

ABIDJAN--2008

Skyline Lau, a Hong Kong citizen and student at Cal Poly, she accompanied me this year. She was a student in an culinary anthropology taught in the Food Science and Nutrition class, the professor of which describe my ongoing work in West Africa. Skyline decided to join me on my trip.



Skyline and Soledad in Mmaniaye

ACCRA



Peter and Padmore accompanied us again this year. And we met Alex for the first time; he became our chauffeur and advisor/translator for all subsequent trips to Ghana. Left, we prepare the car for our trip. As always, we are carrying boots, machetes, and tee-shirts. Right, we visit the mausoleum of Kwame Nkrumah, who is called the Father of Modern Africa because he was the first African leader to break with the colonial power, Great Britain, and he made the first steps toward independence.



A small python. When pythons are small, they only eat rats and other small mammals. As they get larger, they graduate to larger animals like cats and dogs. And then, once they get to 9 meters in length, they eat still larger animals--like human babies. This python is for sale.

EBEKAWOPA



Left, Pastor Sampson (who is pastor of the Lutheran church) welcomes us and presents Skyline with a beautiful dress. Right, teenage girls welcome us.



Corn Crib



Goat House

The Solar Drier



This year, I brought in my suitcase a solar-powered attic fan in order to try an experiment: to make a compact, solar-powered cocoa bean drier that works quickly and efficiently. Top, left: the old method takes more space and the beans are exposed to rain and birds. Above, kids sitting in the window of the Lutheran church watching us work. Left: my initial idea began with how a food pantry is built--with wire grid shelves that allow free air flow.

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Pastor Sampson took care of everything. Left, carpenters carried two planks of wood to the village while riding their bicycles; they charge us only \$20 for their hard work which was also of good quality. And, they didn't use electric tools! Top: an interesting way to hold a saw. Top, right: we are all working together; I'm playing with the fan. Right, a carpenter planes the plank after he cut it.

Opposite page: the sides are covered in plastic as I wanted the sun to heat the inside air which would in turn heat the beans. The shelves are made of plastic screen that I brought in my suitcase. The fan is solar without battery, so it slows down when a cloud obscures the sun.

This was really quite an engineering task. When I got back home, I inspected a solar drier that had been developed at the university. They used black plastic and they also incorporated a thermal mass comprised of rocks and blew the air over them. I'm sure it was more efficient because the rocks acted as a heat reservoir.



MMANIAYE



Mmaniaye is a village located about 5 km into the bush from the Cape Coast - Kakum road. As in 2007, we arrived about 8 PM and they were waiting for us. Top, left: the young people greet us. Middle, left: they lit a bonfire to welcome us. Top, right: Skyline strikes the gong-gong. Bottom, left: the next morning we meet government sprayers who treat the cocoa trees for myrids; this is a service provided by the government for free. Spraying pays off in the long run as it increases yields and increases foreign exchange. Organic methods also work, but increase the bean price, greatly reducing marketability. Bottom, right: Skyline shows how to fold Origami.



Top, left: two women cut up cocoyam leaves to prepare Palava Sauce. Top, right: Soledad shows how one can make a rope using leaves. Middle, left: a village shower. Middle, right: a cocoa pod. Bottom, left: a pantry. Bottom, right: one of last year's t-shirts.



Top, left: one of last year's t-shirts, well used. Top right: Soledad sells tomatoes at the market. Middle, right: a dog regales himself in the residual heat. Bottom, left and right: extracting palm kernel oil. It has to be heated very slowly to keep it from burning.



Top, left: plantains being given to us as a part of reciprocal exchange. Right, Soledad cuts some cassava. Bottom: the gift ceremony.

GYAWARE



More gifts. From the left: Peter, a representative of the village, Padmore, and me.

