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# "Kumbaya" and Dramatizations of an Etiological Legend

#### BY PATRICIA AVERILL WITH JOHN BLOCHER, JR.

Abstract: "Kumbaya" evolved from the African American spiritual, "Come by Here." A transcription by John Blocher, Jr., published in 1955, became the standard version. However, it was widely believed to have been brought from Africa by a missionary. This article traces the origins of the most common origin legends, then looks at those that influenced behavior. It concludes with comments on the persisting belief in an African genesis.

"Tumbaya" was first published in Delaware, Ohio, in 1955 by Cooperative Recreation Service (CRS), a company formed by recreation leaders, Lynn Rohrbough and his wife, Katherine Ferris Rohrbough (CRS 1955; Amy 1957). It spread through CRS songbooks produced for youth groups and summer camps, like the YWCA and American Camping Association (CRS 1957b; 1960). Pete Seeger began performing it in 1957 (Seeger 1958, 2013). Joan Baez released a version in 1962 (Baez 1962). As a consequence of The Seekers' 1964 recording of "Kumbaya," it remains popular in parts of Europe, where community singing traditions persist (Seekers 1963, 1964). In the United States, the song survives in schools and churches.

CRS identified it as "African (Angola)." The owner changed the headnote to "spiritual" in 1958; Lynn Rohrbough's attribution was not widely accepted until Wikipedia publicized research by Chee Hoo Lum, director of UNESCO–National Institute of Education Centre for Arts Research in Education, and Stephen Winick of the American Folklife Center (Lum 2010; Winick 2010; Wikipedia 2020). They each established the

parent, "Come by Here," originated among African Americans in coastal South Carolina and Georgia.

Headnotes convey information. They do not reflect what is comprehended. In 1976, 212 individuals, of the 253 in summer camps who answered a survey, knew "Kumbaya." Twenty-three people believed it was from Africa, while three considered it to be Caribbean. Three thought it was Native American, one that it was Brazilian, and one that it was Korean.

The propagation of the African credit may be attributed to Seeger. In October 1957, he told members of the University of Chicago's Folklore Society:

There was a missionary who came back from East Africa, Angola. And taught this song to us, and a lot of people started singing it around the country. Introducing it as an African spiritual. Lo and behold, someone was singing it down in North Carolina, and people there said we know this song, it's "Come

Come By Here

Kum Ba Yah

Slowly

African (Angola).

Kum ba yah, my Lord, Kum ba yah! Kum ba

yah, my Lord, Kum ba yah! Kum ba yah, my Lord,

Kum ba yah! Oh, Lord, Kum ba yah.

Pronounced: "Koom-bah-yah."

"Kumbaya," as it first appeared in *Indianola Sings* in 1955, without a copyright notice. Copy courtesy of John Blocher, Jr.

2. Someone's crying, Lord, Kum ba vah!

3. Someone's singing, Lord, Kum ba yah!

4. Someone's praying, Lord, Kum ba vah!

by Here."... I'm not sure how it got to Africa. But just yesterday I was reading a book.... He worked at the mission. Name was Coles. Reverend Sam Coles. Maybe he was the one who taught them the song. (Seeger 2013)

Baez's songbook was the progenitor of the belief that "Kumbaya" was Caribbean: "It started as a Negro gospel song, 'Come By Here, Lord,' was exported to the West Indies where it was rephrased in 'pidgin English' as 'Kumbaya,' and returned to the United States" (Baez 1964). By 1964, when this songbook was published, Seeger's view—that it had gone from the United States to another country, with an African culture, and come back—had become the standard narrative. Baez simply modified the location (Baez 1964).

Published credits nurture etiological legends when, to paraphrase American folklorist and linguist, Louise Pound's definition of folklore, the origin stories mutate as they pass from person to person and are remembered for more than a few weeks (Pound 1922, xii–xiii). UCLA professor of folklore and cultural studies, Timothy Tangherlini distilled the common features of a legend. He wrote:

[It,] typically, is a short (mono-) episodic, traditional, highly ecotypified, historicized narrative performed in a conversational mode, reflecting on a psychological level a symbolic representation of folk belief and collective experiences and serving as a reaffirmation of commonly held values of the group to whose tradition it belongs. (Tangherlini 1990, 385)

His definition proposed a hierarchy, with cultural beliefs at the base. Symbols developed that became ways to articulate values. Sometimes, those symbols spawned narratives. Legends might involve culture heroes but also might be related as experiences of the storyteller or an anonymous friend. Even more rarely, legends led to actions that dramatized underlying principles (Tangherlini 1990).

