

## *“In the hearts of those whom you serve”: The Teachers for West Africa Program*

THE UNITED STATES' FOREIGN RELATIONS have always incorporated both *realpolitik* and nobler ideals of the American character. In the years following World War II, America's foreign policy weighed the relative merits of these two approaches and reassessed the efficacy of a reliance on military power or economic coercion. On January 25, 1952, at the annual meeting of the Washington chapter of the Roosevelt Day Dinner, Brien McMahon, Democratic senator from Connecticut, proposed to send young Americans as “full-time missionaries of democracy” to what would later be known as the Third World.<sup>1</sup> Engaged at the time in a cold war with the Soviet Union and a hot war on the Korean Peninsula, the United States had been searching for another way to aid nations in their anticommunist struggles. Policies similar to McMahon's had been part of the national security discussion within the Truman administration, but this appears to have been the first time a major political figure outlined such a proposal in a truly public forum. As the 1950s progressed, Americans focused on counteracting their country's negative image abroad. In 1957, for example, Senator Hubert Humphrey introduced the first Peace Corps bill. “It did not meet with much enthusiasm,” he later recalled.<sup>2</sup> But McMahon's and Humphrey's ideas eventually came to fruition with the support of a sympathetic new young president, John F. Kennedy, and the Peace Corps was established in 1961.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, other industrialized countries also formed volunteer organizations to aid the developing world, such as the Canadian University Services (CUSO), the British Voluntary Service (VSO), and the Netherlands' Jongeren Vrijwilligers Programma (JVP).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Point Four ‘Hoe Army’ Sought by M'Mahon,” *New York Times*, Jan. 26, 1952.

<sup>2</sup> Hubert H. Humphrey, *The Education of a Public Man: My Life and Politics* (Garden City, NY, 1976), 250.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA, 1998), 114–15.

What is not as well-known, however, is the story of other, less-publicized American organizations that also sent volunteers to the developing world, especially to those new countries formed during the period of decolonization. Examples here included the Volunteer Teachers for Africa (VTA), formed by Harvard University students, and the Teachers for East Africa program, sponsored by Teachers College at Columbia University. These volunteer teacher organizations were part of the postwar evolution of nonmissionary teacher programs. One such organization, the African-American Institute (AAI), sent the “first secular American teachers in postwar Africa . . . to Ghana and Nigeria in 1955.”<sup>4</sup> The AAI would later help train another small overseas teacher program, one that was located in eastern Pennsylvania. It was funded by the country’s largest chocolate manufacturer and administered by a private denominational college located about ten miles away. Its creation stemmed not from any overt political considerations but from the unique organizational culture and history of each of these two institutions. The Hershey Chocolate Company and Elizabethtown College were both founded in the 1890s and shared similar cultural and religious backgrounds.

*Milton S. Hershey: A Legacy of Philanthropy*

Milton S. Hershey made his initial fortune manufacturing caramel candy in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. In 1900 he sold his caramel company to a competitor and shifted his focus to the Hershey Chocolate Company, which he had established in 1894. Hershey’s plans were to begin large-scale production of chocolate for mass consumption. He purchased an initial 1,200 acres of farmland approximately thirty miles northwest of Lancaster, and groundbreaking on a new factory and town began in 1903; the town would eventually be named after Milton Hershey. The Hershey Chocolate Company soon expanded production, and sales spread throughout the country, helping Hershey fulfill his vision of creating an industrial utopia. Hershey’s concept was “to build his business to support the town—not the other way around.”<sup>5</sup> With his enterprise thriving, Hershey and his wife, Catherine, set up a trust fund in 1909 to establish a school for orphaned boys. The Hershey Industrial School (now known

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Zimmerman, *Innocents Abroad: American Teachers in the American Century* (Cambridge, MA, 2006), 16.

<sup>5</sup> Joel Glenn Brenner, *The Emperors of Chocolate: Inside the Secret World of Hershey and Mars* (New York, 1999), 90.

as the Milton Hershey School) further benefitted from his philanthropy. In November 1918, Hershey secretly transferred his Hershey Chocolate Company stock into a trust and named the industrial school the beneficiary. This arrangement, in effect, made the school the majority shareholder in a company of national prominence, a situation that continues to this day. Hershey's generosity came not after his death, but while he had almost twenty-seven years remaining in his life. Hershey's approach to commerce, which was best reflected in a sign he had in his office that read "Business is a Matter of Human Service," reflected his Mennonite heritage and the belief that one must live the scriptures in one's daily life.<sup>6</sup>

### *Elizabethtown College: A Tradition of Service*

Members of the German Baptist Brethren, later known as the Church of the Brethren, founded Elizabethtown College in 1899; the group is descended from the Anabaptist and Pietist tradition established in Germany in the early eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup> A pacifist church, the Brethren have a tradition of missionary work abroad, dating back to the establishment of a mission in Denmark in 1876. The church formed other mission stations in India (1895), China (1908), and Nigeria (1922).<sup>8</sup> Brethren missionaries approached their work in the spirit of the social gospel and emphasized education, medical care, and vocational training, in addition to evangelizing. As an adjunct to this missionary endeavor, the Brethren also began practicing a secular approach to foreign volunteer service during and after World War II. Conscientious objectors and others wishing to serve humanity volunteered for the Brethren Service. One of the more well-known endeavors of this program was the Heifer Project, which sent live animals to war-torn Europe and elsewhere both during and after the war.<sup>9</sup> These twin themes of missionary and secular service later found their expression in a project to send American teachers to Africa.

