

# Africa Calling

A REPORT FROM THE NEAR EAST

By N. C. ANDERSON

Hello everyone! At the request of scores of good Morrow county citizens who asked to be kept informed of the Andersons' adventures in Africa I am jotting down a few of the fast moving experiences we have had since leaving Heppner on August 30.

After leaving Pendleton on the 30th we had a change in our travel plans from the N. Y. office. It seemed that air reservations were hard to get for a family of 6. So we enjoyed a few days in Minneapolis, a few with three sisters in Minneapolis, a trip to the old home farm in N. D. over the Labor Day week-end to see my dad, who is confined to a nursing home at age 86, two brothers and a sister back to Minneapolis to leave for New York on September 7. A night and a day in New York provided an opportunity to see some of the highlights of that city. We enjoyed a stroll down Broadway at 2 a.m., a trip up to the top of the Empire State Bldg., Grand Central Station, etc.

## Fly to Paris

We flew to Paris, leaving New York at 8:30 p.m. September 8, arriving at 8:30 a.m. September 9. Pan-Am airlines picked us up at the airport, took us to a downtown hotel, where we spent the day until leaving by Air Afrique to Niamey at 10:30 that night. We had an opportunity to see a little of Paris. Not too exciting but took some colored slides and ate a grand dinner at the hotel.

We arrived in Niamey at 3:40 a.m. the 10th but only having to argue in French for two hours at the Paris airport. It seems that the planes were so loaded that reservations didn't mean much. After a few phone calls and much waving of the hands we got on the plane just at it was getting ready to taxi off. Don't know just what happened but something I said or didn't say in French, maybe. We were met in Niamey by my co-worker, Forrester Fred Weber from Boise who has been here since last November and the AID liaison officer.

## Six Rough Miles

After being run through health, police and etc. we eventually loaded for the trip to Niamey about six rough miles away. While we had been traveling by two taxis between hotels and airports along the way (with our 26 boys), we found we had only a small jeep to load them on. The people of Morrow county would have laughed at me on top of the Jeep load of bags heading for town over a "wash board" piece of oil road—one of the few miles of oil road in Niger. Everyone here drives like they're in a hurry (the only time anyone hurries) so my ride atop the jeep was refreshing to say the least.

As I had suspected, our house was not ready so we lived at the Grand Hotel for seven days. Even though there are dozens of Nigeriennes still working on our house, we have been in it for the past three days. At the rate they are going they will be around for several days.

Our house is typically African, but with electricity, running hot and cold (not very cold) water and bath. We have all new furniture (Sears and Roebuck), gas stove and G. E. refrigerator. Twin beds are vogue here and we have six of them with good innersprings. We have a house boy, Mensha, who came from Togo and can speak pretty good English. Our night watchman, or garde, is Housou, the main tribe of Niger. Our house is large, concrete, and poorly planned. There are three bedrooms, two baths, kitchen, large living room and dining room.

## Bugs Top Morrow's

Being African, it had no windows (just steel slatted shutters) so we are getting new windows and front doors. Our only hope is for some screens as the bugs over here make Morrow county insects look quite insecure. Some of our 4-H Entomologist clubs could be set up in grand business if they were outside our door at the night light some evening! We are getting a high concrete wall installed today with gates that are locked each night, also a nice outside patio with native stone which we will enjoy after the bug season. They say they are worst in September and October.

We have been royally entertained by the U. S. Embassy, AID people and others since our arrival. In just one week our whole family was entertained at Sunday dinner by the ambassador, I have been there for a stag dinner and a picnic and dance Saturday night. Everyone has been exceptionally nice and invited us for several meals. Thursday when we moved in, the ambassador's chauffeur came with a large box of groceries from soup to a bottle of gin. The chief deputy of mission and AID officers' wives both brought boxes so we are living quite well.

## Boys Leave for School

Esther and the boys left Saturday morning at 6 for Ibadan. The 350-mile trip (as we had been told) turned into 1400 kilometres (a kilometre, I am told, is 0.62 mile). Also we were told there was air service available direct to Ibadan but wasn't told it took four days and the long way around to get there. After figuring out the expenditure of \$650 for transportation we decided to invest in a car of our

own. We were fortunate to be able to buy the only Peugeot station wagon in Niamey and get license, passports, driver's license, etc., completed in four days. So the family undertook the two day drive to get the boys enrolled in school there.

Mrs. Perkins, wife of the DCM here, who has had a daughter in the school till her graduation last year, went along as interpreter, etc. They don't let people drive around here unaccompanied, especially women. They will be back Wednesday if everything goes O. K. They left with two spare tires, two tubes, tire irons, patching kit, and food for emergency.

## Fields of Cattails

Niamey is strictly African! While most of the Nigeriennes in town live in mud buildings there are a few thatched huts as one would see in the movies. I have been out to Kolo, the experiment station where I was originally scheduled to be stationed. All the way out there are fields of millet which look like fields of cattails. The farmers have their thatched huts right out in the middle of the fields and the whole family is in the field weeding or pounding out the flour in large wooden "vases" with a large pole. Millet is the main food here as well as the main crop grown.

The soil is quite poor so crops do not yield well, and fertilizer is at a premium. The majority of the cattle, goats and sheep are grown away from the main crop area so that fertilizer is not available. Being nomad, there is not much chance to gather any manure and chemical fertilizer is not economical as freight is so high. There are little transportation facilities, but the last few days large trucks and trailers are getting through from Nigeria. Roads have been almost impassable for several months as the rainy season slows things down considerably. The main mode of transportation is on the head. I have seen some unbelievable loads being carried on the head. Labor is cheap so no one carries anything but has the boys carry it for them. I saw a bell boy carry two large suitcases up a hotel stairway on his head with one in each hand. Even the little kids go around with their books, bottles of pop, etc., on their heads. Rick is getting pretty good at it himself.

