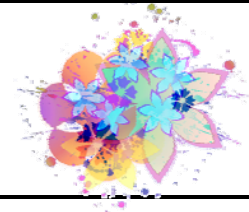




HBS Newsletter

Hôpital Bon Samaritain

Limbé, Haiti



Spring 2008

HODGES 50th Anniversary 1958-2008



William H. Hodges was born in Chicago during the 1920's. Serving in WW II, he envisioned becoming a missionary doctor and serving in Japan after the war. His dream of becoming a medical doctor came true though he never went back to Japan. Instead, in April of 1958, Dr. William H. Hodges, his wife Joanna and their four young children left their home in Bakersfield, California and embarked upon journey to the tropical island of Haiti. To his astonishment, arriving in Port au Prince, Haiti, Rev. Ludovic St. Phard, founder of Hôpital Bon Samaritain, with the blessing of the Minister of Public Health, Dr. Auguste Denize, turned over the direction of Hôpital Bon Samaritain, a small clinic situated in the river valley of Limbé to him. Dr. Hodges was faced with the leadership of a failing facility with no medicines, lab,



water or electricity nor trained staff. William Hodges said many times that if he could have left Haiti in the first six months he would have done so willingly.

Arriving in Haiti was a great adventure for the Hodges family and there was a lot to be done such as learning the language, electrical, plumbing, teaching nursing skills and many more tasks. Soon the word spread that there was a doctor in town and daily clinics were held. In time, people came from all over the Haiti and sometimes abroad just to have a medical consultation with Dr Hodges. With help of generous donors, trained staff, friends, many volunteers and family, the once small clinic grew into a full, 130 bed hospital with Maternity, Pediatrics, Adult Ward, Orphanage and Surgery. The staff numbered close to 200 persons. Limbé, a small town of 5,000 people, blossomed into a larger town of more than 35,000.

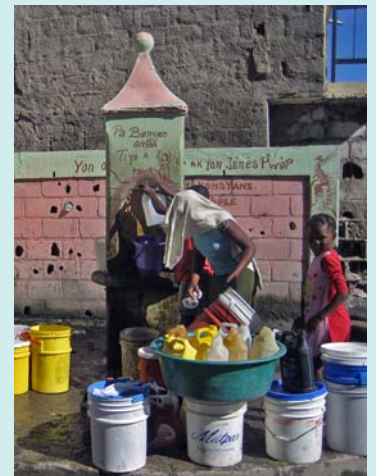


Water tower in the town of Limbe

A 40 foot wooden platform was built to accommodate a 4 inch percussion drill and bailer. It took 3 months by hand to drill down through the clay layer and tap the aquifer at 86 feet with a steel 4" pipe. A water tower was built and a few faucets were provided for the neighbors. Today, there are three wells, two water towers, and five fountains. The water system also provides over 700 homes and schools with potable water pumping over 200,000 gallons a day.

Water

In 1958, the staff was using buckets to haul water from a hand dug well. Even when the well was covered over and a pump was used, the water was not potable and needed to be boiled for most use. Many of the towns people went to the river close by for their water. After a number of years, Dr. Hodges decided to a drill a well to access the aquifer and have potable water.



Museum



Dr. Hodges had a fascination for history ever since his childhood. In his leisure time away from the hospital he would scour the landscapes of Haiti in search of historical artifacts. Haitian farmers would bring him historical items they would find while tilling their land. In the early days, Dr. Hodges made small displays in the hospital corridors in efforts to educate the Haitian people about their history. But his collection was growing more extensive by the day. He had boxes stacked all throughout his house, cluttered on bookcases, under beds and even couches. The Musée de Guahaba museum was built across the street from the hospital and officially opened in December 1981. It is one of the few historical museums in Haiti and some 2000 schoolchildren visit it every year.



Dr. Hodges spent many years searching for La Navidad, the first European settlement of the New World built by Christopher Columbus after his ship, the "Santa Maria" crashed onto the reef of Cap Haitian on Christmas day 1492. The fort was found burned to the ground by Native Indians before Columbus arrived on his 2nd trip back to Hispaniola. Many archeologists have searched in vain for the whereabouts of La Navidad. Shortly before Dr. Hodges died, he came to conclusion that La Navidad was built at Caille Brulee, Bord de Mer Limonade. Dr. Hodges's interest in the history of pre-Columbian times and the first settlements in the new world led to a long relationship with ISPAN, OAS and the University of Florida. They enthusiastically replied with funding



to work beside Dr. Hodges. Together they excavated many sites including Puerto Real, 1503-1570, one of the first Spanish settlements in Hispaniola and a number of sites linked to La Navidad. Dr. Hodges's accomplishments in the arena of archeology have been well received by scholars around the world. In recognition of his work, he was awarded the Silver US Bicentennial Award in 1976.

JOANNA'S Reflections



Looking back over 50 years there were so many ups and down. It has been a beautiful, tough, touching, discouraging, inspiring, and most of all a rewarding journey.

Though most days were bright, when discouraged with it all we would ask ourselves: "Why are we still here?" Dr. Hodges would say that our role in Haiti was an attempt to weave a few golden strands of God's redemptive love, human dignity and the Biblical social concepts into the tapestry of Haitian culture. Even though the results would not be apparent at first as we could only see the tapestry from the back side and view only a mass of tangled threads. But someday these golden threads would alter the design and a new pattern of culture would be viewed. His challenge was to have patience and grace to keep weaving daily these golden strands of God's redemptive love at all costs to mend the differences between cultures. The changes that were made took years and though progress was very slow we toughed it out together as a family. I still laugh as I think back to something Bill used



to say: "I am going to give it 2 more weeks." We certainly did not change Haiti on whole, but we did make a small dent in Limbé. It is each individual person that we helped along the way that made it all worthwhile. We shall prevail. Joanna.

A special thank you to you all for your help and support that made it possible for us to be here 50 years.