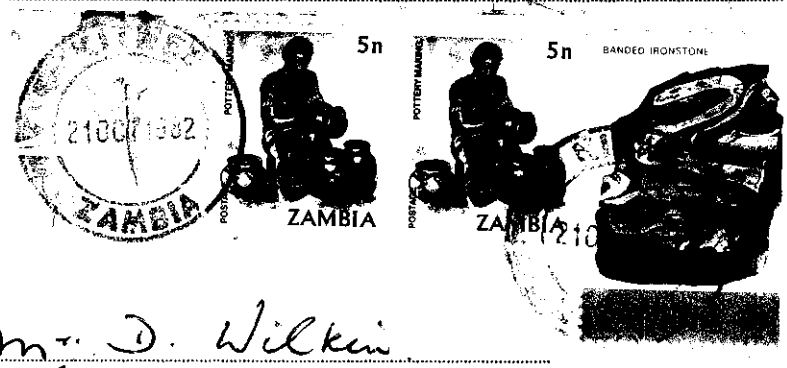
Gordon Suckling.

TO OPEN SLIT HERE

Sender's name and address G. Gordon Suckling
Sachibondo
Mwinilunga
N. W. Province
Zambia.

Enclosures are not permitted

SECOND FOLD HERE



BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION

AÉROGRAMME
AIR LETTER

POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

Mr. D. Wilkin
Box 175
Regs Park
New York 11374
U. S. of America.

Box 175
Rego Park NY 11374
20 October 1982

Dear Mr. Suckling,

Sorry not to write to you again after my letter in April. Your quick reply was appreciated. I hope that your intervening cool season was as pleasant as usual.

My dissertation hopefully will draw to a close at the end of this year. In November I shall try to send you the draft of Ch. 8 which directly relates to Ch. 1 & your father. It will be sent solely for you, your wife & immediate family's interest & hopefully for your response. It is a bit unusual for an author to do this, but I am anxious to get your feelings about this chapter. I could still make the odd change after that.

Although I had planned to ask you a few additional questions about your father, most were not that important in the end. This dissertation is still not officially a publication so before reaching that stage later I will have time to go back over parts of it again.

The only question I really need an answer to is what happened to your

uncle, an Anglican minister I believe, at the Barbados National School in the pre-World War II era. Anything you can tell me — in a few paragraphs!! — about him & his fate later would be most appreciated. If you can't recall don't worry, but if you can I will try to incorporate the information.

All the best. I will keep in touch.

Very Sincerely, David Wilkins

N. W. Province
Zambia.
6th May 1982

Dear Mr. Wilkin,

Thank you for your letter of the 11th April which seems to have taken an unusually long time to reach me. Probably what is known as the "Z" factor in this country!

I will gladly be of any help to you that I can and will try to answer your questions as quickly as possible although I am so busy travelling and teaching these days, that I don't have a lot of time for correspondence.

The men you mention in your letter do all still live at their former addresses, except for Mr. Silas Saneta, who now lives at his village near Kaleie M.S. If you write to him, I suggest you send it c/o. Miss A. Riddell.

Wishing you all the best. With warmest greetings.

Yrs.
Gordon Sackley.

P.O. Box 175
Rego Park, NY 11374
11th April 1982

Dear Mr. Suckling,

I have been thinking of you often during the last year, but have simply procrastinated! I saw your name recently in an old issue of Echoes & decided to finally write this note.

You will no doubt remember my interview with you in Nov. 1977. After much delay (due to resettlement in the USA & due to my wife being gravely ill), my writing is now moving forward. I hope to complete my work this year. Already I have completed the draft up to the mid-1930s. Chitokoloki & your father have a relatively prominent place.

If you so desire, I will send you some bits & pieces for your frank opinion in the next few months. Also, I have a few tiny questions pertaining to your father that have cropped up. You might help me resolve them. If you should like to correspond, I will look forward to hearing from you.

Eventually, I am also hoping to contact Mr. Silas Sameta, Mr. (Spider) Mutemba, Miss A. Riddell, & Mr. S. Tepa. Can you tell me if all of them still reside in Mwinilunga at their old addresses?

Very sincerely,

David Wilkins

(David Wilkins)

Nachibinda Bible School
P.O. Box 38
Mumbwa
11/9/78

Dear David.

I would be glad if you would allow the bearer Mrs Frost to read the transcripts of my conversation with you on the subject of my Father's contribution to Education in Zambia.

I hope you are well.

Sorry I still have not found the time to call on you!

Yours sincerely.

Gordon Hacking.

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xxxx

Centre for Continuing Education
P.O. Box 43, Solwezi

7th February 1978

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Suckling,

Thanks for correcting the script and leaving it with Mr. Rea in Mwinilunga. I collected it from him when up for the seminar given by the University. Sorry that you were away at a meeting but will hope that I can see you both again if I can get up in July or August after my three months of home leave.

You need not have worried so much about the grammar. Words generally come out differently when we are speaking than when we are writing. Thus, one is horrified quite often when they are put down on paper from a tape recording unless edited. This I did not want to do myself, but preferred to leave it to you to do if you chose. However, it was not really necessary as I am interested in the ideas and not how they are put. Some of the fanciest words have the least meaning! The facts and ideas and points you gave me about your father was the important thing. In fact when talking about a topic that one recalls with emotion, which certainly would be the case when talking about the work of one's beloved father, one's words are naturally put less grammatical! I have noted your corrections, none-the-less.

