

COMPANHIA COLONIAL  
DE NAVEGAÇÃO



29 September 1948

VAPOR "Pátria "

Dearest Mother,

We are now approaching Luanda, where we shall stop tomorrow morning at eight o'clock, so we understand. We plan to go ashore to visit with some of the missionaries there during the day, and are hoping that we will see something of one of the chief cities of Angola. In the latter part of the afternoon we expect to be aboard ship once more and on our way to Lobito, our port of destination. We should arrive there about Friday noon.

We plan to send you word as soon as we reach Lobito, but this will give you advance news of what we shall be up to in a few hours from now. Just how long we shall be in the city of Lobito we cannot say because we do not know all of the schedules, what time the train goes inland, it goes only two days per week, when we can see our goods in the customs house and have them arranged for shipment. There are a few things uncertain about travel. However, we expect to be in the central station of Dondi about the end of next week and at the mission in Chissamba about two weeks from now.

We have had a pleasant voyage so far. Smooth sailing except for about two days of swells along the African Coast, the Guineas. Everything running smoothly now. I cannot see to tell whether we are still running through yellowish colored water, a mixture of the Atlantic and the Congo River, or not, but we were this afternoon late. We could not see land, but the water was certainly muddied up. We have now passed the Equator, but the weather has been no more unpleasantly warm than when we left Lisbon. As a matter of fact, last night and the night before, when we were

approaching the Equator and crossing it, the weather was cooler than any we had experienced. Tonight we shall sleep as well as we have any other night we expect.

This trip has been much more enjoyable than the one we made a little more than a year ago from New York. The children have been easier to take care of. The diet has been more readily digestible by all hands. I have spent less time in bed. Probably we have been helped by frequent stops. Tomorrow we shall have been ten days on the water, but in this time we have stopped at two different islands and seen land every day but three. We stopped at the island of Madeira, where we made some purchases. We trust that the mails will safely carry a blouse to Olive, and some other things. I've forgotten exactly what Betty bought, but we'll send a list. We also got some chairs to use in Africa. The stop at Madeira was made on Tuesday. On Wednesday we saw the Canary Islands. On Thursday we saw only water, but were fairly close to land all day. On Friday we saw Cape Verde and Dakar. On Saturday we saw nothing, but on Sunday Cape Palm, Liberia. Monday we saw nothing, but yesterday stopped at St. Thomas island. Today no land sighted, but tomorrow Luanda, and Friday Lobito. Some different than ten days without anything but water and sky. What our ancestors must have thought on their voyages of months time.

Well, this will suffice for now. I don't know when we'll see some of our mail from home, but about two weeks from now probably. We'll send you word from Lobito anyhow.

Our love and our prayers to all,


Mackie  
Betty

When we arrived at our mission station in the morning  
boys and girls met us waving banana leaves and  
singing first a welcome song and then a praise hymn. Oct 15, 1948

Dear Mum & Olive Francis Ruby & Ralph M.

We have arrived! And what arrival! A week ago today at 8:30 P.M. The Hendersons and their four offspring piled into a compartment of the Leopoldville bound train and began the last lap of our journey from America to Chissamba Angola. We had bought six beds in the sleeper but we had brought so much hand luggage that it occupied two of them. The conductor came to punch our tickets and thought we were many for a small space so he went off and ordered two beds made for the men in another compartment. He didn't charge anything extra for them either. The children thought that going to bed on the train was quite the most exciting lark of all our adventures.

In the morning we went to breakfast in the dining car and were most surprised to be served ham & eggs. About eight-thirty we arrived at Lima which is about fifteen miles from one of our mission stations. The Carl Dilles and Mary Hurburt, missionaries there were at the station to greet us and chat during the fifteen minute stop there. They brought us a big basket of bananas, bags of candy for the kids, magazines and rolls of life savers all precious articles from America (except the bananas). Our next point of interest was Bella Vista near the Pondi mission. There at three o'clock we were greeted by the "Childs" and Harriet Somerville our own missionaries and Mary Mac Ogall, Amy Shaufler from the Canadian mission with whom we worked in this mission. We had met them in Lisbon thirteen months ago. The Collins family (Dr Collins is the head of the Theological seminary here) and Betty Gilchrist daughter of the medical doctor of Pondi also were there. Nancy and Tom Dille's (who are going to the school for missionaries at Pondi) - L. Shaufler. H. - two

Our excitement was mounting something awful. We passed through gorgeous country climbing all the time until we reached Bela Vista. Sometimes the track went like this . The vegetation was not tropical altho we might see cactus or palm trees here and there. There were pine groves and eucalyptus groves.

