

**Travelling through Europe and preparing to leave for Zambia and the NWP:
Seven letters to my Mom and Dad in Ohio between 22nd June 1963 and 29th July 1963
-- some important item are in bold & some very personal or family matters omitted**

Letter 1 – 22 June 1963, Saturday 11:00 A.M.

We [David and Ted (travel mate) are now settled in Amsterdam after several days of rapid travel and very fascinating experiences. We arrived in London at 9:30 (London time) and 3:30 A.M. your time, after a delightful sunny trip (naturally we were above the clouds). The night was quite short (3 hours) before the sun started rising at 1:00 A.M. over the Atlantic. (It had set at 10:00 p.m.. I had really anticipated what the flight would be like for most of the trip. But it is those interesting little things people don't tell you about, or you don't read about, that make trip fascinating. For example, on the flight it was the use of the toilet and the funny sensation that accompanied it that was most unusual. And, in London the fascinating thing was that almost every man on the crowded streets wore ties and suits. Quite a contrast to Amsterdam where we have seen very few.

We left London the afternoon of the first day, taking a train to the coast. And from there taking a boat across the North Sea to the Hook of Holland where we (yesterday morning 21 June) came by train to Amsterdam. After we got a hotel (for US\$2.25 with breakfast), we went to the Central Station, took another train out to Alkmaar (25 miles) for US70¢ round trip to the cheese market. At Alkmaar we took a canal boat around the city. (It is just full of canals as Amsterdam is.) We saw the city with its houses and buildings dating from 1400's.

Last night we ate very aristocratically for US\$2.00 in a luxury hotel. After napping we looked at Amsterdam at night and it was quite delightful, except cold, as it has been for the whole trip. (I have worn both sweater and coat all the time.)

When I was in London, I saw the American Commissioner on Education and I am informed he will contact me (probably in Copenhagen) on my appointment. However, I felt definitely I would be going to Northern Rhodesia from Britain. In fact, if I go, I will leave direct and end my trip early.

I will write tomorrow on the trip to Copenhagen.

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Letter 2 -- Copenhagen, 25 June 1963, 2 pp.

We [David and Ted] are now in Copenhagen. The weather has been cool the whole trip, but I understand this is not too exceptional for Europe in the north. This far the trip has been very relaxing and enjoyable. My first goal has been to rest and the second to sightsee. The only tiring parts are those long night train rides between cities which we have been making.

Yesterday morning after we arrived in Copenhagen and got a hotel, we looked over the city by the usual means -- trolley car. Along the seacoast (port) we saw the beautiful mermaid that the Copenhagen harbor is noted for.

While on the train up to Copenhagen, one thing especially interested me and is caused because we are so far north. We arrived through Hamburg, Germany at 3:00 A.M. and it was just getting light out. Last night it never got completely dark until 10:00 PM. As you probably know, if it wasn't for the North Atlantic Drift from the ocean blowing inland, northern Europe would be very cold as it is further north than any of the USA.

I imagine by the time you get this letter you will be in camp meeting. I will be praying for it and likewise I desire your prayers that I will not become careless in my thoughts and actions.

Thus far Ted and I have gotten along fine. We have taken our time and if I want to rest in, he takes both his cameras out and goes sightseeing. I think he will have enough movie film to show movies of the trip for at least 10 hours! He is quite an asset to travel with as he speaks German and Spanish rather well. And as you can imagine with so many languages in Europe, they have come in handy.

Last night we went to **Tivoli Gardens** which are a combination of Euclid Beach, Buckeye Lake and Chautauqua. Very beautiful with cultural as well as frivolous things to do. We saw, free of charge, a beautiful ballet and then elsewhere in the Garden three aerial acts. . . .

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Letter 3 -- Wed 26 June 1963 (4 pp.)

Tonight I will end my first exciting week in Europe. I really feel rested up after the long trip and all the events of the spring. We have decided to stay in Copenhagen one more day, so we will catch the bus out towards Metz and Stuttgart, Germany tomorrow instead of tonight.

Copenhagen is a beautiful city and the food is scrumptious and cheap. We have really eaten large meals, but believe it or not I have lost weight because of all the exercise I have gotten. Yesterday we took a bus tour (two hours) through the city and had three fares more paid for, for only 70 cents!

