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GEOGRAPHY IN
COLOUR

**Peter and David
See Western Nigeria**

BY A. W. BARTRAM

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Geography in Colour

PETER AND DAVID SEE WESTERN NIGERIA

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays British children can accompany their parents if they go to work in places overseas in a way that was quite impossible not many years ago. Nigeria was known only fifty years ago as the 'white man's grave', and Europeans who went to work there did so at their own risk. It is a remarkable comment on the advance in medical knowledge that European children can now live healthily and happily in such areas.

- The plan of this filmstrip is to take a look at Western Nigeria through the eyes of two boys, Peter and David, who spent nearly three years there with their father and mother. When the pictures were taken, Peter was about seven and David about five and a half. The main part of the filmstrip, after an introductory section, is arranged as the record of a day's visit to the home of an African student of the University College at Ibadan. During the visit Peter and David and their parents meet various members of a large family, and see the work they do and the everyday sights that surround them.

During their stay Peter and David travelled extensively in the colony of Nigeria, which is some four times the size of the British Isles. The earlier filmstrip CGA:B598 Village Life in Northern Nigeria was made from pictures taken during such a tour, covering 3,000 miles in a Land Rover, and some of the pictures in that strip can be used to supplement those shown here, since they could apply also to Western Nigeria - Pictures 1-7, 12, 13, 18, and 25.

NOTES ON PICTURES

Note: it is regretted that as the pictures are reproduced from 35mm colour transparencies it has not been possible to number them on the strip.

1 The compound in the rainy season

This picture was taken in the compound (which means yard or garden) of the house where Peter and David and their parents were staying. It was about Christmas time. Peter is the one on the left; he was seven years old when the picture was taken, and his hair is fairer than his brother David's, who was only six. Their mother is with them.

By Christmas time the 'wet' or 'rainy' season has finished and everything has grown tall and green. The weather is hot, the temperature being about the same as in a heat wave in England (over 80°F), but it is a sticky, damp sort of heat which is never experienced in England. This grass must be cut before it gets dry and yellow, or it could cause a dangerous fire.

2 Peter digging up groundnuts

Peter is digging up the crop of groundnuts (often called monkey-nuts) which has been grown in the compound; they grow rather like potatoes. Other vegetables grown in the compound are beans, tomatoes, paw-paw (rather like melons only they grow on a tree), lettuces, and onions. There are also some other fruits never seen in England.

It might be thought that Peter would get sunstroke in the burning sun, but ideas have changed about wearing head coverings. Peter and David and their parents do not go out in the hottest part of the day when the sun is straight overhead, but this is partly to avoid sunburn.

3 David picks a banana

David is picking some bananas. This banana plant is only

a year and a half old and David planted it himself. The bananas are green, but will ripen off in the kitchen. The Nigerians also eat the 'plantain', which is like a large banana but must be cooked.

4 Pineapples in the compound

Peter and David both had a patch of pineapples in the garden, because whenever they had a pineapple for tea they cut off the top and planted it and the next year it grew into a new pineapple plant with a new fruit. The little tuft on top is the part that will grow again.

5 A farmer comes to harvest oil palm nuts

There are very many oil palm trees in Western Nigeria. The farmer has come along to gather the palm nuts (his tree happens to be in Peter and David's compound). He climbs up by leaning against a loop of fibre rope. At the top he chops down the fruit head, which consists of hundreds of red nuts like chestnuts. Palm oil is pressed out of these, and sold and used in the making of soap, margarine, etc. This is one of the main ways in which Western Nigeria earns its living; others are from cocoa and timber. Peter tried climbing the tree with the farmer's rope, but he didn't get very far.

6 Part of the University College of Nigeria

Peter and David lived in a house which belonged to the University College of Nigeria, because their father taught there. This picture shows part of the new University College buildings, and is included to remind the children that there are other buildings besides mud 'storey' houses (see Picture 7), and other people besides farmers and traders. At this college African students study for their degrees to work as doctors, lawyers and scientists.