<sup>6</sup> Michael D'Antonio, *Hershey: Milton S. Hershey's Extraordinary Life of Wealth, Empire, and Utopian Dreams* (New York, 2006), 169, 114.

<sup>7</sup> For a complete history of the college, see Chet Williamson, *Uniting Work and Spirit: A Centennial History of Elizabethtown College* (Elizabethtown, PA, 2001).

<sup>8</sup> *The Brethren Encyclopedia*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, 1983–84), s.v. "Missions."

<sup>9</sup> J. Kenneth Kreider, *A Cup of Cold Water: The Story of Brethren Service* (Elgin, IL, 2001), 131–49.

*The Teachers for West Africa Program, 1961–72*

Samuel F. Hinkle began working for Milton S. Hershey in 1924 when he was hired as a chemist. Rising through the executive ranks, he became president in 1956 of what by then was known as the Hershey Chocolate Corporation; he remained in that position until his retirement in 1965. A protégé of Milton Hershey, Hinkle understood that the company's purpose was nobler than maximizing shareholder wealth and that it was his responsibility to further its mission of human service.<sup>10</sup> For Hinkle, that service extended well beyond the town of Hershey.<sup>11</sup> Nigeria, Ghana, and the other West African nations were major sources of cocoa beans for Hershey's chocolate production. Regarding Nigeria and Ghana, Hinkle wrote in his unpublished memoir, "These two countries were the most important sources of cocoa beans not only in West Africa, but in the entire world insofar as Hershey was concerned."<sup>12</sup> Hershey purchased the cocoa beans on the open market, as the company did not own or manage its own cocoa plantations.

In an effort to give back to those countries, Hinkle announced at a May 29, 1961, luncheon held at Elizabethtown College that "For some time I have been thinking about the possibility of a project in which Hershey Chocolate Corporation would give financial support to Elizabethtown College for a program of sending teachers to Ghana and Nigeria in Africa."<sup>13</sup> He selected Elizabethtown College "because of its location near Hershey, and due to the experiences which the Church of the Brethren already had amassed in missionary activities in Africa, [it] seemed to be ideally suited to this undertaking."<sup>14</sup> Assisting Hinkle in this endeavor was Hinkle's boyhood friend, Dr. A. C. Baugher.<sup>15</sup>

Dr. A. C. Baugher was born Charles Abba Baugher, but he preferred to reverse the initials of his first and middle name and thus was known as

<sup>10</sup> Brenner, *Emperors of Chocolate*, 230.

<sup>11</sup> Hershey Community Archives Web site, "Samuel F. Hinkle," <http://www.hersheyarchives.org/resources> (accessed Nov. 13, 2007).

<sup>12</sup> Samuel Hinkle, unpublished memoir, 1968, 620, Hershey Community Archives, Hershey, PA.

<sup>13</sup> A. C. Baugher, "Report on the Elizabethtown College African Program" (typescript, June 1, 1962), 2, Teachers for West Africa Program files, Elizabethtown College Archives, High Library, Elizabethtown, PA (hereafter TWAP files).

<sup>14</sup> Hinkle, memoir, 657–58.

<sup>15</sup> James M. Berkebile, "Teachers for West Africa Program: Program Report, 1961–1972" (typescript, 1972), 2, TWAP files.

A. C. for most of his life.<sup>16</sup> Baugher was a graduate of Elizabethtown College and, as a student, had been a member of the volunteer mission band beginning in 1916. An elder in the Brethren Church, he served as president of Elizabethtown College from 1941 until 1961, and he was an embodiment of the college's motto, Educate for Service. Baugher was preparing to begin his retirement from the college when Hinkle announced his intentions at the 1961 commencement luncheon. Baugher, instead of retiring, extended his career in education by serving as the program's first administrator.

Following this proposal, Hinkle and Baugher met with officials at the United Nations and the State Department to determine the enterprise's feasibility. After receiving positive endorsements from these two organizations, Baugher contacted the ambassadors of Ghana and Nigeria, the Peace Corps, and the African-American Institute regarding Elizabethtown College's ability to administer the program; he was assured by them of the program's viability. On October 25, 1961, the Elizabethtown College Board of Trustees voted to accept the proposal, and Hershey presented a grant of \$250,000 to the college on November 1, 1961, to fund the endeavor.<sup>17</sup> An advisory committee formed with key oversight members, including Dr. Roy E. McAuley, then president of Elizabethtown College, and Dr. John O. Hershey, president of the Milton Hershey School.

