

NEW YORK -- 2010



This year, my mother, Dorothy Neuhaus, accompanied me on a voyage to Ghana and to Ivory Coast. I met her in Omaha and we flew to Detroit and then New York. The next day we spent in New York with my children, Juliet and James. Right, my mother standing next to the second best present the French ever gave to our democracy, the first being the money an weapons with which to beat the British and gain independence.



MOROCCO



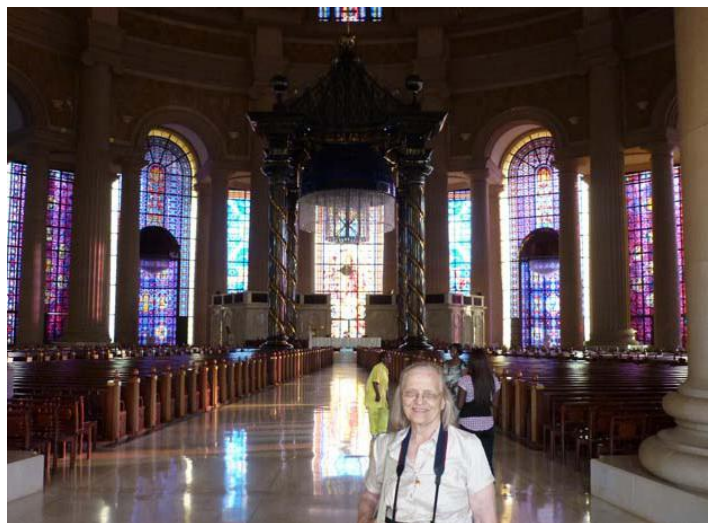
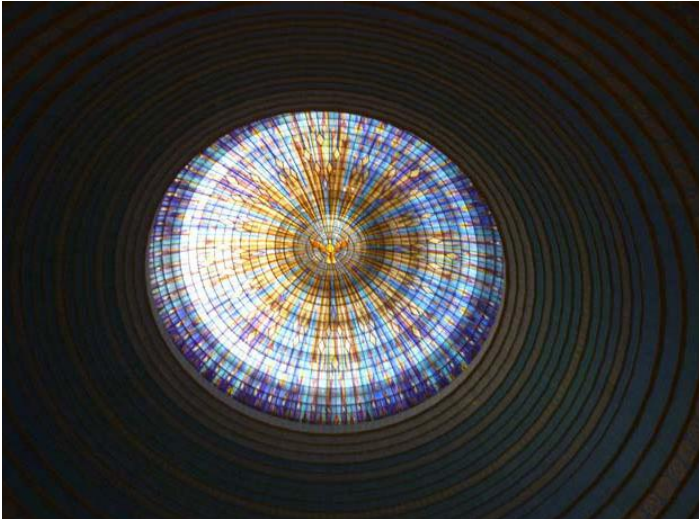
Dorothy in the souk (market) of Casablanca--in the old medina. We left New York around 8 PM and we arrived in Casablanca airport at 8 AM. We spent the day at the Hassan II Mosque, in the market and having lunch. At 8 PM, we left for Abidjan and met Albert Konan at the airport.

Bottom left: the wife of Evariste (who by now lives in New York). Bottom, right: Grace with Thomas William, Tom, Evariste's mother, and my mother Dorothy.

PORT BOUET



YAMO USSOUKRO



After a day and a night in Abidjan, we set out for Yamoussoukro. As usual, we visited the crocodiles in the lake surrounding the presidential palace and we also visited the Basilica Our Lady of Peace. A few details about its construction: the buildings surrounding the esplanade take the form of open arms that are welcoming. The central dome is 180 feet high with a diameter of 270 feet. It is the highest basilica in the world, built to resemble St. Peter's in Rome. The total surface area of stained glass is also a world record for a church.

BOUAKE



After our visit to Yamoussoukro, we drive toward Bouake. Above, left: my mother slakes her thirst with fresh coconut. Top, right: we stop at a weaving center. Middle, left: the weaving machines. Next, we continue our trip north toward Bouake to visit a center for the manufacture of attiéké (gari). Middle, right: fresh manioc tubers. Bottom, left: after peeling the tubers, one grates them (left) and then lets them ferment (right). Brief fermentation makes white attiéké and long fermentation makes yellow attiéké.