There are Infant, Primary and Secondary schools in Nigeria just as in Great Britain, and Africans are very keen to learn. Peter and David went to a school attached to the University College; in Peter's class there were white and

coloured children of all nationalities. The University staff, too, come from all over the world. Peter's particular friends at school, who lived nearby, were an Ibo boy (from Eastern Nigeria), a Gold Coast boy, one New Zealand girl and one Dutch girl.

7 A 'storey' house

One of the students at the College was training to become an expert in farming. His father lived at Oyo, a big town about thirty miles away, and Peter and David and their parents were invited to visit the family. To get to Oyo they travelled through the rainforest and past the fields that the farmers have cleared in the forest (see Picture 19). When they arrived, they first called on an African they knew who lived in the 'storey' house shown in this picture. Notice the corrugated roof, the chickens, the stream at the side of the road, and the blue, indigo-dyed cloth of the women's clothes. The walls are made of the red laterite of the ground which bakes almost as hard as rock, covered with cement to protect them from the heavy rains of the wet season (see also Picture 14 and note).

Most of the people who live in the Western part of Nigeria are Yorubas, like the family Peter and David were going to visit, whereas the people of the east are mainly Ibos, and of the north, Hausas. But the Africans love to travel about. The Yorubas long ago began to live in large cities, because before the British came to Nigeria there were frequent tribal wars, and slave raiders.

8 'Baba' Adeniyi Ogunmale

The visitors then went on to meet 'Baba' Adeniyi Ogunmale ('Baba' means 'Daddy' and 'Ogun' shows that his ancestors were leaders in battle). He had put on his best clothes to greet them and is seen here holding his grand-daughter. He is frowning because the strong sunlight is shining in his eyes.

The lines on the laterite wall behind show how much wall was built each day and then left to get hard before the next layer was put on.

The Yoruba family is very closely bound together, even more so than is the British family. The father builds a house, then he adds rooms for his married and unmarried children. All these rooms are enclosed by a wall. (See the diagram on page 17). All members of related families are part of one big family and all the boys call themselves brothers - instead of cousin or uncle or nephew. During the day the visitors met some of the family and talked about those who were away.

9 Akim makes decorated leatherwork

Akim was hard at work. He takes goat skins, dyes them and then makes bags, pouffes and other articles, decorating them with a pattern of thin strips of coloured leather. The bottle beside him holds his drinking water. He is seated on a mat of maize (corn) straw.

What we call 'Morocco' leather comes mostly from Nigeria (more especially from Northern Nigeria); it is so called because it used to reach Europe only by camel caravan across the Sahara Desert, through Timbuktu and Morocco.

10- Carved calabash gourds

11

Ayo is the husband of one of Baba's daughters. Picture 10 shows him at work carving calabash gourds, and in Picture 11 Peter and David and their mother are choosing one to buy.

The calabash grows like a pumpkin, and can be made to grow into any shape by tying strings round it. (Notice one with a long spout in Picture 11). When ripe, the calabash is cut open, the pith and seeds are taken out and the rind left to dry in the sun.

12 The passenger lorry

One brother, Jimmo, was not at home when Peter and David visited his family. He was working on a lumber plantation in the rainforest nearer the coast, several hundred miles away. The only way Jimmo can get home is by the kind of

'passenger lorry' shown in this picture - sometimes called a 'Manny wagon'. It is an ordinary lorry with planks in the back to sit on. If you travel in front with the driver, that is 'first class' and costs more. In the back there will be perhaps twenty people, one or two goats, and bags and bags of dried fish, or of smelly garri (a sort of cooked flour made from cassava). As the roads are very bumpy and the drivers drive very fast, it is not comfortable. On the front of the lorry is usually a motto, such as 'Safe Journey'.

Each time the lorry stops at a town or village, the bread sellers flock round to sell refreshments, (they can be seen in this picture). If the lorry breaks down, then everybody gets out, fires are lighted to cook food and all the passengers settle down to wait for the lorry to be repaired, which may take several days.