We reached Nova Sintra at 7:49 P.M. Exactly on schedule. Dorothy Shaffer, Eleanor Kirker and "Frankie" Walbridge were there to greet us and Hal Steed. We knew all these folks in Lisbon so what greetings.

Then we piled into a big truck. (It took another on to carry our baggage.)

We came about three miles to Chissamba where the Canadian ladies, Elizabeth Read and Elizabeth McKenney had a feast spread for us. Then we were conducted to our houses. What a lot of work these people have gone to making our houses ready for us. They are lovely.

The floors are all cement or large square red bricks cemented together. They look like the floors in some of the ritzy homes in Boston suburbs. There is a fireplace in the dining room and living room. The whole house was furnished even to towels and soap and it looked so attractive. Until yesterday we all of us ate with the ladies, but now we have a cook, and house boy and laundry boy and are in the process of dismantling the house and refurnishing it with our own things which arrived much sooner than anyone expected. Thanks to Harvey Meshkin is back in Boston.

Three boys seemed <sup>to me</sup> like too many to do the work here. But believe me it takes all of them and Max and I too all day just about now. After we are settled (Times we hope) Max and I will be in class three hours a day and need more time to study.

The six children - Steeds - Hendersons + Welch's are in seventh heaven. They rotate between the three houses. There are four tripes among them, a couple of sand boxes and loads of shade trees. There are four brand

Dearest Mother and Olive,

I can scratch a note faster with the typewriter, when the machine is already out and being used. Mail goes in ten minutes, so this will be short.

We are at studying the language five days a week. Today completes the third week of work. I go to classes at 6:20, 9:40 and 2:10. Betty goes at 8:40, 9:40 and has one at home at 2:45. Altogether we spend a good part of the day in class. Meanwhile we are becoming more and more settled in our house, getting our goods unpacked by stages, (We're mostly unpacked, but there are still odds and ends of books and papers to take care of), and settling on a routine. Of course we won't set a very rigid one, because we shall be on the move too soon for that.

Slowly we are becoming acquainted with some of the Africans. We have African teachers. Already we have been to visit in some of the villages surrounding the mission, and have met many pastors and the mission schools teachers. We have never seen less than three hundred at any church service, and this isn't counting the number who can't get into the church building.

Now we are preparing a letter to give you some idea of our schedule and work. While we are as yet only learning the language, we will begin very shortly learning more of the customs and history and in that way commencing our preaching, because we shall be making comments about what we learn.

Our secretary, Dr. John Reuling, is coming out in January with the new executive head of the American Board. We shall have to do some translating for them we expect.

Our prayers go with you as you work through the day. God bless you. Pray

for us when you think of us. Lovingly, *Jackie*

November 5, 1948

Dear Mam, Olive & Ellsworth

Certainly long before this you have gotten my letter from Lomito. The difference in time between here and America is the same as it was in Portugal. You see we are not so far away after all. Speaking of the world being small Wednesday night Max received a letter from New York. The original address on it was only Mr. Maxwell Welch - Lusanda, Angola (Africa). Lusanda the first city where we stopped is all of 1200 miles from here. It was sent to a Methodist mission there by the Post office. They remailed it to Max at Bela Vista CPO an American Board mission. There it was remailed to us here. The mail is a wonderful service in Africa as well as America. We were so relieved to hear that you finally had rain. We are all just fine. Kenne & Tommie are throwing on the fresh air and outdoor exercise here. We get your letters both of them every Saturday night about nine thirty. The postman gets post mail from the States on Wednesday. This letter must be short because I delayed too long in getting going and it is almost time to send the mail in.