The program was initially called the Elizabethtown College African Program. However, in Africa the term "college" generally referred to high school-level teacher education institutions.<sup>18</sup> Baugher decided to change the program's name to avoid any misunderstanding and to make clear that the teachers being sent to Africa were university and college graduates. After consulting a number of individuals working for other overseas programs in Africa, he decided in September 1961 that henceforth the venture would be named the Teachers for West Africa Program, often shortened to TWAP; it kept that name until it ended in 1972.

On the mild summer morning of August 13, 1962, twenty-seven young teachers boarded a nine o'clock bus in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, bound for New York City. These young men and women had just finished a weeklong orientation and training session held at

<sup>16</sup> *Brethren Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Baugher, Charles Abba."

<sup>17</sup> Berkebile, "Teachers for West Africa Program," 4.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

Elizabethtown College and were the first group of teachers to be sent on a two-year commitment to the new African countries of Nigeria and Ghana. The teachers at the orientation came from two different overseas programs. Baugher had interviewed eighty-five prospective candidates for TWAP and selected only seven teachers for that first year. His concern was to send the best candidates possible to establish the program on a strong footing with the host countries. The African-American Institute (AAI), a nonprofit organization based in New York City, sponsored another twenty teachers. Grants from the Ford Foundation and USAID initially funded AAI, which was experienced in teacher placement in Africa and had an office in Lagos, Nigeria, to assist TWAP in the field. Harry Heintzen, director of teacher placement for AAI, was an instructor at the Elizabethtown College orientation. TWAP eventually covered the expenses for four of the twenty AAI teachers.<sup>19</sup>



Samuel Hinkle (near right) greets Donald Maxwell and Carol Maxwell (left). Also shown are A. C. Baugher (far right), Harry Heintzen (right rear), and two unidentified teachers. The photograph was taken at the first teacher orientation program held at Elizabethtown College in August 1962. Courtesy of the High Library, Elizabethtown College.

<sup>19</sup> Holly Whiting (formerly Harriet Elwood, AAI assistant in 1962, Lagos, Nigeria), e-mail message to the author, Nov. 27, 2007; Berkebile, "Teachers for West Africa Report," 7–8.

After leaving Elizabethtown, the entire group of teachers and administrators spent another seven to ten days in New York City touring the United Nations and AAI offices. According to TWAP teacher Donald Maxwell, they had to wait about ten days to receive their visas to Nigeria. If Baugher had had a better understanding of the Nigerian custom of *dash*, then the wait for the visas might have been shorter.<sup>20</sup>

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Advertisement from the Feb. 5, 1965, issue of Franklin and Marshall's *College Reporter*. Advertisements were placed in numerous college and university newspapers across the country during the program's history. Courtesy of Archives and Special Collections, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, PA.

Sadly, A. C. Baugher died unexpectedly of a heart attack on November 2, 1962. The advisory committee turned to Dr. James M. Berkebile, professor of chemistry at Elizabethtown College, to be the interim program director. Berkebile was a long-time educator, having begun his career as a science teacher in Galena, Ohio, in 1935. He later earned a PhD in chemistry from Ohio State University. Berkebile came to Elizabethtown College in 1957 from McPherson College, where he had been a professor and department chairman. The son of missionaries to India and an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren, Berkebile took a leave of absence from 1959 to 1961 to serve as a science education advisor in Taiwan.<sup>21</sup> It was likely that his overseas work in Taiwan helped shape his decision to accept the position as the program's permanent director in

<sup>20</sup> Donald Maxwell, telephone conversation with the author, Nov. 13, 2007. *Dash*, as Ferial Haffajee facetiously wrote, is a "quaint custom of expressing gratitude in anticipation of services about to be rendered." Ferial Haffajee, "Now to be a Nigerian," Commonwealth People's Forum, [http://ipsnews.net/focus/tv\\_abuja/02122003/page\\_8.asp](http://ipsnews.net/focus/tv_abuja/02122003/page_8.asp) (accessed Dec. 3, 2007).

<sup>21</sup> "Dr. James M. Berkebile to Retire from Elizabethtown College Staff," *Elizabethtown Chronicle*, July 24, 1975.

January 1963. As director, he hoped to have a greater effect on the world through TWAP.<sup>22</sup>

Although the primary impetus for the program came from Hinkle and Baugher, the teachers who joined TWAP were at the forefront of the 1960s movement of social involvement, both at home and abroad. President John F. Kennedy's call to "ask what you can do for your country" was answered by many young people who joined such organizations as the Peace Corps and other secular and religious-based programs. Although the program was not designed to be a Church of the Brethren endeavor, many of the teachers were inspired by the sentiment of service. Donald Maxwell, for example, was a recent college graduate who had an interest in foreign cultures and travel. From Reinholds, Pennsylvania, he served in the U.S. Army for three years and was stationed overseas in South Korea, from where he also traveled to Japan. Maxwell entered Franklin and Marshall College in 1958 and graduated in 1962 with a bachelor's degree in English at the age of twenty-five. TWAP was a perfect avenue to serve overseas without U.S. government or church affiliation, which was a factor in his decision to join the program.<sup>23</sup> He and his wife, Carol, taught at the Methodist Boys High School in Lagos, Nigeria, from 1962 until 1964.