As you probably guessed from the envelope, **the Government notified me yesterday, after I wrote to you, of my definite appointment to Solwezi Secondary School, Solwezi, Northern Rhodesia.** I am cutting off my trip in Rome on July 18 to return at once to London and from there on July 25 to Solwezi. If you have already written to me at any of the places I designated, fine. But, if not, send any emergency mail to either Stuttgart or to Venice or Rome. If there is no emergency, I would appreciate having several letters waiting for me in London on how the summer is going and concerning any matters of business that I need to deal with before going to Africa. Send London correspondence to the address on the envelope:

P. David Wilkin, U.S. Educational Commission in the United Kingdom, 71 South Audley Street, London W1, Great Britain, Attention: Mr. Herrington.

. . . . I intend to buy a small record player in G.B. so that I can get some of my good music to me. I understand I will be paid quite a good salary -- equivalent to Cleveland \$5,500 to \$6,000. But none can (or little) can be converted to American dollars. So, what I buy in new things will be mostly British, for example tape recorder.

Where I am going has no electricity. Such things as my electric razors are worthless. . . . The climate in Solwezi is not hot but not cold either (never below 32 degrees) and in the summer (November to February) tropical shorts are worn. And, in the "winter", heavier clothing. (When I arrive it will be "winter".) I will have to learn more before telling you exactly what clothing I will need. -- But, this can wait till London.

Meanwhile the trip goes on tomorrow night, as I said, I head toward Cologne, Metz and Stuttgart, Germany. Above all I am resting up, knowing I will be busy when I hit London.

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Letter 4 -- Bolzano, Italy 8th July 1963

Yesterday we pushed over the Alps, and what a beautiful sight! We left Berlin by plane (as I told you in the post card) on Saturday P.M. at 4:00 PM and arrived in Munich at 6:00 PM. From Munich, we went to a little town to the south to stay called Sternberg. Yesterday we left there at 9:00 AM went through Garmish, Germany and Innsbruck, Austria but didn't really stop. (They are the tourist centres like Cherokee, NC and Gatlinburgh, TN [in the USA].) From there we came to Bolzano, Italy where we are now to get Ted's new car serviced. The mountains are beautiful and the background and the city is very old and the houses most quaint. They almost touch on some of the narrow streets. And Italian drivers -- wow -- they drive like madmen. Ted is very cautious in these mountainous roads, a little too slow I think, as we always seem to have 10 to 20 of these speeders waiting to get around on heavily travelled roads that twist like or worse (plus mountains) than Dry Creek [in Newark, Ohio].

Today we will head toward Venice and then before I leave to return to London on July 14 we hope to go to Florence and Rome.

The trip has been real restful and I have tried to make it thus as I know in London I will be most busy. It has also been very fascinating and educational being able to see what I have always taught about. I will be both sorry and glad to see the trip end next week. I am a little tired of traveling and moving constantly, despite the sights. What has bothered me somewhat more is the problem of languages. I just guess so I am acquainted just with one and we change countries and have to start over. Yesterday in a few miles we travelled through three countries -- Germany, Austria and Italy. This is what is great about the USA -- no borders. I like to mix and to talk to people and not to move to ask for an interpreter when I want a glass of water. I am convinced that I will have to get busy to learn French and German. I never could see why to learn them before. (Also I am getting anxious to get to London.)

By the way, when I get to London, I will write and tell you what to send me. (I will make it as brief as possible because of time involved to get it to me, trouble for you and cost.) I know the government will help speeding shipment and take care of cost. I will send you the money for shipment. I hope you can have the list of records and clothing to me in London on July 18 as I wrote earlier. . . . I am out of space. Write to London.

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Letter 5 -- London -- July 21, 1963

It has been some time since I wrote to you. So, I have much to say in a little space. I'll start with the last things to hit me first. Mr. Harrington tells me that in the African schools there is a strong religious environment and was pleased in noting my background. Here in London, after trying vainly to find any church with a reasonable amount of standards, I think is almost pagan (as like our large American cities, only worse) you can't even get religious music on the radio! The people of Africa are far less pagan than the people of our civilized society. How sad!

