

The Life Of A Foreign Service Family



THE EARL BROWNS had to make many adjustments to life in rural Ghana. A former Peace Corps volunteer, Brown is helping Ghana with an important land use project. His children found the schools vastly different. Although the classrooms are small and poorly furnished, the Brown children found their studies more demanding.

Introduction

Earl Brown, who grew up in Washington, D.C., is presently serving in Ghana West Africa on an Agency For International Development (AID) project through the Center for Population and Urban Rural Studies at the Research Triangle Institute.

Brown has pursued doctoral studies in city and regional planning at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; has served as lead planner in the Office of Manpower Services for the State of North Carolina; was CETA coordinator with the North Carolina Human Resources Department; and a faculty member at North Carolina Central University in the Public Administration Program.

Both Brown and his wife are graduates of Morgan State College in Baltimore (1964 and 1965 respectively). Brown received his Master's degree in 1970 from the Department of Urban Affairs at Hunter College in New York. He is well-known in the Triangle area.

The life of a foreign service family varies from post to post. Some assignments are relatively comfortable, with easy access to the amenities Americans have come to expect. Some are at the other extreme, such as in Tamale, Ghana, where the Earl Browns of Washington, D.C., are stationed.

When Mrs. Mary Ann Brown found out her husband's next overseas job was in Tamale, she says she anticipated moving into a house complete with electricity to power a washer and dryer, an air conditioner and a freezer to store food purchased in Accra, the capital, 406 miles away.

Reality set in the moment she set foot in the



LIVING IN THE HINTERLAND presented problems for the Browns who frequently find themselves without water or electricity.

compound that has been her home for the past twenty-one months. The first thing she heard was the hum of a generator at the rear of the three-bedroom concrete block house built by the Ghana government for the Browns. The sight of a series of water tanks set up behind the kitchell, well-supplied with tins and plastic containers to store boiled water in, was also less than reassuring.

Earl Brown head the Tamale Land Use Programming Project for the Agency for International Development. With Earl and Mary Ann Brown are their children — Glynnis, 12, and Cris, 10. Since service and delivery problems grow proportionately with the distance from Accra,

AID mission in the capital and on their equally strong family bonds. According to his colleagues, Earl may have found that the Browns rely on strong logistical support from the his job would have been virtually impossible without his family's whole-hearted support.

Irvin Coker, former mission director, notes: "Mary Ann made a home of what was available and endured shortcomings with a sense of dedication to her husband's work that has made it possible to live in conditions the average American would have long abandoned." Glynnis and Cris pitch in on a regular basis, too.

Brown is described by friends as a "positive, effervescent man. His good

humor, enthusiasm, intelligence and drive infect his fellow workers. He has a real dedication to his job. After meeting his co-workers, one believes the seemingly impossible will indeed be realized before he leaves the country." One of Brown's Ghanaian counterparts vows that one of the first roads to be built will be known as "Brown's Road."

Brown, former Peace Corps volunteer in Tanzania with experience in the Harlem Model Cities Program, has developed an excellent rapport with Ghanaians. At first, there was considerable tension; the local district council expressed impatience at the thought of still another study that Brown considered necessary. He overcame their doubts and has established an

ly car was a considerable problem until a delivery system was set up. Brown estimates his driver waited in gasoline lines for as much as two and a half days a week. Kerosene for lamps is also in short supply; the Browns discovered that adding salt to diesel fuel makes it usable in kerosene lamps.

Until recently, the Browns had power and water about sixty per cent of the time. But the situation has deteriorated and they admit they worry about how much worse it will get. Communication with Accra has improved considerably with the installation of a radio.

Glynnis and Cris attend nearby Ghanaian schools. Cris is on the local military base and is com-



LIFE IN RURAL GHANA requires adjustments for Earl Brown and his family. Mrs. Brown starts portable electrical generator in Tamale home to refrigerate food and generate electricity.



FRESH PRODUCE IS SCARCE in Tamale, Ghana, and Mrs. Brown is growing her own vegetables. The vegetables supplement supplies received from the United States.

agreeable and cooperative working relationship.

A typical day in Brown's life starts at breakfast with the family, and whatever friends or visitors happen to be around, linking hands and giving thanks. Brown then climbs into his pick-up truck, along with large containers and some helpers, the first of as many as three daily trips to get water for his family. It's a good taste of what Third World women spend a great deal of time doing, except Brown has a vehicle.

On a recent trip, a few minutes from the house, Brown offered a ride to a community health nurse on her way to the food distribution station. block later, he picked an old man lugging a truck tire to a local shop for repairs. On it goes until the truck is loaded with people and objects. At the water works is a large reservoir.