I doubt if I'll finish my thesis and book for another several years but when I do I'll try to make sure that you get a copy. Your father will certainly deserve attention and in fact that was the cause of my great desire to speak at length with you. He indeed one of the 'heroes' of the book! A man of foresight and vision that has had great impact on the province. In fact he deserves far more than part of the chapter that will deal with Zambezi and Chitokoloki.

Please excuse this sloppy letter! My secretary is on leave and typing in a noisy office without drafting is always a chore that I'd rather avoid.

My best regards.

Very sincerely,

David Wilkin

Mumbwa.
Jan 18th. 1978.

Dear Mr. Wilkin –

Gordon was so horrified when he saw his interview with you, in print – he has begged me to try to make it a bit more readable. I do apologise for making a lot of work for your secretary, but I'm afraid I have had to make a number of deletions and additions of words in order to make sense. Gordon says that having lived in Africa for so long, he must think and speak more like the African than he realises! With ref. to your proposed visit to Misimilunga, he is very sorry, but he is leaving at about 5. am Friday to go to Zambezi and Chavuma for an important meeting there. Doubtless we will meet up again but he is afraid that this time it will be impossible.

I do apologise for the grubby top page of the transcript. It is the fault of our stubborn cat who will sit on any piece of paper that seems to be particularly precious!

It was nice meeting you.

Yours very Sincerely –

Peggy Buckling.

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XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

6375
XXXXX

CENTRE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION,
P.O. BOX 43,
SOLWEZI.

XXXXXX

7/PDW/PROF

6th January, 1978

Mr. G. Suckling,
P.O. Box 38,
Mwinilunga.

Dear Mr. Suckling,

I have just finished transcribing our interview, having my typist type the transcript and lastly re-playing the tape to catch major errors. Thus, you will note different sorts of corrections on the two copies of the transcript that I am enclosing to you. I should be grateful if you could go over them for any corrections. I shouldn't worry too much about style, etc., as this is more-or-less a transcription of direct speech which always tends to be repetitious and jumpy in places. I would think it more important for you to note and correct any incorrect or wrongly stressed facts or opinions. I have tried to use punctuation that seemed appropriate to give the right emphasis to your ideas, but this is no easy task and I may have wrongly connected or separated important ideas. Please also feel free to make additions either on the text, on separate added sheets, or at the end.

I should be grateful if, after going over the transcript and making any changes, you would return the original copy to me and retain the carbon for your own benefit. As I usually do, the transcript has been marked "confidential" meaning that I will only use it for my own research and should any other scholar wish to look at it, they would need to write to you for permission before quoting you. If you feel this is unnecessary just delete the word "confidential".

On 20th January, I hope to make a brief trip to Mwinilunga to give the postponed UNZA seminar from last November when I saw you. I would very much like to come up and see you briefly again before leaving on the 22nd, but simply do not know whether this will be possible within the close strictures of the timetable: arrival Friday afternoon to prepare for the seminar, seminar all day Saturday and departure on Sunday. If we can somehow meet, I would be very pleased. I hope to stay at Mr. William Rae's at the boma and we will be giving the seminar in the Rural Council Chamber.

Thus if we can meet, very good; otherwise, I shall hope to hear from you about the interview.

Very sincerely,

P. David Wilkin

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xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
xxxxx
xxxxx
CENTRE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 43, SOLWEZI

5th December 1977

Dear Mr Suckling,

Thank you very much for giving me so much of your time to interview you at length about your father's work in education. It was certainly one of the interesting and useful interviews that I have had in my research with anyone. I shall try to have it transcribed in the next several months and send you a copy to correct and annotate with any new ideas, points, etc., that you may like to make.

I was also most kind of you and your good wife to have the Reids and myself to lunch. They thoroughly enjoyed the stop with you as well and all of us found the tour of the new farm fascinating.

When in Solwezi please do stop by at least for a cup of tea and if late in the day a bed is always waiting for visitors. I shall be in my new home within the next fortnight. To get there, when coming from Mwinilunga, just turn left before you reach the old Solwezi church in the centre of town and go 300 or 400 metres until you come to a 'T' junction. My house is straight ahead so just curve around from the junction until you reach it. It is a large new white house with a high fence around it and not easily missed.

Wishing you a peaceful Christmas and pleasant New year.

Very sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

6375
XXXXX

CENTRE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION,
P.O. BOX 43,
SOLWEZI.

XXXXXX

300/1 DW/PROF

9th November 1977

Mr. Gordon Buckling,
Bible School,
Mwinilunga.

Dear Mr. Buckling,

We met about 12 years ago in Mwinilunga, but no doubt you do not remember me. Since then I have lived in various parts of the North-Western Province and Zambia. As you may have heard, I am presently writing a "History of Education in the North-Western Province". The more research that I do, the more I realize that about half a chapter needs to be spent on Chitokoloki and about your father who seemingly in the 1930s had advanced education further than anywhere else in the province. I have interviewed many Africans, and I am overwhelmed by their almost unanimous praise and details recalled of his work.

My interviewing is now ending but I would if at all possible like to chat informally or formally (on tape) - whichever you prefer - with you, about the educational work of your father.

I shall be in Mwinilunga District from the 24th-30th November and will endeavour to get in touch with you after arriving to see if it is convenient for us to talk about your father's work in the field of education.

Very sincerely,

P. David Wilkin

PDw/fm