

SENEGAL

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Henry S. Villard	1960-1961	Ambassador, Senegal
Stephen Low	1960-1963	Labor Officer / Political Officer, Dakar
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Phillip M Kaiser	1961-1964	Ambassador, Senegal
Hannah Greeley Kaiser	1961-1964	Spouse of Ambassador, Senegal
Harriet Curry	1961-1964	Secretary to Ambassador Kaiser, Dakar
Walter C. Carrington	1952 1965-1967	Delegate, Conference of the World Assembly of Youth, Dakar, Senegal Peace Corps Director, Senegal
Mercer Cook	1965-1966	Ambassador, Senegal and Gambia
Philip C. Brown	1966-1967	Junior Officer Trainee, USIS, Dakar
John A. McKesson, III	1966-1968	Deputy Chief of Mission, Dakar
Irvin D. Coker	1967	USAID, Washington, DC
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L. Dean Brown	1967-1970	Ambassador, Senegal

Alan W. Lukens	1967-1970	Deputy Chief of Mission, Dakar
Walter J. Sherwin	1969-1970	Program Officer, USAID, Dakar
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Alice A. Dress	1988-1991	Chief of Economic Section, Dakar
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WALTER J. SILVA
General Services Clerk
Dakar (1952-1954)

Walter J. Silva was born in Massachusetts in 1925. After serving in the United States Army from 1943-1945 he received his bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1949. His career has included positions in Dakar, Panama City, Maracaibo, Beirut, Thessaloniki, Athens, Rome, and Naples. Mr. Silva was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1995.

SILVA: I got my assignment, to Dakar, French West Africa, the American Consulate General for French West Africa.

Q: *You were there from 1952-54?*

SILVA: Yes. It was a small Consulate General, on the second floor of an office building downtown. In my last visit to Dakar I couldn't find the building, the town had changed so much. The housing for the Consulate General was next door to and separated by a wall from the Governor's Palace. The Consulate General had a half a dozen funny little houses, no air conditioning. No windows just double louvered doors on each side. The Consul General's house had windows. It was a nice two-story building overlooking the sea, but the staff lived across the street in these little colonial houses of two or three rooms. If you wanted to go to another room you had to go outside and go in through another door. But I thought they were great. It was part of the adventure. I enjoyed it, it was a fascinating city. During the time I was there the Department asked posts of some antiquity to return any old records that might still be at the post. I was a General Services clerk, and I went through the basement of the CG's residence and through the garages we were using as warehouses, and I found the old leather bound registries. In these old records dating back to the last century we had documents entered by hand which were copies of messages that had been sent by sea to Washington. They all began "My Dear Sir, I have the honor to report that..." and at the end it was "Your obedient servant." They were the old original dispatches, I guess. We sent those back.

There was an exciting moment in 1953. Pan Am crashed an airplane in the western part of Liberia. It was the rainy season, the middle of the rainy season in Liberia and it was just beginning up in the North in Senegal. So the Consul General volunteered that we would make an effort to reach the crash site from the north (never having traveled outside the city I don't think

he quite grasped what distance and difficulties were involved. For some reason the nearest American entity, the Firestone company, hadn't been able to reach the site. The CG asked me to try to make it. He asked me to try it because I had a car that might make it. I owned a jeep, an old military style 1947 model. It ran pretty well. Nobody else at post owned a private car except the CG. He had this beautiful old Jaguar pre-war saloon and he wasn't going to risk that for anything. The official car were a Chevrolets a sedan and a station wagon. The only car available that could make the attempt was mine, so he volunteered me to go, me and a French national employee working for me in General Services. We got less than halfway and had to turn back. Actually, we got as far as the Gambia River. There we had a sort of bright moment. There was no bridge where the track met the river, only a post with a bell on it and a pulley with a line that dipped into the water and came out the other side. There was a ferry. We rang the bell and soon an African in white shirt and shorts came down the hill and cranked the ferry over to us. We drove on to what was essentially a simple raft and got to the other side. We followed our ferryman up the hill on a track lined with whitewashed rocks. There behind a heavy growth of plants shaded by a flame tree was a rather large house that had seen better days. The ferryman asked us to sit on the veranda and disappeared into the house. It was mid-afternoon, very quiet. Then our friend returned, having added a red fez to his costume, and offered us a cold drink. He explained that "He" was still having his afternoon nap but would soon join us. "He," it turned out, was some sort of British official responsible for Upper Gambia. And he eventually appeared, trim, tall and young. Welcoming us, he asked "You will have tea, won't you?" He acted as though he had visitors every day. We were a little dirty, but we sat down on the veranda and had tea. It was all very proper. He had his white shirt, white jacket, white pants, black tie. Immaculate. And then he asked us if we would like to spend the night, again in an offhand manner as if this happened every day of the week. Actually I don't think the man had a visitor more often than every two or three months! But anyway, we said sure, we'd be delighted to. We gratefully accepted his offer of the shower facility out back under a fifty gallon drum of water. And talking to himself he said something like, "I don't suppose, no," then asked: "You don't mind do you, but I do dress for dinner?" He came out in black tie, the works. We had dinner, it was edible. He said, "In the morning, now, I like to have my breakfast a little late. The boy will bring you your tea, and then when you come down you tell him what you want." Late? I thought he meant 9:00 or 10:00 o'clock in the morning. He was up at 6:00! We were wakened for tea at the same time. After we dressed we went out to the verandah to join him for breakfast. His house boy brought him the London Times. "You don't mind if I read the Times do you?" "No." So he read the Times over breakfast. I had noticed a stack of newspapers in his bookcase in the living room. Then I saw the day on the paper in his hands. I realized that it was about four months old and he was reading from the stack in sequence. He was that much behind the rest of the world and had chosen not to disturb the rhythm of his isolated existence! It seemed incredibly disciplined to me..and perhaps a clue as to how the British Empire had lasted as long as it did. Anyway, we left there, headed southeast a little further, until the road became completely impassable. We turned around and went back.

Q: *Who was the CG?*

SILVA: Monroe Williams Blake. He went from there, I think, to Liverpool or Birmingham as CG and died soon after he got there. He was a very heavy drinker. It was a common problem then, especially in Africa. One of the two Consuls there hardly ever drew a sober breath.

Q: Did you get any feel for the politics of Dakar?

SILVA: In one way, yes. Dakar was the home of APT, the African Petroleum Terminal so tankers would come in with astounding frequency usually from Aruba. Caltex, Texaco, Esso all shared the terminal. The government was then French, led by a French Governor General whose name was marvelous, Bernard Cornut Gentil, the happy cuckold!. And he was, as a matter of fact. I don't know if he was happy, but he was certainly a cuckold. He was the Governor General, the Africans had a Parliament, I never understood what its function was except airing grievances perhaps, because the rules were made in France. They elected a representative to the French Parliament even then, part of what the French would have called an enlightened colonial policy. But nonetheless the Senegalese government was a rubber stamp Parliament.

The visits of the tankers created some difficulties because the company would not let the crew ashore and would shuttle between Aruba and back to Dakar for about six months or a year without being able to leave the ships. Any leave came at the end of those long periods. They did not represent the best class of seaman, the higher types would not have accepted those conditions. They were what they were. During one visit one guy did manage to get to shore, swam I suppose, wandered around town, and somehow found the government building and went in in the middle of a session of the Parliament and started screaming about "All you niggers." That upset the hell out of everybody, including those who didn't understand what he was saying. And there were enough people around who knew some English to understand the portent of his offense. He was arrested and taken away. He was eventually returned to his ship.

I think the consular, diplomatic establishment was pretty much divorced from what was really going on in the country. We saw it much the way a tourist does, fascinating, very colorful etc. But the French jealously guarded their colonial prerogatives and would not permit other countries to intervene, especially culturally--the teaching of English was frowned upon for example. I think that the incident of the sailor in the parliament was discussed in consular circles. We were reminded, number one, that there was an African Parliament and that they thought they were serious, no matter what we thought, and then this guy came out of nowhere to remind us of all the prejudices that existed and the problems that they create. Because it did create immediate problems. There were demarches, indignant editorials in the local French press...and of course we had to get him out of jail and back on his ship. On another occasion a crew member stabbed and killed the captain who was then on the john. When he tried to escape the Police Chief (a Frenchman) shot him down.

Normally, except for routine consular activities, the occasional welfare case, it was not a busy post. The economic officer, Robert Sheehan, who is now dead, was an FSO-5 at the time. He got nearly all his information (economic and political) from a monthly visit to a major French trading company (CFAO if I remember correctly). If he met a member of one of the French banks at a national day reception he might produce another message. I don't think he ever talked to any blacks, any Senegalese, that I know of the whole time he was there. He got it all second hand from the ruling power. I think that's pretty much the way it was throughout colonial Africa in those days. There were some fascinating people there. I remember my houseboy, Samba, a Gambian, quick and bright, who had me pay him by check which he promptly deposited in a

Bank in Bathurst. He was saving to go to the University in England. I understand he succeeded in becoming a barrister. And I remember Wilfart..never knew his first name--he never used it. A Jew, he had been a prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp. He managed to escape and walked across Europe, through Spain, over into Morocco and finally ended up in Senegal. Worked as a truck driver until he saved enough money to buy his own truck. He said that he drove into the bush as far as a tank of gas would take him and settled down. I met him when I went hunting near the farm he had established, and saw him fairly often afterward. He was well educated, a happy, witty, erudite man who had previously never worked with his hands. But in five years he had created a farm on what had been the barren banks of the river, and become quite prosperous.

My career in West Africa came to an abrupt end around the end of '53, when the Wriston thing started...

CECIL RICHARDSON
GSO/Consular/Admin Officer
Dakar (1956-1959)

Cecil Richardson was born in New York in 1926, and graduated from Queen's College. He served in the US Army from 1944 to 1947, and overseas from 1951 to 1952. Entering the Foreign Service in 1956, he was stationed in Dakar, Saigon, Lagos, Niamey, Paris, Accra, Brussels, Quito, Tehran, Lima, St. Paolo and Bahamas. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 5, 2003.

Q: Well then, but when you went to, you went to Dakar first.

RICHARDSON: Yes.

Q: Did you take French before going?

RICHARDSON: No. They gave me a week or two which I don't know. It looked like, that, I've always suspected, was a design for failure because to go in an entirely foreign language ... here's what my responsibilities were, I was the admin. officer, the only admin officer. So I was the administrative officer, I was the general services officer, which is fairly heavy and also the consular officer. In consular function I had a consular assistant who worked, also served as American Secretary and on the administrative side, I had an administrative secretary, a French woman who also did my translations of leases and things like that. But to send somebody out with no more French, with no French, into an entirely French speaking environment with those responsibilities, looked like somebody was trying to sabotage the operation. Anyway, they didn't succeed.

Q: Well, let's talk about Dakar and you were there in □50s?

RICHARDSON: '56 to early, early January '59.

Q: So, I mean this is really before the, you want to call it the de-colonization of Africa.

RICHARDSON: Yes.

Q: I mean this is sort of the old Africa still.

RICHARDSON: Yes.

Q: What is Dakar like?

RICHARDSON: Dakar was a French city set down in the West Coast of Africa. Abidjan was even more so, but Dakar was French. You had French restaurants. I ate entrecote grillé every night for three months because that was the only dish I knew in French. [Laughter].

Q: Well, yes, we have to stick to the facts. [Laughter].

RICHARDSON: Yes, well it was, it had a good climate, too. The weather time of the year in the fall, what would be the winter, where you would not be uncomfortable wearing a jacket.

Q: It was Consulate General at the time, wasn't it?

RICHARDSON: Yes.

Q: And it had essentially, it was sort of the administrative capital for a whole series of places that later became...

RICHARDSON: Yes, my consular district was about 2/3 the size of the United States. It extended all the way down to the border of Nigeria, Algeria to the north, Sudan to the east, and to French Equatorial Africa in the south.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: Well, I left in '59 for Saigon, came back to West Africa 3 years later and what had been my Consular district, one political unit, was something like 7 or 8 independent countries. [Laughter]. All of the sudden, you're crossing a border whereas before you could travel thousands of miles or kilometers, whichever you prefer, without ever having presented your passport in customs.

Q: Well, how was the Consul General when you got there?

RICHARDSON: Mallory Brown who was I think of USIA and the next one was Don Dumont who was out of the Africa office, Africa Bureau in State.

Q: Well, what was, I mean did you get any feel for Africa per se or was this so French that it was, you lived in a French world, or not?

RICHARDSON: One tread carefully between two worlds. All significant authorities were French. The instructors, the teachers were French. Colonel John Edwards, political officer, who was the representative of another agency, advised me when I arrived, "You cannot mix at a small social event the Africans and the French." And I thought, oh my he's old fashioned, we're moving into the new world. Well, I had a dinner one night and I carefully chose the guests, they had all gone to the same university, Toulouse, and they were young, young open to ideas, and had been, had the same university experience. Well, out of all the entertaining my wife and I had done in all of these years, that was the worst evening and if it hadn't been for the wife of a Frenchman, an extremely vivacious young woman, who never stopped talking, it would have been an even worse evening. My wife and I couldn't wait for it to end. [Laughter].

Q: You mentioned a wife. When did you acquire a significant other?

RICHARDSON: A week before I left for my first post.

Q: What was her background and where did you meet her?

RICHARDSON: She was a teacher in New York, went to City College of the city university. She was teaching when I met her in April of '56 and we married in November.

Q: Well, did she speak French?

RICHARDSON: No, but she has a remarkable capacity for communication and it doesn't matter whether she speaks the language or not. She communicates

Q: I know. Some people can.

RICHARDSON: Amusingly, she, of course, picked up kitchen French, kitchen Spanish, kitchen Farsi. But, a Frenchman once said to her, "Madame Richardson, you speak French perfectly without any agreement of verbs."

Q: What, where you studying French while you were there?

RICHARDSON: Oh, yes. I had to.

Q: Did you ever get Nicola Declare, I don't know what the term is, but "out in the brush or something, sort of beyond the French orbit and all?"

RICHARDSON: No, no. I was busy. I was busy with 3 functions and when we were closed on the weekend, there was a note on the door that said if you need to contact someone from the Consulate, call Mr. Richardson and gave my phone number. I was permanent duty officer.

Q: Oh, how nice. [Laughter]. Did we have any particular ...

RICHARDSON: My wife got to travel while I was trapped in town. The single women there had to put her to the test before they would travel with her. She was the only American-born wife.

The consul general's, no, not Mallory Brown, but Don Dumont's wife was Moroccan-born French. Tony's wife was German, Marcel Vanessen's wife was Belgian, Colonel Edward's wife was Swiss. My wife was the only American-born wife. We had some great single women, Pat Wigglesworth and Joan Clark and Jeanne Vertafeuille. The latter was instrumental in unmasking the "mole" at CIA a couple of years ago.

Q: Ames?

RICHARDSON: Ames, that was, if that was the one because I get confused, one of them was at the CIA.

Q: Ames was CIA.

RICHARDSON: Well, she was instrumental in unmasking him and she, her picture was on Newsweek or Time.

Q: Well, how do you say that the single women tested your wife?

RICHARDSON: Yes.

Q: How does that work?

RICHARDSON: Well, they all went out one weekend in a van, went to visit an important Muslim shrine at Touba, and the van broke down. So they have to take refuge for the night in the home of a Lebanese merchant out there in the bush. And she evidently comported herself well because when she came back the girls thought she was alright [Laughter]. And she went off, she then traveled with Jean, my secretary and the consul general's secretary, to Timbuktu by boat on the Niger. Another time, they went off together, just the two of them, to Mauritania by commercial truck. Purely by chance they were at the founding of the new capital of Mauritania, Nouakchott, the day they founded Nouakchott and they brought back amusing photographs of signs mounted on stakes driven into the sand that said: "Gendarmerie" and "Palais de Justice."

Q: Well, what ...

RICHARDSON: But, this I have to tell you. They did this to me twice. I had no wife at home and no secretary at the office. It was a bad time. So I fixed them, it was the best gag I've ever pulled in my life so I'm using this as an occasion to spread it. I was out at the airport when they came back from Mauritania. They had gone up by truck and then they flew back. So I'm out at the airport and this DC-3 comes bouncing down the field and I put on the longest face I could. And they're bubbling over and they're very excited about seeing me and they're not noticing that I'm not looking all that happy. Finally, it dawned on one of them that I'm not showing sufficient enthusiasm about their return, so they asked me, "What's wrong? What's the matter? Aren't you glad to see me?" So I said, "It's just a damn good thing for you two that my mistress knows how to type!" [Laughter]. And I didn't have any problems with them going off together again. But, I never pulled a better gag than that one. And that happened early in the marriage, you know. [Laughter]. I've never been able to match that one.

Q: Well then, how about some of the work you were doing? Was it difficult working in Dakar or not?

RICHARDSON: Difficult. Well, don't forget this was my first post, everything was brand new and I didn't have French, at least at first. Before I went, the staff had been living in really crummy facilities that had been made available by the local French government. The consul general was living in a big house, also made available by the French, but I saw these awful buildings that my predecessor had lived in when he first went to the post. It was pretty grim, but Department opened up and he was able to lease two grand apartments. They were only one bedroom, but they were big. So that's what I went into so I had good housing, I could have a party. There's lots of space for entertaining, but only one bedroom. So they gave us permission to lease other places and that's when I got into leasing, when I hired a French woman to act as my administrative secretary and translate and she did the leases for me so that was interesting. That was a major activity, getting housing for the staff. They no longer had to go out on the market on their own. On the Consular side, there was very, very little, very little. Not like today where West Africa is busy with Visas. There were almost no visas.

Q: Did you get visitors through there?

RICHARDSON: At that time, I never saw a congressman in the two years I was in Dakar. Then we opened Abidjan as a consulate, as a constituent post while I was there and there was some working connection with that. The Consul General didn't feel like going, so he sent me down to inspect it, which was pretty presumptuous. I'm going down to inspect Consul Park Massey. He was a veteran of World War II with the same 17th Airborne division I had, but he was a senior officer and I'm being sent down there to inspect him, but things went off alright.

Q: When Senegal didn't ...

RICHARDSON: De Gaulle came down and made his tour of West Africa, not only West Africa, but Equatorial Africa also and plugged the new 5th Republic constitution. Guinea chose to leave the Community. And so that was exciting.

Q: Yes, that was when the French pulled and took the faucets and light fixtures.

RICHARDSON: Yes, yes.

Q: They were going to show the Guineans ...

RICHARDSON: Yes, I'm trying to remember, it was still in tact when I left, but they were going to vote. So there was excitement in connection, who was going to do what to whom. There was a territorial assembly in Dakar. So all of these people like Houphouet-Boigny, Sekou Toure, Leopold Senghor, and Diori were all there in Dakar, political figures from the territories, who later became presidents of new countries.

Q: Well, were we making any effort to cultivate these people?

RICHARDSON: No and certainly not with ...

Q: I recall interviewing somebody who was involved at this time in one of the places like Ivory Coast or some place, one of the slower places, saying that Dakar was sort of, really didn't want to give up the colonial ... empire, this was on the American side, they were not very forthcoming because they felt they were the center of the universe and they had very much a colonial attitude.

RICHARDSON: I think that would be true. That would be my estimate also. Yes, and they were very pro-French. I don't know if this would illustrate that, but at one time because my secretary and my wife did so much traveling, they got written up in the local French paper suggesting they were involved in espionage and the French intelligence went to my Consul General and accused my wife of transporting, transmitting, carrying messages to, for the FLN in Algeria. And he did not, he didn't treat it with the skepticism I thought he should have. He was totally unsupportive. Inspectors came out in early December of '58 to check on these reports. I think they were also looking to see how well prepared the post was for the oncoming independence, but while they were there, they took the trouble to reassure me that I shouldn't worry about this accusation, but it really disturbed my wife.

Q: Oh, of course it did, yes.

RICHARDSON: And she got, we got no support, she got no support from my Consul General.

Q: Well, in a way, many of our people early on were sort of in the pockets of the French, in a way wouldn't you say?

RICHARDSON: Well, the other agency, I was not aware of any contacts they had. They may have had because certainly these people were going to lead these territories and independence was coming soon. So I liked to think that they were in contact, but I never saw it.

Q: Yes.

RICHARDSON: And also, the French were very suspicious and if they saw us cultivating Africans, they would have resented it.

Q: Well, this is of course, this went on in particular during the early years, but has gone on and even exists somewhat today and that is the French not really trusting, thinking the Americans have designs on these places which from an American point of view, "Why the hell would we have designs, let the French take care of it."

RICHARDSON: Even after independence.

Q: Oh, yes.

RICHARDSON: The only time we got interested in new independent states was when we needed votes in the UN to keep China out. Otherwise, if there hadn't been China, I don't think we would have ever gotten interested.

Q: Did, while you were there, were the French were fighting the FLN in Algeria, weren't they?

RICHARDSON: Yes, yes.

Q: Did that intrude at all into concerns of ...

RICHARDSON: No, no. The only time was when my wife was accused of being a messenger for the FLN [Laughter]. I don't know to whom she was supposed to deliver the messages.

Q: Well, I, you know, I'm sure security people don't like to see people travel, foreigners, it makes them nervous.

RICHARDSON: Yes.

Q: Well, so in early '59 you were due to leave and what happened?

RICHARDSON: Then, after spending 2 years as Admin, General Services, and Consular Officer in Dakar, they sent me to French training in Nice, with a humble assignment in the Department. Now you tell me, does that make any sense?

Q: [Laughter].

PEARL RICHARDSON
Spouse of GSO/Consular/Admin Officer
Dakar (1956-1959)

Pearl Rachlin Richardson was born in New York City. She received her bachelor and master's degrees from the City University of New York. She married Cecil Richardson in 1956. Their overseas postings included Senegal, Vietnam, Nigeria, Niger, France, Ghana, Belgium, Ecuador, Iran, Peru Brazil and the Bahamas. She was interviewed by Penne Laingen in 1987.

Q: Yes. I see, too, that you got married in November and went right off to Senegal ... to Dakar.

RICHARDSON: A week (later).

Q: Had you ever been overseas before?

RICHARDSON: No, I'd never been out of the United States, except for a weekend in Canada once.

Q: And how did it go?

RICHARDSON: Well, it went well. I always said years later that ... the way I phrased it was ... that if I could survive the first year of marriage without what I called third-party distractions, which means no concerts, no television, no theater ... which for a New Yorker is hard ... married to a man that I really didn't know.

Q: I beg your pardon? (laughs)

RICHARDSON: Well, how well did I know Cy? Our courtship consisted of his coming up from Washington on weekends, and I really didn't know him. So we had the added thing of getting to know each other and moving, not only out of the United States, but to a place where there was absolutely not a single friend, not one, and I didn't speak the language.

Q: And what was the language?

RICHARDSON: The language was French. And neither one of us spoke French, so it was difficult. But not Senegal. The Senegalese are so friendly that you can make mistakes in French. I took lessons, and it didn't matter. With the French, who were in evidence there, it didn't matter if you made mistakes as long as you spoke quickly enough and they thought you were fluent. Now, Cy's French was much better than mine, but he spoke more slowly to make sure it was correct, and the French automatically turned off their ears. I spoke, just spoke, and I made my point and everything was fine.[...]

Q: Oh?

RICHARDSON: But anyway, Senegal is a lovely, lovely country. And we'll get a chance now in the Inspection Corps to inspect Dakar. I've been back once on our way to another post in Africa, but not to stay. The Senegalese are among the most gracious people.

Q: Then you couldn't have been luckier to start there, really.

RICHARDSON: Yes. But it's very interesting. That weekend, when I told Cy, oh yes, we could get married, as soon as he left with his ride back to Washington, I jumped into a cab and went up to a girlfriend of mine, and I said, "Look. Cy just left. I told him I was going to marry him, but I'll call him tomorrow and tell him it's all off."

And she said, "Wait, Pearl. Let's paint the worst possible picture." She said, "You get to Dakar. You can't stand the heat (I hate the heat, though I've spent so many years in the tropics). You don't like the people. You don't speak the language. You don't like the Foreign Service. But, worst of all, you've found out you don't like Cy ... "

Q: (laughs)

RICHARDSON: She said, "You get on a plane and come home." And I thought that was one really simple explanation. (laughs)

Q: (laughs) And what a wonderful friend.

RICHARDSON: Yes, which put it in perspective. Now, the most amusing thing that happened in Senegal was that two of the secretaries at the Consulate General were going either up the Niger or down the Niger ... I think it's down the Niger. The period of the trip was falling during our first anniversary, which is November 25, and they asked me if I wanted to go. Cy said, "Of course you want to go." People later asked me, "How could you leave your husband on your first wedding anniversary?" And my answer was, "I hoped there would be more anniversaries, but it was probably my only chance to go down the Niger River."

Q: Right. Very good answer.

RICHARDSON: And we had a marvelous time. We're now married 31 years, so obviously I've had more than one anniversary, and you'll find this (trip down the Niger) the first.