ABEKRO



Our first village is Abekro. Albert arranges with the chief to set up a field class so I could take pictures of the process of planting and harvesting cocoa. Top, right and left: evidence that the village of Abekro is UTZ certified, which is the preferred certification by large chocolate companies. UTZ guarantees traceability but makes no guarantees on price support--unlike Fair Trade Certification™, which pays according to a price floor and also provides a price premium used by the village to improve various services such as health, better paths, and construction of public restrooms. In the middle, a young man demonstrates how to cut open a cocoa pod using a machete. All children in West African villages know how to use a machete to do just about anything--such as digging, weeding, trimming, peeling cassava, and opening cocoa pods. Right: a nursery run by the village. The nursery is covered by palm fronds in order to protect the young cocoa plants.





We leave the village and walk toward the cocoa fields. Several families leave with us. The women are carrying on their heads the food and utensils needed to prepare lunch for their families.



These young men are leaving by bicycle for the fields. The one on the left has several hands of plantains on the back wheel and a container of village well water on his handlebar. The young man on the right is also carrying village well water, which is safe as the Ministry of Health monitors water quality.



We begin with a lesson in harvesting. Top, a young man shows how to remove a pod without damaging the trunk. You have to cut the stem of the pod without tearing the bark; otherwise it might become infected. Pods should be yellow (if of the Forastero/Amelonado variety). If harvested green, the cocoa beans will be poorly developed and will sell for a low price as they produce an inferior chocolate. The pods are placed in a basin which is then tipped onto the ground and the beans are put in the basin. Bottom, left and right: this is how you ferment small batches (between seasons). You use banana or plantain leaves, the stems of which are inserted into a container. When fermented, the juices produce a wine and the beans are then dried.

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Left, one covers the beans and puts a stem into the container in order to collect the juices. The result is a wine of great subtlety. The juices form as pectinase enzymes degrade the cell walls and membranes and the sugary cell sap drips into the container where it ferments.



A pod never opened: it followed nature's course

How to Plant Cocoa



The young man now shows us how to plant seedlings. First, cut a hole in the soil with a machete. They don't use shovels because it's difficult to carry bulky tools to the fields, and besides, they cost a lot more. Usually there is no need to water the plants because there is no direct sun and in tropical rainforests, rain falls daily.



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This woman kindly showed us the interior of her house (to the right). A home is for sleep, shelter, and to store one's few possessions.



When possible, one makes one's own tools. Left is a shallow basket used to winnow the rice that one throws into the air in order to remove the bran. To the right, manioc.



Left, manioc tubers. Right, the roots of manioc. Manioc or cassava was introduced to Africa by the Portuguese in the 15th century, when they began the Atlantic slave traffic. They first planted manioc at the mouth of the Congo river in order to supply slave boats for the long voyage. The plant spread rapidly throughout West Africa as it was particularly useful for protecting villages from the effects of war. When an enemy burnt down a village, the only edible crop left was the tubers left hidden in the ground.

The Welcoming and Gift Ceremony



After our lessons, we participated in a gift and welcome ceremony. Top and top right: we meet in the village “hall”, which is a structure without walls and that serves as a place to shelter during rainstorms. Right, the village chief. Below, we present out gifts: t-shirts, machetes, and this year, solar-powered lights.



DEPA



We visit our friends in Depa. Left, Chief Dédé and his assistants. Right, Jules Becka.

DJAHA KRO



This year, we built a well for Djahkro. During this trip, we visited Djahakro partly to monitor its progress. But first, we were given a tour of the cocoa groves. Top, left: Dorothy follows the young men in order to watch a demonstration. Top, right: a young man enjoys the good taste of the cocoa fruit. Middle, left: ripe pods that are ready to be opened. Middle, right: they open the pods with machetes and then throw the juicy insides into a basin. The opened pods are thrown into a pile to compost.



