

We would be the first group to train completely in Ghana. Staging was at the Sylvania Hotel in Philadelphia in June of 1969. Staging then was longer than it is now. We had to finalize our paperwork, have our teeth checked by a dentist, meet with a psychologist for a one on one, see slides and films and get yellow fever shots. At first we were told to make our way to New York for the flight but that changed and we left from Philadelphia on a TWA charter for Accra. I don't remember anyone sleeping during that flight. The movie was *The Love Bug*. I've never forgotten that. It seemed such an odd choice. I don't remember too much about the flight. Mostly we had a few drinks and got to know each other better. We stopped in Madrid and most of us got off to stretch our legs, and I remember hurrying to the windows to see the Sahara as we flew over.

When we arrived in Accra, I walked out of the plane and onto the stairs where I was hit with a blast of overwhelming heat. That is my first memory of Ghana. At the terminal, we were greeted and welcomed by Ghanaian officials and bottles of warm Fanta. We were exhausted, and I really don't remember much of what was said. We got our luggage and boarded busses for Winneba. I remember looking out the window for my first views of Ghana then I fell asleep.

Before I left Philadelphia, I knew my posting was going to be in Bolgatanga in what was then called the Upper Region. The more remote posts were filled first, those in the Upper and Northern Regions.

For the first two weeks we stayed in Winneba at a secondary school. The first night was a welcoming dinner. Training began the next day with language studies. I was in the smallest language group, those of us heading to the Upper Region, and we were learning Hausa. The Dagbani group, the Northern Region trainees, was the next smallest. Everyone else was learning Twi. One day was shot day, and we were in a long line moving from one shot to another. I remember typhoid, paratyphoid, diphtheria, gamma globulin, polio vaccine and the worst shot in the world, rabies. Another day we all walked through town to greet the chief at his house. During those two weeks, in between language lessons, we had large group meetings about staying healthy, Ghanaian customs and Ghanaian English.

The next three weeks were our live-ins when we stayed with families who spoke the languages we were learning. My group, all eight of us, were shepherded to Bawku by our volunteer trainer. It took fourteen hours to get there. The last leg of that journey was on a laterite road in a mammy lorry kicking up enough red dust to cover us all. The lorry had stadium type seats, and we held on to the roof for dear life as the lorry bounced from one rut to another. We stayed at the Peace Corps volunteer's house that night as it was far too late to go into town. The next day we met our families. I stayed with Imoru Sanda who lived with a couple of his daughters in one house while his three wives lived in a compound in a different house. I used to love to visit his wives. I'd walk between compounds on a wide dirt path to get there, and I'd pass a class where small boys were sitting under a tree reciting the Koran over and over until they memorized it.

In the mornings we taught at a middle school so we could better understand our students' educational backgrounds. My school was at the bottom of a huge hill. We had been given bikes, and I loved the ride down that hill. The ride up was usually more of a walk. We had language every afternoon. In the evenings, people came to my father's house as he was an elder. The visitors sat around the room. I was always expected to be there for a bit of the evening.

Everyone spoke Hausa, and they would look at me, talk to one another then look back at me. I remember I felt self-conscious and wishing I knew more Hausa.

When the three weeks were finished, we had one week to spend at our own schools, and we all individually made our ways. I went to Women's Training College in Bolgatanag and met Madam Insitfu, the principal. My house was one side of a duplex. I checked out the school, went into town, opened a bank account and wandered around Bolga. One week later, I left most of my eighty pounds of luggage at my house, threw a few changes of clothes in a bag and made my way to Koforidua for the next phase of training.

We stayed together for one week enduring more language then were divided into two separate groups, one for secondary school teachers and the other for training college teachers; both groups were in schools in Koforidua. We spent the next three weeks student teaching. Ghanaian students gave up part of their school holidays for us. We taught a couple of times every day and were evaluated in the classrooms several times then met with the evaluators for their critiques and suggestions. There were far fewer language classes during these three weeks, and we were free most afternoons and every evening. Several of us went to Accra for the weekend. I hitched with a few friends. We stayed at the Peace Corps hostel in Adabraka for 50 pesewas a night, including breakfast. I remember that first weekend vividly as I was the victim of an attempted purse snatching. He had one strap while I had the other. We both pulled but his gave way, and he ran. I thought it an adventure and laughed as that guy would have been darn disappointed by a small haul.

Our last week of training was at the University of Ghana at Legon. It was like being at a resort: fresh coffee in the mornings with real coffee cups and cream, individual rooms and mostly free days to spend as we liked. Kente weavers had set up on the campus so we could watch. There was tribal dancing and Ghanaian drumming. There were the final pieces of training, the language proficiency tests and our swearing-in as Peace Corps volunteers. I remember being crowded in a room shoulder to shoulder. The United States ambassador swore us in, and that was it. We were finally volunteers.

We each received 250 cedis as settling in allowances, and we were on our own to make our ways home. It took me two days to get to Bolga, but I felt accomplished making it on my own almost all the way across the entire country. I was thrilled to be home.