

## Notes on William Charles (Charlie) Willoughby

1857 Born 16th. March. Church Town, Redruth, Cornwall

1861 Census living with parents at 21 High Downs, Gwennap, 3 miles SE of Redruth.

Educated at Tiverton, Devon.

1871 Census gives occupation as "Painter's boy" (then aged 13).

Rev. Claudius May, native preacher from Sierra Leone, gave a sermon at Carn Brea Chapel.

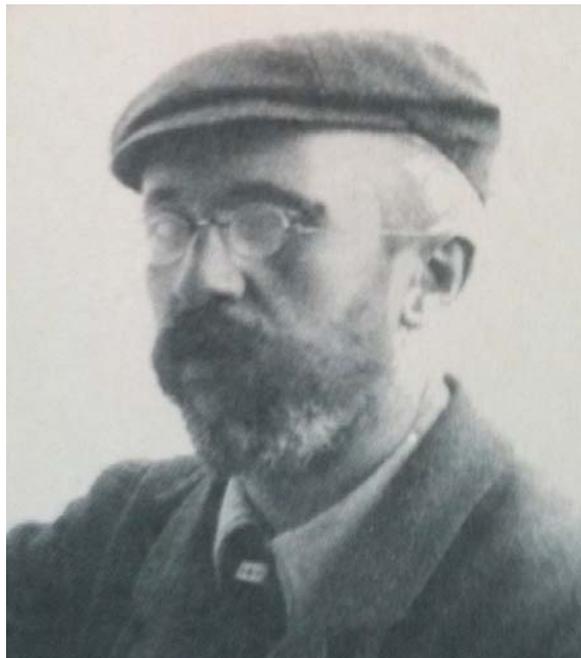
1877 Attended Spring Hill College, Birmingham, (now Mansfield College, Oxford).

1882 1st. May, Ordained as a Congregationalist Minister at St. Paul's Meeting.

Appointed to the Central African Mission of the London Missionary Society.

Sailed 17th. May as joint leader of a pioneering caravan of 475 natives from Zanzibar to Unwamyezi, a district of Unyanyembe, south of Lake Victoria, first group departing 29th. June.

In North Africa camels were used while in South Africa bullock wagons were the preferred mode of transport. Various options used in central Africa.



On route from Zanzibar stayed at Mpwapwa mission house: Lions and ostriches outside. A slave caravan passed by and there were many human skulls and bones on the route. At Kisoke there were lions and boar while by the time they reached Mgunda Mkali several of the caravan were dead with sickness.

Marching through Unyamwezi was at night with fingers on triggers in case of robbers or wild animals. Everyone was anxious about Mirambo's reception as he had recently fought against Stanley. After 3 months and

3 weeks marching, on 31st. Oct. 1882, they arrived and Mirambo "who gave them a very cordial reception, and has continued to manifest to them a very friendly spirit", welcomed them with dinner which they had to eat the native way. Mirambo had been converted and was very enthusiastic to have missionaries in his country. There were only 3 missions in Unyamwezi at this time.

From 'Young People's Missionary Letter' no. 2 by William "on arrival at Urambo, invited to dine with Mirambo. Wore best clothes. His Prime Minister met the party and conducted them to M. who was sitting in his council hut with his chiefs. He rose and met them at the door. Slaves provided small stalls and 3 pots (gravy, mutton and rice) We eat by hand, Eat mutton from M.s black hand. Drank fresh milk from a calabash. Talked, were given 2 bullocks. Dined several times together ... the best African I ever knew"

He worked as a missionary with Mirambo at Urambo [No. 788]. A second part of the caravan from Zanzibar included a lifeboat and a steam launch which was transported in sections for use on the southern end of Lake Tanganyika at Ujiji.

1883 After frequent attacks of fever [malaria] William left Urambo on May 15th and returned to England. Resigned his connections with the LMS and completed his studies at Spring Hill.

1885 Married Charlotte Elizabeth (Bessie) Pountney 27th. October at Moseley Road Congregational Church in Birmingham. Pastor at Mill Street Congregational Church, Perth where he first met the future president MacKenzie of the Hartford Seminary.