13 Lumbering in the forest

This is the plantation where Jimmo works, and he is hard at work in this picture, stripping the bark off a log that has just been cut. He is the one in the middle wearing a hat.

There is much fine wood in the African forests - Iroko, African Mahogany, Obeche, and many other famous woods. Much of the timber is made into plywood before being shipped abroad. There is also the tall silk-cotton tree, which gives us kapok for lifebelts, for sound-proofing, and for stuffing cushions.

14 The brickmaker

Baba had decided that he must soon have a better house - like the storey house seen in Picture 7. Here the latterite bricks for it are being made; they are moulded in a frame and then laid on the ground to dry. Some will be left to go hard in the sun, others may be partly baked by fire.

The West African today may live in a house made by one of several different methods.

a) A hut on posts roofed with grass, palm-leaf or straw,

the spaces between the posts being filled by twigs and latterite mud. (This is just like the wattle-and-daub of England in the Middle Ages.)

b) The walls may be made of solid latterite (like Baba's compound), and the house may well have a roof of corrugated iron or aluminium (see Pictures 7 and 24).

c) If possible he will have a storey house made of latterite bricks faced with cement and with a corrugated aluminium roof, (see Picture 7).

d) The very well-to-do man will live in a house made largely of concrete (like the University, Picture 6, and the houses in Picture 20).

15 Harvesting cocoa

Baba used to be a farmer, but most of the work was done now by his 'senior son', Obafemi. In this picture Obafemi and his son are gathering cocoa pods. Later the pods will be cut open, and the pith and kernels taken out and put in baskets to ferment so that the pith rots away. The kernels will then be laid out to dry in the sun. Most of Baba's money comes from his cocoa farming.

Baba also has a number of kola trees. This tree gives kola nuts, which Africans love to chew. They taste nice, and at the same time help to overcome tiredness; also they contain some quinine, which helps to cure attacks of malaria. The drink 'Coco-Cola' is made with the juice of the kola nut. The nut itself is about the size of a plum, and is often given as a present or a 'thank-you' in Africa.

16 The fields

On another of Baba's fields there were four crops growing. The boy is pulling up cassava, a plant which forms a big tuber under the ground which is pounded up and washed to make a white flour or blancmange. (In England it is called tapioca; in the South Seas, manioc). Also in the foreground is a creeper of a brighter green colour, and this is called yam. It is used rather as potatoes are used, but

it is very much larger. It looks rather like cassava root at first glance. Thirdly, you can just see in this picture, to the left, a calabash growing. Maize or sweet corn was also growing in this field, but cannot be seen in the picture.

In another part of his farm Baba was growing tobacco. On a farm nearer the coast there would be some rubber trees to give an additional crop.

17 Making cooking pots

The wives and sisters work just as hard as the men. In this picture Olo is making cooking pots. She took a piece of wet clay and shaped it over a finished pot. She has now turned her soft clay 'copy' the right way up and is finishing off the neck. It will then be dried in the sun and then baked by a fire. Vegetables cooked in an earthenware pot seem to taste very much nicer than those cooked in an iron or aluminium saucepan.

Notice how Olo is carrying her 'picin'. On her cheeks you can just see the tribal scars which are now beginning to go out of fashion. They are a reminder of the years when tribal wars and slave raiding were common. Every tribe had its own special markings which were scratched on when the baby was born. They stay there for life so that one can easily recognise whether a man or woman is from Abeokuta, Ibadan or Oyo.

18 Cloth being dyed

In the compound, one of the brothers had been weaving on a loom. Narrow strips of cloth, four to six inches wide, are woven, and then sewn together. This picture shows the cloth being dyed blue with indigo-root dye, which is a favourite colour in Yorubaland.

Notice that the woman dyeing the cloth is light brown in colour compared with some of the people in other pictures, who have black and blue-black skins. That happens just as some white-skinned people have light hair and some dark. She has her working clothes on in this picture, of course;

when she is dressed up she looks very fine indeed.