Under TWAP, the host country paid the teachers' salaries. The program covered travel expenses, shipping costs, and other expenditures, such as health insurance. After the first school year was completed, the teachers received travel money either to return to the United States to visit home or to travel wherever they would like while school was on hiatus. Many teachers chose to travel to Europe while on summer break. The program gave educators a stipend upon the completion of their two-year commitment to help them re-establish themselves once they returned home, or they could use that money for further travel. The teachers' housing was provided by the host country. As to be expected in a developing nation, there was variation in the quality of the housing, as access to water and electricity were often problematic and depended on one's location.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Leland Ray Berkebile (son of James M. Berkebile), telephone conversation with the author, Dec. 4, 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Maxwell, telephone conversation with the author, Nov. 13, 2007.

<sup>24</sup> On the program's financial arrangements, see Berkebile, "Teachers for West Africa Program," 76; for living arrangements, see newsletter *Whadoyahear*, both in TWAP files.



TWAP began to find firm footing after Berkebile took over full-time administration of the program, and its goal was to send up to twenty-five teachers a year to Nigeria and Ghana. In 1963, twenty-seven teachers went overseas, with two of the teachers unable to complete their two-year contracts. Berkebile's tasks included reviewing applications, traveling to various colleges and universities to interview potential candidates, administering day-to-day operations, and visiting Nigeria and Ghana for a few weeks every year to meet with the teachers at their various schools. This overseas travel also helped Berkebile maintain contacts with the school principals and government officials of Nigeria and Ghana who were involved in the program.<sup>25</sup>

In an effort to maintain communication with and among the teachers, Berkebile started a newsletter titled *Whadoyahear*, which he issued on a regular basis. He sent the newsletter to the teachers in Africa and to their families in the United States. The purpose of the newsletter was to exchange information and, in all likelihood, to help teachers combat the feelings of isolation some of them undoubtedly experienced at times. The newsletters also provided a window into the trials and tribulations that teachers often faced in their personal and professional lives. Using excerpts from teachers' letters, *Whadoyahear* discussed the everyday struggles teachers dealt with, such as scorpions, green mamba snakes, and other environmental hazards not generally found in the United States. When twenty-two-year-old Grace McIlvain, a TWAP teacher from 1963 to 1965 at the Abeokuta Girls School in Nigeria, wrote, "Truthfully, I was so overwhelmed . . . I decided you would not want to hear how I was getting along!" Berkebile reassured her, "Grace, remember that a lot of us do some whistling in the dark!"<sup>26</sup> From the small town of Madison, Kansas, McIlvain was a 1963 graduate of the University of Wichita with a degree in music education; she survived a severe case of hepatitis during her last year in the program. Living in a developing country took some adjustment, and, in most cases, the teachers appeared to have weathered their encounters with malaria, hepatitis, and other health woes with as positive an attitude as possible under the circumstances. "I got sick with malaria only five times," Stanley Aultz wrote, "the last three times I knew what it was and took care of it myself before it got out of control and I missed no

<sup>25</sup> Berkebile, "Teachers for West Africa Program," 32, 44–46.

<sup>26</sup> Grace McIlvain-Berkebile correspondence, *Whadoyahear*, Nov. 1963, 6, TWAP files.

class time.”<sup>27</sup> Aultz was twenty-six years old and had recently finished an MA in French at Miami University in Ohio when he joined the program in 1966. Not all of the teachers were as lucky as Aultz, and a few of them were unable to fulfill their two-year obligation. Seven teachers returned home before completing one school year, and in an extremely sad instance, a TWAP teacher committed suicide while overseas in his host country.



Grace McIlvain (right) in 1964, with roommate and fellow teacher, Maryagnes Thompson, a Peace Corps volunteer who later was a TWAP teacher from 1965 until 1968. Courtesy of the High Library, Elizabethtown College.

An example of a common experience for many teachers is found in a 1968 issue of *Whadoyahear*, in which Janet Parry in Ghana wrote to Berkebile “that it was finally my turn to join the ranks of that one-third of all TWAP teachers who are robbed within their two years here.”<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, it was too late for Parry, a Wellesley College graduate, to have read a 1965 *Whadoyahear* issue where Berkebile advised: “all teachers should get a dog. At least, he would awaken you by his barking if

<sup>27</sup> Stanley Aultz, e-mail message to the author, June 22, 2009.