1889 Pastor at Union Street Church, Brighton (where son Godfrey's brother-in-law Ronald Woods married Marjorie in 1938).

1892 Resigned this pastorate on being appointed by the LMS on 20th. Dec. to the district of Palapye, Bechuanaland [3,150 ft. above sea level and now Botswana].

1893 15th. February, Dedicated, at Brighton, and then sailed for Cape Town with his wife and three children for the LMS, and became a missionary in Palapye [arriving 16th. June], seat of the Bamangwato in Bechuanaland, and then the town of the famous Christian Chief Khama [Kgama] III (before the removal to Serowe) to work among the Bamangwato of Khama.

1895 accompanied King Khama and chiefs Bathoen and Sebele to England for meetings with Joseph Chamberlain (Secretary of State for the Colonies) and Queen Victoria and successfully pleaded for Bechuanaland to remain a Protectorate to preserve their country from South African capitalist Cecil Rhodes. William later referred to Khama as "the soul of the Bantu"



Sebele, Bathoen, Khama, WCW



Bessie about 1898

1897 letter to Rhodes advising that Khama was willing to offer his regiments for work on the Bechuanaland Railway

1899 13th. October William loaned personal collection of ethnographical specimens from Bechuanaland, South Africa to Brighton museum, while living at Shaftmoor Lane, Birmingham [Museum ref: 4007]. Address also given as 10g Sackville Road, Brighton

1901 Howard was diagnosed as suffering from consumption. He was living in England.

Letters dated 15/4 from Chamberlain refers to flower specimens sent by William to Kew (William Dyer), and a letter by William describing Khama's help during the (Boer) war. {S}

1903 William was "removed with the Bamangwato tribe to Serowe". The LMS decides to built a much needed Central School for Bechuanaland at the request of Khama. {B+R}

1904 William was appointed the first principal and returned to England to confer with the Directors. On 10th. February was passing Madeira returning to S.A. on the Armdale Castle He chose to establish the Tiger's Kloof Native Institution on a farm near Vryburg in the Cape Province. "Scrubby bush, the ruined walls of an old farm house, trees felled for Kimberley mine props, old jam tins and bully beef tins, relics of the Boer War - this was the sight that greeted the first Principle and his staff". By 1907 there was a nucleus of fine buildings reared by the apprentices themselves, and fifty boarders in the Elementary school.



Staff of Tiger Kloof about 1910

1905 2nd. November  
elected Local Secretary at  
Tiger Kloof for the Royal  
Anthropological Institute

1914 suffered a mental  
breakdown and resigned as  
principal

1914-17 served as a  
missionary to the Bakena  
tribe in Molepolole.

1917-19 Ill health and advanced age compelled William to retire, and so he visited Australasia and the South Pacific Islands as Deputation for the Society. He stopped in Sydney until the end of the War to catch up on his writings before taking a round trip on the 'John Williams' via Canada, where he visited his brother Richard's family in Vancouver, and America [visiting his old friend Dr. McKenzie at Hartford] , arriving in England 28th. Dec. 1918

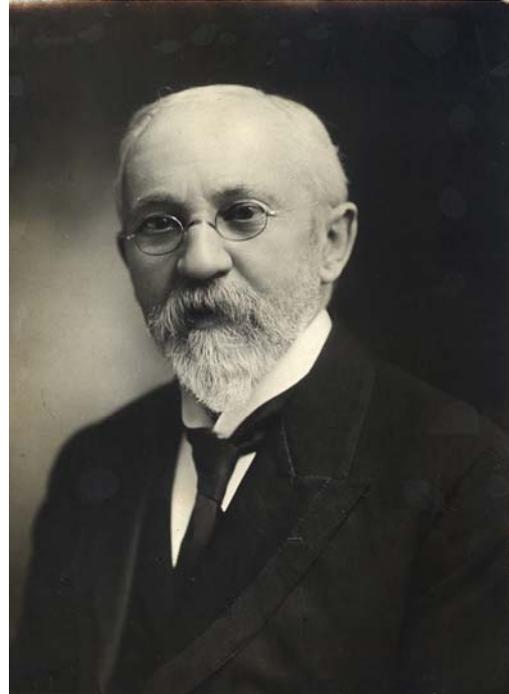
1919-31 Professor of African Missions in the Kennedy School of Missions at Hartford, Connecticut. He gave lectures in subjects including ancestor-worship and animism among the Bantu with special attention to the Bantu mind, and also warnings in the matter of moral instruction and discipline, and also Bantu political institutions and Bantu law, including tribal organisation, the status of women, family relations, inheritance and puberty ceremonies, together with the hindrance or help they afford to missionary work. During this period he was also able to publish his research into the history, social life, politics, religion and anthropology of the Bantu people.