Left: the well. It's been dug! Right: a ripe, dry okra pod. The seeds are often planted next to houses to provide shade. Okra is usually grown as a perennial as it looks and tastes good. It is called *gombo* (the origin of the soup by that name).

PEZOAN



Left, Village Chief Guinea Tape François, weighs himself on the scale. Top, right: a platter of Machoirrons (a type of catfish), a fish that is highly prized in West Africa and that can sell for more than \$30 per Kg (\$12 per lb). Their flavor and texture are quite delicate. Bottom right: Chief Guinea Tape François demonstrates his machete.

Gbeutitapia et Broguhe



We visit the monkey village, Gbeutitapia (see page 150). Afterwards, we stop by Broguhe. Right, the chief with his two wives.



TETIA

Left, one of the chief's wives is holding her daughter and a photo of Anna Nakayama holding her daughter the year before. Anna wanted us to give her the photo. Right, my mother Dorothy, with both the wives.



We visited Tetia Tetia. Left, the chief of Tetia watches his spokesman inspect the scale. Right, the chief.



The chief of the village women.



The chief of the young farmers.

ZEREGUHE



The chief of the young people



The chief of the women



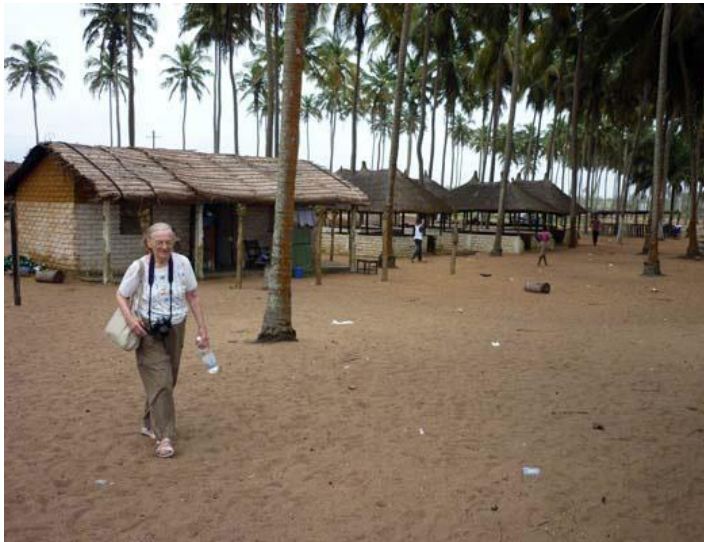
The Chief of Zereguhe



Bicycle Painted American-style

Après avoir visité les villages pendant 4 jours, nous partons pour Abidjan et puis Grand Bassam

GRAND BASSAM



Grand Bassam is popular for enjoyment of beaches (see left). And, as described on pages 101-106, at the end of the 19th century, it was the capital of Ivory Coast.

Above, right: a monument dedicated to the French who died for Ivory Coast.

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Top left: a plaque commemorating the French explorer Treiche Laplaine, the first European to penetrate the forests of Ivory Cast. Top, right: a monument dedicated to the two SMA missionaries, Père Alexandre Hamard et Père Emile Bonhomme, who arrived in Grand Bassam in 1895. SMA means: Societas Missionum ad Afros (Sociétés des Missions Africaines). Middle left and right: the Hotel de France built at the end of the 19-th century. Les “ropes” hanging from the ceiling are lianas. Bottom, left: just as my father taught me to recycle nails. Bottom, right: the main entryway for the Hotel de France.

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After our week in Ivory Coast, we fly to Accra to meet Alex Mensah, our driver Peter Sewornoo, our guide, and Suzanne, who wanted to join the trip because she was owner of a chocolate company and she wanted to learn about the life of cocoa farmers and about the various types of certification.

The next day, we visit COCOBOD, a governmental organization that manages all stages of cocoa--from growing (chemicals, seedling production, genetics, and other aspects of cocoa culture) to storage and export/sales. I described my ideas about the foundation of an educational center where university students would work on ideas and plans for: 1. Studying and understanding the life of cocoa farmers; 2. Founding village associations for the production and sales of chocolate products; 3. Establishing educational and commercial ties to American and European universities; 4. Developing programs of eco-tourism.