<sup>28</sup> Janet Parry, *Whadoyahear*, Sept. 1968, 5, TWAP files.

someone enters your home at night.”<sup>29</sup> The newsletter served as a forum for teachers to exchange practical information that would help them adapt to their living and working conditions.

Of special concern to the program in the mid-1960s was the political situation in Ghana and, especially, Nigeria. Ghana, a British colony since 1821, gained its independence in 1957. In 1966, the Ghanaian army overthrew the government of Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah in a nonviolent coup, although the change in government did not greatly affect TWAP and the other expatriate teachers serving in Ghana at that time.<sup>30</sup> However, the political turmoil and war in Nigeria did cause great concern for the teachers, their families, and the TWAP administrators. A former colony of Great Britain, Nigeria gained its independence in 1960. More ethnically diverse than Ghana, Nigeria was also a more fractious political entity. In January 1966, army officers, mostly from the Igbo ethnic group, overthrew the government in a violent coup that saw the assassination of the federal prime minister and other government officials. Another coup followed in July 1966, and the political situation remained tense until May 1967, when Igbo secessionists in Nigeria’s eastern region declared independence. A civil war then ensued that saw the defeat of the “Republic of Biafra” in 1970.<sup>31</sup>

A number of TWAP teachers had to leave parts of Nigeria during the civil war. Dave Verbeck, who, with his wife, Marilyn, a licensed practical nurse, had joined TWAP in 1965, wrote to Berkebile on July 13, 1967, that “There have been a lot of troops moving in the Oturkpo area lately and the likelihood of conflict increased. . . . We received your letter telling us to be out of the area by August 15, and we are now out of the area.”<sup>32</sup> On July 26, 1967, teacher Doug Shaw wrote to Berkebile that he “left Oturkpo on July 15 with my Principal to travel to Kaduna. . . . Well the situation as of now is that I’m terminating my contract with Wesley High School (with sincere regrets). Dr. Eikenberry is helping to find another job here in the north (probably in a government school).” On a more uplifting note, he added that “on August 5th I shall be married to Susan

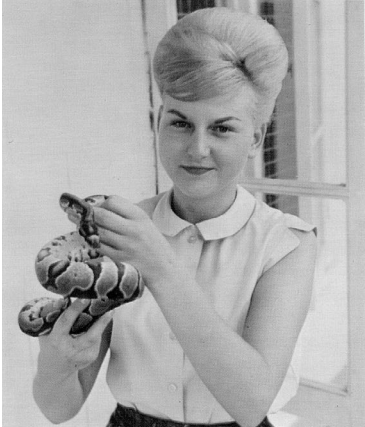
<sup>29</sup> James M. Berkebile, *Whadoyahear*, Nov.–Dec. 1965, 12, TWAP files.

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Department of State Web site, “Background Note: Ghana,” <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2860.htm> (accessed Dec. 13, 2007).

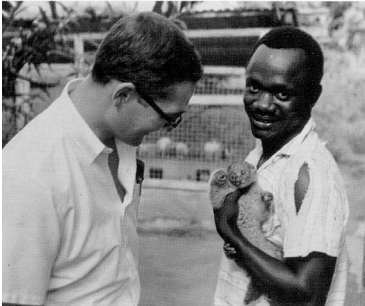
<sup>31</sup> U.S. Department of State Web site, “Background Note: Nigeria,” <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2836.htm> (accessed Dec. 13, 2007).

<sup>32</sup> Dave Verbeck, *Whadoyahear*, Aug. 1967, 3, TWAP files. Verbeck had served in the Brethren Voluntary Service after graduating from Manchester College in Indiana.

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Front and back pages of a four-page TWAP brochure. Roberta Dudas taught biology at Our Lady of Apostles School in Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria, from 1964 to 1966. Richard Maze (far lower left) taught at the Ghana Secondary School in Koforidua from 1966 to 1968. Stanley Aultz (upper right) taught at the Memorial Secondary School in Cape Coast, Ghana, from 1966 to 1969. Courtesy of the High Library, Elizabethtown College.

Williams from Birkenhead, England.” Shaw, a 1965 graduate of Elizabethtown College, met Williams, a British teacher, when both of them were instructors at Wesley High School. The couple fled the civil conflict in that area and later obtained teaching positions in Bauchi, Nigeria, albeit at separate schools. Their daughter, Elizabeth, was born in Bauchi in 1967.<sup>33</sup>

TWAP continued its work until 1970 when change came that was closer to home. At a Tuesday morning breakfast on November 17, 1970, at the Hershey Motor Lodge, Hershey officials informed Berkebile and Elizabethtown College president Dr. Morley J. Mays that “the Corporation was ready to begin phasing out the Teachers for West Africa Program.” Mays reported in a memo that “Dr. Hershey reassured me that there was absolutely no dissatisfaction with the program or our administration of it.” Mays also noted, “finally Dr. Hershey pointed out that the present members of the Board may have other things which are of greater personal interest to them. TWAP was the brain child of Dr. Hinkle and Dr. Baugher and it is obvious that Dr. Hinkle no longer carries the favor of the Corporation.”<sup>34</sup> Hinkle had retired in 1965 and was no longer chairman of the company. It was understandable, then, that new executives made different decisions regarding the company’s future, which included evaluating past programs begun under a former chairman. Challenges to its fiscal resources related to Hershey’s expansion during the 1960s were also a factor. In a memo to participants in the program, Berkebile noted that “financial reasons and a rechanneling of philanthropies in a diversification process” were considerations in Hershey’s decision to end its funding of TWAP.<sup>35</sup> Efforts to secure funding from other agencies, such as the Ford Foundation and USAID, went for naught. Consequently, a two-year phaseout was instituted and TWAP ceased operations on December 31, 1972.