Q: Exactly. How were things there politically at that time?

RICHARDSON: This was before Independence. We had the great pleasure of having de Gaulle come when they were taking a Referendum of whether the old Afrique Occidentale Francaise were going to stay with the French or were going to become independent. And de Gaulle was absolutely very impressive, to hear him get up on a balcony and say, "If you want Independence, take it." It was just very, very impressive. And Leopold Senghor was President and he's a renowned poet, but I must admit they were not there to greet de Gaulle. Yet Sekou Toure in Guinea was going to vote "no" and was there to tell de Gaulle in person, "no".

But the Senegalese are lovely, lovely people. You know something? As far as I'm concerned, the best food is found there.

Q: Is that right?

RICHARDSON: They can do fish and rice. The only place in the world where there is marvelous fish. The market had a Vietnamese fishmonger, and I would go down and say, "I would like eighteen fillet of sole, this size or that size, for next Tuesday." And I'd come down next Tuesday and pick up the fillets. The cost of living was very high. At that time, Senegal was, I think, the second highest post we had in the Foreign Service for cost of living. Caracas was first.

Q: When were you in Caracas?

RICHARDSON: I wasn't, but Caracas was, at that time, first. And I think I'm excluding Moscow, because I really don't know where the Iron Curtain countries came in there, but Senegal was the highest. You could get anything you wanted, because the French liked to eat. I had as good cheese, smoked salmon, anything I wanted, that I could find in Paris, but you paid a price for it. Everything was imported, but I remember distinctly it was the same price when you bought a kilo of apples or grapes or plums or whatever it was. They were all the same price. But

if you wanted it and you were getting an allowance to help defray the cost and you did have to eat, you had it.

Q: Did you do the marketing?

RICHARDSON: Yes.

Q: Or did you have a domestic?

RICHARDSON: Yes. No, I had a domestic. In West Africa, the domestics are male, except people who have young children have a nanny who takes care of the child, the child's laundry, and the feeding and everything. Then they are female. Because I didn't have a tablecloth, I had one of those Quaker lace things. The table was so crowded, I didn't have room for bread and butter plates, so I paid a premium for what they call, like a Viennese roll, that wouldn't crumb. (laughs)

Q: (laughs)

RICHARDSON: And the one thing that I did know was that you didn't serve butter at a dinner party, so that was fine. I just had a bread that didn't crumb! And I had two dinners ... I mean, Dinner A and Dinner B, but I wasn't very well organized. So Cy reminded me one day, he said, "Pearl, do you realize that the Italian Consul and his wife, the Massones, have eaten Dinner B every time they've come here?" (laughs) I said, "But they leave and always say it was delicious." He said, "What do you expect them to say?" (laughs)

Q: (laughs)

RICHARDSON: The other thing was, I don't know how to make desserts. My mother was an extraordinary baker. I didn't know until I was in second term high school (I went to the big high school) that people bought cake. I assumed it was made in the house, including beautifully decorated birthday cakes.

Well, naturally, because you're in a post where the French are, there will be a bakery. This was an Italian bakery called Gentina's, and I would order bombe au chocolate, things like that. Every single dessert in some way or another turned out to be a disaster. Now, you must remember we're sitting here in the tropics. We had no air conditioning, but collar and tie for the men ... "derigueur" ... stockings for the women. When I think back on it, it's kind of ludicrous.

Q: Do you think this was the French influence or the British? Certainly was the British with us, where we were posted.

RICHARDSON: Yes, but I think it must have been the French. I don't really know, and I'm wondering now ...

Q: It wasn't the Senegalese?

RICHARDSON: No. They are elegant. You know, they are among the tallest people in West Africa and they dress regally.

Well, one dessert I remember having ... well, only two incidents stand out in my mind ... was I decided I would have the small filled pineapples with each person getting a half. And Gentina's delivered it with ice cream in it and everything. They'd bring it in a little cooler. Here's Cy, all dressed, waiting for the guests, and he said to me, "Pearl, I think I'd better look at those pineapples. I bet you they never cut off a little piece on the bottom so they wouldn't roll on the plate." Sure enough, they hadn't, and there's Cy ... takes off his jacket, he's got a wood saw, and he's cutting off the bottom of all these pineapples.

The other time, I ordered a bombe au chocolate, and Mrs. Hueybrecht, the wife of the Belgian Consul General, was served first. I carefully explained to (Gentina's) that I didn't want it highly decorated with lots of whipped cream. I just wanted some nuts around it. I hired people, of course, to serve, and one of them had the knife in hot water to offer it so that it would go through the chocolate. Well, he offers it, first naturally to Mrs. Hueybrecht, and she makes an attempt at a stab and nothing happens. Cy looks at her and says, "Make a good stab." So she does, and it goes all over, because the ice cream at this point is melted inside. It was just, you know, a mess. (laughs)

Q: (laughs) But it was very nice.

RICHARDSON: It was very nice. We didn't mind that. I'm amazed, when I look back now, why wasn't I terribly upset? But these were just very, very nice people.

The other thing I would like to say about entertaining in Dakar was, I gave a representational dinner every two weeks. Now, remember I told you, I had only twelve plates, but I also had twelve place settings of silver, and I didn't own any fish eaters. So, I would call the Consul's wife, a very good friend, Louise Edwards, (who were probably the best-liked couple of any nationality in Dakar), and Louise was also one of the most beautiful women you've ever seen. She reminds me of Greer Garson. She looks like Greer Garson. She is fluent in French and Italian, having been born, I think, in North Africa. And Louise, no matter how hot it was, she always looked elegant. She never perspired. Everything was just lovely. Louise also gave a dinner party, and I would call and find out what day she was giving a dinner party. Then, I would decide when I would have mine, so I could borrow her fish eaters. I did this for two years.

I loved Senegal. And I got to travel. The first trip I went down the Niger with the Consul General's secretary and Cy's secretary. That was the only time he had a secretary in the Foreign Service, his first post. And the second trip, I went with Cy's secretary. Some truck was going to Mauritania, and they wouldn't charge us anything. You just fly back. So we went in the cab of the truck to Mauritania.

When we think now that Nouakchott is the Capital of Mauritania and it is a big city, which we will get to see on the inspection tour, I can't imagine it. The day we were in Nouakchott, was the day they laid the stone, the first stone, for the city. It was nothing but sand and signs in the sand saying "Gendarmerie," etc. I can't imagine now that I'm going to see a real city. It's just very exciting.

For my third trip, I went to the Guinea, to the Fouta Djalon which is like a hill station. And I went by myself. I stayed in Labé and just presented myself each time to the Commandanté de Circlé, one, to let him know that he had the wife of an American in the area, also, who I was. And they always invited me to stay and always gave me a car either the next morning or two days later, to take me further on down the coast.

Q: Explain to me what the Commandanté de Circlé is?

RICHARDSON: The Commandanté de Circlé is like ...

Q: Is it like a mayor?

RICHARDSON: Yes. No, no, no, this is the French. They control their area. In the Bush, it was the District Superintendent, like that.

Q: An English word?

RICHARDSON: The equivalent, yes.

Q: And you had to check in?

RICHARDSON: I didn't have to, but I thought it was politic to do it. I am wandering around his territory, and he could be helpful to me. I really wanted him to give me a car.

Q: Were you safe in those days?

RICHARDSON: I was safe, except what I didn't know was that this was the time when all the problems were happening in France. What I didn't know was that the Consul General had gone into Cy and said, "Where's Pearl?" Cy said, "Frankly, I don't know, but here's a list of the places she'll be going," and he then cabled to every single place with instructions for me to return to Dakar immediately, because they were threatening a general strike, and no planes, no anything.

Well, fortunately, a cable didn't catch up with me until I was ... I don't know ... almost near the coast ... Kindia, I think ... and the Commandanté de Circlé said to me, "You know, we've been looking for you for days in the Bush. We really didn't know who you were. We thought you were a missionary. I'm so glad you came in."

What was interesting was that according to my schedule, I was to be in Conakry, the Capital of Guinea, the day of local elections. My most marvelous experience on that trip was that I stayed with the Commandanté de Circlé, that I didn't know when I arrived, and his new bride, in a place called Mamou. This man ... I don't remember his first name ... but the name is Dequequer. They were absolutely charming. He later went on to be the Ambassador, head of the French AID Mission, and he was a very, very nice person. As soon as I got there, I told him I'd heard rumors. I didn't quite understand what was going on. He told me, he said, "We're quite cognizant of what is going on, but that's not what worries, me Mrs. Richardson." He said, "According to your

schedule, if we continue this way, you are going to be in Conakry the day of local elections, and we've already had some incidents. So I think you will stay here until the elections are over and then you'll proceed." I thought what a lovely man, because he took me out in the Bush to show they were building the voting booths for people to vote. He said, "Here, you have no problem. In Conakry, a big city, you might." They were absolutely lovely to me.

I stayed with them four or five days. What amazed me was they invited people to dinner, and I remember the first course ... the second night I was there ... was cheese souffle. It was absolutely magnificent! Mrs. Dequequer had a marvelous cook. The next morning she took me on a tour of the house. The kitchen floor was dirt. The stove was a wood-burning stove, and there were these big flames shooting up. And I looked at that and I said, "That's what the souffle came out of? I don't think from now on I can blame my equipment." Q: (laughs) Noooo.

RICHARDSON: And then, when I got to Conakry ... by the time I got to Conakry ... of course, I knew I had to return to Dakar immediately. But I was never going to see the Bauxite Mines on the Ile de Loos in the airport in Conakry, there was a man who walked over to me and said, "Mrs. Richardson." And I recognized him. He was from the Sureté in Dakar. He'd been then posted to Conakry, because, as you see, Dakar was the head of all of AOA. He said, "Well, how can you ...?"

Q: What is AOA?

RICHARDSON: French West Africa. He said, "How can you leave without seeing the Ile de Loos?" Well, I said, "I have orders." He personally called our Consul General and said, "I will be responsible for Mrs. Richardson." And, of course, the Consul General said, "Absolutely not. You just make sure she gets on the next plane out." I had a day in Conakry, and that was the day they were carrying dynamite across the river, so I couldn't go. In any case, it was a marvelous trip, and I did that on my own, speaking very, very little French.

But I discovered that body language and gestures, if you're polite ...

Q: ... are the same the world over.

RICHARDSON: It's the same the world over. But people can tell when you're welcoming, and it's just marvelous. That started our life in the Foreign Service, and from then on, I was hooked.

Q: And you have been independent (from the beginning). We'll get later to your story of Iran. (laughs)

RICHARDSON: (laughs)

Q: Was there a caste system in Senegal?

RICHARDSON: I don't understand what you mean "caste."

Q: "Caste", among the Senegalese?

RICHARDSON: No, but what's interesting, there's a whole Métisse culture there. For example, we knew that the Hotel de France, a small restaurant that you go to, now that's where all of the best known Métisse officials ate. And that was that. But, no, I never found it so. Of course, I may have been very naive at that time. I didn't really know much about that.

(The caste system in Senegal to which Laingen refers is a very rigid system that plays an important part in the Senegalese society. It is divided into: 1) nobles, 2) freeborn, 3) artisans or skilled workmen, 4) griots or musicians or praise singers, and 5) former slaves and their descendants. While members of different tribes may marry, members of different castes almost never do.)

Q: The people are Moslem (mainly), are they not?

RICHARDSON: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

ARVA C. FLOYD
Officer in charge of Senegal, Mali and Mauritania, African Bureau
Washington, DC (1960-1961)

Arva Floyd was born and raised in Georgia and educated at Emory University and the University of Edinburgh. After serving with the US Army in World War II and in the Occupying Forces in Austria after the war, he joined the Foreign Service and was posted to Djakarta, Indonesia in 1952. His foreign postings include Indonesia, South Africa, Martinique and Brussels, where he dealt with matters concerning NATO, European Security and Disarmament. In his Washington assignments Mr. Floyd also dealt with these issues. From 1978 to 1980 Mr. Floyd was Foreign Policy Advisor to United States Coast Guard. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: In '60 you moved over to the African Bureau itself. What were you doing there?

FLOYD: I was in charge of Senegal and Mali.

Q: And you did that from '60 until when?

FLOYD: Senegal, Mali, and Mauritania, until about '62, late '61. A couple of years roughly.

Q: Senegal was the major country there, wasn't it?

FLOYD: Yes, Senegal was certainly more advanced, in the usual sense of that word. However, we paid a good deal of attention to Mali because it had been left-leaning. Modibo Keita, the president of Mali, Sekou Toure, the president of Guinea, and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana formed

this loose kind of alliance. They were the more anti-Western bunch, and they got themselves involved in a non-aligned movement.

Q: Who was the president of Senegal?

FLOYD: Leopold Senghor.

Q: Was he a senator in France, and a poet...

FLOYD: Yes; he was a former senator and a member of parliament from Senegal, a man of letters of some distinction, and a French poet. Senegal, of course, had had a much longer and deeper exposure to French influence than any of the other liberated French colonies, and was, as a result, much more sophisticated intellectually. They were one of the few newly-independent African countries to effect a peaceful transfer of power when Senghor left. And, to the best of my knowledge, while there have been occasional coups and things like that, I don't think there's been a military uprising or military takeover since independence. They've done relatively well that way. They're still poor; they're not going very far economically; but, there was a certain depth into their political culture that the other African countries didn't have.

Q: Were we fairly comfortable with how Senegal was doing?

FLOYD: At the time that I stopped following it, yes. On the other hand, Mali didn't do at all well, in spite of our interest in it. Keita was kicked out and confined; and the military took over; and, it hasn't been a good story at all. Much the same in Guinea. People thought that Sekou Toure was one of the great dominant leaders, who was going to come out of Africa. There was a much darker side to all of that. He produced nothing of any real lasting consequence.

Q: He had a rather brutal regime.

FLOYD: Quite brutal, yes.

HENRY S. VILLARD
Ambassador
Senegal (1960-1961)

Ambassador Henry S. Villard was born in New York City in 1900. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Harvard University he did post graduate work at Magdalen College at Oxford University. His career includes positions in Tehran, Washington D.C., Rio de Janeiro, Venezuela, Norway, Libya, and ambassadorship to Senegal and Mauritania. Ambassador Villard was interviewed by Dmitri Villard in July 1991.

Q: In 1960 you were then appointed ambassador to Senegal and to Mauritania. If I am not mistaken you were originally appointed ambassador to the Mali Federation which included the country of Mali as well. What happened?

VILLARD: What happened was that the Mali Federation, composed of Senegal and Mali, which were components of what used to be French West Africa, the large bulge on the map of Africa, couldn't make a go of it. Tribal animosities were so great that they split up. By the time I had been at my post a few days, literally, there was no longer any possibility of being accredited to a federation. I could either stay in Dakar, which was the capital of Senegal or go to Bamako, which was the capital of Mali.

Q: There wasn't much choice was there? [laughter]

VILLARD: That's right, I stayed in Senegal. I tried to be accredited, as my British colleague did also try, to be accredited to both and to make visits to Mali, basing in Senegal, but the Mali government would have none of that. They would have nobody connected to Senegal make a trip to their territory. So I remained in Senegal.

Q: How did the appointment itself come about?

VILLARD: The appointment came about through Loy Henderson, who at that time was Under Secretary for Administration. He called me up one day in Geneva and pointed out the fact that I had consistently declined several appointments as ambassador and it was high time I accepted an appointment as such. He said, "I think that it would be well for you to take the appointment to the Mali Federation. It is the best post among the new African countries in which the Department is setting up embassies." These were the former French African colonies which had been made independent by General de Gaulle. Henderson was engaged personally on a trip through Africa setting up the sites for new embassies everywhere. So I accepted this new post.

Q: This was in fact the second new nation that you were envoy to.

VILLARD: Yes indeed.

Q: What was the situation as far as our interests in Africa and specifically in Senegal and Mauritania at that time?

VILLARD: There were very few American interests as such except that Dakar had been, during the war, one of our listening posts and its strategic value was very great. Trade between the United States and Senegal was minimal, but the relations were chiefly, in my case, on a personal level with the president, Leopold Senghor. He was a celebrated African poet in his own right. Educated in France, a teacher of French--he spoke better French than the French--under whom it was an inspiration to carry on. Our discussions were mainly of a general character. It was mostly connected with the status of the Negro in America and our domestic policies.

Q: How was your staff?

VILLARD: The staff at Dakar was consistently a good staff. Previous to it becoming an embassy it was a consulate general and as a fairly large office it had a thoroughly qualified staff.

Q: So upgrading to an embassy was not as difficult as setting up a brand-new embassy where there had been no representation at all?

VILLARD: The transition was easy, on the other hand, being also accredited to Mauritania, I made a trip to Nouakchott, the capital, also recently independent, and it was very primitive indeed. There was no embassy of any kind. I was taken out to a tract of land on the edge of the capital and shown the site of the future American embassy. The horizon was limitless.

Q: Did you supervise the building of an embassy and assign people there?

VILLARD: No, this was to come later. Relations were established with the Prime Minister and head of government at that time, a very able, French-trained, official with a French wife to whom I presented my credentials. It was too early to construct an embassy and establish a staff in place. Our relations were conducted at long distance from Dakar.

STEPHEN LOW
Labor Officer / Political Officer
Dakar (1960-1963)

Ambassador Stephen Low was born in Ohio in 1927. He received his bachelor's degree from Yale, and his master's and doctorate from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. In addition to Nigeria, Ambassador Low served in Uganda, Senegal, and Zambia. He was interviewed by Professor I.W. Zartman in 1988.

LOW: We went to Dakar, Senegal. The position was called labor officer. We then had two boys. The third was born while we were there. Within a week of getting there a telegram arrived saying we had been transferred to Abidjan because the under secretary for administration, Loy Henderson, who had just completed a trip to Africa decided that the labor function should be moved to Abidjan. This was the famous trip to decide what U.S. representation in Africa should be. Henderson recommended, quite correctly, that we needed representation in every country. It didn't seem to me that it made sense to move the labor function to Abidjan. By far the more dynamic labor elements were in Senegal. As the old capital of French West Africa Dakar was more influential and better situated transportationwise than Abidjan. Besides, we were there and not anxious to move again. So, we appealed the directive and got it reversed. We stayed in Dakar, from which I operated, but I only remained in the labor function for a year and a half. This would have been in 1960 and 1961. Sometime in 1962, a new ambassador was appointed to replace Henry Villard who had been relieved because of frictions which developed during a visit by Vice President Lyndon Johnson, largely related to the overweening attitudes of his wife. To my great surprise, his replacement turned out to be Phil Kaiser, who had been my professor for the labor training course and a good friend. He also had been slightly skeptical of the new interest in Africa. As soon as the embassy political officer position became vacant a few months

later, he got me transferred out of labor affairs, which he considered a dead end in the career, to the political job and we got a new labor officer.

Q: Just to complete this, you stayed in Dakar until when?

LOW: 1963. I had been assigned to the Federation du Mali, a fragile federal union of the former Senegal and Mali. The president was the Malian leader, Modibo Keita, and the prime minister was the Senegalese leader, Leopold Sedar Senghor. But the experiment broke up even before we arrived. I traveled a great deal during this assignment - for the first year and a half through out French-speaking West Africa (except Guinea where there was a separate labor officer) and then after that through the three countries to which I was assigned as political officer.

Q: Let's talk about the labor side first. How did you operate there? How did one get started?

LOW: You got to know the labor leaders. My attention went to workers organizations rather than industrial relations or questions of manpower. It was the politics that was important. I tried to get to know and explain to Washington who the leaders in each country were and what their role in society was. So, there was a lot to do. It was a very rewarding time.

Q: Did the employers occupy much of a role or was the labor movement almost beyond that?

LOW: The labor movements were essentially political organizations created to represent African aspirations. They did some collective bargaining, but their focus was much more on social and political conditions of the African population.

Q: Did you see these labor movements going in any direction? Were we concerned about finding a Red under ever bed?

LOW: No. We were concerned with taking them for what they were, political organizations, and getting to know the people and seeing how they related to the power structure in each of the countries. I had a pretty free hand to do what I wanted; to see and report on what I thought was important; and to set up the programs I thought could be useful and important in terms of our understanding of African dynamics and their understanding of U.S. issues and policies. The process, it seemed would inevitably serve to increase our influence. I don't think I ever got any instructions from Washington on what to do. You just found your own way. And Washington seemed to be pleased with the results.

Q: Was Sekou Toure there?

LOW: He was in Guinea. As soon as he became president, the labor movement there was turned into an instrument of government. That was true in other countries too but not to such an exclusive degree. In other countries, like Senegal, the political parties attempted to assimilate the unions and exercised the control.

Q: Who were the leaders that you dealt with?

LOW: My dealings were on the level of trade union leaders. Senghor in Senegal and Houphouet Boigny in Abidjan were way above the level I was in contact with.

Q: Both Senghor and Houphouet Boigny had very solid French credentials. Did that show a reflection into the labor movement and their relationship or not?

LOW: The French certainly were suspicious of my contacts with the labor movement. Every once in a while, our embassy would receive an informal inquiry or even a note from the foreign ministry suggesting I limit my activities and geographic travel. On one occasion, I had a rather bad automobile accident way out in the "bush" near the Senegal River. The vibrations set up by an absolutely straight, but corduroy dirt road broke the front axle of the jeep station wagon I was riding in. The vehicle rolled over a couple of times and I got quite a cut on my head. The foreign ministry said that if I had informed them where I was going, the accident might not have occurred. Privately, they told us that their reaction was generated by some of our French friends. But for the most part, they pretty well let me alone and we had no serious problems. I suspect my activities were a great deal more innocent than they imagined.

Q: When you became a political officer, your broad representation was cut down to one country, wasn't it?

LOW: No, I had responsibility for political reporting in Senegal, The Gambia, and Portuguese Guinea which represented the three African colonial traditions: Portuguese Guinea, British Gambia, and French Senegal. I found it an interesting opportunity to compare the long-term differences between those very different colonial systems. And very different they were. I was always impressed with the profound difference between the French and British racial and political attitudes towards Africa. The French saw no inherent difference between Africans and Europeans, but the only civilization of value was that which existed between the Seine and the Marne. As a result, the French strictly prohibited Romanization of the African languages ("dialects"). The British, on the other hand saw a profound difference between the African and European, and believed that Africans should be trained to live as a part of African society. They therefore did nothing to interfere with the missionary's zeal to Romanize African languages and provide as quickly as possible African language bibles. In French Africa a person could only be literate in French, schools only taught French, and the number of literate Africans was small, perhaps not much more than 10 percent, but they were very good. As everyone knew, Senghor had been assigned the job of correcting the French of the 4th French Republic's constitution. While in British Africa, people quickly became literate in the vernaculars, a literature grew up and newspapers flourished. Each approach had its arrogance and its realism. The Portuguese tended towards the French approach and a few Africans, or often mixed bloods, attained high levels of (Portuguese) education.

HELEN C. (SUE) LOW
Spouse of Labor Officer / Political Officer
Dakar (1960-1963)

Sue Carpenter Low was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She received her BA from Denison University, her master's from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, second bachelor's and master's degrees from Oxford University and her PhD from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1952. She married Stephen Low in 1954 and is the mother of three children. She was interviewed by Jewell Fenzi in 1987.

Q: Did you travel, as we did, with all of your food, all of your water, spare tires, all your gasoline, your servants, your kerosene lanterns? I mean we were self-sufficient when we set out. Did you have to do that, too?

LOW: Not quite to the extent that you describe it. There were occasions when we ran out of petrol and had to coast down through the twilight among the papyrus swamps. Or found ourselves grateful when offered a roasted ear of what under other circumstances would have seemed very tough corn. But what I remember most are the highlight events -- a trip north along a jeep track to the Nile where it spreads out below Murchison Falls, the elephant grass trembling as two giants tussled and the victor then turned to flap his ears warningly at us. Or, on another occasion, watching above the elephant grass a reassuring line of approaching bundles, just as we had concluded that we were irretrievably lost.

But the world immediately surrounding us was equally colorful and exotic. When you ask someone about his society and culture and he starts talking about clans and totems and their symbolic significance, one soon gets lost since it is so foreign to our experience. There was a remarkable American woman living in Kampala, setting up YWCA programs in the Kiganda villages. Not having anyone with whom I could leave our son for any length of time, I could go with her Muganda assistant very seldom but the contact with village life gained there formed an important part of my impression of the country. Over the years I have found that getting a feel for the life of the women, rural and urban, traditional and modern, professional and housewife, is the surest way to get below the surface.

After leaving Uganda and a brief interval in Washington where Steve trained to serve as a labor attaché, we went to Dakar just as it was adjusting to being the capital of a small country rather than of a vast region. That tour provided fascinating contrasts between East Africa and West, English and French, colonial and independent.

Q: So Senegal was independent when you got there?

LOW: It became independent just before we arrived and celebrated the event a few months later when the weather was better. Our three years there were mostly a blur for me since we brought two small children with us and a third was born there. As in Uganda I didn't have adequate help so most of my energy went into just holding things together. We did do a fair amount of entertaining however.