Now back to Berlin. After flying out of Berlin to Munich, we headed south (2 weeks ago) across the Alps into northern Italy. Proceeding to Venice, we had an unusually good time. In Venice you must relax and move slowly as there is no way to travel except on foot or by boat. Not even bicycles! Even boat jams! Instead of Coca-Cola, the US Coke boats. Keep in mind in all of Italy there is a three hour siesta.

. . . . On leaving Venice, we went to Florence, a true art and music centre of the civilized world. You can read and see pictures of some painting and statues, but you must see them to really appreciate them. Take Michelangelo's David. It might bother you because it is a nude. But if you are noting the beauty of work, the workmanship, skill, grace and beauty of it, it is beyond words! All you can do is stand quietly and admire its greatness. I feel God himself would show no displeasure as I am convinced there is nothing harder to copy and perfect than humans in sculpture and painting.

Anyway, on to Rome, a city of religious form, fast drivers, and sin. Beautiful structures of churches that are beyond description again and which reverence surrounds and yet at their very doors the worst sins and open on the trip to Europe. How sad! Fast drivers of Rome and Florence were not overestimated And then Paris -- no better. They go everywhere at once at top speed.

In Rome I left Ted Rudin. We had gotten along fine. But, I was glad to get out on my own. And his cameras! He was worse than Harold [another American friend]. He says he will come down and show you his pictures and I told him I felt sorry for anyone who saw them. I think he took everything in Europe. I'll bet they will take 4 or 5 hours to show.

From Rome to London I had the worst things happen and the best. It was a . . . ghastly train trip, but interesting to no end. The railway officials were the most inefficient I have ever seen in my life. They told me there was a second class train from Rome to Paris. And, there wasn't. I almost got stranded in Bologna, Italy, overnight. I (like several other poor chumps) got on a first class train and were constantly awakened to pay more. In the end it would have paid to gone by plane (Rome -- London) in two hours instead of 18 hours to Paris and 10 hours to London. Anyway in Paris I ended sharing a ghastly room with a Canadian. I was worried, but it turned out excellently as he was a fine person just out of college and very interesting. Also by the sharing I met a North Carolina boy from Yale who was just returning from teaching in India. Also in Paris I meet on a trip a teacher from NYC who worked in the slum areas and who introduced me to two boys from Minnesota just ready to start work as engineers. A really interesting group altogether. Then the trip to London where it was beastly cold. (Paris and Rome had been like our hottest days.) The Channel Crossing was tiring and the cold penetrating and rainy. Anyway, on last Thursday at 9:10 AM, I arrived in London on time.

Then the news [from Africa] which I thought terrible, but which has been a blessing. There was no opening by plane until August 7, and school starts August 1. However, there has been so much business to take care of and time to study and things to see and do that I am glad of the delay although hate to be to school late.

The problem was caused as I did not get their last two letters. . . . I did get a letter from the Principal of Solwezi and he sounds very fascinating and I am so excited I can hardly wait. I understand that as secondary schools are a privilege to attend such things as discipline do not exist as problems. The boys will range from 15 to 19 years of age. Miss Jones (Mr. Herrington's assistant) agrees, as I said, that London is far more pagan than Africa.

Next week will be very busy. On Monday I must take shots for typhoid and x-ray for TB. .. I must also meet Mr. Nkonga from the Northern Rhodesia House. This is all very fascinating. . . .

I am still receiving pay (until 1 September) from Cleveland Board of Education, but the Credit Union's handling that matter along with other business for me so you won't have to worry. In

Cleveland the most helpful individual would be and has been, Mr. Clyde Varner , Supervisor of Social Studies, Cleveland Board of Education, East, 6th Street, Cleveland, Ohio.

If you want to consult anyone about me in the Government, either contact Mr. J.O.A. Herrington, 71 Audley Street, London W I (preferably as he knows me and while he is British is employed by the American Government as I understand it). Also you could contact in emergency Mr. Frank Thomas, Teacher Exchange Section, Bureau of International Education, Washington D.C..

I plan only one year as that is all the Government will permit at one time, with a few exceptions, in which case I would know no differences until next February. But, that is a long way off and much may happen!