This article presents some facts about the song. Next, it limns the nuclei of the most common expository tales. Finally, it looks at

those that influenced behavior. The title varies by supplier. Rohrbough used "Kum Ba Yah," and most published arrangements adopted his spelling. In oral tradition, the name became "Kumbaya." That is the form preferred on recordings.

#### **Facts**

Seeger embedded the etiological legend in a first-person anecdote with its own Aristotelian dramatic arc. First, he cited the original tale, that it was brought to this country from Africa by a missionary. Discord arose when people in the audience countered it was an African American song. He, the hero, restored tranquility by suggesting a Black missionary took it to Africa, and another repatriated it.

Legends often combine isolated facts with apocryphal details. The Villagers prefaced their performance of "Kum Ba Ya," in 1963, by disclosing it was a Negro spiritual. The group's leader then repeated Seeger's addendum to the original legend, but with elements that set it in a particular place at a specific time. She held the song was taken to South Africa in the 1800s by American missionaries (Villagers 1963).

The anonymity of the missionary created a vacuum that stimulated speculation. His hitherto undisclosed name appeared in a letter Rohrbough sent Shawnee Press in 1959:

Professor Chance of Baldwin-Wallace, who had it from Melvin Blake, a returned missionary from Angola, in the winter of 1954–55, had jotted down this mispronunciation to John Blocher, Jr., who first notated the song. We published it this way March 18, 1955. (unpublished letter, private collection, World Around Songs [WAS])

Rohrbough knew both Blocher and Varner Chance, but he did not participate in the creation of "Kum Ba Yah." Four years after he disseminated the song, his memory merged disparate details into a coherent causal account. This mental process did not differ from those of skillful storytellers who emended their narratives so they made sense to their listeners.

Blake was a Methodist missionary in Angola from 1948 to 1956, who was known to "enjoy singing." While he was an undergraduate at Taylor University, he performed with the Varsity Quartet. Blake later moved to Traveler's Rest, South Carolina, where he died in 2011. His obituary said he "was a member of the Piedmont Men's Chorale" (Greenville News 2011).

Missionaries in those years spent their entire times in the field and did not return to the United States until the ends of their assignments. Nevertheless, Blake was in Nashville, Tennessee, in May of 1952. He stayed at the Methodist missionary training center in Scarritt College. After spending time at Ohio's Wittenberg College, he went to his family home near Muncie, Indiana.

Blake represented the Division of World Missions at the denomination's Christian youth conference in August. The national office alerted him that some international ministerial students sponsored by the church would be there and warned him that he would be the department's sole representative at the meeting. Larry Eisenberg (1992, 59) remembered that 5,000 people went to the Purdue University campus.

I contacted Blocher in 2016. When he transcribed the CRS melody, he said he altered the rhythm to 3/4 time and inserted some variations, which he termed syncopation, into the stream of even quarter and half notes (John Blocher, Jr., email communication with author, 2016).

Kathryn Thompson Good sang it for him when they were preparing *Indianola Sings* for a Methodist family camp in Columbus, Ohio (CRS 1955). Blocher stayed in touch with Good's children after she died. They told him she probably learned "Kumbaya" at a Buckeye Recreation Workshop (John Blocher, Jr., email communication with author, 2016). In his dissertation on CRS, Larry Nial Holcomb (1972) noted the annual affair lasted a week and attracted 150 people in 1954.

A reasonable surmise would be that someone who heard it at Purdue contributed the song. A local newspaper reported the workshop attracted "school teachers, ministers, church workers," and other "community leaders" (*Press-Gazette* 1961, 3). These were the very sorts of people who would have attended a Methodist conclave on youth.

Chance was not involved with *Indianola Sings*. In addition to teaching at Baldwin-Wallace College, he ran the music program for the Methodist summer retreat that served the area where Blake had been a pastor in the 1940s. More than likely, Blake visited Epworth Forest when he was in Indiana in 1952. Later, Chance may have told Rohrbough that Blake was the missionary of legend. The person who appended comments to Blocher's score probably was a member of the CRS staff who attended the Buckeye Workshop.