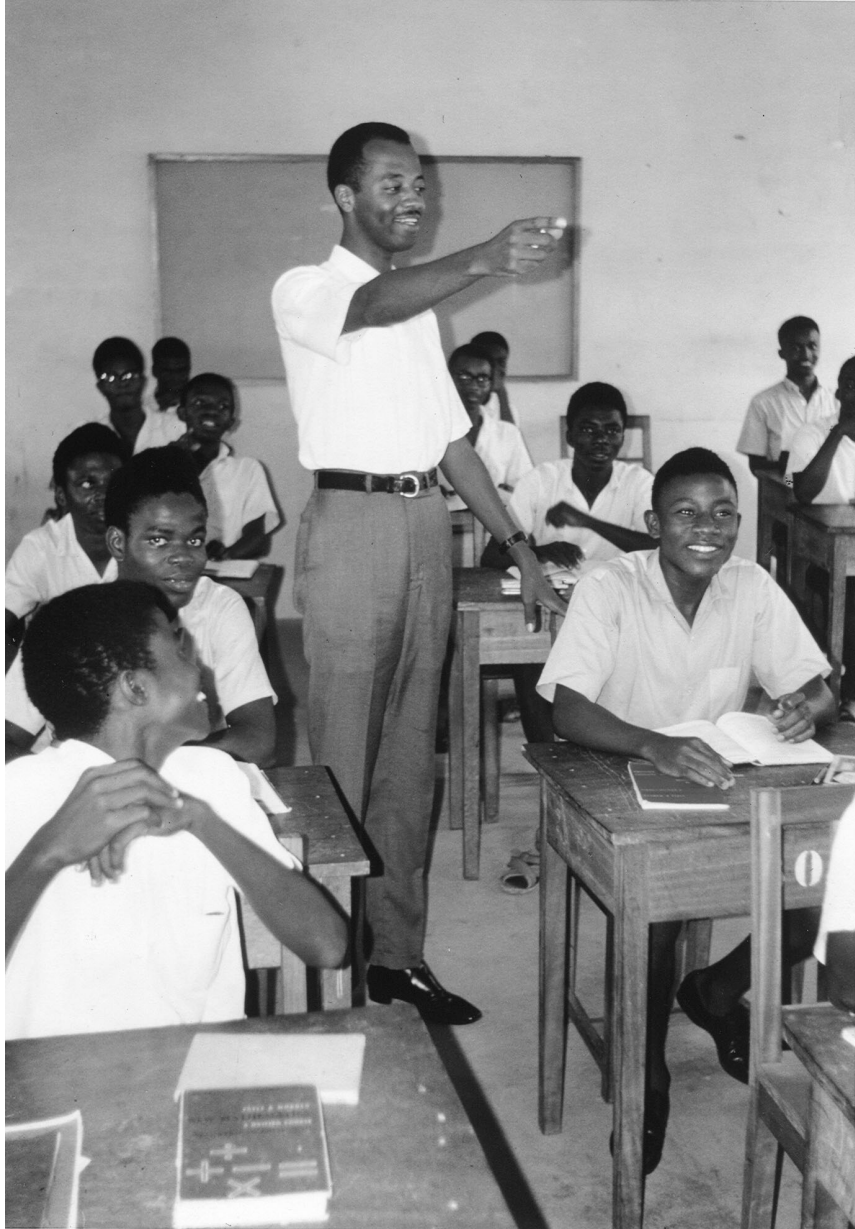
At the end of 1972, TWAP’s budget held a balance of \$786.89.<sup>36</sup> The Hershey Foods Corporation, as it was now known, contributed nearly \$1,000,000 to TWAP from 1961 until 1972. Originally started as a two-

<sup>33</sup> Doug Shaw, in *ibid*; Doug Shaw, telephone conversation with the author, July 10, 2009. The family returned to the United States in 1968 and settled in Manheim, Pennsylvania, where he taught sixth grade mathematics for thirty years.

<sup>34</sup> Morley J. Mays, Teachers for West Africa Program, memo, n.d., TWAP files.

<sup>35</sup> Jack H. Morris, “Hershey’s Troubles,” *Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 18, 1970; James M. Berkebile, Teachers for West Africa Program, memo, n.d., TWAP files.