Q: Part of that time we were in Sierra Leone when you were in Senegal -- '62 and '63.

LOW: We were in Dakar from late '60 to late '63. That was the first place where I had any contact with the way an American diplomatic community functioned. (I had been the only spouse in Kampala and in the social dimension we had improvised in that atypical situation.)

Q: But really, what a wonderful way to start a career with all that responsibility and...

LOW: It was a fun way to start.

Q: ...and to make your own decisions in many, many instances.

LOW: The social situation was so different from any existing model that guidelines tailored for other places would hardly have applied.

Q: Do you remember Susan McClintock, the first career counselor in FLO with Janet Lloyd?

LOW: I've met Susan. I don't know her well.

Q: She and her husband, David, went to Yemen with a baby, and the mission was terribly understaffed, and so Susan just put the baby in a basket, and brought the baby into the Embassy, and worked side by side with David. She said really, in retrospect, those were the happiest Foreign Service days she had.

LOW: One can look back on each tour and find highlights. But of all our posts, Brasilia was the one we enjoyed most.

In Senegal the French were pulling out just as we arrived. The U.S. had had a consulate general there long before independence when Dakar was capital of all French West Africa. It was a very cosmopolitan place with some highly educated and widely traveled Senegalese. As a post Dakar was dramatically different from Kampala; it was a fully functioning metropolis with a well established diplomatic corps.

Q: Well yes, it was a great treat. We used to fight in Freetown for an opportunity to come up to Dakar because it was much more sophisticated than the life we were leading.

LOW: One of the projects I found most interesting, to the extent that I had time to get involved in things, was a community center not far from us, run by the French Council of Churches. The center did not proselytize in that entirely Muslim country but was trying to serve a social role. One of their programs was designed to help raise the horizons of wives of people who had moved abruptly from being minor functionaries to assuming roles of some importance. Sometimes I went with the center staff to a nearby fishing village where the women spoke only Wolof. The challenge for all of us, the French women as well as me, was trying to communicate, to transmit basic ideas about hygiene and diet and to give them some new household skills. I remember vividly the frustration of trying to demonstrate without words how a foot-treadle sewing machine functions. And the time when the day's program was to bake a pound cake, each participant taking a turn at beating in the eggs with great gusto. When the oven was lit, a horde

of cockroaches ran out in all directions, but later the fragrant cake that emerged just as the head of the household returned home won a reprieve for the oven which he had threatened to discard.

There was nothing particularly distinctive about the entertaining we did in Dakar except that, as our house was small, we tried to plan outside events. During the rainy season we sometimes had to resort to all sorts of improvisations, like roasting the mechoui (lamb and couscous) under an overhanging roof -- and eating it there, too.

Senegal was a three year tour. In those days we did not get back to the U.S. during that entire period. As there were no satellites to make intercontinental phone communication possible, we felt quite cut off from home even though the pouch did bring letters.

Q: I arrived home 35 pounds underweight.

LOW: Our youngest son and I returned home with amoebic dysentery. What I found most difficult was the lack of adequate medical care. With three little boys, one of them born there, it was a constant concern.

Of course, we all took anti-malarials regularly but the children often had high fever and there was no one to turn to for help or diagnosis. The only time I felt a little more relaxed about a fever was when it turned out to be chicken pox -- at least I knew what the problem was!

Q: My children went away to school the next two years. They were there for 14 months. Then the school said they couldn't take them anymore so all of us at the Embassy had to send these small children away to school because that was the way the British did. I can remember going to Abidjan and being so hurt that here were my colleagues in the Cote d'Ivoire with their children with them because there was an adequate French school. And then there mine were away in Switzerland.

LOW: The American children at our mission in Dakar found it very difficult to latch onto the French system. I remember one nine-year-old boy who came home from school regularly in the late afternoon, his satchel loaded with books. He studied from then until bedtime to avoid the need to repeat the year's curriculum. By contrast, our eldest son, who was three and a half when we arrived, went first to a Jardin d'Infants and then to first grade in the public school in our neighborhood. There were four entering classes, three for Wolof-speaking children who covered the year's work in two years and then would no longer use Wolof. Half of the fourth group were French children; half were African children who spoke French at home -- and this one little American boy.

The first day of class these five-year-olds took their pens, dipped them in ink, and wrote "ecureuil" in cursive style!

It was not an easy time for our schoolboy. That made it a post with its own special hardships and difficulties. And I began to appreciate how hard it can be for our Foreign Service children to move around so much.

Q: But no. I think that is a very important subject because I'm astonished that my children turned out as well as they did considering the life that they led. Really. How many languages and how many continents! I have them written down somewhere -- three languages, 13 schools, three or four continents. I forget exactly.

LOW: Is there anything else that you want to focus on in Senegal? Or shall we go on to...

Q: I was trying to think back, how did I fill my days in Sierra Leone? I used to haunt the little shops that the traders have. I noticed that you have a lovely Bambara carving from Mali. I started collecting and I collected tie-dyed cloth.

LOW: My problem has always been how to find enough hours to do the absolutely essential things. Wherever we are or whatever we're doing, it seems to be that way. When I came home from the clinic with our third new-born son, I didn't have anyone at all to help with the children. The person I thought I had lined up didn't work out. Fortunately I did have someone helping in the kitchen but I was taking care of these three small children myself -- from washing diapers on. And, as you know, houses and systems in Africa aren't set up for doing things oneself.

Q: Was help that difficult in Senegal?

LOW: At that time it was quite difficult.

Q: We did have servants who had worked for the British.

LOW: Our cook was good and that worked well.

Back to the mission itself. At the time we arrived, we had a career Ambassador, Henry Villard. Shortly afterward, Vice President Johnson came for the Senegalese independence ceremonies. That was a traumatic experience, handling his intricate program with the mission's limited facilities. Villard was succeeded by a political appointee, Phil Kaiser, a very capable person who has subsequently served with distinction in many posts. His wife Hannah was marvelous but was learning the ropes rather than serving as a role model for how the social side of diplomatic life should be run. Fortunately we did have some senior wives who were very helpful and very conscientious about the American diplomatic community.

Q: Which cone was your husband in? Political?

LOW: When we first came to Senegal, after ten months of training in Washington, he was assigned as labor attaché for what had been French West Africa, except for Guinea and Mali. Later he became political officer for Senegal, Mauritania, the Gambia, and Portuguese Guinea -- an interesting quartet. He traveled a great deal but we went with him only on rare holidays. It wasn't an easy place to explore with small children.

PHILLIP M. KAISER

**Ambassador
Senegal (1961-1964)**

Phillip M. Kaiser was born in New York City in 1913. He received his bachelor's degree in 1935 and then went on to study as a Rhodes Scholar at Balliol College at Oxford University. In Washington D.C. he served many positions in the State department and also served as the Special Assistant to the Governor of New York, Averill Harriman. He has had ambassadorships to Senegal and Mauritania, Hungary, and Austria, as well as different positions in London. Ambassador Kaiser was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in May 2005.

Q: Then you came back to Washington.

KAISER: I taught at the School of International Service in American University and served as the Director of its International Labor Training Program. I gave a course on Labor and International Affairs for a couple of years before I went off to be Kennedy's Ambassador to Senegal and also Mauritania. It's interesting that when I asked Chet Bowles, "Why does Kennedy want me to go there?"

Q: Chet Bowles was the Under Secretary [of State].

KAISER: The Under Secretary who was handling these assignments for Kennedy. He said, "Why Senegal? The President of Senegal, Senghor, a very remarkable man, is an old French Socialist. His political ideas were shaped by the French Socialist Party and his heroes were Jean Jaures and Leon Blum. This is a world with which you are familiar; you know French; and we think that combination will prove to be a valuable asset in your dealings with him." And so it turned out to be.

Q: Well, Kennedy was elected and took office in January '61. How did that affect you?

KAISER: He asked me to become ambassador, I guess later that year. I was there from '61 to '64. I was there for three years. Senegal.

Q: This was of course a time when there was a great deal of optimism about Africa, you know, new winds were blowing.

KAISER: That's right. All these colonial areas were becoming independent.

Q: When you arrived here, what was the situation there?

KAISER: The situation was that originally there was an attempt to form a union between Senegal and Mali and that broke apart very dramatically the year before I got there. Senghor was a remarkable character. The president of Senegal. He had integrated his position very effectively and he was the darling of the French people, very popular in France. He had been a very successful member of the national assembly and a member of the French government. He'd been secretary of state and in one or two cabinet posts. They seemed to be the most stable of the

African countries. They weren't that stable because Senghor had a problem with his prime minister who was very left wing. Senghor was a moderate socialist. When I asked Chet Bowles, "Why do you want to send me to Senegal?" He said, "This fellow that runs the country, Senghor, he's a Leon Blum socialist and that's a world few people know better than you." And we did hit it off.

Q: Where was the prime minister coming from? Was he coming out of the Marxist camp?

KAISER: Very left wing, a big political crisis where he tried to overthrow Senghor and Senghor outsmarted him. I was kind of in the middle of the crisis, actually.

Q: How did you get in the middle?

KAISER: In terms of trying to disentangle it what was going on and trying to find out before the issue was settled. I kept in close touch with the French ambassador. I had a whole gang of technical advisors to the various departments. The Senegalese government, there was a French *conseille technique* in practically every ministry. They knew what the hell was going on. He was captured. The French were very good to him. The Senegalese army supported the president, Senghor, captured and arrested the prime minister and one or two of his top people. He was sentenced to life imprisonment and shipped to another part of the country. It was very tense in that 48-hour period.

Q: Particularly in those early years, you must have felt you were in a difficult position because I'm sure the French were jealous as hell of their control and the Americans are very suspicious of what they were trying to do all throughout their.

KAISER: A very good point. My last instruction from Dean Rusk. Rusk was a great friend and we worked very closely together in the Truman administration. He said, "We don't want to displace the French. On the contrary, we want the French to do a good job and to keep these characters, keep these people, as the head of the left wing. Don't try to displace the French." Did I ever tell you this? About the Israeli specialist in Africa?

Q: No.

KAISER: Shortly before I was leaving, I had already been briefed, to Africa, the Israeli ambassador, originally English, Abe Harmon, a very nice guy, called me up, a good friend. He said, "Look, Phil, I know you've been briefed and so on, but our leading expert on Africa who spent the last five years in Africa, Ehud Avriel, is in Washington. It would do you no harm to spend an hour or so with him." Two things I remember. He said, "Be very careful in how you deal with the French community." There were about 35,000 French in Dakar. "It's really a love hate relationship between the Senegalese and the French. If the Senegalese think you're too close to the French you are going to pay dearly for that. On the other hand, you have to develop working relationships with the French." Then he said something to me that I try to tell every other person I've known who is going out to be ambassador. He said to me, "The American ambassador has no identity problem. Don't go around trying to show what a big shot you are and so on and so forth." A wonderful line, don't you agree, Stu?

Q: Oh, absolutely. Too many people feel that they're doing their job as if they're sort of campaigning out in the field. It has nothing to do with the job.

KAISER: I love that line. "The American ambassador has no identity problem." I profited a great deal from that advice.

Q: We've just gotten you to Senegal in 1961. We've talked a little bit about your trying to walk the line between the French community and the Senegalese community and not to annoy either of them, but then we'll talk about what happened while you were there and various things that occurred during that time.

KAISER: Just to put the end on this, I developed a very good relationship with the French ambassador, Lucien Paye, who was a very distinguished guy, a lovely guy. We were neighbors, too. He had been, that was a very complimentary point to the Senegalese, rector of the University of Dakar and then had been minister of education back in France. Then, appointed ambassador to Senegal. Subsequently, after I left Senegal, he was the first Western ambassador to come to China. He was a very impressive character and we became very good friends.

At the height of that crisis between the prime minister and the president I walked about four or five blocks away from our embassy to see him. The crisis had not been resolved yet and I wanted to get his take. While he's talking to me, his chief of intelligence walked in and I wanted to get up. He said, "No, stay. There are no secrets between you and me." The guy paused and said, "They've got Senghor trapped between the 10th floor and 8th floor," or whatever it was. He left and he came back and then he corrected himself. It made me a little dubious about how reliable he was, but in any case, this was the evidence that the game was practically over. He was about to be taken. He was taken and put into the VIP prison in the VIP house, visitors house, which bordered my residence, the ambassador's residence. The house was surrounded by military people in the hot sun and some of the military people moved into my garden in order to get relief from the sun. When I came back to the residence my two young sons said, "Father, that's illegal, that's American property and they shouldn't be there." They were very insistent. I had to call the chief of staff who was a friend of mine, Senegalese and said, "Will you please get your soldiers off my property?" In the Senegal experience, the big crisis was the Cuban missile crisis.

Q: Today is the 8th of July, 2005. First place, before we move to the Cuban missile crisis, could you talk about your relationship with Senghor?

KAISER: Two things he liked. First of all he knew that I had a personal relationship with Kennedy. Stu, I should make this point before I go any further, Kennedy was the president, first of all, who picked ambassadors who had substantive reason for being picked for those posts. He was the only president in recent times who did not sell ambassadorships. In other words, he appointed non-career people, and all the non-career people with one exception were people who were experts in the countries to which they were assigned. Japan, Reischauer; Galbraith in India; Lincoln Gordon in Brazil.

Q: Even career; my ambassador in Yugoslavia was George Kennan.

KAISER: Kennan and David Bruce were technically non-career.

Q: They had more ambassadorships than any career ambassador and important ambassadorships.

KAISER: Who was the general he appointed in Paris?

Q: Oh, yes, Gavin.

KAISER: He figured, the kind of guy to deal with de Gaulle.

Q: Didn't work out too well, but the idea was.

KAISER: All over the place. I think I told you, when I asked Chet Bowles who was at that time handling ambassadorial appointments, Bowles said, "Well, this fellow Senghor is brilliant, but his politics is essentially the politics of the Leon Blum socialists," (Blum was one of his heroes) "and that's a world with which you are utterly familiar." At that time I was a professor, see, and indeed, in his response to my credentials he made a big thing about the academic and my interest.

Q: He was a professor.

KAISER: It turned out to be the case. We got along extremely well. My French was adequate. It wasn't as good as, very few people had French as good as his French, but we hit it off from the very beginning. I was always uninhibited in my dealings with him. To supplement that generalization, on one or two occasions, I walked in to him and said, "Mr. President; I'm going to ask President Kennedy to recall me." "What do you mean?" "Well, you said so and so and I can't, I find that very difficult for an American ambassador to accept as a reasonable position vis-à-vis the United States." We'd talk about it, I talked him out of it and I was always accessible. I never had any problem with him. Any time I wanted to see him I saw him. At one stage he said to me, "Will you do me a favor? Every now and then, would you go and see the foreign minister because his nose is out of joint because you see me all the time and don't see him."

To go way, way ahead, when I was replaced and I told him I was going to leave, he made all the right motions - how sorry, too bad you're going - and then I told him I was going to be replaced by Mercer Cook who is your close friend, a professor at Howard, who translated several of his books into English. "Well," he said "Mercer Cook is a lovely man and he's my good friend, and I accept the compliment, but tell me frankly, Mr. Ambassador, does he know the Kennedys as well as you know them?" I had as easy relationship as any ambassador could hope to have with the head of the government he's accredited to.

Q: Did Senghor have the trait that's so apparent today and has been apparent for a long time, but this is way back, of the French intellectuals and the disdain for the United States?

KAISER: No. He had a very good, his attitude, well, look, to answer your question, he translated our leading black poet into French.

Q: Langston Hughes?

KAISER: Langston Hughes. When he came here, the question came as who to invite to the presidential lunch and the name Langston Hughes came up. Somebody said, "Well, he's pretty left wing," and Kennedy got furious. Anybody raising any question about Langston Hughes. Of course he was invited to the lunch. He had a tremendous admiration for Kennedy and so that shaped his attitude toward the United States and he knew the United States. He had visited here. One of his best poems, what the hell is it called, is about Harlem, I think. He wrote some poems about the American blacks..

I have to tell you one other story. I gave a long pitch once about Thomas Jefferson and what he meant, what he represented if you want to understand America, one of the things you have to appreciate was an understanding of Thomas Jefferson. He said, "Could you get me a book on the life of Jefferson in French?" I called the embassy in Paris and said, "Surely we have a translation of one of the well known biographies of Jefferson." They sent me the book and it has an introduction by Marshall. I don't remember the name. He was hated by all the African blacks. He was a right wing French general, imperialist general. I guess what they thought was it was more readable. It was stupid. I didn't give him the book because once he saw the introduction I was afraid he'd say, "What kind of stuff is Kaiser trying to sell me?" So, I never gave him the book.

Q: For the historical record, you better explain what the Cuban missile crisis was and then down in Senegal what happened.

KAISER: The missile crisis was of course, put very simply, we discovered that the Russians had put in place missiles in Cuba.

Q: This is in October of 1962.

KAISER: They could easily reach the United States. The problem was to get those missiles, those nuclear missiles, out of there. One of the first things Kennedy did was he laid a blockage around the country, around Cuba. Having done that, the people in Washington realized that the only way that the blockade can be broken was by airplane from Moscow to Havana. But in order to do so, they weren't these long range planes at that time, they had to stop and refuel in West Africa. And the best airport by a country mile, was in Dakar, the capital of Senegal.

Q: We'd used it during World War II. It was our major filtering point of supplies for Africa.

KAISER: That's right. Anytime Roosevelt came he stopped off to resupply there. So, I got communication from Washington with the text of the president's speech that he was going to deliver to the American people that night. The situation in Cuba and what he was going to do about it. Very interesting. It said, "Show Senghor the speech and tell him how important it is that Dakar deny Soviet use of airplanes en route to Havana." I immediately called his top aide and said I had to come over immediately. He said, "I might as well tell you this, Ellender is in town."

Q: He was a senator from Louisiana. He just traveled everywhere.

KAISER: He was looking to pick up information to cut the aid and information programs in Africa. I had a date with the president. Ellender said he was coming. I went to see Senghor and I said to him in French, "He's a racist, he's a reactionary, but he is chairman of the committee on appropriations." Senghor said, "Excellence, je comprends," ("I understand"). That became one of the great lines of the diplomatic corps in Dakar because I told them the story. He said, "Why don't you come a half-hour before. He's coming in an hour." He could read English and he said, "Oh, c'est très sérieux, n'est-ce pas?" ("it's very serious isn't it?"). I said yes, and I told him. What had happened was that Sekou Toure, that scoundrel, Guinean, of all the left wingers and later on killed a dozen.

Q: Oh, he had a horrible regime.

KAISER: And he, at that particular moment, was enamored with Kennedy and he had sent word to the airport. His airport was as primitive as can be. I used that to begin with. I said, "Your friend Kennedy would find it very difficult to understand if Sekou Toure has denied the Soviet's use and you have not done so. I put it entirely on the personal Kennedy basis. He said to me, the left wing prime minister, the communist leader of the party, he said, "Give me a memorandum tomorrow morning, or have one of your aides hand me a memorandum giving me the whole background on the communist meeting, and be sure you include in the memorandum the fact that Sekou Toure has denied his airport." I made that commitment.

But this is a sort of a footnote. Ellender came in and I stayed with him. Unprovoked, unsolicited, said, "There's been some business about Cuba lately" and so on, and he downplayed the whole thing. I sat there, and Senghor handled him beautifully, superbly in every possible way, charmed the pants off him. On the way out, Ellender said to me, "Are you sure this man is all black?" I said, "Well you saw him didn't you?" He said, "He must have some white blood in him. He's too intelligent."

So we went back and we got this memorandum prepared all in French, every officer spoke good French, some better. I got Steve Low who was the political officer to deliver the memorandum at 8:00 the following morning. Late that morning I got word that they were going to deny the use of the airport to the Soviets. My little contribution.

Q: Well, but of course this was a key place. No doubt about it.

KAISER: It's a wonderful example, too, of president to president.

Q: Oh, yes.

KAISER: He had visited Washington before. In effect what I did, Stu, was call a spade a spade. He came through this to your friend Kennedy.

Q: As a footnote, Ellender was a big proponent of sugar quotas. I don't know if he was corrupt or not, but I suspect he was, but he made a point of traveling all over. He wanted to get his passport stamped with every country. He came to Yugoslavia when I was there and I remember we had to work with the I think I was the Romanians to get him - he just wanted to go in and out of the place just to get his passport stamped. He would write long accounts of his travels and all.

KAISER: He liked Russia. He was favorably disposed in some ways to the Soviet Union. It was very interesting this reactionary from Louisiana. I knew him because he was on the appropriations committee when I was the assistant secretary of labor. I had to appear before him to get my budget.

Q: Well, did you have problems with the prime minister? Did he belong to the anti-capitalist, anti-American camp or not?

KAISER: I didn't see him very often. It's interesting. I got Food for Peace for them, and I dealt with him on that, the practical side. It generated enough currency to build several schools and to build a major road link about 25 miles between the main vegetable producing area and the port of Dakar for export to France. Of course that was all plus positive. I also got him, the army (our army) in France made available some very good road building equipment. They were replacing it with more modern. They cabled me inquiring whether Senegal would like to have this very good, still effective, road building equipment. In the first instance I went to see the prime minister. He was a little leery. He thought I was trying to pawn off some useless secondhand stuff. Then to my great surprise, he got back and he said, "We'd love to have it." It turned out to be very valuable and very useful. The first stretch of building we had a ceremony.

They not only did it, but it got in the newspapers, a big front-page story, and we built some very good roads. It was a big plus. I can't say I had a, he was not an easy character. Remember he tried to remove Senghor in the rebellion. He and his minister of the interior. I think we talked about that before. I had dinner one night, the French ambassador, which was a great compliment really, Mendes-France was visiting and he was very popular in France because he was the prime minister and also was very liberal about North Africa. He was a very attractive character. That was the only time I saw him. It was just the French ambassador and the prime minister, Mendes-France, and me. I had a working relationship with him, but didn't have the intimacy that I had with Senghor.

Q: During the Cuban missile crisis, the French gave us, through General de Gaulle very strong support. Did the French ambassador wade in there or not?

KAISER: I don't know. I never checked that out. Maybe de Gaulle waded in after Acheson saw him.

Q: Yes, a very well known story.

KAISER: A great story. "Never mind the pictures, if Kennedy says this is good enough for me." I can't I don't know whether there was any other price they put on it. I do know we prepared the

memo and we gave it to him. Later that morning he called me and he said “You can tell Washington I won’t allow the Russians to use the airport.”

Q: While you were there was the Peace Corps in Senegal?

KAISER: I signed the deal on it.

Q: How did that work out?

KAISER: It worked out very well. When I signed the deal with Senghor, he said to me “You are not going to keep those young people here all through the hot season?” I said, “Sure they’re here for a couple of.” He said, “Come on, that’s much too cruel.” He said, “When I was a schoolboy my parents used to take me to France to cool off.” Actually the schools in Senegal were closed from June to November, that was the bad period. I said, “Well, Mr. President, our American young people are very tough. They’re survivors.” Sergeant Shriver came.

Q: Kennedy’s brother-in-law.

KAISER: He’s not in good shape now. I made it my business to visit every Peace Corps guy. The weekend before they left Senegal I went up in the northern part of the country to see the last of the Peace Corps. One or two of them got sick and my wife took them into the, I was worried they were all going to get sick, because she took them into the residence and nursed them back to health. It was a successful program.

Q: How about AID? How did that work?

KAISER: We did pretty well. Food for Peace was the main source, but we gave some additional aid as well and Kennedy, - when he saw Senghor I think I mentioned that before, Stu, - when he saw Senghor in Washington he opened up by saying, “I need your advice. Nkrumah is asking for a big chunk of aid to exploit these bauxite mines.” By this time Nkrumah was flirting with Beijing and Moscow. “If I give him this aid,” Kennedy said, “I won’t be able to give you guys as much aid as you would like.” I’ll never forget it. Very touching. He said, “Monsieur President, j’ais connez tres bien. [He had need of a good psychiatrist].”

He went on to explain how he sabotaged - Senghor, when he visited Ghana - he saw to it that he didn’t get to the scheduled meeting of the students on time. Then he said to Kennedy, “You’ve got to give it to him. Your policy is, if you’re sure he’s genuinely neutral, you’ve got to give it to him otherwise I and my colleagues in Africa will never understand.” We did very well. I went back, that’s right, we cut the aid and the State Department said “If you want to fight about this to get the cut back, come to Washington and talk to the AID people.” So I had a meeting with the AID people. I guess it was [Bell] and his African guy. I made some general remark about Africa and this guy, I remember this very well, he tried to put me down. “What do you know about Africa and the AID situation?” I said, “I don’t know about the AID situation in all of Africa, but I know more about the situation in Senegal and Mauritania than you know about this situation and I’m here to talk about what we need in Senegal and Mauritania.” That shut him up and I think I got my aid restored.

Q: You mentioned a story about Roosevelt in Dakar.