## Dramatizing the Original Legend

Shawnee's correspondence with CRS, (now WAS), began after it copyrighted an arrangement of "Koom Ba Yah" by Harry Harter (Gearhart 1959). The composer claimed he knew "an African missionary," who told him it was "widely sung in Africa" (unpublished letter, private collection, WAS).

When Shawnee's lawyer pressed him, Harter conceded that his friend learned the song in this country but maintained his connection to the burgeoning legend. He allowed that he "had the understanding that Rosa Page Welch heard the work while traveling in Africa and brought the song to America" (unpublished letter, private collection, WAS).

Welch was an African American from Port Gibson, Mississippi. The mezzo-soprano told Shawnee's lawyer that she "first heard the work at the World Christian Student conference at Athens, Ohio, about 1956 when an African student led the conference in singing it" (unpublished letter, private collection, WAS).

Rohrbough responded in June 1959:

Rosa Page Welsh led the singing at the Athens SVM Convention; the Negro was F. Talbot; from B. Guiana; a Theo. student from Yale; we have tapes of all singing; and the Africans were from Kenya, Ghana. (unpublished letter, private collection, WAS)

SVM was the Student Volunteer Movement, which was organized in 1888 by Dwight L. Moody to promote evangelism. More than 3,000 volunteers were on the Ohio University campus over the 1955–1956 winter break. Harlan Hatcher boasted that half the attendees "were foreign students from all parts of the world" (Hatcher 1957, 74). Frederick Hilborn Talbot was from South America. He retired as a bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 2004. He recalled, "the song was sung alternatively by the gathering," but did not name the docent (Frederick Hilborn Talbot, letter to the author, October 18, 2016).

This event occurred after *Indianola Sings* was released, but before Rohrbough publicized "Kum Ba Yah" in a January 1956 *Song Sampler* (CRS 1956a). The unknown song leader only could have learned it, directly or indirectly, from Blake. One would guess the singer was an international student who met or heard the missionary in Indiana. Some surely sought him out as the spokesperson for their sponsor.

#### The Nigerian Legend

The CRS–Shawnee correspondence explains one proto-legend. Welch had spent time in Nigeria in 1953. She styled herself a missionary, but her autobiography suggested her role was more that of a goodwill ambassador (Myers 1984, 116–24).

At least some people who attended the Athens meeting must have deduced, from her résumé, that she was the missionary alluded to by the common legend. Irwin Silber was the first to publish the theory:

While American Negro spirituals have their roots in African folk music, some spirituals have made their way back to Africa from the United States. Which way did this one go? A southern spiritual, "Come by Here," is a first cousin to this Nigerian song. (Silber and Silverman 1963, 139)

Silber's parents were working-class Jews. He joined the Communist Party before he became involved with the predecessor publication of *Sing Out!* in 1949 (Reuss 2000, 209; Hunt 2012). It takes no analytical skills to posit Silber did not attend the Athens

meeting. This means that the Nigerian variant of Seeger's legend was in oral tradition in the New York City area in 1963.

The reference to Nigeria moved through the mass media, appearing in Norman Luboff's anthology of folk songs in 1965 (Luboff and Stracke 1965). Reader's Digest cited Luboff in 1975 (Simon 1975). The motif remained in or reentered folk tradition. Marlène Ngaro recently included a hummed version in a collection of African lullabies, with the suggestion it came from Nigeria. Her parents moved to France from Bénin and the Central African Republic. She must have absorbed both the song and the genealogy in Europe (Seck 2008; Ngaro and Camara 2016).

#### **Possible African Incubation**

The common view of a legend, as defined by Merriam-Webster (2020), is "a story coming down from the past" that is "popularly regarded as historical although not verifiable." For people like Harter, this produced a syllogism for action. If "Kumbaya" was introduced by a missionary from Africa, and if he was the composer of the song, then he, Harter, must demonstrate a relationship with the missionary.

Folklorists have different reasons for following the evangelist's trail. They, like Shawnee's lawyer, need evidence to accept Harter's declaration of authorship. The location of any antecedent for the missionary is limited to that part of Central Africa's western side where Blake was active. It could not have been Nigeria or South Africa.

Before the First World War, the northern Methodist Episcopal Church sent two Black women to Angola. Susan Collins went in 1887 and opened an orphanage at Quéssua among Kimbundu speakers on the Malanje Plateau. Her family had migrated to Iowa after the Civil War. She probably did not know "Come by Here."

