

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Jon & Jeanne Berg

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Family Memories Oral History project

Interview # FM-A-L-2007-005.01 thru .04

Jon and Jeanne Berg, who served as missionaries in west Africa during the 1970s and '80s were interviewed on the dates listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Family Memories* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location(s):

Date: June 19, 2007 Location: Family home/Atonement Lutheran Church
parsonage in Springfield, Illinois

Date: June 21, 2007 Location: Family home

Date: June 26, 2007 Location: Family home

Date: June 28, 2007 Location: Family home

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Transcription by: Norma McFarlan, ALPL volunteer

Edited by: Rozanne Flatt, ALPL volunteer

Total Time: 1:57 + 2:25 + 2:00 + 1:58 = 8 hr, 20 min Total Pages: 185

Session 1: Early life thru first year as Lutheran missionaries in Camaroon

Session 2: Missionary experience in Cameroon

Session 3: Work at a Lutheran minister in Fairbury, Illinois & return to Africa

Session 4: Missionary service in Senegal, school in England and return to USA

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 10/5/2007.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in
Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Jon & Jeanne Berg, *Family Memories*, FM-A-L-2007-005

Biographical Information & Synopsis: Jon and Jeanne Berg were American Lutheran missionaries in western Africa from 1977 to 1979 in Poli (northern) Cameroon, and from 1985 through 1992 in Dakar, Senegal. Jon was born on March 17, 1950 in Coulee Dam, Washington, grew up in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1976. Jeanne Nelson was born in Chicago, Illinois on January 22, 1950, and grew up in Oak Park, Illinois. She graduated from Northern Illinois University, majoring in Elementary Education and with an additional certification in Special Education, Learning Disabilities & Emotionally Disturbed. They were married in 1975. They both learned French in Albertville France in 1976-1977 before going to the bush of Cameroon in 1977, where they lived in very primitive conditions for nearly three years. While there, Jeanne gave birth to two sons. They returned to the states (for a ministry in a Fairbury, Illinois) only after their home in Poli burned to the ground. After five years ministering to the rural farming community, they returned to Africa, this time to Dakar, Senegal, a far less rugged experience for them. During their ministry in Senegal, Jon helped start the Galle Nanondiral community center in Dakar, and Jeanne raised their three sons and worked as a teacher at the International School of Dakar. From 1989 to 1990 Jon attended school at Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham, England, earning a master's degree in Islamic Studies while Jeanne taught in a local school.

Topics Covered: Missionary work in Poli, Cameroon and Dakar, Senegal; Lutheran minister in Fairbury Illinois; Rigors of missionary life in Cameroon with the Dowaayo people of rural Cameroon, and with the population of western Senegal; Islamic culture in west Africa; and rural Illinois culture; Teaching in Dakar, Senegal and Birmingham, England; Galle Nanondiral center in Dakar.

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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