1919 5th. December elected Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Under qualification in his election certificate is written "25 years Missionary in Bechuanaland and Metabeleland. In 1883 let caravan of 475 porters from Mpwapwa to Wrambo and thence to Zanzibar {sic}. He also travelled widely in South Sea Islands for the LMS..."

1920 23rd. November elected Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute

1923 12th. April William recorded as a member of the Board of Trustees for 1924 for the United Board colleges in New York and led the meeting in prayer. It was also noted that he had been appointed to their Committee on audit.

1931 On his retirement the Seminary made William Emeritus Professor and granted an honorary Doctor of Sacred Theology degree. Returned to Birmingham with Charlotte



1932 In a letter dated 9th Dec. to Robbins Barstow, President of the Hartford Seminary, William wrote that Doris and Edgar both lived within a mile of them in Birmingham, visiting most days for an hour or so, and that Godfrey and Dora were home from Nairobi on furlough and visited twice.

1933 he also writes that the children are as usual, Godfrey is not due home for another two years, Edgar visits most days, and Doris and her family visit frequently. {H}

1936 March, loan of ethnographical specimens from Bechuanaland to Brighton museum made permanent.

In a letter by A. Haille to Northcott (?LMS) just before William's death, he was referred to as "having a delightful wit with outstanding ability. He knew what he wanted, and usually got it" {S}

1938 died 19th. June.

His address at this time was 25(?) Shaftmoor Lane. In Moffat's obituary to William he referred to him as being "among the Great and Wise" (20/8/1938)

In addition:

Local (Cape Province) correspondent of the Royal Anthropological Institute from 1905

Chairman of the South Africa District Committee of the London Missionary Society

Chairman of the S. A. Missionary Conference.

Member of the South African Native Races Committee 1900-08

Vice President of the Fourth International Congregational Council - 1920

Prof. of African Missions, Hartford Seminary Foundation

Trustee Peking University

Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute

Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society

Mirambo: In July 1877 Rev. Thompson (on the LMS first approach to Tanganyika) wrote "Mirambo goes in for everything he sees European & he wants Europeans to come to his country to trade." In 1878 he was aged 40 and stood 5'11". He was "very helpful but initially amused at my lecture on theology." At that time he had 20 wives.

A photograph by Rev. Willoughby of the warrior chief Mirambo of Tanzania appears in the biography by Norman Bennett 'Mirambo of Tanzania'. William wrote "this is the best African I ever knew"

William's visit to England with King Khama:

Cecil Rhodes, President of South Africa, wanted a railway line to run from Cape Town to Cairo. This would involve annexing the Bechuanaland Protectorate for his own company. The three main Chiefs of Bechuanaland Protectorate, Khama, Sebele and Bathoen, object.

William was missionary to King Khama, the principle chief, and together they decided to appeal to Joseph Chamberlain and Queen Victoria in England. The four of them, plus various others including Howard Willoughby, then aged 8, departed Palapye on 31st. July 1895 by oxcart and horseback. At Mafeking they caught the train to Cape town (via Vryburg) which they reached on the 18th. where they met Rhodes at Groot Shuar. Rhodes tried unsuccessfully to dissuade them from their

trip. They sailed on the 21st. August on the RMS Tantallon, arriving in Plymouth on 6th. September from where they caught a train to London.