We left Accra in the afternoon and traveled toward Kumasi. On the way, we stopped to visit Yayra Glover, a representative of cocoa smallholders in the region of Suhum–Kraboa–Coaltar, located in southeastern Ghana (north of Accra and west of the Volta). His goal is to market cocoa that is certified organic, Fair Trade, or UTZ. He works with the famous Swiss chocolate company, Felchlin (<https://www.felchlin.com/en/sustainability/project-yayra-glover>).

After our visit to Yayra, we turned north toward CRIG, located in Tafo. The last time I had visited CRIG was in 2003 (see pages 32 & 33).



CRIG--Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana



This time, we got to see current research on cocoa illness. Left, Suzanne, Dorothy, and Peter. Right, one of the diseases under investigation.



We left CRIG and traveled to Kumasi, where we arrived at about 5 PM, just when traffic had reached a peak. We went to visit Kuapa Kokoo the next morning. By now, it had 75,000 members. We talked to various officials for about an hour. I discussed my ideas for a center--the same talk I gave at COCOBOD. left, an office door at Kuapa Kokoo.

We take the road to Lake Bosumtwi (see page 31 for more details). Left, normally motor boats are not allowed on the lake. Right my mother stands in front of the boats that are allowed--basically planks that are paddled by hand. Below, fishnets drying out and hung for repair.

LAC BOSUMTWI



The next day, we drive to Cape Coast. We arrive in the evening and enjoy an excellent meal in a restaurant right next to the fort. Right, Dorothy on the ramparts.

We leave Cape Coast after dinner and drive to Ebekawopa, where we arrive after sundown. Reverend Sampson has lit a bonfire to welcome us.



EBEKAWOPA



Left: some people have come to welcome us, to listen to the music and to dance. Right: the bonfire.



The next day, we visit the old school that was built by the village and with village funds. It is traditional construction: with tree trunks, mud, and palm leaves. Top, right: the tree trunks sprouted roots and push some cocoa leaves above the wall! Bottom, left: a blackboard. Bottom, right: student desks in the new part of the school that was built by the Ghanaian federal government.



Left: this woman is making banku. She starts by milling corn and then throwing it into boiling salted water. She stirs vigorously because the dough becomes quite thick. The pot is made of aluminum, manufactured by Kaiser Aluminum at the Akosombo Dam, located at the southern end of the Volta. The clay pot holders are made by the women themselves by harvesting clay from cliffs or road cuts. They make the mounds and the fire them.



Top left: a warehouse for storing rice, corn, tapioca and other starch sources. Below, left; Pastor Sampson with his family. Right: young people who will surely be parents soon. Either they stay in the village and adopt traditional gender roles or they move to the city where they might share a room with a bunch of other young people.



Left: this woman is removing palm kernels from the fibrous mess that is scooped out of the pot after palm oil is scooped off the top. The palm kernels are then cracked and rendered to produce a clear oil that is perfect for frying potatoes, African yams, and coco-yams. Right: children are expected to participate in domestic tasks.