19 Walking back from market

Two of the sisters are seen returning from the market which is held not very far away. The nearest one has on her head a load of firewood for cooking, and the other a load of calabashes for Ayo to carve. On either side of them are yam fields and in the distance an oil palm. Notice the shadows of the women, which show that the sun is very nearly straight overhead.

Notice how carefully the grass has been cut on either side of the road. This is to make a sort of pavement so that pedestrians can get out of the way when traffic comes past on the dusty road. It also presents a barrier to the many unpleasant insects which live in the shady vegetation.

Yoruba women often walk twenty miles a day with a heavy load on their heads. It is amusing to see the children going to school with an exercise book and an inkpot balanced on top of their heads.

20 The street of the cloth sellers

All Yorubas are traders, and it is often the women who do the work of buying and selling. They buy goods from shops, or from each other, and sell them in smaller quantities. For instance, they will buy a pound of sugar and sell it at so much a lump, for many of the poorer people cannot afford to buy a whole pound at a time.

This picture shows a busy scene in a cloth market. Every Yoruba is fond of fine clothes. The shops behind the stalls are called 'canteens', but the word does not have the same meaning as in English; they are big shops run by Europeans, Syrians or Indians, and they sell goods to the street traders, and to people who want to buy larger quantities than are sold on the stalls.

Notice the women with picins on their backs, the many shades of blue cloth, and the big cloth head-dresses. There are no

shoes to be seen. This is a street of cloth sellers; another might be a street of tin-smiths, of food sellers, or of tailors, cobblers, etc.

21 Cooking a meal by the kerb-side

The evening meal is being prepared outside Baba's compound. On the left is the big wooden pestle in which corn, cassava, or yam has been pounded. The fire is a bundle of sticks pushed into the side of a specially shaped clay pot; as the sticks burn they are pushed further in. The woman in this picture was cooking bean cakes in palm oil, flavoured with red peppers. Once you get used to the taste of palm oil it is delicious. The calabash bowl is covering a pot of slices of fried yam over which the cook had poured a fish soup full of hot green peppers and spices.

22 The bicycle-parts stall

On the other side of the road was a canteen or store, and in front of it was a stall selling bicycle parts. Every Nigerian wants to own a bicycle, and owners are very proud of their machines. The strange things here with red handles are charcoal irons - nothing to do with bicycles, of course. The man with white trousers, coat and hat is probably a clerk who works in one of the Government offices or in a big shop. Notice how most people wear their shirts outside their trousers in order to keep cool.

23 Washing in the river in the evening

In the evening when work is done for the day everybody goes down to the river to wash. In this picture they are even washing their bicycles. On the left a man is getting water to take home. In the distance is the forest, and there is a coconut palm just by the edge of the water. There are usually many people doing their laundry at this hour, so that the ground is covered with shirts, trousers and robes laid out to dry.

24 Drawing water from a standpipe in the street

Baba was fortunate in having a water tap near his compound. While the bigger houses may have a private supply, most people must share a standpipe or tap at the street corners. There is always time for a chat and a joke while drawing water.