PORT BOUËT, YAMOUSSOUKRO



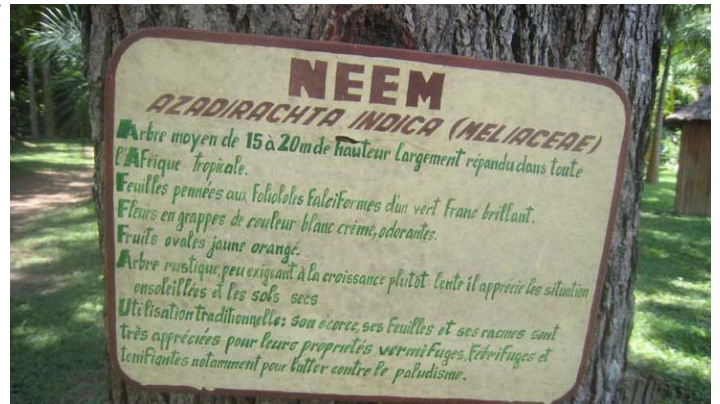
We arrive in Ivory Coast, as usual at Port Bouët where Evariste lives. And, as always, we visit Abidjan, especially the Cathedral of Saint Paul and then we set out for the capital, Yamoussoukro,. After our arrival, we visit the Basilica of Notre Dame de la Paix and also the Palais Présidentielle, where we were shocked to discover this chicken being fed to the crocodiles. Several years later, the man charged with the task became a victim himself when one of the crocs knocked him over with its tail.

BROGUHE



Top, left: an interesting tree that produces fruits resembling calabashes. In fact, it is called the Calabash Tree! As with the vine, people score the skin to produce scabs in order to write a message or produce art. Top, right and beneath: pictures of the gifts ceremony in Broguhe.

ISSIA



We leave for Issia. On the way, Evariste buys our dinner, which is a grasscutter (left). This was a wild one, but increasingly, they are being replaced by village-raised because their habitat is disappearing. In the future, monoculture will destroy the village way of life, and that will rid West Africa of its remaining wild animals--just as what has already happened in much of Europe and the U.S. Right, we visit the Sanctuaire Notre Dame de la Délivrance. Many jungle trees were planted there to remind people of the plants that used to be so important to life in a tropical forest. Here is the Neem tree, whose oil is used for its antibiotic and antifungal properties and in addition as an insecticide.

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Top, left: one often sees beef cattle being herded in the streets of Issia, population 86,000. Right, Skyline visits the WC that she purchased for Pezoan. Middle, left: Skyline and the chief. Middle, right: Tom contributes a dryness meter for measuring the dryness of cocoa beans. The farmers will often earn 25% more if they sell dry beans. Bottom, left: a chicken gift from Pezoan. Bottom, right: a palm leaf roof.

Following page; top, left: two goats given to maintain a balance of gifts. Right, two children play the game of Mancala, which is possibly the oldest of all childrens' games. Middle, left: the roof that Stan Thompson's death brought to the school of Dawayo-Chantier. Right: Evariste and Skyline exiting a classroom. Below, left: cocoa beans in the process of drying. Bottom, right: Dr. Brou stands next to a scale that we donated to the village.



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Left: I show how plastic bags designed for storing agricultural products prevent the penetration of oxygen. Any product stored in such bags will not experience the growth of insects and mold. Above us, the Stan Thompson roof.

Skyline, Evariste and I returned to Abidjan, and then Skyline and I returned to the US. Another successful year!

EVARISTE LEAVES HIS COUNTRY FOR THE USA!



Daloa, 2004



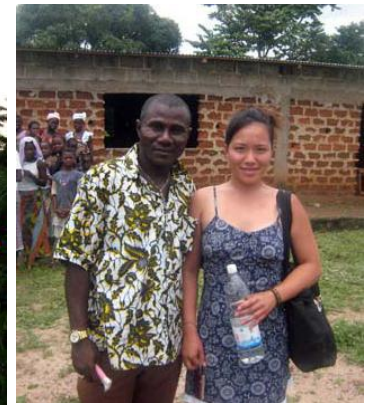
Kavokiva, 2005



Daloa, 2006



Broguhe, 2007



Dawayo-Chantier, 2008

During the years of 2004 - 2008, Evariste Segur Plegnon so much wanted to visit the US that he persuaded me several times to visit the American embassy. This was not my idea of fun; in fact, I found it a little depressing because the building resembled a prison, with its steel, glass and hard surfaces. I even found the personnel to be quite intimidating. After 2008, Evariste managed to get his tourist visa and traveled to New York City. Once he got there, he applied for political asylum. One day that fall, I received a phone call from an unknown man asking me questions about Evariste. Mysterious. Two weeks later, I learn that Evariste has applied for and earned political asylum! From that day, Evariste has not been able to return to Côte d'Ivoire but he was able to bring over his family--his wife and three children. And he continued to work for PH&F until 2018. I appreciate his hard work.