Financially, I am setting well as the Government is paying me much better than I dreamed. They gave me 800 £ sterling when I reached London which is \$2,400 to put in an account at once and all together I will get \$6,000 with low taxes. . . . It is very confusing -- much will be not taxable . . . but must be used in sterling (pounds £) in the Commonwealth or England. For example, if I have money left I cannot travel in America or buy a car there, but would have to buy it here and travel here

By the way, [Solwezi] is a considerable distance from Victoria Falls; but we will have a month, mid-summer (December -- January) to travel and I hope I will be able to travel there.

I understand and another Cleveland teacher (whom I met by accident in Cleveland, a sharp young lady from Collinwood H.S.) will be in another part of N.R, and just left London before I arrived.

In the Principal's [Mr. Nisbet's] letter, he told me another American there has offered to share his house with me. Also on the staff, he said there was a Canadian and wife, himself, (Scot), Welshman, two English, one Basuto, and two natives of Rhodesia. Sounds like a cosmopolitan, vibrant group, doesn't it?

My conditions will be "crude" with no electricity in Solwezi.

Feel free at all times to tell people about whatever I write you except confidential matters such as money and matters which the press might use, such as any bad conditions (no water, etc.) in the country. I don't mean you couldn't tell friends about any conditions, but what I mean be careful if at any time you should be interviewed my any news agency (magazines, [Newark, Ohio] Advocate, Cleveland Press, etc.) on my work.

Pass this letter on to Danny [my brother] or at least the newsy part as I will seldom have time to write such news and long letters. Cherish it carefully! HA.

I am tired. I have written for two hours I couldn't do this often, love of family or not! HA

Will write later for more work for you. HA

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Letter 6 -- London, July 22, 1963

We've having unusual weather in London I understand -- hot -- I believe it is, as until yesterday it has been actually cold.

Today has been busy, but interesting. I got a yellow fever vaccination (no reaction at all) and an X-Ray again, as I didn't my certificate. And I need it. (Friday I get doses 2 & 3 of typhoid, they

give both at once in G.B. and I dread it. But, then I hope to have most of my busy work done so I will plan to be sick for a few days.)

Also I met Mr. Nkonga in charge of the Northern Rhodesia delegation. An interesting and intelligent native of Rhodesia. I have an idea that Edith and Russell met quite a different quality of native than many I will met.

Tomorrow I lunch with Mr. Herrington and a doctor returning from Rhodesia. Frankly, I am meeting some very important men in the world and it is fascinating and interesting to note their ways and manners.

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Letter 7 -- London, July 29, 1963

All is well today as usual. I am combining my relaxation with appointments sightseeing. I received the letters from you today, one from grandma and one from Jim Brooks, quite a record.

I have had a busy but fascinating time since I last wrote you -- mostly with meeting new people and seeing parts of this gigantic city. Fortunately, after much diligent searching and prayer, I found a very pleasant little church to attend while in London. I really feel it is a congregation of the Church of God. Through the Church I met a Fulbright teacher who is getting ready to return to the States (California) after teaching a year here in London. (Excuse all this scribbling. I am trying to hurry, as I want to get a good night's sleep before an exciting day tomorrow.) It was a real relief to find fellowship with God's people here. I really felt at home, although I am sure there is not the full depth to the messages I have heard. But I know it is the attitude and spirit that counts.

Well, getting down to some business. I can see I can get you somewhat confused on a few things and I am also afraid you are working too hard on my notes. There is no grave hurry. TAKE YOUR TIME.

As to the telegram today. Don't worry if you have sent the letter to Washington asking about notification and confirmation of my appointment to Newark. But, if you haven't written to Washington, DON'T. I took care of the matter in anticipation of their letter to you -- before you ever wrote to me (today). When my personal business is involved with such things and you are not sure what to do, I would rather you would telegram me than make a mistake -- some things such as the draft board. London told me how to handle myself and while it is not worth any worrying about, I repeat it looks odd to Washington why you would write them when I have instructions in London, (n.d., they knew I did) on how to handle it.

If you have matters that concern my wellbeing or health etc., feel free to get advice, help or to advise Mr. Thomas in Washington. But, if it is business I may be able to take care, please telegram first. And if it is not too urgent, use this policy next year. But, again, don't hesitate as Washington will be helpful. This is not the army. I am a good will ambassador -- especially if you are concerned about my personal wellbeing. (P.S., Your letter was businesslike and sweet.)

I have now received all your letters. Everything has come back from Rome.