Martha Drummer joined her in 1906. She was born about 50 miles from Atlanta in Barnesville, Georgia, in 1871, where she could have learned an early variant. In 1908, members of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society were told she taught school

and "frequently takes some of the larger girls with her to sing the gospel in the surrounding towns where sacred song has never been heard" (McConnell 1952, 31). In 1953, Dorothy McConnell talked to someone who remembered her, although Drummer had returned to Atlanta in 1926.

They probably were the last African Americans sent to Angola by Methodists. David Killingray (2003) found that, after the First World War, colonial powers discouraged missions from placing American Blacks in leadership roles in Africa.

Samuel Coles offered illustrations in his autobiography. The African American mentioned by Seeger was an Angolan missionary for the Congregational Church. After he retired in 1953, he tried recruiting young Blacks but discovered they had "been told by their boards that the colonial governments do not want American Negroes as missionaries" (Coles 1957, 215).

Coles' mission at Galangue, Angola, was founded in 1923 by graduates of Talladega College. Modupe Labode described the director's wife as the kind of individual feared by Europeans. Bessie Fonvielle McDowell taught the Ovimbundu choir James Weldon Johnson's "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" and William Bradbury's "Esther" (Labode 2000). She might have known "Come by Here" as a child, since the African American was born in Goldsboro on North Carolina's coastal plain. The Galangue station was closed in 1937 by intrigues preceding the Second World War. She died before it was reactivated after the war.

The dynamics of oral tradition make it difficult to countenance either Drummer or McDowell as Blake's source. One would have to argue that "Come by Here" traveled from the United States to Africa before 1924, was translated into Portuguese or a Bantu language, and after 10 or 20 years, was retranslated into English in a form that paralleled the concurrent evolution of the text in the United States.

Angola's ethnic conflicts are another reason McDowell was an unlikely intermediary for Blake. The Ovimbundu lived south and west of Kimbundu speakers. In the early 1950s, their men were going to the Malanje Plateau as contract workers (Vidal 2002, 119, 201). It was possible a Congregational Ovimbundu would spread a song among Kimbundu-speaking Methodists. However, during the subsequent wars that came with Angolan independence from Portugal, Nuno Vidal, in his doctoral research on Angola, said they supported separate factions (Vidal 2002, 103).

Nothing can be inferred from the absence of Angolan reports of "Kumbaya." Quéssua was bombed, and the area laced with land mines. Galangue was a demobilization center. Famine ravaged the area in 2002. Anyone who may have known the song has died, disappeared, or is unwilling to talk.

#### **Possible Nashville Transfer**

If Blake did not learn the song in Angola, then he had to have heard it in Nashville. Another letter sent to CRS sketched a possible scenario. Clare Lovejoy Lennon wrote Rohrbough in 1956 to assert she was the fountainhead. When asked to elaborate, she replied: "I never dreamed that it would go beyond May Titus" (unpublished letter, private collection, WAS).

Lennon was the African American superintendent of a Methodist boarding school for Black girls in Asheville, North Carolina. She heard "Come by Here" in Meriwether County, Georgia, before the First World War. That was about 40 miles from Drummer's birthplace on the Piedmont.

May Titus was the sister of the Allen School's white principal, Julia Titus. The family settled in Moriah, New York, after the American Revolution. Their father, Homer Titus, was a Methodist minister in Troy and elsewhere. After May graduated from The Hartford Seminary Foundation in 1933, she was minister of education for the Schenectady Methodist church and the Poughkeepsie Presbyterian church.

Titus moved from New York state to Nashville in 1946, where she was hired by the Methodist Interboard Commission on Missionary Education. This placed her in proximity to Blake in 1952. Nothing more can be adduced until someone is located who remembers if she taught songs to others. One needs proof that Titus was interested in music to be able to accept Lennon's reconstruction of the origin of "Kumbaya."

If Lennon and Titus were not Blake's agents, they formed a template for whoever was. Those traits could have been embodied by one person or spread across several. The collaborator had to have spent enough time in an African American community east of the Appalachians to have learned "Come by Here," and to have attended some session at the Methodist headquarters in Nashville, before or during 1952, where songs were exchanged.