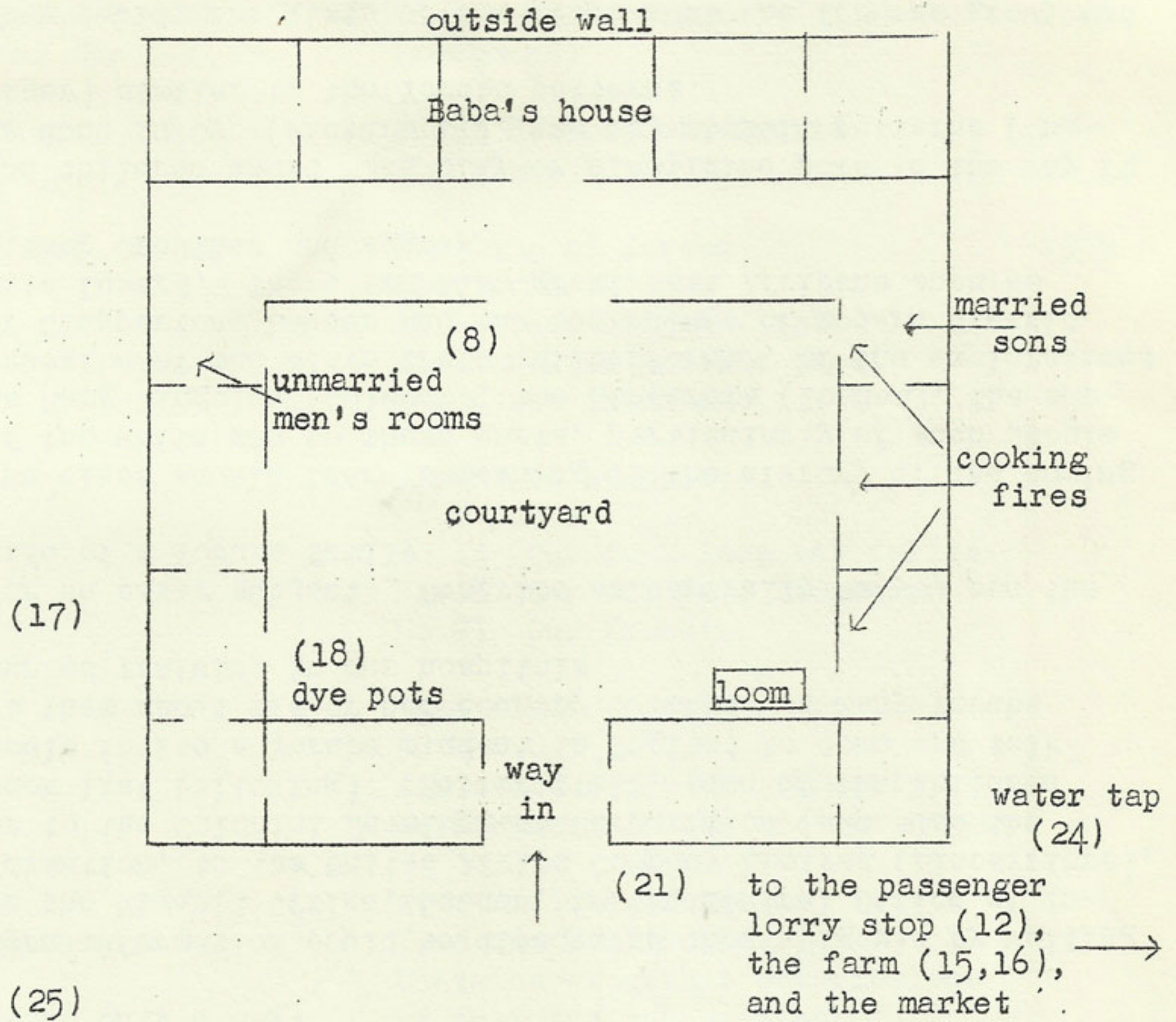
Notice the little pad of cloth which the girl on the left has on her head to prevent the heavy bucket from being uncomfortable. One little boy has been having a bath and is a bit shy. One woman is balancing a big calabash water pot on her head. The other, on the right, has a starch-patterned dress: this is made by stencilling the cloth with starch before dyeing, so that the dye does not stain where the pattern has been made, and afterwards the starch is washed out. At the extreme right are some of the stalls of the market - not in use at the moment.

25 The children gather round to say goodbye

Now it was getting dark, and time for Peter and David and their parents to leave. Everybody came out to say goodbye, the children all wanting to have their photograph taken with the visitors. It had got quite cold as the sun was getting low, so Peter and David put their shirts on (made of Yoruba cloth, like their trousers, and indigo-dyed).

Peter and David are both at home in England now, and going to school here. They enjoy having television to look at but they often miss the freedom they had in Nigeria.