Thaps of love to Ed & Betty

Our prayers go with you as you work through the day. God bless you. Mary

For us when you think of us. Lovingly,

November 6, 1948

Dear Mum, Olive & Ellsworth,

Certainly long before this you have gotten my letter from Lobito. The difference in time between here and America is the same as it was in Portugal. You see we are not so far away after all. Speaking of the world being small, Wednesday night Max received a letter from New York. The original address on it was only Mr. Maxwell Welch – Luanda (the capital of Angola) Angola, Africa. Luanda, the first city where we stopped, is all of 1,200 miles from here. It was sent to a Methodist mission there by the post office. They remailed it to Max at Bela Vista c/o an American Board Mission. There it was remailed to us here. The mail is a wonderful service in Africa as well as America. We were so relieved to hear that you finally had rain. We are all just fine. Kennie and Tommie are thriving on the fresh air and outside exercise here. We get your letters, both of them every Saturday night about nine thirty. We sometimes get boat mail from the States on Wednesday. This letter has to be short because I delayed too long in getting going and it is almost time to send the mail in.

Heaps of love & God's blessing,

Betty

We got Olive's letter mailed the 30th. on the 6th. The same train brought Mum's letter mailed the twenty fifth. There must be only one mail plane from America here.

missão de Chuanamba  
nova lintra, Saie  
Angola, W. Africa  
November 12, 1948

Dear Mum & Olive, Francis, Ruby, & Ralph Merton

Are you shivering in some brisk November air? We shiver in the morning and evening and occasionally it is cool enough for a sweater all day. But today is hot. Even so many a July or August day feel hotter in Maine. The thermometer in the dining room says 72°. So you see it is very comfortable inside our house. The boys are just fine. Tommie needs lots of guidance and patience and directing. When he's good he's a good god and when he's bad he's horrid.

Last week-end we had company. Dr. Cushman, formerly of Farmington came with Peggy and Duane Walen and Alice Morrison from Oileaso to get acquainted with the new missionaries. Dr. Cushman was thrilled to see some Maine people and have a chance to talk & brag about Maine especially Farmington. It was grand to see Alice again. The boys remembered her and talked a lot in Portuguese to you.

Monday night was Dorothy Shuffler's birthday so we had a party at the ladies' house and played rick and store. Store is played with flash cards and is real noisy and loads of fun.

During the week about five hours a day goes into language study. This language is much simpler than Portuguese but it sure taxes the memory. In between lessons I watch the garden grow, explore the surrounding country side and try to keep the household running smoothly. The houseboy has never worked in a house before but he is learning fast.

An African wedding <sup>provision</sup> just passed by. In front was the bride carried in a hammock slung on



two poles and carried on the shoulders of a couple of men. Then followed friends & relatives and finally the flutists whose music gave a very festive air to the occasion. The women <sup>(all the time)</sup> mostly dress in what they call a cloth. And a cloth it is. Several yards of material which they drape over their shoulders and around them so that it hangs fairly loosely below the hips. They all wear handanas on their heads. I noticed today that most of the women were wearing blue cloth & red handanas. Of course many of the young women and the most educated of the older women wear clothes like ours of a quality which they can afford. Great lots of second hand or out moded clothes are sent out here by American firms to be sold quite cheaply.

So far we have seen pineapples, avocado pears, banananas, oranges, lemons, paw-paws, and mulberries all growing. We haven't seen any wild animals or even a snake yet. I knock on wood when I say snake because I shall not feel as if I've missed a thing if I never see a snake in Africa. Oh yes we did see some monkeys on the way in from the coast while we were on the train.

Pit patler. here comes Tommie and he from his nap he says "I've just had a nice sleep." Faintly I doubt if he slept at all but anyway he rested his head an hour. At night both boys are sound asleep shortly after seven. On the back of this page is a train that Tommie just drew for him. He loves to draw trains and so far has had no guidance just his own powers of observation. <sup>for a long time</sup> ~~that he~~ ~~settles~~

Mission do Chissamba  
Nova Sintra, Bie  
Angola, West Africa

Dear Folks,

We have really begun the study of "Umbundu". It is an interesting and very different language. For instance most all of the descriptive adjectives aren't adjectives at all. They are verbs used in the past tense. The verb itself means to be cold, hot, or pretty. However it is much easier than Portuguese to learn.