The Chiefs stayed at the temperance South Place Hotel (Finsbury) just round the corner from London Mission House (Livingstone House) at 23 Bloomfield Street., H.Q. of the L.M.S. On the 11th. they met Chamberlain the radical imperialist and Nonconformist Secretary of State who then had to leave on a pre-planned tour abroad. While waiting for his return, William, acting as their manager, press secretary & political adviser, arranged various trips in London followed by tours around Britain meeting people who could help them, and speaking at Nonconformist chapels as part of the LMS centenary celebrations.

On 14th. Sept. they visited Brighton for 2 nights, staying with George Singleton, secretary of the Union Street Congregational Church. They visited the Aquarium and walked between the two piers with Howard acting as their interpreter (he spoke fluent Setswana and was popular with the Chiefs). After a brief stay in London they visited Bristol where the Chiefs spoke for the first time publicly in the Victoria Rooms, and traversed Clifton suspension bridge. On their return to London they were again publicly feted before visiting Birmingham and the Midlands, and during a hunting trip Khama accidentally 'peppered Willoughby's buttocks with shot' (Rider Haggard's 'African Reviews'). After this on 29th. September they returned to Brighton for a rest and included a visit to Steyning nearby. Then followed visits to the industrial north and to Scotland. On 16th. November William and Khama visited Redruth to stay with William's father in his small cottage at Carn Brea and where they attended the Wesleyan chapel at Redruth.

William had lived in Carn Brea Lane. In 1871 Rev. Claudius May, native of Sierra Leone, preached at Carn Brae Chapel

19th. Nov. the Chamberlains held a dinner in honour of the Chiefs at his home at 40 Prince's Gardens and the next day they all met Queen Victoria at Windsor with William interpreting from the background. They left England on 23rd. November and reached Palapye on 7th. January 1896.

Although Chamberlain was initially unhelpful, the failure of the Jamison Raid against the Boers caused Joe to reject Rhodes' demands. Bechuanaland remained a Protectorate for the time being, and the Boer

war started. Was William responsible for the Boer war which can be said to have brought about WW1?

William was referred to by Rhodes variously as: an "enragé missionary", "that rascal who detests me", "who with strong feelings which would not be modified, seen as the Demon of the plot", and in a letter from Harris to Rhodes 12/11/95 "native chiefs and Willoughby acted like pigs".

Khama's grandson was Sir. Seretse Khama. He married an English woman, negotiated independence from Britain, and was Prime Minister and then President of Botswana

Tiger's Kloof [the Tuskegee of Bechuanaland]: In 1901 Khama wanted schools and churches in different parts of his country, and by 1904 was helping William at Tiger Kloof. By the time William retired as first Principle there were 200 pupils in residence with buildings appropriate for a large and varied community. In 1939 there are about 200 boys plus 150 girls receiving training in crafts and industry, scholarship, and above all, character.

Council of World Mission [LMS] at SOAS London hold some papers and correspondence, plus some personal material, photos and press cuttings, and much material about Tiger Kloof

There are Willoughby papers at Orchard Learning Resources Centre, Selly Oak, Uni. of Birmingham [Special Collection] which were deposited by Edgar Willoughby in 1940, and they also have papers from Chamberlain when he was Secretary of State, referring to the Bechuanaland question. A PhD thesis on William was written in 1983 at Birmingham by John Rutherford. Correspondence is also held at Hatford Seminary Library, Connecticut

Royal Anthropological Institute's journal has two articles by William, one an article on initiations ceremony of the Becwana [18/11/1908], the other about Totemism of the Becwana. [copies available on request]. He was proposed for a Fellowship by E. N. Faliaize and E. S. Hartland.

Trustees of Peking University were based in New York with meetings held at 150 5th. Ave. and William was recorded as a member of the Board of Trustees for 1924 He led in prayers for the meeting of 12th. April 1923.

Some of the papers by William:

'Mirambo, King of the Wanyamwesi' published in the Chronicles of the LMS 1884.