<sup>36</sup> James M. Berkebile to John O. Hershey, Jan. 3, 1973, TWAP files.



Walter Elkins Jr. from Memphis, Tennessee, a former Peace Corps volunteer, taught mathematics at Ghana National College in Cape Coast from 1966 to 1968 as a TWAP teacher. Courtesy of the High Library, Elizabethtown College.

year program, TWAP continued to operate on a year-to-year basis well beyond the term originally envisioned by Hinkle and Baugher in 1961. TWAP's accomplishments may be summarized by the following numbers: a total of 238 teachers, 63 of whom held a graduate degree, from 144 different institutions taught in fifty-one different schools in Nigeria and seventy-one schools in Ghana. The ratio of female to male teachers was almost even, with only a few more men than women. The 238 teachers came from thirty-four states and five other countries. Pennsylvania provided 27 teachers, followed by New York with 25; California and Michigan were next with 16 each. While Elizabethtown College contributed 7 teachers, the University of Michigan contributed the most with 10. Of note is that a total of thirty-seven children were with their teacher-parents in either Nigeria or Ghana, and almost half of them were born in Africa.<sup>37</sup>

### *TWAP in Historical Perspective*

The Teachers for West Africa Program was not only a product of its time in American history but also of the founding ideals of the Hershey Chocolate Corporation and Elizabethtown College. "I think of the TWAP project and the vision that sponsored it as clearly progressive. The vision was grand, even if the implementation was somewhat modest compared to the Peace Corps," wrote Donald Maxwell. "It was a vision similar to Milton Hershey's own, so Hershey's financial backing was a natural." Milton S. Hershey established the corporation's philanthropic nature from its beginning, while the college, from its earliest years, centered on the training of "teachers and preachers."<sup>38</sup>

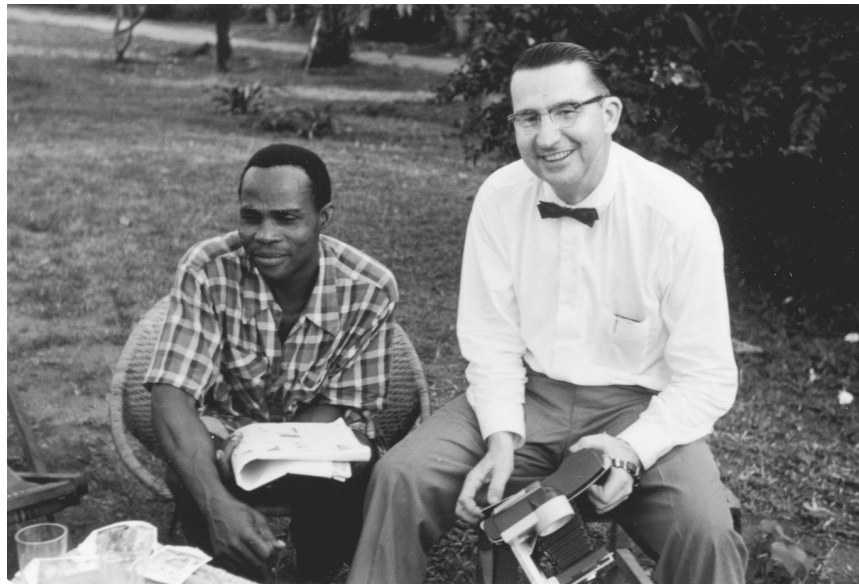
The convergence of these two organizations to establish TWAP, roughly sixty years after they were founded, occurred at a time in the nation's history when the idea of helping to change the world for the better was at the forefront of American foreign policy. Like the Peace Corps, TWAP was "a lineal descendant of the missionary tradition originated by Christian Europeans," though TWAP was not under U.S. government control.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Berkebile, "Teachers for West Africa Program," 12–13, 32–51.

<sup>38</sup> Donald Maxwell, e-mail message to the author, Mar. 10, 2009; the phrase "teachers and preachers" used to describe the students to be trained by Elizabethtown College during its early years comes from former Elizabethtown College library director Nelson Bard.

<sup>39</sup> Elizabeth A. Cobbs, "Decolonization, the Cold War, and the Foreign Policy of the Peace

The effectiveness of the TWAP endeavor is difficult to separate from the other American and international programs that sent teachers to Ghana and Nigeria. For the young students in those countries, it probably was not important to them whether their teacher was from TWAP, the Peace Corps, or some other foreign teacher program. In fact, the average Nigerian and Ghanaian initially thought that most such volunteers were connected with the Peace Corps.<sup>40</sup> To make matters even more confusing for the African students, the expatriate teachers from those various programs often roomed together and taught at the same schools. According to Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, nearly 675,000 Ghanaians had American teachers in the thirty-year period ending in 1991.<sup>41</sup> It is impossible to determine the percentage of Ghanaians who had a TWAP teacher during this time, but the program undoubtedly made a small contribution to this total.