KAISER: On one occasion he was invited to The Gambia, which was British territory. That was part of my domain. There was a governor there. The governor invited him to take a trip on his yacht. There is a river there. And he went along. He picked up a fever. He never recovered from that fever. That fever plagued him to the end of his life. I was aware of this story at this time and when I called on the governor, which I did a couple of times a year, he would always invite me to take a few days down the river on his yacht, and I always managed to have an excuse not to go so I never went down there.

Q: You left in 1964. How did the assassination of President Kennedy hit Senegal?

KAISER: Terrible, just terrible. I was on home leave and I got word that I better cut it short. The president felt that I ought to be there. Senghor didn't come to the funeral. I thought he was going to come, but he didn't. But he invited me and my wife to a private dinner in the presidential palace. That had never happened. I never did that before. Just the two of us. We talked about Kennedy and that's when he made his statement, "We got our independence 20 years too soon.

I think I told you I got worms, I got dysentery and I got TB in Africa.

Q: Oh boy. When you left in 1964 it was still the high time for Africa. Mennen Williams was the Assistant Secretary and there seemed to be a group of what I call true believers in Africa as the wave of the future. But there were a good number of professionals, it was still early days, but having considerable doubts about whither Africa. How did you feel?

KAISER: That's a good question. I had a very positive feeling not necessarily about Africa in general, but about Senegal. I had this whole Mauritania experience. We should go into that, too. I was ambassador to Mauritania, too.

I had a positive feeling because of Senghor, because of the level of Senegalese I'd met. There were some very extraordinary corps of young Senegalese who had been educated in Africa. There were some very competent people in the government. Senegal was the pet of France. I had a really, I shouldn't say distorted, but I had a feeling about Africa based mainly on Senegal, quite different from Mauritania, which was very positive and hopeful and peaceful. They had a possible coup, but they had a level of competence in their top people which was quite exceptional compared to other African countries. Africa as a whole, it was Nkrumah. He came to visit Senegal, I won't tell you about that. I was most unimpressed by him. There was Ghana, which at that time was dubious. There was South Africa, which was a very bad situation. East Africa had all kinds of problems. It exploded. Amin was prime minister of Uganda. In other words, the picture was not entirely charming all over Africa. On the contrary. I guess what I'm saying is that Senegal was an exception, proved to be an exception. It was the first country to have entirely free elections and for 30 years, 40 years there was, other than that one crisis, no political crisis. This was after the CIA guy briefing me in 1961 said to me, in front of Allen Dulles by the way, "Ambassador, Senghor will be out in six months." Senghor left in 1980 I think. That was a pretty good assessment, wasn't it? (Laughs)

Q: What about your relations with G. Mennen Williams, Soapy Williams?

KAISER: It was very good. Poor Soapy, he made very little impression in Washington. As a consequence, he came to Africa regularly. He must have visited Africa at least four, possibly five or six times. And the last time, Stu, was the weekend before I was leaving Senegal permanently. He came to call on me. I was packing up.

Q: Not exactly a good time. Did you get the feeling from him that he had an overly rosy view of Africa?

KAISER: It was a positive view. He loved taking these trips as I've just indicated because he got attention. He was not very effective. He wanted me to come back and become a deputy assistant secretary and the president asked me about it, Kennedy. I said I wasn't interested. He said, "I appreciate the fact that you're not interested."

An interesting thing was the way Mokhtar and Senghor used to talk to me about each other.

Q: Were you supposed to carry messages back and forth?

KAISER: They just sort of complained about each other. It is called the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and it's the only Islamic country that - except for Egypt and Jordan, they recognize Israel, too -

KAISER: Mauritania is a big chunk of land bigger than Texas in square miles. A large part of it is desert. The least of the West African countries borders on its north of Senegal divided by the Senegalese River and interestingly enough the country, the blacks in that area divided between Senegal and Mauritania. The blacks in Mauritania were intellectually the dominant group. Mauritania is a country of the Moors, who were Arab, but kind of special Arab. This was a source of great tension, the fact that French was the official language of the government and the Moors all spoke Arabic. Because the blacks in that region were relatively well educated, they held the majority of the positions in the civil service in the government which is the major source of employment and the cause of great resentment on the part of the dominant sector of the population. In fact, later on, I talked to the president about the problem, the tension between the two groups on some occasions, but he was overly relaxed about it and later on after I left, several years after, there were great riots. There were a lot of casualties. Arabic became the official language of the country.

HANNAH GREELEY KAISER
Spouse of Ambassador
Senegal (1961-1964)

Hannah Greeley Kaiser was born in Simsbury, Connecticut in 1913. She studied social services at the University of Wisconsin and at the University of Chicago

and did a Business Program at Radcliffe. Hannah and Phillip Kaiser married in 1939. Mrs. Kaiser has served as wife of the ambassador to Senegal, Hungary, and Austria (and as wife of) the Deputy Chief of Mission in London. She was interviewed by Jewell Fenzi on December 4, 1987.

Q: Today, I want to concentrate on her years in Senegal, one of the new countries in the early nineteen sixties.

KAISER: Phil worked with Byron White for the Kennedy campaign, and out of that fact, he got his appointment from Kennedy as ambassador to Senegal in 1961. We were there for three years. It was a most interesting experience, because the French had been in Dakar first. You lived in comfort and you ate French food and the staffs knew how to cook French food. The climate, I always maintain, wasn't quite as bad as Washington, except that you had no seasons. But the humidity was no worse than Washington, and there was often a breeze more often than there is in Washington. We had the ocean walking distance from our front door, so I could swim twice a day if I wanted to, and this made an enormous difference, too.

In Senegal, I started out in this beautiful modern house to offer my services to the USIA, who wanted to have English classes for the Africans, who came and who didn't have the funds to employ an English teacher. So I did teach English. I did not teach Africans for very long, however, because they did get the funds to employ teachers themselves. I was sorry about that, but was able to teach afterwards the French women, whose husbands were stationed in Dakar either in private business or in a government capacity or were the wives of other diplomats. A group of about ten or twelve women gathered twice a week in the morning on the terrace of the [official] residence, and we talked English. After three years of this, they gave me this beautiful gold Lacoutre watch, which I wear with a great pleasure.

Q: He abdicated...that's not the word to use, but that's what he did?

KAISER: He's the only African up until then who was succeeded in a peaceful way. He resigned, let's say, in favor of a man, Abdou Diouf, who had been in his government. Senegal has done fairly well, but like all African countries, they have their problems of corruption and food shortages, but to a lesser extent than the countries that have made the newspaper on the subject of famine.

Q: How much of that do you attribute to his leadership? Quite a bit?

KAISER: Oh, yes. A few years ago, we saw a movie made in Senegal about the subject of corruption. There was corruption portrayed in the movie. The whole thing showed people having to grease the palm of people from whom they needed something, and it ended up with a kind of appeal for a different way of behavior. It was extremely interesting and a well done film. Wonderful pictures of markets and Africans and where they lived.

Africans are allowed to have four wives, I believe, the Moslems, and when we traveled...I remembered African women are rarely treated like western women. They are not sitting down at the table as hostesses. They are waiting on you. When we had a small dinner with a local African

government official in the south of the country, a woman came in to serve us. The political type said, "This is my wife!" And pretty soon another woman came in and he said, "This is my wife!" Phil has always been fond of his punch line, "I'm Catholic, I only have two, instead of four."
(laughs)

Q: (laughs) Was there ever a question when an invitation was extended as to which wife of a government official might come?

KAISER: I'm sure there were, but I don't remember any. As a matter of fact, they usually only had one wife for public display.

Q: Display. And the others?

KAISER: They might have one who, for instance, knew French, and the other would only know her tribal language or several tribal languages. It's amazing what good linguists the Africans can be. I got to know a midwife and went out into the country with her. I always remember the poignant scene in a tiny, little concrete building that had been built for her in order to help her examine women in privacy...women who were pregnant or had just given birth.

One woman said she really needed a few stitches. She'd had a baby the week before, and Marie Touré took her into this little concrete building and looked around and found one broken needle and an empty bottle of alcohol. She just told the woman to come back next week, but privately she said to me, "That part of a woman's anatomy heals very fast. By next week, she won't need any stitches, so it will be all right." But this is a lovely, relaxed attitude and, in that case, I guess it worked out all right.

Q: She was a Senegalese midwife?

KAISER: Oh, yes, she was Senegalese. She was devoted, and the thing that made her so unusual was the fact that she did go out into the countryside to take care of people, because the pattern was becoming, "We'd rather work in the city. We don't want to work in the country." It was extremely difficult to get new doctors to go to the country to make a living. There was this large area that was a slum...the Medina...and the slum area was appallingly primitive with no plumbing and lots of sand (sighs) and no conveniences. They used kerosene lamps in some cases even. The Africans felt the cold very much. The most popular present I could give them was sweaters. To us, it wasn't all that cold, but they found it cold.

Q: Well, this time of year, it did get a bit nippy in Dakar though, didn't it?

KAISER: We could wear sweaters.

Q: Where we were (Sierra Leone), they were the same way. They'd complain about the cold and the dryness just about this time of year.

KAISER: Well, you know, it was perhaps like a crisp Fall day at the most. The countryside was relatively flat most parts, except in the south where we could have mild jungles. You had baobab

trees dotting the countryside, which are very special trees, very unusual kind of mushroom-like silhouette on the horizon. We learned a certain amount about the flora and fauna, and our sons learned a certain amount about diplomacy.

I remember when Mamadou Dia challenged Senghor, tried to lead a coup, he was chased to the top floor of the Government Building which was eight stories high. (Mamadou Dia was Prime Minister, arrested for attempting to overthrow the president in 1962. Dia and others were tried, convicted, and imprisoned in 1963, at which time Senegal adopted a new constitution that gave the president executive authority and abolished the office prime minister.) Eventually he was captured with no bloodshed whatsoever and he was put in a rest house or a government entertaining house that was not far from our residence.

When our sons found that those soldiers were resting on our property, they were very indignant. This was American property! No Senegalese soldiers should be on American property! They needed my husband to do something about it fast. He succeeded in getting them off the property, but they were harmless really. They weren't about to shoot anybody up. The whole coup was managed with great skill. Mamadou Dia was sent off to an island, and I think he spent ten or fifteen years there. But he has since been released. Very civilized. Nice. What can I tell you?

My husband wasn't the first ambassador to Senegal. He was the second, I believe. A man called Villard was there, who had a Russian wife and who was there when (then Vice President Lyndon) Johnson came to celebrate Independence (in 1960).

Q: The only reference that I had is the Department of State Biographic Register -- and after Senegal, you seem to have come back to Washington and then really not have gone out again until 1977 to Hungary.

KAISER: No, that's not true.

Q: It's not true?

KAISER: There's one little story I want to add about Senegal. After the first year, I took David and Charles to Paris in the summer, and Charles was then ten and a half. He was wearing the blazer and button-down shirt and walking in the streets of Paris when he was accosted by a local American photographer, who wanted to take his picture right there on the street. Charles decided he wouldn't speak a word of English to this guy. He spoke French so well and so long that the man finally said to him, "You're not American, are you? But what part of France do you come from? I can't spot that accent." And naturally this was the proudest moment of Charles's life.

Q: (laughs) Yes. Well, I would think that Dakar really must have been a constant outdoor life for the boys, for one thing.

KAISER: Yes, although too hot. David wanted to become a track star. The Peace Corps was very important to us there, and the Peace Corps had track stars. David, who is a slight young man and who was not at all built up physically in those days, tried to do a lot of running. But since he had had nephritis we were over-protective perhaps, but I think probably wise, because it wasn't the

place to build himself up by exhaustive running. However, he felt that we did wrong by him in not letting him develop. Since he grew up he has become a very sturdy young man and plays both soccer and tennis very well, but he didn't get a real start there.

HARRIET CURRY
Secretary to Ambassador Philip Kaiser
Dakar (1961-1964)

Ms. Curry was born in Annapolis, Maryland, daughter of a Marine Corp family. She was raised at military posts throughout the United States. She was educated at The George Washington University, after which she worked with a number of non-governmental organizations. After joining the State Department she served as Secretary and Assistant to United States Ambassadors in Brazil, Senegal, Israel, Jamaica, Ireland, Hungary, Austria, Syria and Pakistan. She also had several assignments in Washington. Ms. Curry was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

Q: From Paris, where did you go, in 1961?

CURRY: Then, they opened up posts in Africa. They were eager to fill them, and I went to Dakar. That is when I worked for the number two man, the ECM, who was Ross McClelland. The ambassador's secretary was leaving about a year later. At the same time, I was asking for a third year. I was asked if I would work for the ambassador, who was a political appointee, by Kennedy, Philip M. Kaiser. When Kennedy died, Johnson reappointed him. After he was there for three years, he went to London, to work as the number two person for Ambassador Bruce. That is where I met Eleanor, because he took me with him.

Q: How did you find Phil Kaiser?

CURRY: Oh, he was a character, but we got along fine. I knew how to operate with him, and his wife. I liked them both, and we became quite good friends.

Q: What was Senegal like in those days?

CURRY: It was a former French colony, so they had some good restaurants there. It was not very exciting. If I was disappointed at all, it was a bit boring to me, but lovely beaches, that we used to go to, very nearby. It was a nice, calm, lazy life. Phil Kaiser was involved when the Cuban crisis came up. He was involved in trying to persuade President Kennedy not to let the planes land at Senegal's base.

Q: You mentioned that Phil Kaiser was quite a character. In what way was he a character?

CURRY: He was pretty sure of himself, and also, I thought, slightly defensive, in being a political appointee, but I was told he had worked for the government, which he had. He had

worked for the Department of Labor. A little bit of personal work for him, I didn't mind, it wasn't the kind of thing you don't see secretaries doing often but it was some personal work. He had a little bit of an ego, maybe not a little.

Q: I know he falls to one side. He has written a number of books. He was interviewed by our program. He was a Rhodes Scholar, which he would never let you forget.

CURRY: That's right. He didn't let you forget. He knew England before he was assigned to the Embassy. He has three interesting sons. Of course Robert was always with the Washington Post. David, the middle son, is a professor at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, and the youngest, Charles is trying to make a living writing. All four Kaisers have published books.

Q: How about Mrs. Kaiser?

CURRY: She was a very kind-hearted person. I always liked her. She didn't have a mean bone in her body, but she was misunderstood by a lot of people, because she did like to help people. I put "help" in quotes, because she felt she was helping them.

Q: Did you get a feel for dealing with the Senegalese, at all?

CURRY: Not at all. They seemed to be nice people. They didn't bother us. I didn't feel threatened by them or anything.

Q: How about Senghor? How was he viewed? What were people saying about him?

CURRY: I thought he was highly respected, and an intellectual poet. He had a white French wife. I don't know whether people resented it or not. I rather doubt they did, because there were mixed marriages. I don't really know what the Senegalese thought. I think there were a number of attempted coups, at one time or another, while we were there, which didn't amount to anything.

Q: Well, when you asked to extend, this was somewhat unusual?

CURRY: Yes, and I should explain, probably, because I came from a very busy, hectic office in Paris, and an easier, nice life. I wouldn't call it lazy. I had enough work to do, but I didn't feel Dakar was pressure. I didn't want to go home after two years, on home leave, and then go back. I just wanted to stay there an extra year.

Q: What did your family think about this, way over there?

CURRY: As far as I know, they weren't concerned about it. My family let me do what I wanted to do. I think they thought I had a level head.

Q: Now, Eleanor, in the first place, when you took off on this Foreign Service career, what did your family think about this? Did they have much feel for what you were doing?

OSTERMEIER: Well, I think they were a little shocked beyond words. I had been living in Chicago, and they were living downstate. So, we had kind of been apart, but it was a great occasion when I took a train to Washington. My young nephews and niece all went out to the train with me, as if I were going off for the rest of my life. There were tears. I think I mentioned earlier that I had worked for the state in the Illinois Department of Public Construction. I had become friendly with some of the people there. Their comment was that I was the last person in the world they would ever expect to go off in the Foreign Service. It was not in my character. I think that was the general feeling. We were in a small town, and didn't have a lot of international experience, or education. We hardly knew what an ambassador did or was. They were all just a little surprised. It was a little joke in my family that I came home at some point, and my parents were going off on what they called a "Prairie Farmer tour". That was a big thing for farm families to do. They had these quite expensive and very nice tours. That was for three or four weeks. They were escorted in.

I was home, and I went down to the railroad station to see my parents off. It was kind of a joke afterwards that my father just lived to tell people that his daughter worked for the American ambassador in London. I think, by that time, he had become very proud of me.

Q: Well, Harriet, where did we leave you?

CURRY: Senegal. In Senegal I did work for William L. Eagleton, who was the chargé d'affaires, in Nouakchott, Mauritania, where Ambassador Kaiser was also accredited, when he came to Dakar to report to Ambassador Kaiser. When Ambassador Kaiser and I went to London after Dakar, Bill Eagleton also went there as a political officer for two years.

WALTER C. CARRINGTON
Delegate, Conference of the World Assembly of Youth
Dakar, Senegal (1952)

Peace Corps Director
Senegal (1965-1967)

Ambassador Walter C. Carrington was born in New York in 1930. He received a bachelor's degree from Harvard in 1952 followed by a LLB in 1955. He served in the Peace Corps in Tunisia and as director of the Peace Corps in both Sierra Leone and Senegal. In addition he fulfilled an ambassadorship to Senegal. Ambassador Carrington was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 9, 1988.

Q: What was your impression of Senegal when you went there in 1952?

CARRINGTON: Well, first of all, it was for me an overwhelming experience, being a young black American and going to Africa for the first time, and very early in that trip going to the

island of Goree and seeing the slave house, the place from which the slaves left for the voyage to the United States was a very emotional sort of thing.

Q: Putting these two ones [Tunisia/Senegal A.G.] together, since we are looking at this from a sort of professional point of view, were there differences in how the Peace Corps fitted into the operations in Tunisia/Senegal as opposed to Sierra Leone? I'm speaking of American operations?

CARRINGTON: No, again, when I try to think about the relations, for example, with the rest of the Embassy in Tunisia, we had a very supportive ambassador, Francis Russell. I can't recall any real conflicts with the AID mission there, nothing like we had initially in Sierra Leone. Things went rather smoothly in terms of our operations in Tunisia, vis-a-vis the rest of the American establishment there.

Q: You are looking at Senegal more than ten years later.

CARRINGTON: Thirteen years later.

Q: Have you seen much of a change? Did you see much of a change?

CARRINGTON: Oh, yes. Well, first of all, the physical change was very pronounced. In fact, when I was Peace Corps director I lived on Place d'Independence in an apartment building that didn't exist when I had been there before, and a lot of the people whom I had first met as students were now moving up in government and in other areas so that I had a lot of people that I knew when I arrived in the country.

The political situation then was one where Senghor was President and had a kind of modified multi-party system which he devised with sort of French Cartesian logic. He looked at Senegal and said there were four major political tendencies in the country. There is a conservative tendency, a liberal democratic tendency, a socialist tendency, and a Marxist tendency; and there ought to be political parties that represent each of these tendencies. And so he decreed that there would be four political parties. His party would be the socialist party and then these other parties could organize, so you had a four party system. Anyone who wanted to organize had to organize within this framework.

At the same time, you had a lot of magazines which came out monthly and some newspapers which came out weekly which represented all kinds of political views, so that you had then a very open and free kind of political expression going on in the country.

I was there, I remember, at the onset of the first drought which took place in 66-67.

Q: This is the beginning of the Sahel droughts?

CARRINGTON: Right. And I remember it because in 1966 Senegal hosted the First International Festival of Negro Art, in which they brought together people from all over the world in a tremendous cultural festival, and it cost the government some money. Not long after

that was when the rains ceased and the drought began, and there was a lot of talk among his opponents and talk out in the bush that we never had a festival before and we've never had a drought before, so there must be some connection between the two. That's how I remember when that drought first happened. And, of course, the Senegalese economy has not been as strong since then as it was when I was there in the mid to late '60s.

Q: What was the Peace Corps--what were we doing? Here we were Americans in a francophone country with the French culture, a President who was a major literary light among other things within the French society. What were we doing and how were we received there as the Peace Corps?

CARRINGTON: Well, again, one of our largest programs was teaching, but teaching there meant teaching English. And this was something that Senghor very much wanted. He wanted to have every educated Senegalese to be fluent in both French and English.

Q: Why do you think this? This is so almost untypical, I would say, of someone brought up in the French culture?

CARRINGTON: Well, yes, but Senghor very much believed in what he called the concept of negritude, and he felt that it was important that the intelligentsia of the black world be able to communicate with one another. And he felt that English was important and that the best way to learn English was to be taught by a native English speaker. And so we had a lot of people teaching English.

Q: So you received the full cooperation of the government?

CARRINGTON: Yes. Yes, we did. We had the full cooperation of the government on that program.

We had another program which was a program mostly of women who were working in rural clinics around the country and in what were kind of social centers in various parts of the country. And they were working with women on a number of different kinds of programs teaching them about maternal-child health, nutrition, etc. And this program was extremely effective. We had some volunteers who became very fluent in the Wolof language and were able to do, I think, some really useful things.

The problem that we had with that program was that it was tremendously underfunded by the government. And, in fact, the person who was the junior minister in charge of that whole program for the government was not very competent. In fact, he was a relative of the President. And so we were always fighting trying to get better support. And the success of the program often depended upon how cooperative the local officials were and how well our volunteers were able to relate to them.

But the Peace Corps program which still goes on in Senegal and has expanded was well received because, I think, the volunteers were able to so identify with the communities in which they lived. In fact, I remember when I went back as Ambassador and was making my initial rounds

meeting all of the ministers in their offices almost every conversation I had the minister would begin by telling a story about a Peace Corps volunteer who had lived in his village and who spoke Wolof almost as well as he did. So that there was this lasting memory of what the Peace Corps volunteers had done in Senegal. [...]

Q: Well, you left Senegal in 1967.

CARRINGTON: Yes.

MERCER COOK
Ambassador
Senegal and Gambia (1965-1966)

Ambassador Cook was born and raised in Washington D.C. and educated at Amherst College and the Universities of Paris and Brown. During his career as a professor of romance languages, the Ambassador served on the faculties of Atlanta University, the University of Haiti and Howard University. In 1961 he was appointed US Ambassador to Niger, where he served until May, 1964. That year he was appointed Ambassador to Senegal and Gambia, residing at Dakar, where he served until July, 1966. Ambassador Cook died in 1987. The Ambassador was interviewed in 1981 by Ruth Stutts Njiiri.

Q: Can we talk a little bit more about Senegal?

COOK: Oh! Of course. Well, we can talk about Senegal, and I needn't tell you that it was almost like coming home to be appointed to Dakar. I had met President Senghor in 1934, when he was a student in Paris and I was a student in Paris. And we had continued that friendship down through the years. He had invited me to Senegal on several occasions, either to meetings or merely for, well, for personal reasons. Also, I got there in the summer of 1964 and, naturally, there was a crowd at the airport, including reporters.

And one of the first questions was, "What is the racial situation in the United States?" Well, I told them. This was now President Johnson, of course, and some of them knew President Johnson because he had been sent over by President Kennedy when he was Vice President, to attend, to be the official representative, our official representative at the independence celebration of Senegal.

And I said I was representing a President who had done many things to help the racial situation in the States and who would be doing, I felt, many more. Remember that a big law, an important law, had been voted in 1964. I said, "I am the father of two sons and (at the time) five grandchildren." I said, "And I believe, I believe that they have a better future ahead of them than I had ahead of me when I came along." I said, "If I did not believe that, I would still be teaching school and I would not have accepted this position."

Well, that was the opening of that particular visit to Senegal, and it was followed by two and a half years, the same struggle which I had in Niger started all over again with AID. If you will just bear with me, I'll just quote one statistic. This is the AID program in Africa, 1964. Now the first year I got there, Senegal got about two million dollars in U.S. aid. The second year I was there, 1965, Senegal got seventy-five thousand dollars in aid; that's opposed to Nigeria's fifty-three million. I don't believe that Senegal should have gotten anything close to that, but certainly she deserved more than a country like Chad, Upper Volta, Niger, Dahomey.

Well, at any rate, and the last year I was there, 1966, Senegal got 250 thousand. So, I still had then the same problem of convincing the AID people that there were projects in Senegal that were promising enough to deserve a little more generosity, particularly since much of that generosity is a two-way, works on a two-way street.

Senghor, of course, was hospitality itself. He welcomed me. When I presented my letter of my credentials, I mentioned our former friendship and how in 1934 he was telling me about the beauties of Africa, the beauties of Senegal, the importance of Senegal, the future of Senegal. And I was telling him what he most wanted to know about the writing scene, the writers, black writers in the United States. As early as 1934, I was amazed to hear him quote, by heart, poetry by Langston Hughes, by Sterling Brown, by Countee Cullen, by Claude McKay and by other black American writers and poets. That, of course, was the first side of Senghor that I had noted. And that, of course, had been continued and had developed. Incidentally, in his autobiography he was asked what books, if he were on a desert island, like Robinson Crusoe, what books would he take with him? And the fifth book he put down there was Langston Hughes' first book of poetry, The Weary Blues, which, as you may remember, was published back in the 1920's.