1921 Fifth General Missionary Conference of South Africa - evidence for the Commission on the Uniformity of Discipline in Native Churches in South Africa

articles for 'The African Monthly', 'The Chronicle of the London Missionary Society', 'The Geographical Journal', 'The London Quarterly Review', 'The International Review of Missions', and 'The Christian Express'

Special Collections file DA49/12]

articles from 'The Times Literary Supplement and others [file DA49/2]

Lecture notes 'Caravan & Camp Life in Central Africa'

Books [some published by William]:

1877 'Description of Unyamwezi, the territory of King Mirambo, & the best route thither from the east coast' Broyon - Mirambo, P  
Proceedings of the R.G.S. 22 (1877-78), 28-36 ###

1895 '20 years in Khama's country' Rev. James Harman LMS Hodder & Stoughton

1900 'Native life on the Transvaal Border'

1912 'Tiger Kloof'

1928 'The Soul of the Bantu: a Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices & Beliefs' \* first of proposed trilogy [\*marked\*] and this book published by Doubleday Doran & Co.

1923 'Race Problems in the New Africa' published by Clarendon Press Oxford ['required reading' for a British Commission sent that year to South Africa.

1932 'Nature Workshop and Taboo' \* published by Hartford Seminary Press

'High Gods & Supreme Beings' incomplete due to ill health

Several sketch books by William, some at the SOAS.

'Bechuanaland Protectorate' Anthony Sillery 1952

Obituary: THE TIMES THURSDAY JUNE 23 1938

DR. W. C. WILLOUGHBY

MISSIONARY WORK IN AFRICA

Dr. W. C. Willoughby, F.R.G.S., who gave many years devoted service as a missionary in Africa. died at Birmingham on June 19. at the age of 81.

William Charles Willoughby was born on March 16, 1857, to Richard Willoughby at Redruth, Cornwall. He was educated at Tiverton, and received his training at Spring Hill College, Birmingham. In 1882, having been ordained as a Congregational minister, he volunteered for service in the Central Africa Mission, then newly established by the London Missionary Society, but within 12 months contracted malaria and was compelled to come home.

As his return to the mission field seemed barred, he accepted in 1887 the pastorate of the Congregational Church at Perth. Some what later he moved to Union Street Congregational Church, Brighton. But during all those years his heart was in Africa. In 1893 the board of the London Missionary Society appointed him to straighten out difficulties that had arisen in Phalapye, the capital of Khama, the leading chief among the Bechuana. He soon won the confidence of the native chiefs, and when, after the Matabele War, it was proposed to hand over the Bechuanaland Protectorate to the Chartered Company, he was chosen by Khama and two other chiefs, Bathoen and Sebele, to be their adviser in a personal appeal to the British Government. They came together to this country in 1895, and it was largely due to

Willoughby that the protest of the natives was successful: -

He remained working among the Bechuana for eight years and was then selected as the first Principal of the new Tiger Kloof Educational Institution, which he had founded near Vryburg, Bechuanaland.- Tiger Kloof, to-day, with its boys and girls, its highly organized industrial training, its practising school for native teachers, and its ever widening Christian influence, is the best testimony to the value of Willoughby's services to South Africa. He built up a magnificent scheme of training for young African men and women in crafts and industry as well as scholarship and character.

He remained in charge of the institution until his retirement in 1917. Two years later he was appointed Professor of African Missions in the Kennedy School of Missions, Hartford Seminary, Connecticut, United States, and continued teaching there up to 1931, when his merits were recognized by the degree of D.D.

Dr. Willoughby was an authority on Bantu anthropology and was the author of several books on the subject, including "Native Life on the Transvaal Border" (1900) and "The Soul of the Bantu" (1928). He was also the author of "Race Problems in New Africa" (1923). He had been a member of the South African Races Committee from 1900 to 1908 and local correspondent of the Royal Anthropological Society from 1905.. His books are of scientific as well as religious value. He wrote with a

sympathetic insight into the mental processes and the specific genius of the South African native, and was keenly alive to the desirability of developing native culture. He fully recognized the danger of attempting to impose Western civilization and culture upon Bantu tradition. Dr. Willoughby married in 1885 Charlotte Elizabeth Pountney, of Birmingham, and there were three sons and two daughters of the marriage.