Interesting enough, it isn't a shortage of water that plagues Tamale, but insufficient power to drive the pumps to distribute the water. Woman have tapped line shear their home to avoid long walks to carry water, so the system is in sore need of a major overhaul.

Because of a gasoline shortage partially due to the fact that drivers from the south refuse to carry gas supplies over the poor roads, water is rarely trucked to individual storage tanks. It is not unusual to find women doing their daily wash in buckets near the water distribution site.

Back at the house, the heavy, water-filled containers are emptied via a bucket brigade, with Cris taking over. The few days that water is delivered to the Browns' storage tanks is cause for celebration. Those are the times the family luxuriate under showers.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Brown primes the generator adjusting the choke, getting the machine started for a run of several hours. Two generators work, alternately, for about nine hours a day — just enough to protect the frozen food run the refrigerator and, in the evening, provide some light. Candles and batteries for lamps are in short supply, so the electricity — which the Browns once took for granted — is greatly appreciated. Getting the gasoline they need for project vehicles and the fami-



FILLING WATER CONTAINERS is a frequent chore. Brown and his helpers sometimes make as many as three daily trips to supply the family's needs.

a rototiller to increase the garden size and will plant corn this year to support a family chicken project. At the moment, the Browns are experimenting with rice in a low corner of the garden where drainage is poor. Mrs. Brown expects a fair yield from this otherwise unusable piece of ground.

In addition to strong backstop support from the mission, the Browns have lots of help from their neighbors. In addition to becoming a gourmet on Ghanaian dishes, Mrs. Brown is learning about

gardening and how to make clothes from local fabrics. She says the friends they are making are a highlight of their tour. One lesson the Browns have learned has been that they can do rather well without many luxuries and that they can provide for themselves. While the situation is admittedly difficult, the Browns say they have been compensated with the growing awareness of how they relate to each other as a family and how much they have become part of the local community.

United Nations Report

The Reagan-Thatcher Axis

By Laura Parks

Glorious Zimbabwe is one year old. The heroic infant nation, in a solemn declaration, proclaimed to the world that it would support any and all liberation struggles in South Africa, the last stronghold of minority white rule on the African continent.

The declaration from Zimbabwe came soon after British Prime Minister Thatcher's visit to India and President Reagan's representative, Mr. Crocker's visit to southern Africa. The twin visits did not go unnoticed among African leaders, nor for that matter among the leaders of most developing nations.

The visits are generally being regarded as the first steps along the road toward the Reagan-Thatcher Axis global power play attempting to reestablish the influence and power of the United States and Britain in an area of the world that former national security advisor to President

Carter called the arc of crisis. This arc stretches from South Africa to the trouble spots of the Middle East and beyond to the Indian sub-continent.

The Reagan-Thatcher plan envisages a powerful military presence in this vast region to protect the supply of oil to Europe, the United States, South Africa and Japan. The plan has three essential components. The first is the land strategy. This component sees South Africa, Egypt-Israel and Pakistan as being key military bastions from which it would be possible to intimidate and dominate the surrounding nations.

The second component of the plan calls for the establishment of naval and air bases in certain selected countries from which rapid strikes could be carried out against unruly nations that may, at some time in the future, raise the prices of their raw materials a little bit

too high or may even refuse to supply them. The last component of the plan sees the creation of a powerful naval force in the general region of the Indian Ocean guarding the waters that wash the shores of South and Eastern Africa, the Persian Gulf and India and Pakistan. The overall political-military reason given for the creation of this mighty military edifice is to forestall a possible Soviet power move into the region, especially into the Persian Gulf.

But there are important disbelievers. First, there is India Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's intense fear of an armed Pakistan for a neighbor. Second, she believes that the nations of this region are best served when the super powers are absent and their military hardware removed. Nor is she convinced that the Soviets intend to move in to the Gulf, arguing that

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How Do You Feel About The Proposed Gasoline Tax Increase?

I want to know how you feel about the proposed gasoline tax increase. When you elected me to the North Carolina House of Representatives, I promised you that I would not forget that you — the people of Durham — sent me to Raleigh to represent your interests and views.

Now, the General Assembly is being asked to pass a bill to increase the tax on gasoline. The highway officials and the politicians here in Raleigh have all been giving their views and reasons for increasing the tax on gasoline.

Personally, I want to hear how YOU feel about this proposed gasoline tax increase, so that I can represent YOUR views and feelings about this most important issue.

I need to know your views and opinions so that I can represent YOU in the manner that you expect me to. You may reach me at the following telephone numbers:

682-5679 489-1638 733-5973

Thank You,
Kenneth B. Spaulding
North Carolina House of Representatives