There were some, as I say, there were some Americans, a few Americans in Senegal, not many in business, but there were small businesses. There was, incidentally, was a black American who had opened a restaurant there, and then Senegal was much closer to the mainstream than Niamey was. And so they knew what the situation was, and, as I say, they'd had American consuls there for many, many, many years. But the AID program was still sticky and, frankly, in that respect, I was not able to do very much for Senegal.

We did, however, help with what is one of the most unforgettable experiences in my lifetime. We helped with the first Dakar festival, the first festival of black arts which took place in 1966. I was disgruntled about the AID program, and so I had sent in my retirement. This was the third time I resigned from the Foreign Service: in Niger, and in Senegal. And then the Government asked me to stay on at least until after the festival, because I had been working on this project since 1956, when we first met at the conference in Paris, to which I alluded earlier. So I was staying on then until after the festival, and the festival was something that was well worth the while.

As I say, this was an unforgettable experience, with at least forty countries, many of them African countries, sending their best artists, their choral groups, their dance groups, their orchestras to participate in this great get-together. And I was proud that my country was able to participate. We sent some of our best artists. Well, I start with Duke Ellington and his band, tremendously successful; Alvin Ailey and his dancers, tremendously successful; Leonard de Paur

and his choral group, a biracial group, tremendously successful; Marian Williams and her gospel singers, and, believe it or not, they sang in the Cathedral of Dakar. A singer, one of our singers from the Metropolitan, I think her name was Martina Arroyo, tremendously successful. Right on down the line it was success after success. Duke appeared in public three times, and, of course, the President was there. Incidentally, the President, in a poem written back in early 1930, mentioned Duke in one of his poems and so you can imagine how happy he was to see Duke; you can imagine how happy he was to see Langston Hughes at the festival.

One interesting sideline about the festival concerns Langston Hughes. The President called me one morning and said, "Emperor Haile Selassie is here, as you know, and we're having him for lunch. Langston Hughes, back in 1936, when the Italians were invading Ethiopia, Langston Hughes had written a poem, An Ode to Ethiopia. I translated it, and I'd like to read my translation at the lunch." He said, "I'm sending over by messenger a copy of my translation and would you ask Langston if he approves?"

So the messenger came bringing the poem. I read it over the phone to Langston Hughes and Langston said, "Now that's a beautiful poem." He said, "The only trouble is I didn't write it."

So I called the President back and he said, "Could you bring Langston over?" And I said, "Yes." So, I brought him over. And the President said, "You published this poem in Opportunity Magazine, Opportunity Magazine such and such an issue. And then Langston said, "Of course I did ... (slaps his forehead)!" He said, "Now I remember. It was for a public manifestation at Madison Square Garden."

Incidentally, that luncheon attended by, well, the main guest of honor, of course, was Emperor Haile Selassie but was also attended by Langston Hughes, the diplomatic corps and a number of Senegalese officials, including the President. And the President read that translation of the Langston Hughes poem. Oh, there are so many things that I could say about, about Senegal.

Q: Would you talk a little about the political climate there?

COOK: The political climate was ... as far as the cold war went, the political climate was not bad, but as far as the internal situation was concerned, there were problems. There were problems because, if I could go back in history a little bit, during French colonialism, Dakar was the capital of eight colonies, including Senegal, and Niger, and Ivory Coast, and Dahomey, and so forth. There were eight of them. And that confederation, if it could be called that, had its headquarters in Dakar. Dakar, as far as health was concerned, as far as weather was concerned, as far as beaches were concerned, Dakar was the ideal place. And so the French selected Dakar.

Well, that meant that Dakar was the administrative center and they had to hire a lot of people to take care of eight colonies. With independence and the breakup of each of those eight countries, Dakar was left with a tremendous staff of government employees to support, to maintain, to pay salaries to, you see. And yet they were servicing only a small, let's say one eighth of the former French-West African Federation in West Africa; the financial pinch was terrible.

Remember that Senegal, like Niger, Senegal's main product was peanuts. Now it's true that they also had phosphates, but if you look at the budget, incoming and outgoing, you could see that peanuts by far outranked phosphates. Phosphates only brought in 6 million dollars in import whereas peanuts went up to 81 million dollars. And remember that the per capita income in Senegal was only about, was less than two hundred dollars a year. It was higher than some African countries, but it was certainly not much, considering the prices that you had to pay for those goods that were manufactured in France, you see. France proper profited from some of the raw material that came right out of Senegalese soil but sold it back to Senegal for prohibitive rates.

So that this, of course, had a bearing on the political situation plus the fact that there was some unrest in the University, unrest among the younger people who wanted progress to come faster than it could be forced upon this impoverished country. Other than that, I think the situation was good. Although, remember in 1962, there was an attempted revolt, and in 196 ... I guess about 1967, there was an attempt on Senghor's life. Fortunately, the gun did not fire, but there was that attempt. And, as I say, it misfired and Senghor was able to go on until 1980, when he felt that it was time for him to retire.

Q: You mentioned briefly the invitation that was extended to the President of Niger but was never followed up upon by President Kennedy. I don't know if you want to talk about why you feel this didn't happen, but, in any case, would you let us know whether or not President Senghor received an invitation to the United States? How was he perceived by the U.S. Government?

COOK: First, I want to continue with the Diori story, President Diori's story. I don't know why he never got the invitation. Maybe it was because Secretary Goldberg was shifted to the Supreme Court, you remember. No wait a minute, wait a minute, it was the other way around...

Q: He went to ...

COOK: ... he went to the U.N.

Q: ...but after...

COOK: ... yes, maybe it was because it was, I think he went to the Supreme Court, yes! And maybe that had something to do with it, or maybe other problems were more pressing. But Diori did come over as a guest of Lyndon B. Johnson later on. I was no longer in the Foreign Service at that time.

Oh, yes. President Senghor was invited by President Kennedy, I think, the very first year of President Kennedy's Administration. He came back a few years later under President Johnson. And, interestingly enough, President Johnson sent an invitation through the Ambassador while I was there in Senegal. Senghor is such a scholarly person. He said, "I cannot possibly go there this year. I would have to spend months studying the situation in the United States so that I would know how to meet it when I went over there." But the year after I left Senegal, President Senghor did come over here and, incidentally, that was the year he received an honorary doctorate from Howard University, 1966, at the end of 1966.

Q: You spoke of the resignations that you submitted while you were in the Service. Would you like to elaborate on those?

COOK: I don't have much to say about them. They were all caused by the same thing. The inability to get aid and AID was not forthcoming. I felt that this was setting a bad precedent for future black ambassadors, for the possible appointment of future black ambassadors, because there had been this question in the beginning: Can a black U.S. ambassador get the assistance that these countries need?

When I first got back to the State Department for briefing, I told Governor Williams -- Assistant Secretary Williams then -- I said, "I'm surprised I'm the only one of my complexion down here. I thought there'd be some, some others." He said, "Well, there will be." And I found that there were. But the reason I, tried to resign three times was that I didn't want it to be a stain on the discussion. Of course, you know that there have been more, not enough, but there have been more, and there's even been an ambassador to the, to the U.N. from our group.

Q: Do you feel that you received any advantages because of your color while you were serving as Ambassador?

COOK: I think so. I think so. I think the rapport that I had with Boubou Hama and Hamani Diori in Niger and my long friendship with Senghor in Senegal, I'm sure those things helped me. I had many friends in Senegal before I became ambassador. I'm sure that ... that was a great help. I tell you another ... one incident that was not helpful ... (slight giggle) ... where my color didn't help too much.

In Senegal, now remember that I had had difficulties with a certain Senator when I was in Niger. When I was in Senegal, one day my public affairs officer came in and he said, "Oh, I just saw the man from Reuters News Agency and he tells me that a certain Southern Senator is planning a trip to Senegal. And so the newspaperman, the newspaper people here are just sitting back to see how the black ambassador is going to get along with the Dixiecrat, with the former Dixiecrat. So immediately I cabled the State Department asking to be on leave when this particular Senator came and I got a response, "Oh, no, no, no, you have to be there; you have to be there." This, well I said, "Well, I could be out of Dakar. I could just be in some other town in Senegal. A visiting Ambassador is supposed to be traveling around in the country, you see." "No, but we'd like you to be here ... at the time."

So I wrote back. This was a very insistent statement that I got, that I had to be there. And I said, I wrote back and said, "No, I will not be there. And I'm willing to accept the consequences." Somehow or other the State Department got the Senator to cancel his trip. At least he postponed it for as long as I was in Senegal. Because you see the situation that could have developed? The man had a reputation for racism, and I certainly was not going to be there. That would have demolished any respect that the Senegalese would have had.

PHILIP C. BROWN
Junior Officer Trainee, USIS
Dakar (1966-1967)

Mr. Brown was born in Massachusetts and raised primarily in Pennsylvania. He was educated at College of Wooster (Ohio) and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. After serving with the Voice of America, in 1965 he joined the United States Information Agency Foreign Service (USIS), where he served several assignments at its headquarters in Washington DC. His foreign posts include Dakar, Douala, Yaoundé, Paris, Vienna and Moscow, where he served twice. At these posts his assignments ranged from Assistant Branch Public Affairs Officer to Counselor for Information, Press and Cultural Affairs. Mr. Brown was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2012.

BROWN: So I took this long flight; Paris to Marseilles to Las Palmas to Dakar, Senegal arriving on November 2, 1966.

I didn't even begin to appreciate at the time that Dakar was a wonderfully comfortable place to live 10 months out of the year. Two months out of the year, the rainy season, it was quite humid but for the rest of the year, it is a vacation spot and a lot of French travel there to this day.

Dakar is a peninsula on a peninsula and the most western spot of the continent. Most flights to Africa were from Europe but Pan Am flew a direct route from New York to Dakar; that was the first place you could land in Africa.

The president, Leopold Senghor, who was married to a French woman, was a poet and intellectual and had French citizenship. He was a member of the French parliament but was Senegalese born. Within the society, there was a hierarchy and the Africans, as I looked at it, were at the bottom of that hierarchy. The people who lived there most comfortably were the thousands of French people. They often occupied the position of technical counselor (conseiller technique) in the ministries.

The second level in the hierarchy in terms of how well people lived were the so-called Lebanese. They were not necessarily from Lebanon but that's the term that was used. People who were merchants, second level professionals doing things like plumbing, accounting and whatever.

The third level were "the Arabs." There was a considerable number of Arabs in the country. And the fourth level were the Africans.

Dakar was a beautiful city, a modern city in some ways with many amenities. I almost said all of the amenities but there were things we missed or that we found strange. You didn't have to go too far inland to find children with distended bellies and that loss of color in their hair to show you that it was in many respects a poor country, maybe not like Niger or Upper Volta or Mali but you didn't have to go too far from Dakar with its skyscrapers and French restaurants to find poverty.

I was initially put into a hotel with a terribly uncomfortable bed. Of course, I was missing my wife and newborn daughter. Before I left Arlington, Virginia, we held our daughter under a lamp and took some pictures of her with high speed black and white film. It produced nice photos. I would look at those multiple times during the day with such a longing for my wife and daughter. I really did miss them. I sometimes say I might have had a short Foreign Service experience had it not been for the political officer, a fellow named Allen Caswell. I had met him and his wife briefly in Washington and they had two sons and they invited me to stay with them in their very lovely house. I accepted and I could not have had a more life-changing type of experience; playing croquet outside on their lawn.

I probably should be embarrassed to admit it but my reading material was a Sears Roebuck catalog. I was reassured to see how much one could order out of a Sears Roebuck catalog and receive via the pouch. Somehow my material needs were assured through the Sears Roebuck catalog.

I would ride to work with Allen. He lived along the coast. There were areas where foreigners lived in quite nice homes and I would ride in with him and he'd pick me up in the evening. This went on for several weeks. I was not in the embassy. The embassy was in an office building in a central square in Dakar. We were in the American Cultural Center and it was easy to tell anyone where we were. We were on the Boulevard de la République, directly across from the cathedral. At the end of the boulevard was the President's palace.

After a few weeks, an apartment became available in what was called the 'water building' (the Immeuble des Eaux) at 70 Boulevard de la République, just a couple of blocks from the American Cultural Center and across the street from the Daniel Sorano Theater. Daniel Sorano (I learned later) was a Franco-Senegalese actor and the theater had just been opened in 1965. It was notable at the time because just one year before I arrived, President Senghor had organized something called the Festival of Negro Arts.

Q: It was negritude in those days.

BROWN: Exactly. They brought in black or Negro artists from all over the world and organized a big international festival. This was typical of Senghor. He wanted to celebrate negritude, celebrate the black cultural experience; many of the activities had taken place in that Daniel Sorano Theater.

So these were standard landmarks. Even the building where we lived, the water building, right next to it was the residence of the Grand Marabou of Dakar, a leading Muslim figure in this very Muslim town so if I wanted to tell anyone where I lived, it was the water building, right next to the residence of the Marabou, across the street from the Daniel Sorano Theater. My work was across the street from the Cathedral on the Boulevard of the Republic. These were pretty easy to locate, notable landmarks.

As I said, I walked up the street from my apartment to the cultural center. The cultural center had big windows with exhibits and a library on the ground floor and offices on the second and third.

I had met my boss briefly in Washington, a man named Jim McGinley. Jim was a delightful fellow. He was married with small children, a hard working and serious guy but also easygoing outside the office. We could talk sports, we could play tennis. Jim taught me a lot of things about the job.

I can recall very clearly going into his office and he asked me a question and I began my answer saying, "I assume" and Jim looked at me with a scowl but a smile behind it saying, "Phil, as long as you are working with me in Africa, don't begin any sentence with "I assume." It was good advice. You didn't take anything for granted.

In December of 1965 my wife arrived. Jim took me to the airport. That was pretty exciting, the Pan Am plane coming in with my wife. He is standing next to me and says, "Is this your wife?"

"No."

"Is this your wife?"

"No."

"Is this your wife?"

"No, oh, it is my wife." She had cut her hair; I hadn't seen her for a couple of months. I didn't even recognize her. Maybe too it was still the early hours of the morning or something. That was one of the brightest moments.

Q: Who was the ambassador when you were there?

BROWN: We didn't have an ambassador when I arrived. The Chargé was a man named John McKesson. I remember very little about him except that to me, he was the quintessential Foreign Service officer; very correct, he probably had lots of white hair, tall, dignified. I called him Mr. McKesson. I don't remember very much about him.

The ambassador who arrived a few months after I arrived was William R. Rivkin. He had been ambassador at USEC in Brussels. A very nice gentleman. I believe he had a young son, although I am not certain of that.

The Ambassador was accredited not only to Senegal but to the Gambia. The Gambia is this tiny little country, inserted within Senegal on the Gambia River. You could drive down there in a few hours. If your car survived the road and the ferry boat going over to Bathurst, you found yourself in a very English colonial environment. I went down there with Ambassador Rivkin when he went to present his letters of credentials.

As I recall, he climbed up on some structure to look around and I noted how red his face was. It was only a few months later, on a Sunday morning that Jim McGinley called me and said that Ambassador Rivkin had very tragically died of a heart attack.

He is the Ambassador Rivkin for whom one of the State Department awards is named. The reason I mentioned his son is a few years ago, while visiting my daughter who lives in France, she showed me a copy of Paris Match magazine with an article about the new American ambassador to France, son of Ambassador Rivkin, Charles Rivkin. I wrote him a letter saying that I had known his father in Dakar. I am sorry to say I never heard back. I thought I might just get a little note saying “glad to hear from you and glad you remember my father.” No such luck.

Q: I am interviewing Al Fairchild and Al talks in very glowing terms of Rivkin.

BROWN: Al would have been closer because he would have been in the embassy but I do recall favorably my interaction with Ambassador Rivkin.

Among other things, the ambassador had a lovely residence up on a point where you could look out at the sea. We would be invited there for receptions and activities.

Q: What was your impression of Senghor, I mean sort of professionally? You were in the cultural field.

BROWN: I recall him as a man with one foot in France, one foot in Senegal, an intellectual, the head of a nominally independent nation but hardly a man of the people, the masses. Everyone knew that the real decisions were being made, the strings were being pulled by the French. Senghor knew and understood that this was the way the country was going to run for a while. He not only tolerated it but benefited from it personally.

By the way, I have a picture of myself with Leopold Senghor. I can't remember any of the specifics but there was a small international exhibit, it wasn't an expo but it was an international exhibit. We didn't have the resources to devote to it that some countries did but somehow we got posters, put them up on the walls and I was the person standing by when Leopold Senghor made his official visit. I am standing there next to him looking quite young. My French was good enough that I probably welcomed him and told him something about these posters of America.

I also think there was an attempt on his life while we were there. He probably was riding in an open vehicle and maybe a shot was fired but I don't remember much about it. There may have been some news reports.

The memory is vague but I did see him when he welcomed Emperor Haile Selassie to Senegal. I think Selassie was on his way to the United Nations and came thru Dakar. I have this vision of these two men, one from the western side of the continent, the other from the eastern side of the continent, two of the great old men of Africa. Whatever you say about their contributions, their successes or failures or the fact that their names are forgotten today among young Africans, Leopold Senghor and Haile Selassie were two major African figures of the 20th century.

.Q: How stood our USIA contingent there? Was it just you?

BROWN: The PAO was Jim McGinley, a great guy. The cultural affairs officer was Kintzing Emmons. He had come out of academia. I remember my wife coming home one day all excited

because she had gone sailing with his wife, Carol. Carol had said something about the private school she had gone to and the fact that they played soccer rather than football. My wife picked up on that and it turned out they had gone to the same private Quaker school, Westtown Friends School outside Philadelphia.

If you are new in the Foreign Service, on a new continent with a new baby and all of a sudden you find someone with whom you share not only the school but all the values associated with the school, it gave my wife a lot of warm, fuzzy feelings.

Kintzing Emmons, the CAO, went back to academia in Atlanta and in 1972 he tried to talk me into going down there to take a position at Georgia State University. I didn't. To tell the truth, the position was not offered to me but that would have been real career change for me. To this day we are very good friends with Carol Emmons. Carol did a lot of work in Atlanta with the International Visitors' Council. Kintzing died of cancer many years ago.

They were our close friends in Dakar. They had a very nice apartment with a big open balcony. I recall going there one night when they showed a movie, "Twelve Angry Men," a black and white movie about a trial when there is one courageous holdout on the jury. The movie was in English but they invited in Senegalese guests.

The assistant cultural affairs officer was a man named Jack Simmons. Jack had just come into the Foreign Service, though he was older than I was, out of Baptist missionary work in the eastern Congo. It would not be the last time I would be exposed to someone who was in the Foreign Service with that kind of background. We know what was going on in the eastern Congo at that time; rebellions and people going back and forth evacuating across the lake over to Tanzania. They left that and came to the Foreign Service, to Dakar. Jack had a wife, a lovely family of four children.

We had an executive officer, a woman named Harriet Love and myself. There really wasn't a need for an information officer or a press attaché. There wasn't enough press or radio/television media there. To the extent it was done, I did it.

I was on the third floor of the cultural center building. I was fortunate, I have always said, to be surrounded by a Lebanese secretary, Madame Houdrouge, and African employees who spoke virtually no English. Not only did Madame Houdrouge not speak English, but she couldn't even try to come up with a word if I was struggling. It was great because it forced me to use French all the time with her.

The same with our films guy who had been there a long time, Papa Diaw who drove a Citroen, lived a bit out of town in Rufisque. He was the photographer. When we got news that Ambassador Rivkin had died, my job was to drive out and get Papa Diaw, no phone, get hold of him so that he could come in and start developing some pictures and put up an exhibit in a window, that kind of thing.

Q: We were going through our civil rights, opening up civil rights period at that time. Were you able to get fairly good representations of one form or another to pass on to the Senegalese?

BROWN: Do you mean speakers?

Q: I am thinking of pictures. It was sort of all consuming in the States.

BROWN: I have to say it wasn't the dominant memory that I have of what we did. We would get these two or three page printed materials from something called IPS, the Press Service of the USIA and they were quite often on civil rights. There was a magazine published out of Paris in French and it had a lot of focus on civil rights activities, movement. But that is not my dominant memory.

What I recall doing a lot of was packing up a Land Rover, and this is where I learned to drive a Land Rover, and taking one of the African employees. I did this in both Dakar and in my next assignment in Cameroon. We would drive for two and three days at a time. We would go up along the coast to St. Louis, go into the interior to some of the villages where there were Peace Corps volunteers. We had a multimedia approach. We would take movies; we had books that we could give away. The American publishers could donate excess books, take a tax write off and then we could give them to schools. We would take posters and magazines, that kind of thing.

There were two basic films that we showed. One was on President Senghor's trip the previous year to the United States. There was an image of him sitting down in the White House next to Lyndon Johnson.

I hope somewhere in the archives these things are maintained because USIA produced a lot of this kind of products during those years.

The other was a film about the Festival of Negro Arts that was a very sensitively done film. The problem with it was they decided to be creative in Washington. They weren't going to do a color film; they weren't going to do a black and white film. They were going to do something called 'sepia'. So this whole thing had a brownish tint to it.

Back in the United States, this was thought of as artistic creativity. But our audiences, thought we had a defective film. They thought that something had gone wrong. This was during the cold war. The Soviets produced a color film that was much more favorably received than our sepia film on the Festival of Arts.

Another place I visited was a town called Ziguinchor in the very south of Senegal, south of Gambia. I recall sitting down there with one of the Lebanese. He ran a movie theater. We had contracted with him to use his movie theater to show our films and do a reception afterwards. I will never forget sitting outside in the courtyard where he lived eating mangoes, or *mangues greffés*. They were mangoes grafted with another fruit, how delicious they were. It is one of these things to this day you can almost taste the sweetness of the fruit.

Most of the travel was along the coast. You had to go a little bit inland to Thies to get to the road to the coastal cities but we didn't really go much further than that. There was a game park in the eastern part of Senegal but I didn't go there.

Q: Did you have much contact with the Senegalese?

BROWN: Sure, through schools, through some of the contacts with the very small media, the press journalism group, through the ministry of culture, through various receptions and through these travels.

Do I remember individual people? I remember especially the FSNs like Papa Diaw whom I mentioned. The woman who ran the library was named Mae Diagne. Mae was from a very prominent Senegalese family. During the course of the year an American named Leo Sarkisian who worked for the Voice of America and who was a musicologist and really understood African rhythms and African music extremely well, came to Dakar.

In addition to being a musicologist, he was a very gifted artist and he did portraits of Mae Diagne and many other African women. The African women were very, very beautiful, especially as portrayed by Leo Sarkisian, very tall, erect, good looking women. I would have purchased these portraits if he had been willing to sell them. We had an exhibit of paintings by Leo Sarkisian in an exhibit hall in Dakar. The Africans flocked to that. Somehow they could much more easily understand that American cultural presentation that either of those two films I talked about; Senghor in the United States in the Oval Office or our sepia film on the Festival of Negro Arts.

Through vehicles like that, I had a lot of contact with Africans.

We had a houseboy named Mamadou Diallo, a wonderful Muslim man. When we would go out in the night, we would quite often leave our daughter in his charge. We would leave the building and Diallo would be sitting on his prayer rug in front of our building right next to the residence of the Grand Marabou. Our daughter would be on the prayer rug next to him. I am not sure I would have that faith to do that these days but in those days it seemed very natural.

Q: We were going through the last part of the Vietnam War and of course, Senegal had a significant connection with Vietnam in the fact that a lot of Senegalese troops were there. In cleaning up after the war the Vietnamese Senegalese mating left a number of children. How stood things with the Senegalese?

BROWN: No memory. This was 1967 and by that time we are deeply involved in Vietnam. But I don't recall it being an issue. Maybe it was just I wasn't aware of it but I don't recall being aware of Senegalese who had been in Indochina.

Q: Was it an issue? I mean, were you getting questions?

BROWN: No. I don't think it was that I was naive or unaware but I don't recall either Vietnam or civil rights being something that caused much either tension or was raised. Perhaps it was with other people but not at my level.

But in other ways, those were the years when Vietnam dominated our lives. I did not serve in Vietnam, not because they were not looking for me. I received a draft notice somewhere in the

mid-60's and had a deferment, an education deferment. Then I had a marital deferment and then a deferment because I was a father. Someone said to me "you should tell them you are going in the Foreign Service" and the retort was "they won't understand that. That's what they think they are trying to get you into," another type of Foreign Service. So I didn't serve in the Army or in Vietnam but I do feel strongly that I served my country well and faithfully for 30 years.

I'll try to recall some of the other things that do come to mind when I think of that year in Dakar, special memories.