Without more knowledge about Blake's activities, one cannot judge whether he was an active or passive bearer of the legend. If he heard the song at Scarritt, he may have presumed it came from another missionary. The circumstances in which he passed the song to others also are unknown. If it happened during a formal speech, Blake may have fabricated a memorate that fit his function as surrogate for the World Missions office. If the transmission occurred during an informal sing, his listeners may have drawn their own conclusions, like some did who attended the SVM meeting.

## **Dramatizing Seeger's Legend**

The most elaborate dramatization of Seeger's "Kumbaya" script was done by Marvin Frey. He was raised in the area of Portland, Oregon, where his father was affiliated with Aimee Semple McPherson's Foursquare Church. Somewhere, the white adolescent picked up "Come by Here" in the late 1930s, and substituted lines like "somebody needs salvation" (Frey and Frey 2008, 144). When he was sent to preach in his father's place at an African American mission on Dekum Avenue, he shared his "new chorus." Frey recalled: "The small congregation enthusiastically sang the new song, during which its pastor, the Rev. Everett George Washington, added the words, 'Do Lord,' and 'I've Got a Home....' I added another verse-I took Jesus as my Savior/You take Him, too/While He's calling you" (Frey 1989b).



May Titus. Photo courtesy of The United Methodist Church's General Commission on Archives and History.

In 1939, God sent Frey a vision that He wanted him to save children on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Frey moved to the City in 1954, and opened a camp in Old Bridge, New Jersey, in 1958. (Frey and Frey 2008). Beth-El moved to Stephentown, New York, in 1961. He settled in Ossining, New York, and listed nearby Croton-on-Hudson as his business address.

This propelled him into Seeger's magnetic field. Seeger began staging concerts to raise money for his Hudson River clean-up projects in Croton in 1966. Lee Hays, a member of Seeger's former group (The Weavers), lived in the village.

Frey was convinced he was the composer of "Kumbaya." He approached Seeger after a concert in Ossining in 1978. Seeger deflected him to CRS.

He wrote Rohrbough that he had taught his "Theme Chorus" to Frank Pennington in 1939. The boy's parents were "Assembly of God missionaries to Nigeria who spent time in Congo working with natives from Angola" during the Second World War (unpublished letters, private collection, WAS). By then, Rohrbough had sold CRS. He forwarded the problem to the new owners of the renamed World Around Songs.

Frey requested custody of the version of "Kum Ba Yah," which had been published in a 1957 Girl Guides' songbook (CRS 1957a; Frey 1981). Rohrbough had copyrighted a harmonization of "Kum Ba Yah" by Bliss Wiant in 1956, after he distributed his Song Sampler in January (CRS) 1956a, 1956b). CRS had let the Wiant rights lapse when it republished the song without the requisite proprietary notice. An attorney advised the new owners that they would be better off acceding to Frey, than paying court costs for

something in the public domain that had no financial value (unpublished letters, private collection, WAS).

Frey attempted to enforce his copyright with The United Methodist Church in 1989, when the church was planning to include a version of "Kum Ba Yah" in its new hymnal (UMC 1989). He prepared a Synopsis to plead his case, which he sent to Bishop Rueben Job, chair of the committee overseeing the project (Frey 1989a). In the Synopsis, Frey recalled the anointed boy was Robert Cunningham and that he and "his family were preparing to go as missionaries to the Belgian Congo (Zaire). Their particular burden was for Angola (to the south and west), which at the time was closed to Protestant missionaries" (Frey 1989b).

None of Frey's details could be confirmed. Pentecostal groups do not maintain archives like the Methodists do. Most of the people he named were obscure when they were alive. Even the inconsistencies in his memoirs may have been a function of recollections that acclimatized with age, rather than errors. His most damning argument, based on the

experience on Dekum Avenue, was that he also wrote "Do Lord" (Frey 1989b).

#### **Dramatizing Beliefs**

The appeal of the musical missionary was rooted in the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. During the 1950s, religious emissaries were seen as bulwarks against communism. Albert Schweitzer, who played organ and operated a hospital in modern day Gabon, was a culture hero.

The 1950s conferences were weapons in the battle. Methodists called their international recruits Crusade Scholars. The SVM's meeting was the first to invite students from proselytized countries. The possibility of a Christianized African having created "Kumbaya" affirmed that the forces of good were winning.

Kennedy's Peace Corps supplanted missionaries as apostles for Western values in 1961. The Vietnam War destroyed the faith of many in the United States' imperial mission. The tale of the missionary faded, but not the song's web of associations. A third of the publications and recordings issued in the past decade postulated an African genesis.