Tai Solarin, principal of the Mayflower School in Ikenne, Nigeria, and James Berkebille, director of TWAP, shown here in 1963. Courtesy of the High Library, Elizabethtown College.

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Corps," *Diplomatic History* 20 (1996): 84. For a full discussion of the Peace Corps as a missionary-type enterprise, see Roger D. Armstrong, *Peace Corps and Christian Mission* (New York, 1965).

<sup>40</sup> Cobbs Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love*, 177.

<sup>41</sup> Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, "Diplomatic History and the Meaning of Life: Toward a Global American History," *Diplomatic History* 21 (1997): 516.



The critique of the Peace Corps and other aid programs as being instruments of American imperialism requires a balanced assessment. Whether affiliated with the United States government or not, as historian and educator Jonathan Zimmerman notes, “All educators are to some degree imperialist—just as all educators are missionaries—because they seek to bring a new idea, belief, or skill to students who might not share it.”<sup>42</sup> This interaction was a two-way process, as the Nigerian and Ghanaian governments requested teachers from abroad to help develop their education systems. The foreign teachers in those nations returned to their home countries with a better understanding of themselves and the world beyond the developed West. Regarding her TWAP experience, Grace McIlvain wrote, “I learned a great deal from those two years. I learned something about determination and perseverance.” McIlvain became an attorney and focused her practice on “representing employees in discrimination cases.” “I feel like I found a way more suited to me to act upon my idealism,” she observed.<sup>43</sup>

According to Joseph Bruchac, who, with his wife, Carol, taught at the Keta Secondary School in Ghana from 1966 until 1969, their “African experience changed [their] life for the better,” and it gave them “a wider perspective on the world . . . [and] helped [him] see American culture more clearly by seeing it from a distance.”<sup>44</sup> Kenneth Chastain, whose mother, Gladys Chastain, was TWAP’s administrative assistant, returned to Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, after teaching at the Amaniamong Secondary School in Ghana from 1969 until 1971. He became a social worker, while his wife, Carol, also a TWAP teacher, later taught at a school in the city of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, with a large minority student body. Kenneth Chastain remarked, “We both have remained more interested in the world beyond America. I tell people I am a citizen of the world first, then America.”<sup>45</sup> Assessing TWAP’s effectiveness, in 1972 Berkebile wrote, “Through this working together there was created a relationship of trust, confidence, respect, and appreciation for each other. And from the constant contacts we all developed an understanding of each others’ problems, hopes, and aspirations for the world in which unity

<sup>42</sup> Zimmerman, *Innocents Abroad*, 208.

<sup>43</sup> Grace McIlvain, e-mail message to the author, July 19, 2009. In 2000, McIlvain was the first woman presented with the Walter E. Craig Service Award by the Arizona Bar Foundation, <http://www.hmpmlaw.com/attorneys/grace-mcilvain.aspx> (accessed July 20, 2009).

<sup>44</sup> Joseph Bruchac, e-mail message to the author, June 20, 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Kenneth Chastain, e-mail message to the author, July 6, 2009.

and peace could thrive. It has succeeded in this goal for all those who took part.”<sup>46</sup>

As the 1960s progressed, the weight of historical events began to erode the optimism and idealism present at the beginning of the Kennedy administration. The assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King Jr., the struggle for civil rights and the accompanying civil unrest, and the tragedy of the Vietnam War all undermined the nation’s confidence. By the early 1970s, the country’s desire for volunteer programs had diminished greatly, while the economy headed towards a period of stagflation.

The volunteer spirit of the 1960s, however, was not completely extinguished during the 1970s. Stanley Aultz taught high school French in Ohio for twenty-seven years after returning from Ghana. At the end of each school year he often showed his students slides of Ghana and the other western African countries. “I was told personally by three students I had, that those talks on teaching abroad . . . inspired them to join the Peace Corps. One was sent to Senegal, one to Togo, and the third to Kenya,” he notes.<sup>47</sup> It is impossible to know how many other young people a TWAP teacher similarly inspired, but today vast numbers of non-governmental organizations work around the world, while philanthropic celebrities such as Bono, Oprah Winfrey, and Bill Gates show that the Western humanist tradition is still present. These organizations and individuals seldom realize that their endeavors are descended from organizations such as USAID, the Peace Corps, and the other, little-known volunteer organizations like TWAP. It was never the Teachers for West Africa Program’s mission to function as an aspect of “soft power” in American foreign policy. Berkebile best expressed the program’s underlying philosophy in a 1965 Christmas message to the TWAP teachers: “And long after your professional labors are forgotten, your compassion will live on in the hearts of those whom you serve.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> James M. Berkebile, Teachers for West Africa Program, memo, Aug. 24, 1972, TWAP files.

<sup>47</sup> Stanley Aultz, e-mail message to the author, June 22, 2009.

<sup>48</sup> Berkebile, *Whadoyahear*, Nov.–Dec. 1965, 1, TWAP files.