BABA'S COMPOUND



Open courtyard in the centre surrounded by the 'house'. There are no windows facing outwards, but openings for windows and doors facing into the compound.

The numbers in brackets refer to the pictures in this strip.

Suggestions for class work

- A The children could draw scenes in Baba's compound and stick the best onto a large wall drawing of the compound (see the diagram on page 17). Scenes taking place in another part of the town could be included on the sheet, just outside the compound: the passenger lorry drawing up, market scenes, etc.
- B On a map of the world, Peter and David's journey from Nigeria to England could be traced. They could have gone by sea from Lagos to Liverpool (Elder Dempster Lines), or by BOAC, Lagos - Kano - Tripoli - London. One way takes a fortnight, the other only a day.
- C More information could be discovered about Nigeria by writing to the Nigeria Office, London, to the Central Office of Information, to the United Africa Company Limited (Blackfriars), or to the Colonial Development Corporation (see also the book list following). Better still, some of the children could invite a Yoruba student in England to come and talk to them about his or her country. There are many Yoruba nurses training in our hospitals.
- D For an essay subject: Describe as carefully as you can the life of a Yoruba family.
- E The class should learn something of the history of the coming of the white man to these parts, particularly of such people as Mary Kingsley (Calabar), the Hinderers (Ibadan), the suppression of the slave trade (Wilberforce), of the explorations of Clapperton, Lander and the beginnings of modern Nigeria with Lugard. There are also great West Africans such as Bishop Crowther and Aggrey.
- F The children could make clay or plasticine pots in the way it is done in Oyo (Picture 17), and try stencil patterns (on paper) similar to the Yoruba patterns.
- G They could make lists of the crops that the farmers grow, and find out what they look like.

BOOKS FOR FURTHER READING

<u>Author</u>	<u>Title and Publisher</u>	<u>Date</u>
Guinn-Young, C.T. and Herdman, T.	Geography of Nigeria (Longmans)	1948
Niven, C.R.	Short History of Nigeria (Longmans)	1950
Thorp, Ellen	Swelling of Jordan (Lutterworth) An account of the first missionaries to this area, a hundred years ago.	1950
	Crownbird pamphlets (H.M.S.O.)	
	No.14 Our folk lore and fables	
	No.18 Our Oil Palm Industry	
	No.23 Our Forests	
	Igan Alade Shows the Way (H.M.S.O.) A picture story of community development in the western region.	
Onabamiro	West African 'Penguins' Food and Health (WA 2) Contains excellent descriptions of West African cooking.	1953
	Fables and Folk Stories (WA 3)	1953

Other Common Ground Filmstrips include:

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- CGA:B686 Berbers of the Atlas Mountains by Tom Weir
CGA:B440 Farmers and Boatmen of South China by E. Thorndike
CGA:B130 A Journey through New South Wales by Jean Garrett
CGA:B643 Life in the Lofoten Islands by Tom Weir
CGA:B516 Life in New Zealand by G.M. Hickman
CGA:B517 Mountain Life in High Asia by Tom Weir
CGA:B647 Rural Life in Central Sweden by Charles H. Sporle
CGA:B512 South Sea Island by G. Milner
CGA:B426 Village Life in India by A.D. Uppadine
CGA:B598 Village Life in Northern Nigeria by A.W. Bartram

Regional Geography of the World

Edited by N.V. Scarfe and R.C. Honeybone

AFRICA

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CGA:B400 South Africa. Part 2 by R.C. Honeybone
CGA:B266 West Africa by R.C. Honeybone

Peoples of Other Lands by L.J. Simpkin

- CGA:B670 Farmers of Africa
CGA:B587 Farmers of the Americas
CGA:B223 Farmers of Asia
CGA:B381 Farmers of Europe
CGA:B588 Fishermen of Europe
CGA:B584 Natives of Africa
CGA:B585 Natives of the Americas
CGA:B586 Natives of Australasia and the Pacific