I mentioned traveling into the interior. There was an American singer who came out of Paris named Steve Waring, a folk singer. USIA had this office in Paris that would find talent in Europe, Americans living there, and send them to the African posts. I made several trips with guitarist Steve Waring to Saint Louis and other places. He was not a great folk singer but it was a way of flying the flag a bit and finding some cultural presence.

I also mentioned that when I was in Washington before I went to Dakar, I was introduced to something called PPBS. One day Jim McGinley called me into his office and asked, "What was that program you told me about that you had worked on in Washington before you came out?"

I said, "PPBS" and he looked at me and basically his thoughts must have been "poor kid" or "just the person I was looking for" because the overseas posts had now been assigned this project and I was placed in charge of it for Dakar. I had to look at all of our programs, speakers, IVs, exhibits, the library and attach a point value to them, and then decide what audiences they were reaching, how much money we were spending. This is the matrix that you talked about. I took this thing so seriously and I thought "how am I going to measure this and that?" I was anguishing over it.

One day at home, I just sat down and arbitrarily attached numbers to it, took it in to Jim and thought well, if he doesn't like it, he can either fire me or change it. So I put down my best thoughts, took it into Jim, he tweaked it a little bit, he sent it in to Washington and I got commended for our presentation which was one of the first and one of the best, etcetera, etcetera. I never told anybody how I had gone about it.

We were very fortunate that year to have a visit from my wife's parents. They had three children. At that point, their son and his wife were in the Peace Corps in Peru. Their younger daughter was with her husband teaching in India. And their older daughter was living in Dakar, Senegal. Their friends back home must have wondered what they had done right or wrong to have their three children on three different continents. They came, stayed in a local hotel, visited us, and went on to India, back through Europe, back home. It was a great to have visitors from back home, to have them see what life was like.

There are a couple other things I recall from my time in my one year, almost exactly in Dakar. I celebrated my 25th birthday there before my wife came out. That was 1966. Looking back, the period from 1963 to 1968 was probably the most formative five years in my life. It happens to all of us, I suppose. It was the time I graduated from college, I completed graduate school with a Master's degree and I met the young woman who would become my wife. I choose a profession

that, unbeknownst to me at the time, became my life's work for the next 30 years and I saw the birth of my two children. Nothing was more formative to the rest of my life than those five years -- education, job, wife and children.

After Ambassador Rivkin died, John McKesson was no longer the DCM. There was a man named Allan Lukens. Allan Lukens had lost his wife and children in a terrible plane crash. Because of that, he loved company, loved people and didn't ever want to be home alone at night. His new wife was the same age as my wife.

We lived in an apartment building. Before I left for work, there would often be a knock on the door. We would open the door and there would be a young man there with a platter on his head full of fresh shrimp. There was a large fleet of small fishing vessels that would go out every night and you could be quite sure what they brought to your door the next morning was fresh off those boats.

There was a restaurant in Dakar, there were many, but there was one in particular that was built on a pier over the sea with crashing waves below. I went there only once or twice but when I did, I would see French people dressed in their bathing suits having a meal, jumping in the water, coming back up, continuing their meal. That was a lifestyle that I didn't know at all. This was my first overseas assignment. I was more inclined on Saturday morning to go in to work and try to clean up my desk. Probably I could have done just as well had I spent a little more time on some of the hedonistic pleasures of Dakar.

We did go out quite often to a beach near the airport where the embassy had a little hut or beach house. We enjoyed many, many afternoons, particularly on the weekend on the beach.

Unfortunately, to get to the airport, there was one place where there was an open sewer and for as long as you could, you would put your hand over your mouth or hold your breath or try not to breathe in.

Beautiful sunsets. Our apartment did not afford us a view of the sunset but of course, being close to the equator, the sun set almost the same time every day and this was one of the joys of Dakar.

I was also introduced to Muslim holidays. This is a very Muslim country; a lot of Catholics but primarily a Muslim country and we were introduced to Ramadan and various other aspects of the Muslim calendar.

There was also the Island of Goreé. It had been used as a slave holding site. In more recent years, American presidents and others have visited Goreé Island. It is now something comparable to a national historical site.

And we used to visit a lot of the Peace Corps volunteers. I remember one in particular in a town south of Dakar on the coast called Mbour. We went down to visit her; we being my wife and daughter and I. There was no place for our daughter to sleep so we put her in a dresser drawer. We pulled out the drawers and put her in there. She was safe.

We had no major health problems associated with living in Africa. My wife did have to go back to the States for a tooth problem, and I began to realize the inadequacies of the French and African dental care. And we were taking the anti-malaria medicine, taking it as we would our entire time in Africa in a way that we might not be comfortable doing these days, just popping pills without knowing what the consequences might be.

So after exactly one year in Dakar, I got the word that I had been reassigned. Dakar was my JOT assignment. I understood all along that I would only be there for one year. I got word that I had been assigned as branch public affairs officer, branch PAO in Douala, Cameroon. I am sure I had to go to a map to try to figure it out. I knew Africa pretty well but Douala was not exactly one of the places that popped into mind, the largest city in Cameroon, a port city but not on the ocean, on the aptly named Wouri River. I had been assigned as branch public affairs officer there.

En route to Douala we stopped in Monrovia, Liberia. I think the justification was consultations at the Voice of America facility. Liberia, for all intents and purposes, was an American colony in Africa. It was the place where we had the largest presence and they had this very large Voice of America facility.

By chance, we happened to know the regional doctor there, Doctor Ron Hilty. He was a college classmate of my wife's and he confirmed that my wife was pregnant with what would be our second child. That made that stop in Liberia an indelible memory for us.

There was another facet to our stop in Liberia. Back in graduate school at Fletcher, I had had contact with Liberians, both Americo-Liberians from the Tubman family that ruled Liberia at that time and an Afro-Liberian, a fellow named Lami Kawah, a fellow with whom I was very close. He was an usher at my wedding and as we drove around Monrovia, there was a route around the city, as I recall, and along it you would find these huge antebellum homes built by the Americo-Liberians, the people who had come back from the United States and sort of recreated the America that they recalled from the American south. They lived much better than the Afro-Liberians, the tribal Liberians who are farther in. Of course, those were the seeds of conflict that have plagued that country more recently.

JOHN A. MCKESSON, III
Deputy Chief of Mission
Dakar (1966-1968)

Ambassador John A. McKesson, III was born in New York March 29, 1922. He received a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from Columbia University. He then entered the U.S. Navy, where he served for four years. Mr. McKesson entered the Foreign Service in 1947. His career included positions in France, Iceland, Germany, Vietnam, and Senegal, and an ambassadorship to Gabon. This interview was conducted by Arthur Day on May 7, 1990.

Q: In Senegal you were DCM?

MCKESSON: I was DCM. That was a very pleasant tour. Nothing sensational happened. I did get to know Senghor and the present president, Abdou Diouf, quite well for Abdou Diouf was secretary general of the presidency at the time, and a very bright man, hard working, intelligent, sincere and dedicated. I am a great admirer of both Senghor and Diouf, and most of the other Senegalese I knew. The problem with Senegal in a nutshell, as anyone who has studied the area knows, is that it is very poor country with few natural resources that has achieved a standard of living that can only be maintained through foreign aid. So how long does this go on? I suppose it could go on indefinitely, but it creates a very difficult situation. Austerity has to be constantly pushed on people who after decades are getting tired of it.

Q: Did the U.S. have a very well developed African policy at the time you were there?

MCKESSON: It is hard to say. When Soapy Williams was Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, he was, of course, very pro-African and very keen on pushing Africa. Very proud that he had been appointed Assistant Secretary for Africans Affairs by President Kennedy even before Dean Rusk had been chosen as Secretary, but he was terribly ineffective in the Department as I found out when I was in S/S. The different bureaus compete with each other for the attention of the Secretary and the White House, and some Bureaus were very skillful at it, such as IO [International Organizations]; it always got its papers around to everybody. It was a past master, while incompetent bureaus were always left behind. Whenever there was a conflict between EUR and AF over the policies of the colonial powers vis a vis the African powers, EUR would do better in pushing their papers through than the African Bureau. This was seen by somebody like myself in S/S. We would go back to AF and say "You have to improve your paper" to help them, but you cannot do anything beyond what the bureaus produce, and some bureaus produce very well-written papers that hit the mark and papers that come from other bureaus are constantly beside the mark; they obviously are not going to fare as well.

Q: It does make a much greater difference than it should, doesn't it?

MCKESSON: Much more than it should. In this case, of course, probably Africa would have ended up at the tail end anyway, because it was the area of least interest to everyone. Later on during the Kissinger period, it was obvious that Africa was treated with benign neglect, which was the best way of describing our policy.

Q: When you actually went to Dakar, how did the Washington approach to Africa look from there?

MCKESSON: It was a strange period. The ambassador was Mercer Cook, one of the finest gentlemen I had ever known. He was a black American who had been a Howard University professor for many years and had had one tour of duty as ambassador to Niger. He was a political appointee, appointed by Kennedy. Then Kennedy sent him to Dakar, partially because he had been a classmate of Senghor, and he had known Senghor all his life, had translated some of his books, and had taught about Senghor at Howard. They were close friends. Cook arrived as a really intelligent, well-informed man who was determined to do a good job. As he saw it, his job was to get aid for Senegal and Senegal was certainly a deserving country. Unfortunately in

those early days of independence the feeling in Washington was, for some strange reason, that the wave of the future was in countries like Guinea, Mali and Ghana, and people like Nkrumah, Sekou Toure, and Modibo Keita. People like Senghor and Houphouet-Boigny, were considered hopelessly neo-colonialists, who were just expected to fade away. Well, history proved exactly the opposite. Nkrumah was overthrown, Guinea went completely downhill, Modibo Keita was finally overthrown and Senghor and Houphouet continued and did fairly well.

To get back to my point, the Department was giving more aid to Guinea, which was pro-Marxist at the time, than it was to Senegal, which was very friendly to us and where we had sent an ambassador who was a personal friend of the president. Ambassador Cook tried very hard to reverse that and get more aid for Senegal and when Washington continued to turn a deaf ear, he simply up and resigned. This was the only case that I know of an ambassador resigning purely out of moral reasons. He disapproved of our policy. Of course I became chargé as a result of it, but I hated to see him go like that.

Q: That was the situation the whole time you were in Senegal?

MCKESSON: The whole time. It was a continuing battle between Cook and Washington, with his staff in Dakar trying to persuade Washington to be more forthcoming to Senegal. The Department gave a little, but basically turning a deaf ear because it was convinced that Senegal wasn't important and that all the pro-communist countries would be the wave of the future.

Q: Did they feel that Senegal was part of the French...

MCKESSON: That was another thing, absolutely. There were two things against Senegal; it was conservative, pro-West, and seemed sort of reactionary and also because it was very close to France, and still is, was another factor; let the French take care of it.

Q: What was your impression of the French in Senegal; were they very active in the administration?

MCKESSON: They were very active indeed. The French ambassador was a very active ambassador, a very strong person, Jean de la Garde.

Q: You must have had good relations with the French.

MCKESSON: My relations were good and I was able to get honest opinions from them on rather delicate subjects. It became clear not only with embassy people but with business people that they still had - mind you I arrived in Senegal in 1964 - there was still a feeling, a fear, that the United States was going to move into Africa as we had in Indochina, that somehow we were going to push the French out, stop their influence, and be the dominant force in Africa. This lingered on during most of my tour, but it was beginning to fade by the time I left, perhaps even before, because eventually the facts spoke for themselves. We gave so little aid to most of these African countries and were not interested in them at all, so that any fear that we were going to pull a Vietnam gradually vanished from the French minds. That was the only concern that caused

some tenseness between the French and the Americans, but it vanished as our lack of interest in Africa became evident.

IRVIN D. COKER
USAID
Washington, DC (1967)

Irvin D. Coker was born in Petersburg, Virginia in 1935. He graduated from Howard University and served in the U.S. Military in South Korea. His postings abroad included Ghana, Uganda, and Nigeria. Mr. Coker was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1993.

Q: What were your first impressions of Africa?

COKER: When I got to Senegal, I was impressed with the kinds of buildings I saw and the hotels. It certainly looked more modern and cosmopolitan than I had anticipated. I hadn't known what to expect. The kind of exposure that we had had previously about Africa was somewhat off center in terms of what Africa was really all about. So when I arrived in Senegal, I was very pleased with what I saw. Because of my investigative background in auditing, when I went out to these places, I began to look at the situation on the ground. I got a direct impression of what the people were like. I have to admit that when I got to Dakar, Senegal, I found a situation where there were some people who literally were sleeping on the streets. That hurt. There were people begging for money to buy food. That also hurt. I was saying to myself: "Why is this?" I also set out to talk to some of the AID and Embassy people. I started looking into some of the projects which they had under way there. One of our responsibilities in traveling was to look at some of the projects that had been designed and implemented. I wanted to know how far they had gotten, how the accounting system was set up, and what information was being provided to the Regional Financial Assistance System in Paris and London. I began to unravel some things that were mind boggling, and one in particular.

A major celebration had taken place in Senegal. Ambassador Murcia Cook, in recognition of this particular event, had wanted to do something for Senegal. It had been arranged to bring over a boat as a present from the U.S. Government to the Government of Senegal on the occasion of this particular, major event. No one had paid much attention to the fact that, when you get a few feet off the coast of Senegal, you are in deep, ocean water. This was not a vessel which was geared to being in deep water. So the vessel was placed in a dry dock, and there it had sat for several months, if not years before I got there.

I was asked the question: "What is going to happen with this vessel?" In other words, what are you going to do with this boat? Is it going to be sent back to the U.S.? No one had any idea of what they were going to do with this boat.

I saw the taxpayers' money wasted on this ship. Then I started digging into some AID programs and discovered that AID had started a rice production project in Senegal in the Casamance area

of southern Senegal, because they found that Senegal was too dependent on the import of rice. Consumption far exceeded production. Then, lo and behold, we had sent USDA [United States Department of Agriculture] personnel to Senegal. They had looked carefully at the country and then identified a place in the Casamance area for this rice production project. They had done this without using Senegalese Government people in selecting the site for this project.

By the time I got there, we had about 16 people under PASA (Participating Agency Service Agreement) contracts [contracts for personal services] from the USDA, sitting around and waiting to do something. When I asked: "What are you waiting to do," they said: "Well, we thought that we were going to be out at this site in Casamance, implementing a project where we could teach the Senegalese how to increase their rice production." When the advance party from USDA arrived at the project site, they found that the area which we had selected was all under water. We had selected a site which is flooded out every year, when it rains. I asked: "Did you know this in advance?" The man I was talking to said: "No." I said: "Well, why didn't you know it in advance?" He said: "Well, we didn't use any of the Senegalese experts for this project." I found that was a waste of money.

I identified problem areas with some other projects. This didn't set too well with some of the AID people. So they asked me why I had come out to Senegal. I said: "Well, it was a combination of things. I was coming out to look at some of the programs and the accounting systems. At the same time this led me to look into some of the things that we were doing, some of which were mistakes. This was a serious problem. In any case, it was a very worthwhile experience being exposed to Senegal.

ALBERT E. FAIRCHILD
Central Complement Officer
Dakar (1967-1969)

Mr. Fairchild was born in Pennsylvania and raised in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. He was educated at the University of North Carolina, the University of Chicago and Georgetown University. Joining the Foreign Service in 1963 he served abroad in Dakar, Kabul, Teheran, Niamey, Teheran and Bangui. In his assignments at the State Department in Washington, DC Mr. Fairchild dealt primarily with Management and African affairs. Mr. Fairchild was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2012.

Q: So you went to Dakar, Senegal. How stood things at that time in Senegal? What was the situation?

FAIRCHILD: Senegal had a very good reputation among Western countries as being a very responsible and reliable country. Leopold Sedar Senghor was the president and was very well respected. He was if I recall correctly the only non-French member of the Academie Francaise. He was a well-regarded poet, a former member of the French parliament, and in fact he helped draft the constitution for the Fourth Republic in France. Senegal, as you probably know, was one

of the first if not the very first French colony in Africa, dating from the 17th century. In fact after the French revolution the four “communes” in Senegal – the towns of Dakar, Rufisque, Thies, and St. Louis – were actually considered part of France and the people there elected representatives to the French parliament. That was modified a bit later for various reasons, but Senegal has a long association with France. Senghor was looked on as a leader among Francophone African chiefs of state. Dakar received a number of visits while we were there from important French personalities, e.g., political personalities like Michel Debre would come visit and consult with Senghor. It was still very much in the French cultural and political zone of influence. For example, when we were there, there was relatively new theater called Teatre Daniel Sorano. We got current French stars at the time, people like Francoise Hardy and Johnny Hallyday. I think the aged Tino Rossi even showed up once, drawing an older crowd of course. But at that time there were about 30,000 French people still living in Senegal, of whom over 20,000 lived in the Dakar peninsula.

Q: Well the U.S. Consul General in Dakar really covered most of Francophone Africa during the colonial period. I guess it was still considered pretty much the pre-eminent post in Francophone Africa, wasn't it?

FAIRCHILD: Absolutely. It was also the former capital of French West Africa. Abidjan was beginning to emerge as a power in the 1960s, maybe because of economic interests there. There were the important cocoa and coffee crops in Ivory Coast, and there were also a lot of industries – even if many of them were final assembly as opposed to indigenous industries. Textile production was very important too, and Ivorian textiles were exported to many African countries. And Felix Houphouët-Boigny, the Ivorian president, was at the time right behind Senghor as a leading Francophone Africa political leader.

Q: Who was our ambassador when you were there?

FAIRCHILD: When I first arrived it was William Rifkin, for whom the Rifkin award was named. I found him a fascinating if somewhat rough hewn character. If I remember correctly he was a former law partner of Arthur Goldberg from Chicago, before Goldberg was on the Supreme Court. Rifkin had in fact been a political appointee ambassador to Luxemburg under John Kennedy. Then he wanted another embassy, and he was sent to Senegal under President Johnson. I think he was a frustrated man in Dakar because he was high-powered, high-energy Chicago lawyer. When he said jump he wanted everybody to jump. Of course, all we Americans did jump, but the Senegalese have a much more languid approach to life. They didn't jump as fast as he wanted, ever. Also Ambassador Rifkin smoked a lot, and that wasn't good for his health. He was also disarmingly direct, at least he was with me. I remember when I called on him the day after I arrived, he looked at me and he said. “You are going to need two things right away. First you will need a car, and if you don't have enough funds of your own I will be happy to lend you at no interest the money you need to buy one, because you have to get around. Especially since you are starting off in the consular section. The second thing you need is a haircut.” Slave to fashion that I was, I had a fairly long hair, much longer than it is today, and certainly much more on top. And I certainly needed my car three or three and a half months later when Ambassador Rivkin woke up one Sunday morning and fell over dead of a massive heart attack. On that sad day my first assignment was to go out to the N’Gor beach area near the

Embassy's weekend beach house to tell guests whom he had invited to a picnic that the picnic was off because our ambassador was dead. I will always remember another thing that happened with Ambassador Rivkin. For good reason I had the reputation of having the best French among the younger people in the embassy. He came over to me at a reception in his residence, grabbed me by the arm, and said, "Quick, how do you say scholarship in French." So I replied "bourse." The Ambassador's reaction was immediate – "No, bourse means stock market." So, as politely as I could, I said, "Yes, it does, but it also means scholarship." He grumbled and walked away, with a disgusted look on his face. The next day he called me into his office and said, "I just wanted to apologize, you were right. It does mean both. Thanks."

Q: That in a way is significant to talk about people because there are not many of these high charging types who will do that.

FAIRCHILD: My second ambassador who came in several months later was L. Dean Brown, Lewis Dean Brown.

Q: How was he?

FAIRCHILD: I quickly became an acolyte in the Dean Brown church. He was a wonderful person. I liked him very much. He had a slightly gruff manner but I thought he was a superb boss. He was the one who taught me that if you are unhappy with a subordinate's behavior you tell him so in private. But if you are happy with it praise him in public. That was one of the basic lessons that I remember learning from him. He was 48 years old at the time, which was considered a very young age at which to be ambassador – at least then it was. He had worked in African affairs on the Congo desk back during the early, violent days of that country's independence. He had also become quite active in AFSA, the American Foreign Service Association, and I remember his telling me once he thought he was sent to Dakar as ambassador to get him out of town because he was known as one of the young Turks at the time. Somebody apparently thought he was more trouble than he was worth, and would be less trouble if he were out of Washington, although I am sure he enjoyed and liked Dakar.

Q: Well you were a vice counsel basically.

FAIRCHILD: That was the title, but the Department had a really terrific program at the time I was assigned to Dakar, not as a consular officer but as a "central complement officer." What that meant was that one did some time in all sections of the embassy and one's mentor and supervisor for that first assignment was the DCM. My DCM for most of the time I was there was Alan Lukens, who is a good friend and I think also was a very good mentor.

Q: China hand, wasn't he?

FAIRCHILD: No, I think he has done mostly African things. In fact, he was Ambassador in Brazzaville at one point. He was in Denmark as DCM also, also Turkey, but I think there has been a pretty much African focus to Alan's career. But the central complement officer assignment worked such that I would do three months in each section of the embassy. That was during the first year. Then having discovered what I liked, I could express a preference for which

section I wanted for my second year. The management of the embassy would also express its preference as to where they needed me. So I did each section of the embassy, but as I had an extra three or four months I was also sent to the USIA cultural center to work for three or four months. That was very interesting and an enormous amount of fun because I was working mainly on the cultural side. That was the time of the first African tour, under U.S. Government cultural affairs auspices, of the Alvin Ailey Dance Company. So while I wasn't exactly Sol Hurok for this operation, I got involved setting up the program for them, organizing hospitality, working on related advertising, and basically everything connected with the company's appearances in Dakar. It was just a phenomenal experience for a 25-year old junior officer.

Q: From your perspective how was it received?

FAIRCHILD: The Alvin Ailey Dance Company was very well received. The audience was probably more French than Senegalese, but the Senegalese were certainly there in force for all the performances. The dancers were lionized socially in town for two or three days.

Q: This was the preeminent African American ballet troupe.

FAIRCHILD: They did more modern dance than anything else.

Q: Well what were your impressions of the political life in Senegal?

FAIRCHILD: Senegal I think was typical of most Francophone African countries in that there was only one political party, the UPS or *Union Progressiste Senegalaise*. It was basically a socialist party totally dominated by Senghor and his lieutenants. I think they were reasonably liked, but there was not a lot of space for people with other political ideas. The party leadership had to, as I think any party leadership would in Senegal, have some kind of accommodation with the large Muslim brotherhoods of Senegal. The largest and most powerful brotherhood was the Mourides, "mouride" coming from an Arabic word meaning follower. The Mourides have their own caliph, whose capital is a town called Touba. The areas controlled by the Mourides religiously and to a great extent secularly correspond with the main peanut growing areas of Senegal. That is the country's major export product. Senegal also has phosphates, but they came on line after I left. Following Senghor and Abdou Diouf, who was his successor, that link with the brotherhoods – especially the Mourides – may have broken down a bit. Previously candidates who were not endorsed by the Mourides were not going to win, but after the end of the Senghor/Diouf period that became less important. So, Senegal was essentially a conservative, one-party African state.

Q: What was the feeling in our embassy; did we feel it was the French who were calling the shots or not there?

FAIRCHILD: I once heard the French ambassador at the time, Jean Vyau de la Garde, refer to Senegal as "*notre chasse privée*" – our private hunting preserve. They certainly acted that way and they were certainly quite dominant. We were trying to make inroads at least offer some alternatives, seek commercial opportunities, provide economic assistance both developmental

and humanitarian where needed, although our aid program was a relatively small at the time. So I guess we were more or less content to play Avis to France's Hertz.

Q: You are speaking about the traditional rivalry between two automobile rental companies, where Avis, I am putting this in for the reader. Avis used to have an ad saying, "We are number 2, we try harder." Hertz was the big automobile rental company. Did you maneuver within the political and economic world there as a young officer to get out and get information?

FAIRCHILD: Yes, and with relative ease. I assume you mean get out among the Senegalese, because the diplomatic community is always ready to trade views and opinions and gossip. Yes, I think in my case that job was facilitated by Dean Brown's having made me the officer responsible for something called the Ambassador's Special Self Help Fund. This was a fund that at the time, depending on the size of the country, was between \$50,000 to \$100,000 that the ambassador was allowed to use for local small projects that would be helpful to a community but would also show the United States' interest in helping ordinary people in that country. For example, if a community had managed to raise enough money to build its own schoolhouse but didn't have enough extra funds to put a corrugated tin roof on the building, we would buy the tin roof for them. Then there would be a formal dedication ceremony that the ambassador would often attend. So, I went about the country checking on the progress and results of previous projects and trying to start new ones. Many of these projects were actually suggested by Peace Corps volunteers. Once the fund got known better local authorities would steer local communities toward our embassy to ask for help. These were relatively small amounts of money, but working on these projects I traveled pretty much all over the country. In doing such projects you also develop a wide range of contacts, and you of course are able to talk to them about other subjects as well...including political, economic, commercial, well just all other subjects.