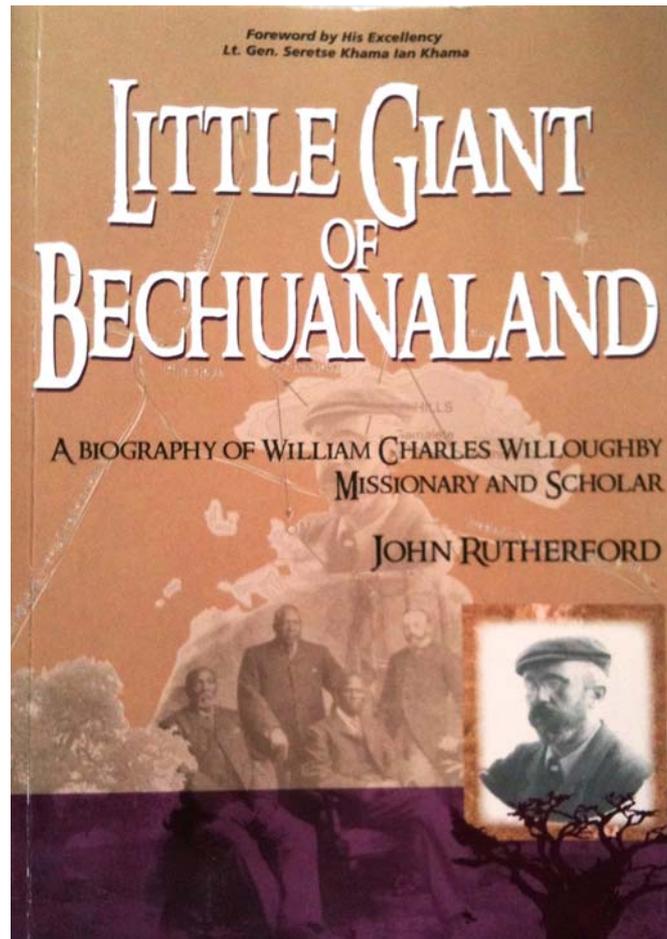


Godfrey      WCW      Edgar  
                    Bessie      Doris

Picture around 1912

## Little Giant of Bechuanaland

In 2009 a biography of WC Willoughby was published by the Botswana Society and Mmegi Publishing House, Gaborone. The book was authored by Rev Dr John Rutherford and is entitled "Little Giant of Bechuanaland". It is an abbreviated version of his PhD thesis, written some twenty five years earlier. A foreword to the book was written by Lt General Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of Botswana.



The review, by Sheridan Griswold, appeared on 6 November 2009.

### **Book Review:**

Little Giant of Bechuanaland is the story of pioneer missionary Reverend William Charles Willoughby (1857 to 1938) and his dedicated wife Bessie Willoughby. He is most famous for his role with the "Three Chiefs" when they went to London in 1895, something that has been written about extensively, but not completely. Professor Neil Parsons called Willoughby a "pathfinder" in his book King Khama, Emperor Joe, and the Great White

Queen (1998) and the Three Kings (the Dikgosi Khama III, Bathoen I and Sebele I) his "reluctant followers".

Willoughby is remembered by many older Batswana for a number of other significant contributions he made to Botswana over the 24 years he lived in Southern Africa as a missionary, an educator, a linguist, a researcher, writer and author of five significant books, and a photographer.

*Little Giant of Bechuanaland* was launched on September 2, 2009 at the Botswana National Archives and Record Services (BNARS) - one of the sponsors of the book. At the launch, Dr James Wilkinson, Willoughby's Great-grandson, donated to Botswana three photo albums on old Palapye and Serowe that had been in the family for over 100 years.

The keynote address was by former Minister of Youth, Sport and Culture, Gladys Kokorwe. She blessed BNARS for its role in preserving the heritage of Botswana, congratulated the Botswana Society and the Mmegi Publishing House for their part in producing the book and thanked the author, Reverend Dr Rutherford for his hard work (because of his age and health he could not be present). Rutherford is also known to many Batswana as he was the principal of Serowe Teachers' Training College.

