

MISSIONARY DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTHERN RHODESIA to 1980

Purpose: This “*Social History*” exhibit tells the story of missionary development in Southern Rhodesia through the display of missionary mail and other materials.

Southern Rhodesia (present day Zimbabwe) is populated by two principle people groups - the Shona (VaShona) peoples to the east/ northeast of the country (“Mashonaland”) and the Ndebele peoples to the west (“Matabeleland”).

Scope/Treatment: The exhibit begins with a “Background” section discussing the missionary movement and local people groups. It is then organized into three time periods corresponding to the historical development of Southern Rhodesia: (1) administration under the British South Africa Co. (BSACo) (Rhodesia) to 1923; (2) Southern Rhodesia (1923-53) and (3) the Federation of Rhodesia & Nyasaland through Zimbabwean Independence (1953-80). Missionary development is shown within each time period. The exhibit concludes with the post-Independence indigenous church with continuing support by foreign religious workers.

Based on original research, information is provided about the missions and the missionaries serving there. Excerpts from missionary mail and additional materials such as picture post cards and other ephemera bring to life mission development and the challenges faced by missionaries.

Importance: Missions are an integral part of Southern Rhodesia’s (present day Zimbabwe’s) social/political history; playing an important, if sometimes controversial, role “colonizing” and developing the country. Missionaries have had a lasting legacy spreading Christianity and establishing schools and hospitals, most of which are still in operation.

Rates: The standard (Universal Postal Union) foreign surface postal rate during the majority of this time period was 3d. This is noted with the first example only. Other rates are indicated.

Plan of Exhibit:

○ Background

- Missionary movement; The Shona and Ndebele peoples; colonial expansion

○ Mission development – BSACo/Rhodesia (1891-1923)

- New missions; Mission outreach (evangelism, education, healing); Women missionaries

○ Mission development - Southern Rhodesia (1923-1953)

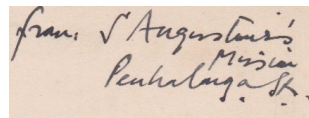
- New Missions; Mission outreach; Women missionaries

○ Mission development - “Federation” to Independence (1953-1980)

- New Missions; Mission outreach; Political turmoil

○ Post-Independence/Conclusion

Background and biographical information about missionaries and mission development in blue font. Excerpts from missionary mail/articles framed in blue.



Missionary mail often identifiable by return address, which is scanned if on the reverse

Items of importance shown with red border

Details of importance/scarcity noted in Times New Roman font

Scarcity: highlighted items are selected based on known missionary covers after 20+ years of collecting Southern Rhodesia, extensive research, and review of mission covers through the Rhodesia Study Circle.