Q: Did you see or did our embassy see a growing problem between the Islamic side of the country and the non-Islamic side?

FAIRCHILD: That was not the case in Senegal because Senegal I would guess was 98% to 99% Muslim. There are a fair number of Senegalese who are Christian, and there may even be a few of those who are in the 98-99% who are animist more than Muslim. The President, Leopold Senghor was raised as a Catholic, and indeed there was a small Catholic minority. Among the Muslims at least I think there were three major groups: those who were unaffiliated with the brotherhoods, and then the largest brotherhood was the Mourides, and the Tidjani were a smaller Muslim brotherhood.

Most of the Senegalese seemed to have a relationship with the local Muslim cleric; I guess in other societies you might call them a mullah. They are known as "marabouts" in Senegal. One consults them for spiritual advice, or if one needs – and this is where the animist legacy comes into play – a charm or amulet to ward off certain evil things or if you need a set of prayers to make a certain thing happen, one sees the marabout and makes a donation to his establishment.

Q: Well were there any threats to Senegal from the surrounding countries or elsewhere that we could see at the time?

FAIRCHILD: No, none at all. Mauritania posed a small threat in that slavery was still prevalent in Mauritania. Occasionally Mauritanian bands would come across the river in the north and kidnap Senegalese children to be raised as slaves. But there was no serious threat other than that either from Mauritania or Mali. There was still a Portuguese colony south of Senegal, Guinea Bissau, where there was an active insurgency underway. Of course right in the middle of Senegal itself there is this small country known as the Gambia which is essentially an overgrown river bank or as National Geographic once described it, a “long arthritic finger thrust into the belly of Senegal.” It is a former British colony, very small, and never posed any threat to Senegal.

Q: Was Senegal were Goree was? And had the “Roots phenomenon” started yet, meaning African Americans many of whom whose ancestors left Africa as slaves coming back to seek their roots?

FAIRCHILD: That was the Alex Haley series. That was not until the 1970’s. I don’t think there was very much African-American tourism or roots seeking at that time I was there. There was a museum on the island of Goree, a museum in the so-called *maison d’esclaves* or slave house. You could actually see where people were chained before being put in the long boats that went out to the larger ships that were anchored offshore. It is a very grim place. You just can’t imagine how many people must have gone through that fort.

Q: How stood things in Senegal with our war in Vietnam, because a lot of Senegalese served in the military there. There was more of a tie than say many other places. It was a very unpopular war?

FAIRCHILD: Most Senegalese chose not to raise that subject. If they did they were generally journalists, and they did it in a very polite way. Most were against the war, however. I think this says as much about the Senegalese character as it does the tenor of the times. There were a fair number of Vietnamese in Senegal. Dakar itself as I recall had five or six Vietnamese restaurants, all of which did a pretty good business at the time. I think the Vietnamese were there professionally and probably in positions that were carryovers from the colonial times, meaning education or perhaps civil service. The Vietnam War was probably more of an issue for serious and animated discussion for Americans than among others. I just don’t recall it ever being put on the spot by someone who was criticizing our policy in Vietnam.

Q: How did you feel about that, our involvement in Vietnam at the time?

FAIRCHILD: I thought that we could have done better – we could have had a better, smarter policy. I suppose not knowing much about Vietnam I came up with notions similar to this: if we could make an accommodation with someone like Tito in Yugoslavia, why not with Ho Chi Minh? From what little I knew I didn’t think Ho Chi Minh was the uncritical servant of the Russians or the Chinese anymore than Tito was. I realize before the break with the Soviets that Tito was viewed as one of the most faithful servants of the Comintern there was, but when he did have the break he didn’t become a free marketer by any means, yet we were able to have an accommodation with him as part of a larger Cold War approach to opportunities like the Yugoslav case. Part of that Yugoslav-Soviet rift undoubtedly dated from the war. I understand that when the Soviet Army went through a corner of Yugoslavia they treated the Yugoslavs

pretty much the way they treated Germans in the East or the Poles. They stole what they wanted, raped the women, and just did whatever they felt like doing. That didn't sit well with the Yugoslavs; they were looking for much more comradely treatment from the Red Army than that. And when they complained to the Soviets about it, they were rebuffed by Stalin himself who thought they were at best ingrates to worry over such trifles. But in the Vietnamese situation, I thought we could have profited from the historical problems between Vietnam and China and the less than fully supportive Soviet stance toward their Vietnamese comrades. It also seemed that we were backing the side that clearly didn't have its act together and wasn't a very good long term bet. Shades of China, perhaps.

Q: How did you find living in Senegal?

FAIRCHILD: Well, it was not like living anywhere in the States or in Europe, but it was pretty good. As I served in more African posts later on I think it was about the best I had, certainly in terms of creature comforts. The first apartment we lived in – and most of the staff lived in apartments except for those who had official residences like the Ambassador, the DCM, and I think the Public Affairs Officer – was simple but quite nice. It was a fifth or sixth floor apartment directly across the street from the Catholic cathedral, which was fine except for Sunday morning when they started ringing the bells quite early. Even if you didn't want to, you had to get up about 6:00 because of those bells. The second apartment was one we inherited from the person who was my first boss in the rotation there. He was also one of the best bosses I ever had in the Foreign Service and a wonderful man named Joe Cheevers, Joseph Patrick Cheevers.

Q: I knew Joe.

FAIRCHILD: Joe was probably the nicest and undoubtedly the most civilized boss I ever had. When Joe and his family left we took his apartment, which was a second floor apartment on the Avenue Carde. It was eventually renamed the Avenue Jean XXIII after the Pope. It had a nice view from the balcony in back of the Ministry of Finance. From that balcony we could see the various African girl friends of the Minister, Jean Colin, a Frenchman who had taken Senegalese nationality and was mayor of Joal at the time – Joal being Senghor's hometown. One of the standing jokes in the community was to ask me how many girlfriends did you count this afternoon going into the Ministry of Finance. It was good housing, however, if not luxurious. As I recall we had air conditioning in the two bedrooms but not in the rest of the house. But it was quite comfortable.

Q: Well now you were married at the time.

FAIRCHILD: Yes, to Katya Smirnov.

Q: How did your wife find diplomatic life?

FAIRCHILD: Well I think she enjoyed life in Dakar pretty well. We had a number of friends, a good social life. She chafed a bit about some of the chores that American diplomatic wives were not only encouraged to do but also expected to do. For example, making and delivering hors d'oeuvres for cocktail parties at the Ambassador's or Chargé's residence or showing up for

various teas that were probably less interesting to her than doing other things like volunteer work. She was sensitive about her foreign background, as I think many Foreign Service wives with foreign backgrounds are. She didn't understand why some people got nervous about having Russian traditional food served at our dinner parties. Her response was, "If people don't mind eating spaghetti and meatballs, why should they mind eating *pazharskiye cotlety*?" But I think there was a certain hard feeling among some members of the Embassy family about her being Russian. While not being arrogant or condescending, she didn't have much sympathy or good feeling for people who had culturally insensitive attitudes toward her because of her Russian background.

Q: What about was the Soviet and Communist Chinese presence in Senegal?

FAIRCHILD: Yes, we had a Soviet embassy. I don't recall how large it was, but I remember at one party at the American ambassador's residence we met a man named Boris Samsonov who was the KGB *rezident*, the head of the KGB station in the Soviet embassy there. He was a very handsome man, and spoke very good French. He didn't speak any English, however. At a reception early in our assignment, I noticed he was talking to my wife; he had sort of cornered her. It turned out later he was fishing for information on her family, but she didn't tell him anything about them. As he left he was saying good night to everyone, and after saying good night to me in French he turned to my wife and said in Russian "I hope to see you again. Be sure to tell Albert everything we talked about." She replied, "I will. Of course, I will; I always do." He wasn't pushy after that, and we did not see him or his wife socially. I think that was probably the only serious conversation either of us had with him. The Chinese were, I am trying to remember, I think only the Chinese Nationalists were there at that time. My memory is a little vague on that. I remember the Chinese at later posts. In fact in the Central African Republic there was a night and day difference with our relations with the Chinese from one day to the next, when I guess the word came out from Beijing to start being nice to the Americans. I believe this was in 1979 or 1980. They were standoffish most of time since our arrival, and then one day they were just as friendly as one could wish, they would come over to us at receptions and initiate conversations, and even started inviting us to dinners. It was just totally different.

Q: Did you get out into the countryside or the bush, whatever you call it?

FAIRCHILD: Yes, mostly through my work as the Self-Help Fund officer, but also I was designated as the "publications procurement officer", buying maps and other publications. Occasionally there was a visitor from the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research who was interested in buying publications, but also in visiting the country and talking to people. For example the French had a branch of the *Institut Geographique Nationale* in Dakar that did mineral studies and related surveys. They were happy to share all their publications with us, some of which dated from late colonial times. I suppose we could have gotten those things in Paris, but it was perhaps more convenient to get them there. I remember escorting the person who came from the Department to buy some publications around on two trips. I would look for the things myself, and almost everything was published in Dakar. I remember also going once as an unofficial embassy representative to the "Magal," the annual speech by the grand caliph of the Mourides. There is this huge Mosque complex in Touba, the capital of the Mouride area in Senegal. When I was there the French Ambassador was also present, and one or two other

embassies were also represented. My task was just basically to go, see and be seen, and listen to and report on the speech.

Q: You left there when?

FAIRCHILD: I left there in the late spring of 1969. I transferred back to the Department where, thanks to Ambassador Brown's recommendation, I became one of two staff assistants in the Africa Bureau's front office.

Q: OK, well looking at the time this is a good place to stop I think and we will pick this up in 1969 when you have come back to Washington to the Africa bureau. I put at the end here where we are so we know where to pick it up.

FAIRCHILD: That's fine.

Q: Today is 24 January 2012 with Al Fairchild. You said you had a few things to add.

FAIRCHILD: Yes, we left off with my having left Dakar to go back to the Department in the spring of 1969. We covered my background and education and events in Dakar. I think there are two things I would like to add about background and education particularly about university, and then a couple of short things about Dakar that I neglected to mention last time. I think they are important both because of the history involved as well as events that shaped me for better or worse.

When I was at university, in the summer of 1963 I decided to take most of my savings and go on a summer trip to Europe. For most of the time involved I was banging around on my own, and for several weeks I was with Dennis Sweeny – a friend from UNC, and his brother, Martin. They had hooked up with me when we first went to York from London, both to see York and attend the biannual York festival. The Sweeney brothers eventually rented a car later in the summer in Switzerland, and I went around with them sharing gasoline costs. We covered a lot of ground. I broke off in York to go establish a “beach head” in Rome because we wanted to attend the coronation of Pope Paul VI. I traveled first, using my two-month Eurail pass – that back then only cost \$125. I found a *pensione* for us in Rome, and a few days later the brothers Sweeny arrived. So we did the papal coronation, which we were told was the first ever conducted outdoors, and then we went to Zurich, Geneva, Dijon, and Paris. I remember vividly a mustard laden lunch consisting mostly of ham and cheese sandwiches that we had there in Dijon. We eventually went to the Basque country in France and Spain, and to Pamplona. There of course we all ran before the bulls, on two separate days. The second time we were considerably more sober, and did a far better job. For the rest of the summer I went alone to places in Germany and Scandinavia, and spent some time in Yugoslavia – specifically in Slovenia and Croatia. There were earthquakes that summer in Yugoslavia that messed up the rail connections throughout the entire country.

Q: Which summer was this?

FAIRCHILD: Summer of 1963.

Q: There was a bad earthquake in Skopje.

FAIRCHILD: That is correct. It disrupted all of the rail connections, and some of the road connections. My Eurail pass was not valid in Yugoslavia, so I had to pay my way on the train. But things were quite inexpensive in Yugoslavia then. I remember paying \$1.80 per day for a lovely room, including a full breakfast, at the Grand Hotel Toplice in Bled.

Q: I know I was there. I was head of the consular section in Belgrade. I went down and spent two weeks with an Army MASH hospital outside of Skopje.

FAIRCHILD: I can imagine it was pretty devastating. I read about these earthquakes, and knew there was extensive damage. Also while in Germany I went to Berlin with some guys I met at a youth hostel in Hanover, and went with them into East Berlin for a day. That was interesting, and that day trip along with the time spent in Yugoslavia may have been what caused my security clearance when I came into the Foreign Service to take a little bit longer than it might have otherwise. While in East Berlin we even attended a tent fair set up to celebrate the 70th birthday of “Our Beloved Comrade Walter Ulbricht” – the then head of the East German government. But the point of relating all these European travels is simply to say that they contributed substantially to my decision that I wanted to combine travel and public service in my later life, and so the summer of 1963 was quite determinant in the course of my life.

The other thing I wanted to discuss, or rather add some detail about, was my decision to join a particular fraternity while at UNC. I pledged the fraternity in 1961, and became a full brother in 1962.

Q: What fraternity was that?

FAIRCHILD: It is called St. Anthony Hall, but goes by the Greek letters Delta Psi. I think that was a good experience for me because it taught me how to get along with a core group of diverse people, about 35 brothers and pledges at the time. The fraternity experience thus gave me whatever sort of incipient political skills you get from making your way in such a group. My fraternity brother and roommate for one year, Matt Weisman, often joined with me to play peacemaker between or among small factions in the larger group, and even though the whole fraternity was only about 35 young men there were a number of very contentious issues. The emphasis on literary duties, which I discussed earlier, and academic achievement helped me learn not to be embarrassed about using my intellectual skills to exert a constructive influence over others. Of course some of the friendships I made at that time are still active, and are probably closer than some formed in later in life.

There are a couple of other things about Dakar I wanted to mention. I think there were three events or experiences that were important “learning moments” for me. In 1967 there was an Inter-parliamentary Union meeting in Dakar. Various parliamentarians from Western Europe, Asia, the Western Hemisphere, and from even the Soviet Union attended these annual sessions. They did, after all they have a parliament. The American delegation was composed of three senators and seven congressmen, all of whom were accompanied by their wives. This was my

first experience with that dreaded thing known as a CODEL, Congressional Delegation. The Embassy assigned me to stay at the Hotel N’Gor with the group for virtually their entire one-week visit to Dakar. One can learn all kinds of interesting lessons in life when you are up close and personal with people, and I certainly did during that week. Senator B. Everett Jordan from North Carolina was there and I was asked to take special care of him since I was from North Carolina and my mother had known his wife. Senator Gordon Allott from Colorado was there as well. Among the Congressmen, the leader of the group was Emilio Daddario from Connecticut. He was a very impressive man. Congressman Ed Derwinski was there too. He was quite active in the delegation, and I remember also his wife giving a real tongue lashing once to the colonel who was with the group as principal hand-holder. The CODEL had an air force plane to transport them, and the colonel’s job was to make sure they all were kept happy. One afternoon the colonel had offered Mrs. Derwinski some innocuous compliment about her knitting or needlepoint, and she said something like, “It is not beautiful, and you know damn well it is the ugliest needlepoint in the world.” He backed out of the room as Mrs. Derwinski noted in saltier language her displeasure at his generally unctuous and sycophantic behavior. I made a mental note that there was clearly no good purpose to be served in offering Mrs. Derwinski anything but total candor about any subject she raised. Just give her the straight opinion, and I had occasion to do so the next day when she asked me if a trip to the local artisanal market was worth her time. My reply was something like “If you’re interested in well crafted gold filigree work, it’s worth a visit. Otherwise, no.”

Also I think I mentioned that my first assignment was as a “central complement officer,” whereby one worked in each section of the embassy. My first assignment was the consular section, and that’s where I worked for Joe Cheevers. Later on, not too long after Ambassador Dean Brown had arrived, I was actually working in another section when I had a call from him about 11:00 on a Sunday night. He began by apologizing for bothering me since I was not the duty officer, but he thought I was the one to do this. His French neighbor had just dropped by and said he heard that a dozen American sailors had been arrested for murder and were in the first arrondissement lockup. So he wanted me to go down to the jail and sort it all out. So I said, “All right, I will do it.” I had no idea what I was going to do. I also asked, “Should I call you back tonight and let you know what happened?” He said, “Hell no, just tell me in the morning how you fixed it.” That was that. So I went downtown, and in fact there were ten merchant mariners who had been drinking in a bar outside of which someone had the misfortune of being murdered. The police, as is typical in many countries, just rounded up everybody in sight and took them all in to get their statements. Unfortunately the police didn’t speak English and none of the sailors spoke French. So they were just facing each other and didn’t know quite what to do when I walked in. The fact that Senegalese police had automatic weapons was also a reason for the uncommonly quiet demeanor of these sailors. This episode is a good example of why a minimum of 3+ language skills are really necessary, because I had to determine quickly what was the real problem and what was necessary to solve it. I told the sailors that the police just wanted a statement from them. They all said something like, “Oh we didn’t hear or see anything.” I said, “Come on guys, you are in a bar and somebody is shot to death outside. You must have at least heard something, at least a shot or two. That could be your statement.” So the statement was laboriously typed up, and they all signed it, following which the police released them. At that point the merchant mariners decided I was the greatest person in the world, and insisted on buying me a drink. I wasn’t quite sure how to handle this because they

obviously had drunk quite a bit already. So, I said, "Well why don't we go down to the Taverne du Port, which is quite close to where your ship is. I will let you buy me a drink, but you have to promise me that you will go straight back to the ship after that." Thankfully they agreed, and we went down to the port area, had a fine old time for several liquid minutes, and I then watched them stagger off to board their ship. I think I got home about 2:00 in the morning, and slept the sleep of the just.

Last but not least, there was an incident at the end of my tour in Dakar that is best described as one of those funny reverse cultural twist stories. Making my farewell calls, I went to make a call on the deputy chief of protocol in the foreign ministry. I had worked with him on a couple of projects, including the CODEL mentioned earlier and some tricky visa cases. He was waxing eloquently, making excessive use of the subjunctive tense, about what a great fellow I was and what a fine job I had done. Then as I got up to leave he said, "Please before you leave, send me a picture of your queen." I thought at first that I had misunderstood what he said, but then I realized he had me confused with my close friend Peter Gregory-Hood at the British Embassy. Peter is tall and thin, and I was already starting to show some of the weight that I now carry. Peter had a very strong Oxbridge accent in French, whereas I didn't have much of an accent at all. I decided to not make it complicated, and promised send over the photo of Her Majesty as soon as possible. After returning to the Embassy, I rang up my friend Peter who promised to send a picture of the queen – which he did – and in an envelope marked "On Her Britannic Majesty's Service." But attached to it he put one of my calling cards, which he happened to have, and wrote in the corner "PPC," which means "*pour prendre conge*," or essentially "to say farewell." I still wonder if Monsieur Protocol ever noticed the disconnect between a card from the American embassy and a photo of Her Majesty the Queen.

L. DEAN BROWN
Ambassador
Senegal (1967-1970)

Ambassador L. Dean Brown was born in New York in 1920. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Wesleyan University in 1942 he served in the US Army from 1942-1946. His career has included positions in Belgium Congo, Ottawa, Paris, EUR, Rabat, Senegal and the Gambia, Lebanon, and an ambassadorship to Jordan. Ambassador Brown was interviewed by Horace J. Torbert in May 1989.

Q: *Then how did you come to go to Senegal?*

BROWN: There were many ways to communicate with the President of the United States, and Lyndon Johnson was President. If you understand Lyndon Johnson, you understand how to communicate. That is, at 3:00 in the morning, he's got nothing to do and he wants something to read. So there was a piece of paper produced by the secretariat in the State Department called "The President's Evening Reading." It was done about 9:00 or 10:00 at night, and if you were around, you could get something in it. And there wasn't anybody to check with; you just put it in.

Because no one was going to see that except the President. The Secretary of State wasn't going to see it or anybody else.

So I produced a lot of stuff for that thing on various things, and Lyndon Johnson liked it. He called in his chief of staff and said, "How long has he been in Washington?" They said, "A while." He said, "Get him an embassy." So they called me to the White House. A guy says, "What do you want?" I was smart enough not to say, "What's vacant?"

I knew what was vacant. So I said, "I'll take Senegal." He said, "Good. I thought you were going to ask for one of the impossible ones."

Q: You are fairly unique as a Foreign Service officer to have had that access to the President.

BROWN: No, others did.

Q: I had it, but because I was in the congressional relations group, he mistakenly thought that I was one of his boys. [Laughter] He wasn't gentle. He didn't like the East Coast establishment.

BROWN: Not at all. You had to make sure that Lyndon Johnson understood that you worked your way through college. If you told him that, you were okay. But if he thought that your father had paid for you to go to Harvard, you were dead with him.

So then I went to Senegal. Senegal is a pleasant African country. The president was a fine gentleman, a poet. He earned his Ph.D. in the same class as Georges Pompidou. He had been a minister in the French Government right all along before independence, and he was a urbane gentleman, from a very small tribe, which allowed him to rule the country, because if he had come from one of the major tribes, then everybody would have been in big trouble.

Q: The other major tribe.

BROWN: Yes. So what have you got to do there? Not much. I mean, it's a nice, pleasant place. There are a certain number of bilateral problems. But I found that the president of Senegal, when I would go see him, I would take a bunch of little pieces of paper along, the bilateral things, he'd say, "What are they?" I'd mention them. He'd say, "Okay, fine. Just give me those papers. I'll take care of those." Because he didn't want to talk about that; he wanted to talk about the world. He was not interested in talking to ambassadors about nickel-and-dime problems: should AID build a little bridge across this river or not? That sort of thing. Every time I'd go to the States, which I did frequently, because I went to the U.N. for a while and then I worked on that big task force of Diplomacy for the '80s, and that took a lot of months out of my tour there, but every time I'd return, I'd get a phone call from his office. "The president wants to see you." And he'd say, "What's going on?"

Q: When you came back.

BROWN: Yes. "What's going on? Let's talk. Let's narrow it down. I don't want to talk about bilateral. What is the attitude of Washington towards African states? What do they think of the

radicals? Are they ready yet, as some of us are, to try and set up an African initiative with South Africa?" Things like that. And that made him a very fascinating man.

Q: Was he of reasonably common sense about the major problems, or was he sort of an ideologue?

BROWN: Oh, no, no. Very common sense. He just thought that the Sékou Tourés and the Nyereres and some of the more ostentatious dictators, particularly the ones that had spouted socialism while practicing concentration-camp politics, he just thought they were for the birds.

Q: Yes. Nyerere is a perfect example.

BROWN: Perfect example. He said, "I'm a socialist." Everybody's a socialist in Africa. They can't mean it. They know collective farms won't work.

After he'd retired, I went to see President Seuzhor in Paris. We had coffee with his wife, just the three of us. I said, "Now, Mr. President, you got your country to independence. You were president for a long time. You are one of the few presidents in all of Africa who ever resigned his office and then left the country for a while so your successors could carry on."

I said, "I know you'll probably go back some day. I assume you'll probably live as modestly there as you do here," which was very modest indeed. The whole apartment was about as big as this room. I said, "For Africa, what's the most important thing?" And he said, "That in the good universities they continue to teach Greek and Latin."

Q: That is pure Paris, of course.

BROWN: How about that? [Laughter]

Q: I must say the French did a fantastic job of--

BROWN: Well-educated people. That's right.

Q: They took care of that sort of thing and it seems to have paid off because the French colonies have been stabler than the British ones.

BROWN: Yes.

Q: Interesting thought.

BROWN: So that was that. That was Senegal. As I was going through into the third year of Senegal, I said to my wife, "I know what we're going to do for the rest of the year. Let's get last year's date book out, because we'll be doing the same thing." And she said, "Oh, God!" [Laughter]

I'm trying to remember exactly how it worked. I guess I was back on leave or consultation or something. I was wandering around, and I was called in, first of all, by Joe Sisco, who said he wanted to see me. He said, "Dean, you're going to go to Beirut as ambassador." I said, "I don't know anything about the Middle East." He said, "That's the idea."

Then I went around seeing some people that I knew, saying, "What's going on?" They said, "Well, the President and Henry Kissinger are fed up with the reporting from the Middle East. They don't understand a word of it. All these people are experts, Arabists, and it's all too long and too complicated."

I guess it was Eagleburger or somebody on Kissinger's staff, said--

Q: Possibly even Bill Macomber had something to do with it, it occurred to me.

BROWN: No, no. It was Kissinger. I was back in Senegal by then. I was called and told to report to San Clemente and not stop in Washington. The President was out at San Clemente. So naturally, I stopped in Washington. They said, "All the signals have been changed. You're going to go to Jordan and Bill Buffum is going to go to Beirut, and there are going to be some other changes." I said, "Is that why I'm going out there?" They said, "We assume so."

So I went out there. Thank God somebody told me, because when we got out there, the President grabbed me and said, "Now, what are we going to do about Jordan?" We walked around the lawn there, the President striding, with me trying to keep up with him.