Prices are interesting too. We had chicken for dinner today. It cost thirty two cents. all kinds of fruit except tangerines cost four cents apound. Tangerines cost five cents a pound.

Gasoline and kerosene cost about seventy two cents a gallon. and any manufactured product has to be imported and the prices are the sky.

Tommie and Kennie are growing and are they ever enjoying the freedom of the country, their puppy, the other youngsters, and the fruit.

We are expecting company this week-end- the Walns from Chiles: one of our missao\* stations about a hundred miles away. Also Alice Mc Morreira a Portuguese teacher who lived with us in Portugal.

Max is learning to ride a bicycle. In fact he has practically mastered the art just since we arrived here. He has taken a couple of five mile trips.

My biggest job is making a garden. I am supposed to tell the gardener what to do. I am not just sure how the trial and error method is going to work out. My knowledge of how to grow vegetables is in need of a lot of piecing out.

Olive, you asked what *ago* meant on the stamps. It means angolas and is equivalent to about 4 pts. in American money. If we don't overload our letters they cost about 25 pts from here to America.

Mum, we opened our box of snap shots that we haven't seen since we left America. The youngsters were thrilled with them and Kennie was particularly thrilled with the ones of you which he recognized instantly.

Frances and Ruby - isn't it thrilling to be parents! I love hearing about Ralph and how I'd love to see him getting his dinner or to give him a bath. Ralph, are you obeying all the advice your uncle Max gave you in his poem? Something good - I guess fish is being tried for supper I'm hungry. Love  
Dad

Missão de Chissamba  
19 de Novembro de 1948

Dearest Mother,

We keep thinking that every week we'll at last write you a good long letter about what we have been seeing and hearing and experiencing in other ways, about our travels, our program here, and the missions work. As yet we have been too busy moving in and settling down to the study of the language to write you more than just a short note before mail time. Well, here it is within fifteen minutes of mail time again and I'm just beginning the letter. Always something is going up to interrupt our letter writing. However, we'll persist.

Did Betty tell you last week that we entertained Dr. Mary F. Cushman, the Maine doctor, born in Farmington Falls, Maine, once had her office in Farmington, here two weeks ago? Dr. Cushman is now seventy-eight years old, I think. She is at least that, for she was fifty-three when she was appointed, has spent twenty-two or three years in Angola, and was during the war in America for four or five years. She still operates, does leg amputations, performs Cæsarian births and so on. She was somewhat ill herself when she was here, but writes that she is recovering now from the streptococcus infection which had her in its grip for several weeks.

Also we entertained Alice Moreira, who lived with us for a while in Lisbon and who is one of the ABCFM missionaries in Chilessao, about seventy kilometers from here, where we may be going perhaps, although no one knows as yet just where we will be stationed. Wherever the need is, there we will be sent.

We getting some experience in here. I have spoken informally twice. Next Sunday I am to have a sermonette in Portuguese. It will be translated into Umbundu by an Umbundu teacher who speaks fluent Portuguese. Having heard him translate once before I think I can safely say that he will make a good Umbundu sermon out of anything I may care to say in Portuguese. The sermon is to deal with family life, and will be given in one of the first mission out-stations, the village of Chiyuka which was converted about seventy years ago.

Well, sorry, it's mail time. We get your letters very regularly on Saturday night, when all air mail letters arrive. It's a joy to hear from you with such regularity and the news about folks at home, Ralph Merton, and so on. We have to stop and think now and then that while we here are watching the gardens grow, you are beginning to eat things canned from last summer's garden. Now, next week, Thanksgiving week, a big letter. Until then, lots of love, our prayers and God be with you. From all the tribe hugs and kisses.

Lovingly,

*Mackie*

P.S. We've had two heavy thunder showers today.  
One is still going on so I write.