The Methodist hymnal, which excited Frey's wrath, clearly stated "Kum Ba Yah (Come By Here)" was an "Afro-American spiritual." Hymnary conventions assumed tunes were separate entities from texts. Consequently, the hymnal committee named Blocher's melody "Desmond" after "Desmond Tutu, social activist and Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa" (Carlton R. Young, email to the author, January 5, 2017).

The tune did more than assimilate the song's links with the antiwar messages that Baez and other folk singers had spread through their music (see Baez 1977, 1980). It localized them to the 1980s campaign against apartheid. Thus, the archetype of a Christianized African was redeemed.

"Desmond" was not a legend, but a complex symbol that anyone could expand into an explanatory tale. When I asked a Presbyterian minister why "Desmond," he immediately made the connection between "Kumbaya" and Tutu. His explication recapitulated the gist of Carlton R. Young's unpublished email. Despite their theological differences, the two men knew the same history.

Placing a song in a hymnal does not guarantee it will be sung. New York's Sandy Creek Methodist church used Hymn 494 ("Kum Ba Yah/Desmond") as a Congregational prelude during Lent in 2017 (UMC 2017). In the summer of 2016, the church in Springville, New York, scheduled it as the Hymn of Meditation between the message and offertory (UMC 2016a). That same year, the church in Kennedy, New York, sang "Kum Ba Yah" as an Act of Praise after the offertory and before the scripture on Trinity Sunday, the first Sunday after Pentecost (UMC 2016b).

The legend of "Kumbaya" was not being dramatized, but incorporated into community rituals. Individuals could look down and see the footnote, and know they were singing an African American song. At the same time, they could see "Desmond." The symbol bridged the past and present, while it blurred boundaries between the folk, popular, and religious strata. Lay liturgists and music directors, who planned the services, were professing their beliefs. Those parishioners who joined in the singing confirmed their mutual ethos.

#### **Notes on Sources**

Information for Melvin Blake, Varner Chance, Susan Collins, Martha Drummer, Claire Lennon, Bessie Fonvielle McDowell, and May Titus was gleaned from obituaries, newspaper stories, college yearbooks, genealogy websites, and UMC files and publications.

The United Methodist Church Archives and History Center at Drew University provided information on Blake and Titus. Frances Lyons sent copies of letters to and from Blake that established the chronology. Without her help, this research could not have been done.

World Around Songs (WAS) lent the author the company's file on "Kumbaya." It included letters from Marvin Frey, Claire Lennon, Lynn Rohrbough, and Shawnee Press. CRS and WAS files have been sent to the Library of Congress. I want to thank the owner, Bruce Greene, for his help.

The list of "Kumbaya" versions used in the table was compiled from WorldCat, the J. W. Pepper online catalog of sheet music, the Copyright Office's online database of documents filed since 1978, YouTube, and Amazon's listings for books, digital music, and CD/Vinyl. The survey of camps was done in 1976. A Google search for church Sunday bulletins, which mentioned "Kumbaya" or "Kum Ba Yah," was conducted in August 2018.

For more information, visit the "Legend" page of the "Kumbaya – Come By Here" website *KumbayaComeByHere.com*.

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Table 1. Summary of "Kumbaya" origins provided with sheet music, recordings, and YouTube videos by decade

Decade	African (A)	African American (AA)	Traditional (T)	Caribbean (C)	Total	% <b>A</b>	%AA	%Т	%C
1950s	I	0	0	0	I	100	0	0	0
1960s	23	7	2	2	34	68	21	6	6
1970s	33	8	4	2	47	70	17	9	4
1980s	10	9	2	0	21	48	43	10	0
1990s	17	17	6	0	40	43	43	15	0
2000s	17	19	12	3	51	33	37	24	6
2010s	20	35	5	I	61	33	57	8	2
Total	121	95	31	8	255				

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John Blocher, Jr., was a research chemist at Battelle Laboratories in Columbus, Ohio. During the Second World War, he worked on the Manhattan Project at Oak Ridge, Tennessee. He pioneered the field of chemical vapor deposition. When he was an undergraduate at Baldwin-Wallace College, he took courses in harmony and composition, along with his science classes. Along with Kathryn Thompson Good and her husband, Ohio State University ecologist Gene Good, Dr. Blocher was instrumental in organizing Camp Indianola. He was 100 years old when he died in 2019.

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