Twice Size of Texas I have not yet figured out exactly what my job will be, but have to get busy soon developing some kind of a program. I have met with the minister of agriculture and his director of one of the phases of agriculture, which included the extension service.

As soon as the roads are so we can get around, I want to go out to some demonstration areas in the interior to check out some possibilities. My area is almost the size of Texas doubled. Director Souanna says we will concentrate on an area about 60 kilometres out for the present. There is lots of opportunity for development here if only I can get down to the correct level to start.

Big thing in the making here is a bridge across the Niger at Niamey. While the ferry looks quite adequate to me the locals say it is a bottleneck in transportation. The U. S. will loan about \$2 million to the Niger government for construction to begin in 1966.

Problem now is correct height for barges to get under in case dams are built on the Niger to make it navigable. From the concrete work I have seen here I can't figure out how they can build a dam that will stand but I guess it can be done.

Everything Green Everything is green now following the rainy season, but I understand it will begin to dry up soon. We are looking forward to the nice season, which begins about mid-November lasting until March. Camels, donkeys, sheep, goats, cattle are in excellent flesh. Camels and donkeys are loaded with firewood, grass hay and other commodities and can be seen around town, night and day. I'll let my wife tell about shopping experiences which is quite startling.

I'll write again soon and relate some more experiences, work of the Peace Corps here, etc. Our regards to everyone who takes time to read this rambling report.

Au revoir!

From Mrs. Anderson comes this additional report:

We have been in Africa 13 days and everyone has been as busy as any day in Morrow county. People have been so hospitable and eager to make us feel at home that we have been continually "on the go" to luncheons, dinners, and parties. So far we have felt only momentary pangs of homesickness. We do miss the good fresh breezes and the water of "home". Our weather has been hot and humid, 90% humidity, they tell us, so has been uncomfortable. The rainy season is due to end soon and along with it the extreme humidity, so the next few months are supposed to be more pleasant.

This last week-end the boys and I drove to Ibadan where they have entered school. The drive is a beautiful one as far as scenery, but a back breaking one as far as roads, as quite a bit of it was gravel and rock

road and washed out by rains.

## Wildlife Exciting

However, we enjoyed it and saw more sights than I can begin to tell you here—wild boar pigs, blue giant lizards, monkeys, native villages, camels, game birds, wild birds which are truly gorgeous, and many other different types of plants, trees and flowers.

We will go again to bring the boys home for Christmas at which time we will take pictures and notes. It takes one and a half days to make the trip. Ibadan is a teeming city, thousands of people all going every which way. Some enormous modern buildings rising out of the native homes of mud, bamboo and thatched roofs, modern hotels and a department store which seemed like Meier and Franks to us after the little markets of Niamey. We had a shopping spree! The school is out three miles in a lovely natural setting of grassy slopes, trees, and flowers, modern buildings and is a quiet haven after the hustle and bustle of the city. I am sure the boys will enjoy their stay there, once school is in full swing.

Here in Niamey, Rick will be attending a French school starting October 4. It's all in French. Nels and I are starting French class today and hope to be able to converse much better than we do now. There is a large group of English speaking families here also, so we always have someone to visit with in our usual way.

As yet we have not received a Gazette-Times and the boys are eager for theirs to come to Ibadan. Their address is International Secondary School, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria. We send our greetings to everyone.

Sincerely,  
Esther Anderson

## Principals to Meet

Elementary principals of Morrow county schools will go to Portland Friday for a 3-day meeting of grade school principals of the state. Supt. David Potter said. Those planning to attend include Jack Grossnickle of Heppner, Everett Holstein of Ione, Mick Tolar of A. C. Houghton, Irigoin, and Ron Daniels of Boardman.

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## Church Sets Special Meetings Next Week

Bud Godbey of Gooding, Idaho, will be guest speaker at a special meeting of the Assembly of God church on Monday, October 11, according to Rev. Billie Alsop, pastor. The cowboy minister, who serves as an RCA chaplain, and rode this year in the Pendleton Round-Up, will speak of his interesting experiences at a public meeting at the church, starting at 7:00 p.m.

The church will also hold a series of nightly meetings, starting at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 12. The Rev. Gerry Minton, an evangelist and former pastor of the Assembly of God church in Pendleton, will speak each evening Tuesday through Sunday, with a special service planned for Sunday morning.

Mrs. Tom Fraters of Grass Valley was a week-end visitor at the home of her sister, Mrs. Lucille Parrish. She arrived Thursday with friends and returned to her home Sunday with her nephew, Alvin Ayers.

HEPPNER GAZETTE-TIMES, Thursday, October 7, 1965

## Lexington Grange To Hear Speakers

Two interesting meetings have been planned for the Lexington Grange during this month. Following a potluck dinner Saturday night, October 9, at 6:30, the program will feature a talk on the Pioneer Memorial Nursing Home, and the important points of Medicare, by hospital administrator Will O'Harra.

On Saturday, October 22, the grange will be host to a public meeting when a special guest, Glenn Simmons of Glenwood will be present. He will give an instructive talk and show films of his recent visit to Pakistan. The public is invited to attend. Refreshments will be served at the close of the meeting.

Bess Huddleston had a surprise visit with friends, Dr. and Mrs. Gordon Hebstrom of Fontana, Calif., last Thursday. They were on their way to Seattle, Wn., and stopped in Heppner en route.

## Brown in OSU Band

Chris Brown, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Brown of Heppner, is a member of the Oregon State University band, playing cornet. He entered OSU as a freshman this year after graduating from Heppner High last spring. Chris also was a member of the Heppner High band.

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