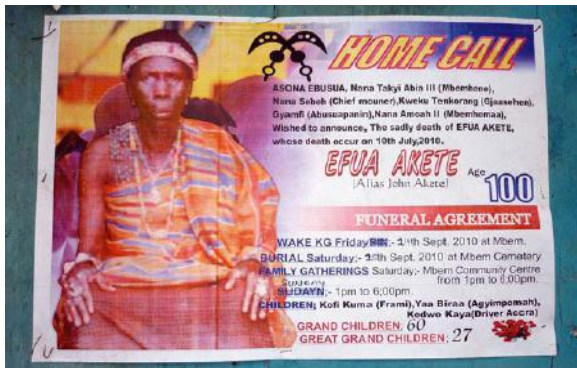
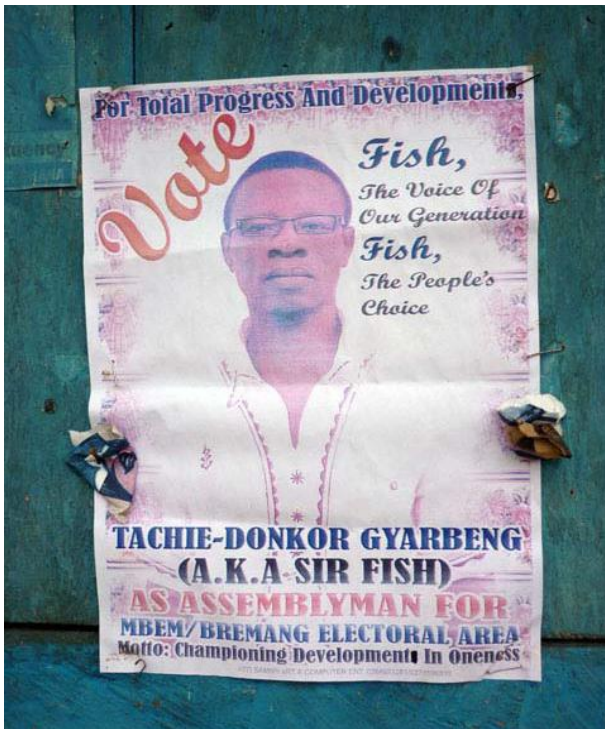


Top left: my mother talks to villagers in English. Often, Ghanaian village women speak only their local language (in this case, Fanti) because until recently, girls did not always have the right to a good education (as was the case for women in the U.S. and Europe before WWII). The life of a woman in Ghana is difficult: bear children, please her husband, cook, and maintain the home. If a woman were to lose her husband, she is sometimes accused of being a sorceress in order to deprive her of any inheritance. There are actually villages where such sorceresses (women with no husbands) are kept.

Bottom right: last year, I had given the village plastic bags for storing corn, rice, and cacao. Pastor Sampson showed me how well the method worked. As you can see, the bugs all congregated near the source of oxygen and suffocated. So, the plastic bags work! But, as they say, you have to have money to earn money. You have to be able to buy the bags to prevent loss due to insects.

We left Ebekawop and soon arrived in Adiyaw, one of the five villages with which Peter had communicated in 2006.

ADIYAW



We arrive in Adiyaw in the afternoon. Top left and right: a few villagers are waiting for us. Middle right: this young man is a carpenter and shows us his saw. Middle, left: an electoral candidate for Assembly. His name is “Sir Fish”. Of course that’s not his real name, which is the quite unpronounceable Tachie-Donkor Gyarbeng. Bottom right: a funeral announcement for Mr. Efua Akete, age 100.



After our visit to Adiyaw, we go to the Hans Hotel, located on a small lake. Left, weaver birds that from spherical nests. Their cries are quite special. Right, a hotel connected to the restaurant where we enjoyed some afternoon snacks. The lake is populated by crocodiles: no playing on the balcony!

GYAWARE



We visit Gyaware (see more about this village on pages 132-134). As always, it is an unusually beautiful place.



Left, wood collected for cooking. Above, the chief recompenses my gifts with a chicken

JUKWAH



On the way back to Cape Coast, we visit the king of the Fantis at his home in Jukwah.

MMANIAYE



The next day, we visit Mmaniaye--for the fourth time since 2007. See pages 117-124 to learn more about this village. This time, the village is perfumed with the aromas of oil-making. Two large pots, one full of coconut flesh and the other full of cracked palm kernels were being heated slowly. Above, left: the chief's house. Above, right: one of the oils being rendered. Middle, left: palm kernels waiting to be cracked. Middle, right: dried coconut waiting to be rendered. Bottom, left: the village well. Bottom, right: a birdhouse.



Left: the gari factory. They are heating shredded, fermented cassava over low flame. Right: at the gift ceremony, I took a picture of Soledad's mother. For more pictures of Soledad, see pages 176-179.

TAKORADI



We finish our trip to Ivory Coast and Ghana with an afternoon spent in Takoradi, the country's main port. Top, left: bags of cocoa beans waiting to be loaded into containers. Top, right: a container ship docked at the quay. Below: Padmore Cobbina and his partner running their cellphone parts shop.