Willoughby was born in Cornwall in the United Kingdom (UK) in 1857, his mother Anne's first child of 12. He was educated at Spring Hill College where missionary work became his "Call". He had his first year in Africa in 1882-1883 when he was a young and formative 25-year-old. His first stay was at Urambo in central Tanganyika. It took nearly six months just to get there, and as his fellow missionaries died around him, he survived, perhaps due to his short stature and stubborn character, but ill health caused his retreat back to Great Britain.

A decade later, in 1893, after serving as a pastor in Scotland, and then Brighton, England, Willoughby responded to a call from the London Missionary Society (LMS) to "undertake a particularly difficult task at Palapye in Bechuanaland".

Willoughby would discover that to be able to function he would have to learn Setswana. So he did, much to the surprise of the Batswana around him and those in the LMS who did not like him. Another demand made on him was that he become a "doctor of medicine", so he accomplished that too, dispensing medicines every morning for two hours.

He also found that though he was a church builder and out to save souls for Christ, he was also operating in a "Front-Line State" and that the enemy was Cecil Rhodes and his allies. He would serve to block Rhodes' vision of a British Empire extending from the Cape to Cairo. His first book was on these years, an illustrated volume, *Native Life on the Transvaal Border* (1900).

After 10 years in Palapye the Willoughbys moved to Serowe, following other great shifts in populations at that time. In 1903 they buried in the first European grave there Howard Poutney Willoughby, only 15 years -old and their first born son. In 1904 the Willoughbys were moved by the LMS to Tiger Kloof, near Vryburg in the Northern Cape, where he was to become the principal of a great school for the Bechuana and Africa, the "London Missionary Society Native Institution" on 2,700 acres on the Cape to Cairo Railway.

Khama III was always annoyed that the LMS had chosen to build such an eminent institution outside of his territory. The Willoughby was to spend a difficult decade there and when he left for Molepolole at 56, he looked 66 (pages 94 to 148). His second book was called simply *Tiger Kloof* (1912). The Institute became known as the "Hampton or Tuskegee for Bechuanaland".

"Wheels Willoughby", as the students named him, was a controversial person. In London at LMS headquarters Bechuanaland missionaries were noted for their "rugged individualism ... and had a long-standing reputation for 'in-fighting' and jealousy". That Willoughby achieved as much as he did over those 10 years is remarkable given the amount of time he had to spend defending himself against ad hominem and other attacks. He was challenged as a person and for his policies on industrial training. *Tiger Kloof* was denounced by missionaries returning to London as a failure. He faced factions within the church, the Bechuana and the students. "What is certain, the Willoughbys, man and wife, gave their all to bring *Tiger Kloof* into being. If the vision was large, and it was, their commitment to its realisation was even larger" (page 109). Allegations against Willoughby, when investigated, led to his exoneration. One famous incident surrounded the thrashing of Tengo Jabavu by a teacher and allegations that Willoughby said he would have killed him if he'd found him with his daughter Doris. The next principal said about Willoughby that he was "nothing but generosity and kindness and self-effacement ... he was a fine, unselfish Christian, and yet [he] had alienated man after man from himself, so that his ability is praised but his name is not loved" (page 121).

Willoughby left Molepolole and Bechuanaland in February 1917, sailing for Australia. War was on and travel was difficult. In 1918 he participated in a deputation to Papua (north of Queensland) for the LMS visiting a dozen mission stations there. This would lead to his moving to Connecticut (US) where in 1919 he joined the Hartford Theological Seminary. There he was made a professor and founded the Africa Department in the Kennedy School of Missions, where he was to spend the next decade.

Willoughby's next books were: *Race Problems in the New Africa: a study of the Relation of Bantu and Britons in those parts of Bantu Africa which are under British Control* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923)-considered his major opus; *The Soul of the Bantu: a Sympathetic Study of the Magico-Religious Practices and Beliefs of the Bantu Tribes of Africa* (1928); and, *Nature Worship and Taboo* (1932).