ALAN W. LUKENS
Deputy Chief of Mission
Dakar (1967-1970)

Ambassador Alan W. Lukens was born and raised in Philadelphia. He joined the Foreign Service in 1951. His career included positions in Turkey, Martinique, France, Morocco, South Africa, Senegal, and Kenya, and an ambassadorship to the Congo. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

Q: To Senegal as Deputy Chief of Mission. You were there from 1967 to 1970.

LUKENS: Yes, I was chosen by Ambassador Rivkin, when he was in Personnel looking for a DCM, and finally he asked me. And then he died suddenly, after he got there. So when I got there I was Chargé for six months until Dean Brown came. And Dean Brown was gone a lot of the time, working back in "Diplomacy for the '70s", so I had a very interesting time there. We liked the Senegalese very much, they were the nicest people in West Africa...

Q: Could you describe the situation in Senegal?

LUKENS: Well, Senegal of course, was then run by Leopold Senghor, who was one of the original Francophone leaders. He had been nicknamed the "Black Frenchman"; his wife was French. He's one of the few people in Africa who has retired gracefully without any coup. And then came President Abdou Diouf, who was a good friend. He was then Administrator of the Plan and moved up to Prime Minister while I was there. I think Senghor lasted--I forget how many--five or six years after that. The atmosphere was very good. While again, it was in the French area, Senegalese maybe being closer to us, or a little bit more educated than the Central Africans, were very open and very friendly. It was a nice period to be there.

Q: What were American interests in the area?

LUKENS: Well, again, there weren't all that many. We tried to develop some investment in commercial exchanges and so on, and a certain amount with the Peace Corps, with the USIS exchanges, visit to the States. We had quite a lot of cultural interest. Of course, Senghor was the author of "Negritude" and also of "Francophonie", and the French, of course, played on the Francophonie. The Negritude theme opened up for us and he was always interested in this, and with relations with black Americans.

Q: Was Senegal an area from which many of the blacks of the United States came from? Or was it more of the slave catching type?

LUKENS: You had the island of Gorée off Dakar where the slave ships were actually filled up. At this point there is a retired Ambassador, Dumont, who lives there. They have tried to get the old Consulate turned into a museum. I don't know how successful they've been with that. But an awful lot of slaves went through there. I think the majority that came to the United States eventually, came from further south in Africa rather than from Senegal. I don't think there so many Senegalese that went. That was a kind of way-station. The Arabs would bring them in and they would leave from there. I'm not absolutely sure about that. But in the modern day context there has always been a very nice symbiotic relationship between Senegal and the United States that has survived or overcome any kind of antipathy about the French area.

Q: In this period were there any particular problems?

LUKENS: No, there really weren't. We had a lot of Congressional visits. We had some ship visits. Senegalese problems were endemic to Africa. They needed more help in this and that, and we began to get things going. I was there before the disasters in the Sahel, and our Embassy was reasonably small at that stage. Now Dakar is a much bigger place because it's an AID regional headquarters. It was a very nice period to be there and we have only fond memories of it. But I don't remember any outstanding problems per se.

Q: And then you moved again as a DCM to Nairobi in Kenya.

LUKENS: That's right.

Q: This is from 1970 to '72. How did this come about?

LUKENS: It came about because the Ambassador, Bob McIlvaine, asked if I would come, the way Personnel used to work. He'd been a friend for years dating back to when we were in the Congo days together. That was a very exciting time at that point in Kenya. There was a lot to do, a great many relationships to build with Kenya. Again, the Embassy was much smaller than it is today, and we didn't have all the regional functions that we seem to now. It was pleasant living. It was a nice place for the children and we were intensely busy there. But, of course, it was great fun to be with the McIlvaines who were close friends.

Q: Why would you be so busy there?

LUKENS: Maybe part of it was American tourism, CODELs, and everything else. People came through because they liked Kenya with all the game parks. But the British had a very different attitude from the French. When they left both these places, they didn't have the money. They welcomed Americans coming in, and so I guess we were still behind the British but we were certainly well up there as No. 2. There were American companies coming in, and all kinds of exchanges going on, and a great deal to be done in a representational way.

Q: Well, looking at both Senegal and Nairobi--one of the a thesis put forward often by people in the academic world, is that economic interests drive our relationships with countries. And I wonder if you could remark about that at that time both in Senegal and in Kenya.

LUKENS: I don't think that's true. We had more economic interests in Nairobi and Kenya than we did in Senegal, but I think that's a very cynical point of view that many people take. The French specifically take that, very much. But a lot of other people do, I mean "the oil companies decide our position on this and that" and so on. I think it's a more personal thing in Africa--puts this generality to the rest of the world, but I think that how the Chief of State feels he treated by the United States, how his top people are, is at least as important and maybe more so than any commercial efforts. Obviously commercial interests are important and we support them. But I think, when you look over the history of Africa, where our interests are basically minimal compared to the rest of the world, our influence--whatever there is--has been developed by personal contact, by diplomats, and by how we treat their people and not so much just by commercial rationale.

WALTER J. SHERWIN
Program Officer, USAID
Dakar (1969-1970)

Walter J. Sherwin joined ICA in 1959 as a civil service employee. He joined the USAID foreign service in 1965 and served in Upper Volta, Madagascar, Senegal, Niger, and Guinea. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1999.

Q: What kinds of projects are we talking about?

SHERWIN: I believe projects were developed in many of the fields where AID normally provided assistance. However, my recollection of this is scant, because my basic responsibility in Dakar, where I was transferred in 1969, was to work on what was left of the bilateral programs in Senegal, Mali, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia. In fact, I didn't work on any multi-donor projects. I did help mount one regional project -- a poultry raising effort that involved Guinea, Mali, and Senegal.

Q: How do you make a project like that regional?

SHERWIN: Well, it's not easy. You use a vehicle like the Organization of Senegal River States as regional sponsor. Its French acronym was OERS. The chicks were raised in Mali and at a certain age they were to be sent to farms, poultry raising centers, in Guinea and Senegal.

Q: That made it regional?

SHERWIN: Yes, and the OERS signing on to the project made it legitimate for AID to be involved. The foundation for the project was a bilateral poultry raising project that had already begun in Mali.

Q: What was your view of this kind of a project?

SHERWIN: I didn't see the outcome of it. I was there at the early stages, but I think it was awkward because we were dealing with three different countries, each with different interests and capabilities. We had the difficulty of coordinating project activities, raising chicks in one country and sending them by air for further raising and processing in another country. It was difficult enough in those days just to run a bilateral project, never mind a complex regional one. I would be very surprised if the record shows that this was a success.

Q: But this was an attempt to maintain programs in these countries under the Korry Report policy where we didn't have bilateral programs.

SHERWIN: That's right. I might mention as an aside that one man lost his life because of this project. He was a Guinean named Oumar Balde who was an official in the OERS in Senegal. He was our contact point, and we became very friendly with him. He had escaped Guinea for political reasons some years earlier. He was on Sekou Touré's enemies list, but Guinea was an OERS member and part of this project, and Balde decided to go back to Guinea to undertake negotiations for this project under assurance that he would be well-received as an OERS representative. Well, the minute he landed in Guinea he was apprehended and promptly hanged. That was a shock.

Q: By Sekou Touré?

SHERWIN: Yes, the president, the dictator of Guinea. Not a nice man.

Q: So when did you go to Senegal?

SHERWIN: I went to Senegal in February, 1969, and stayed there until June of 1970.
Assignment in Senegal – 1969

Q: By this time RUA had disappeared.

SHERWIN: RUA had disappeared and in its place we had the new regional offices in West and Central Africa.

Q: The one that you were involved with covered what countries?

SHERWIN: I'm not sure I remember all the countries, but I think they included Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Mali, Upper Volta, Niger, Togo, and Benin. Sierra Leone and The Gambia were ex-British colonies; all the rest were part of former French West Africa. The other office in the Cameroon covered the Central African countries.

Q: What was your sense of the changing U.S. policy toward these countries during this period? It must have been kind of a revolution in policy interest in that area in respect to what were we trying to do, what our focus was, the U.S. interest.

SHERWIN: I guess our purpose, within the limited resources that Congress made available to us, was to hang on and maintain some influence and some developmental contact with these countries. It is really no way to run a development program, but AID had no choice but to go the regional and multi-donor route if it wanted to stay active in these countries.

Q: Why is it no way to run a development program?

SHERWIN: To constantly change the organization and mode of programming does not make for sound programs in developing countries. There are times when a regional or multi-donor approach is legitimate and feasible, but to rule out bilateral projects entirely adds greatly to the complexity of project design and implementation. Now, I was in Senegal just as the droughts were getting more serious.

Q: This would be 1969?

SHERWIN: Yes. As I mentioned, I had been involved in running a drought relief program in '66 in Upper Volta. However, the droughts were intermittent, and the term Sahel was only a geographer's term then, not in common usage at all. It was only in the early '70s that people in the U.S. became conscious of the Sahel because of the length and severity of the drought in that region. And that's what caused the programming tide to turn once again. In the '70s we restored bilateral programs to these countries, basically because of the drought. And it's a good thing we had remained active in these countries through the regional and multi-donor years, however awkward it was, because this enabled us to move more quickly back into the bilateral mode when the drought made this necessary.

Q: What was your understanding of why the drought?

SHERWIN: I think in large part it was cyclical, but it was exacerbated by population pressures on the edge of the desert. Farmers from the more heavily vegetated southern regions of the Sahel were pressing northward into drier areas where livestock herding was predominant. This pushed herders further north, accelerating the process of desertification. The desert was creeping southward.

Q: How did it affect your career in what you were doing in Senegal? Were you part of a mission there?

SHERWIN: I was part of CWAORA and also worked closely with the embassy, but drought relief was not within my bailiwick in '69-'70. If AID was furnishing any drought relief at the time, the Food for Peace officer in CWAORA was responsible for it. But this was still before people realized that the region was in for a long-term drought.

Q: What were you working on?

SHERWIN: I worked on phasing out various bilateral projects. One was an agricultural project being carried out in the Casamance project in southern Senegal south of The Gambia.

Q: You were phasing that out?

SHERWIN: The project may still have had several years to go, and it wasn't going to be ended prematurely. But once terminated, any follow-up project would have had to be regional or multi-donor rather than bilateral.

Q: What was your understanding of that project? What was it supposed to be doing?

SHERWIN: It was a farmer training project basically. I don't recall the details of it. Then, there was a lot of cleanup work that had to be done in terms of reconciling local currency accounts from previous PL 480 Food for Peace shipments of grain, including drought relief. Both Title I loans and Title II grants were involved. The host government was responsible for depositing the proceeds from the sale of PL 480 commodities into counterpart accounts. That local currency was then to be jointly programmed for use in agreed projects. There was a lot of money that hadn't been deposited into the counterpart accounts and from there into the project accounts, and I had to dig into these matters in Senegal and Mali.

Q: Did you find it?

SHERWIN: Yes, we found it, and Al Hurt, the director, in his evaluation report of me gave me credit for renegotiating local currency loans. He said there was evidence of large ultimate savings to the United States.

Q: What did your negotiations produce?

SHERWIN: We saw to it that the proceeds from food sales were in fact deposited into the counterpart accounts and then applied as previously agreed to various projects. In a number of

cases, the uses of the funds, both counterpart and AID dollars, had to be renegotiated to better reflect current project needs.

Q: What were they being used for?

SHERWIN: To help pay the local costs of the bilateral projects. AID contributed dollars to cover offshore expenses. Any money that the host government contributed to a project from a counterpart account was considered equal to any of its own budgetary funds that it put up.

Q: So you were programming in effect the government's contribution to the projects?

SHERWIN: Yes, at least partly.

Q: Did you run into any resistance to the use of these funds or this kind of arrangement?

SHERWIN: Well, once I dug into the accounts and presented the hard numbers to the governments as diplomatically as possible, they were really quite cooperative. After all, we weren't taking the money back, we were just finding it and making sure it was deposited and programmed.

Q: Well, are there some other activities that you were primarily concerned with when you were in Senegal?

SHERWIN: Yes. There was construction of secondary and vocational schools, well-drilling, road construction, rice and poultry production, housing loans, a cattle vaccine laboratory in Mali, and probably some other projects that I don't recall now 30 years later. Many of the projects involved the use of counterpart along with U.S. dollars. Most of the activity was in Senegal, but I also made field trips to The Gambia, Guinea and Mali -- quite a few trips to Mali, in fact.

Q: Generally, you were in phase-out mode.

SHERWIN: Yes. Thinking about Mali, it is amazing, considering the largeness of the program that was reestablished there in the '70s, the degree to which we deprogrammed in the '60s. I mean, there was hardly anybody left at the mission when I was working on the phase-out in '69 and '70.

Q: This was out of the Korry Report or from something else?

SHERWIN: It was basically the Korry Report that dictated the phase-out.

Q: And you were trying to find some regional basis for carrying on.

SHERWIN: Yes. The Dakar office that Al Hurt ran had a good number of technicians whose sole job was to develop regional and multi donor projects.

Q: Is there one that stands out in your mind?

SHERWIN: Mainly the regional poultry project we talked about that I had some involvement with. I was so tied up with the nitty gritty of bilateral programs that I'm afraid I never got a good feel for the other regional and multi-donor projects that the staff was working on.

Q: How long were you in Senegal?

SHERWIN: Until July 1970. I was there about 17 months.

Q: Were you long periods in any of these posts?

SHERWIN: No, two years in Upper Volta, 17 months in Madagascar and 17 months in Senegal.

Q: You were phasing down or phasing out programs?

SHERWIN: In Upper Volta, 1965-67, we were still starting up a few projects and just beginning a phase-down of the program. By the time I got to Senegal, we were clearly phasing down and out.

Q: That is not so exciting is it?

SHERWIN: No! But each of the countries I was stationed in stands out in my mind as a unique situation and a unique place. I wouldn't trade those experiences for anything. We spent a total of ten years in Africa.

Q: What stood out as being unique in your situation?

SHERWIN: Just the people, the culture, the art. I recall a spectacular dance program and an African version of Macbeth that we saw in Dakar. Yesterday my wife and I went to a Nigerian play at the Kennedy Center, and we felt completely at home.

Q: Which place did you prefer?

SHERWIN: I think just from a country living standpoint, Madagascar was the most pleasant. Dakar was a close second. I think the city has deteriorated since then, with a great deal of crime and overcrowding, but it was a very nice city when we were there. It sits on a promontory on the west coast of Africa, and there is a wonderful wind for most of the year that makes the climate very pleasant. Upper Volta was a difficult place. But, again it was fascinating; it was our first post. We enjoyed our contacts with the people.

Q: How did you find working with local government people?

SHERWIN: Really quite pleasant. I think if you were serious about your work and knew what you were doing, they respected that, and they were good people to deal with. It was often frustrating following up to get governments to meet their commitments. They were so short-funded and short-staffed. Travel conditions were difficult -- washboard roads in Upper Volta,

deep potholes in Madagascar, but it was pleasant to deal with the people. In Madagascar, we had close relations with the people. We would go to their homes, they would come to ours. That was not the case in Upper Volta and Senegal.

JOHN L. LOUGHRAN
Chargé d'Affaires
Senegal (1970-1972)

Ambassador John L. Loughran was born in New Jersey in 1921. After receiving a Bachelor's degree from Lehigh University in 1942 he served as an aviator in the Marine Corps during World War II. He later received a Master's degree from Harvard. His career included positions in Bonn, Liberia, Senegal and the Gambia, Washington, DC, and an ambassadorship to Somalia. Ambassador Loughran was interviewed by Horace G. Torbert on June 22, 1988.

Q: When you finished that assignment [in Gambia], you just moved next door, is that what happened?

LOUGHRAN: Yes. Dean Brown was already under consideration for posting to Jordan. The nominee to replace him had not received his letters of acceptance from the Senegalese Government, so the African Bureau wanted somebody there with experience in the area. I visited Senegal frequently to see ambassador, Brown, and knew the situation fairly well. So the Department transferred me to Dakar as a chargé. Subsequently, Ambassador Clark assumed charge.

It was only to be a year, and then, of course, Ed Clark was given the opportunity as ambassador to Buenos Aires.

Q: Ambassador Loughran, you were just explaining that the new chargé in Bathurst had died, and you were asked to stay a little longer than you expected in Senegal. Do you want to pick up from there and tell us about the job in Senegal?

LOUGHRAN: I must say, I was wedded to the word "service" in our organization, and it's meant exactly that to me, and I loved every aspect of the Foreign Service career. So when Ed Clark asked me--as I thought, in a moment of weakness--when he heard the devastating news of losing his chargé in Bathurst, now Banjul, would I stay on for another year, I just jumped at the chance and said, "Of course, I'll stay on for another year. Delighted."

Q: What was the name of Bathurst?

LOUGHRAN: Banjul. They divested themselves of Lord Bathurst's name and it's now a good old Wolof town, Banjul. It will always be Bathurst to me.

Q: You stayed for a year. What were our principal relation problems with Senegal at that time? What kinds of things did you work on?

LOUGHRAN: The drought of the Seventies had already devastated the peanut crop and the rice crops in Senegal. The major problems were economic. Politically, under Senghor, the situation was stable. He was not an autocrat. He always told us, as a former member of the assembly in Paris and an agregé in languages, that he would retire, he would step down, and he would not find a bullet between his two ears. As you will recall, years later he followed through on that, retired and turned over the reins to the Dauphin, Abdou Diouf, who is now the President.

I think it was a remarkable period when AID was assessing the problems of this terrible drought in the Sahelian countries. There was a massive influx of personnel from all sorts of voluntary agencies, which, naturally, impinged on the operations of the embassy and the AID program, but I think Ambassador Clark was an outstanding leader and had some excellent officers in all of the programs.

Our position with the government was amicable, and certainly the programs were readily accepted. Again, as in so many of the African countries that you know of, infrastructure problems predominated--the roads, the trucking, the petrol stops, and just moving the tons of sorghum and wheat and rice and corn from the ports to the interior, and hopefully to do this in such a way that there would be a minimum of corruption at every phase. I say this without judging the Senegalese. I think it's just natural. You suddenly have had a starving family with cousins and extended family, and there's an extra bag on the back of a truck that wasn't offloaded or maybe purposefully not offloaded, and it's going to go into hands and go into the market economy. But I think that's the nature of the beast.

It was a period of becoming acquainted with an incredibly able head of state with a very good Cabinet, and also it gave me another opportunity, as DCM, to work closely with all of the AID donors from the EEC and from our own country and all the relief agencies.

Q: How were your relations with the French Embassy and French authorities there? Sometimes this has been a problem in former French colonies. Did the embassy and you personally have good working relations with them?

LOUGHRAN: Quite frankly, there's no question, when the former Francophone states accepted the CFA as the unit of currency, they were still very closely associated with the French Government in any undertakings. I think we were always suspect, in the sense that Jean Foccart, the famous eminence grise of General de Gaulle, looked upon us as a nation trying to move into the area. I don't know what for. I don't think we were selling any great numbers of Deere tractors or locomotives from General Electric for the train system, or boats for fishing. But I think it was always in the back of the French minds that we saw an opportunity for economic expansion of our own exports. We had no intention of replacing the French; we were intent on competing. In the housing field, we did. We had an extraordinary housing program in Dakar, right close to the Youf airport. It was unfortunate that they didn't build in accordance with Senegalese standards.

But there were many successes in that field, and there continue to be to this day. I think it depended a lot on my two chiefs of missions. I can say with total objectivity that the relationships that Dean Brown and Ed Clark had with their counterparts and everybody in their missions was outstanding. Whether it's remained that way with others, I don't know.

Q: By that time, did most of the Senegalese ministries fully staffed with French advisors?

LOUGHRAN: Many, but much less than in the Ivory Coast. Senghor recognized the problem. He was aware of what Houphouet-Boigny had done in the Ivory Coast, lengthened the time that the French would remain. I think to this day, if I'm correct in my reading of the African scene, there are more expatriate Frenchmen in the "Côte d'Ivoire" than there were when I was there in the Seventies. On the other hand, there are fewer in Senegal. Whether this has worked to the benefit of the Ivory Coast and not to the Senegalese, I just don't know. I think the economy in the Ivory Coast is so much more diversified, with many, many more mineral resources, and many, many more types of oil, palm oil, in addition to other varieties and certainly tremendous resources of forest products, woods, for export to world markets which the Senegalese just do not have. Water resources, yes. Fishing resources, certainly; and of course, the peanut--or as the British named it the ground nut. But they have experimented with the cattle industry, feed lots, but it's, again, a long and very difficult problem to change the indigenous farmer to accept an American method of raising cattle.

EDWARD C. MCBRIDE
USIA, Cultural Attaché
Dakar (1970-1973)

Edward McBride was born and raised in Savannah Georgia. He attended university at Belmont Abbey, the University of Georgia, and Georgetown. He served in France with the US Army and lived in Paris for a time afterwards. Between 1974 and 1975 he worked for the USIA in the American embassy at Belgrade. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2001.

Q: Well while you were there, how did you see Senegal as far as American relations go during this '70-'73 period?

MCBRIDE: Oh, I think they were very positive. They were good, and, in fact, Senegal was always one of the places that would be held up as an example of how good our relations were with Africa. It was a stable democracy. It was a country that had gone through a lot of painful change. Not easy, it had been difficult, but they managed to strike the right kind of balance. I think we had a very good relationship with the Senegalese on many different levels. The trouble was it was a one crop economy. If the peanut crop went bad, the country collapsed. Peanuts were not making a lot of money on the international market. So the Senegalese were trying to develop tourism. We were trying to help them. A lot of hotels were built and a lot of infrastructure was put in place with our help. We had big exchange programs through the international business program. We did a lot of help stuff with our AID mission there. We had a big AID mission. So I

think we had a very good relationship with Senegal, and it was kind of an example for others. But Senegal was not an important country in terms of Africa. In our relationship Nigeria or South Africa, a lot of places were far more important than Senegal.

Q: Well now, did you run into any problems with the French because particularly you are talking about culture or something, the French get very sensitive in their former colonial empire.

MCBRIDE: Actually I am going to end the Senegal segment with one story that does this in a very humorous way. When I was asked to teach at the University of Dakar, I readily said yes. I asked the ambassador and he said, "Sure, go do it." I then went to the University and was told that I had to be paid. There was no way that I could do this job without being compensated. I said, "You know, I can't take any money. I am employed by the U.S. government. There is a conflict here. I am not allowed to do that." They said, "But if we can't figure out some way to do this, you will not be able to teach." So I went back and worked out this deal with the Peace Corps. I said, "I will take this money, but I will give it to you to do good works for the Peace Corps, and you can buy books or do whatever." My salary will go to the Peace Corps. Everybody thought that was okay. Here again I learned that the role of the French was so pervasive, but you didn't know that until you scratched the surface. Every time I got paid, I went to the French embassy, and I was paid by the French government because the French government actually underwrote the cost of the University of Dakar in a major way. I was on the payroll of the French government.

Q: Did you run across people anywhere within the French apparatus who were concerned about what you were doing, I mean American culture penetrating?

MCBRIDE: If that were the case, I was unaware of it, and I had a very warm and very good relationship. There were a lot of French expats there. The French community in Dakar in those days was almost 100,000 so it was huge. There were a lot of French people at the university, and there were a lot of people who came down under the French aid program to teach at the university, so I knew a lot of French people. They were colleagues at the university, and we had a wonderfully good relationship, and there never was any problem whatsoever.

Q: How did the Peace Corps work?

MCBRIDE: Terrific. I think they just didn't have enough to do what they wanted to do. They also were involved in this program that was self help, and they were setting up co-ops and getting women to do tie dye things and sell their wares in the markets to the tourists. They were digging wells out in the villages and basic hygiene. They were doing wonderful stuff there. It wasn't a very large program, but it certainly was a very effective one.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

MCBRIDE: The ambassador was a wonderful career guy named Ed Clark who died about ten years ago. In fact we still keep up with his widow. She is back here in Washington now. His son who was also a young kid while we were there is Ted Clark who you may hear on National Public Radio. He reports for National Public Radio.

DAVID SHEAR
USAID Africa Bureau
Washington, DC (1970-1972)

Mr. Shear was born in the Bronx, New York in 1932. He graduated from New York University and Harvard. His career in the Foreign Service included posts in Nigeria, Tanzania, Ivory Coast and Senegal. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1998.

Q: Do you remember its [American contractor in Dakar for technical knowledge and input] name?

SHEAR: Yes, it was Zanzibar Technical College. In 1994 I had the opportunity to return to Tanzania for the first time since my departure in 1966. The private company that I'm now with was invited by UNDP to emulate an employment generation program I had started also in the private sector in Senegal. That's a different story, but it explains numerous visits I made in 1994-95, when I had an opportunity to visit Zanzibar and also travel extensively within Tanzania. The contrast in Zanzibar could not be more striking. Liberalization of trade, the removal of government controls, the release of the entrepreneurial spirit which had existed there for centuries was made manifest. Zanzibar is again the bustling port that it was in the 19th century. [...]

Q: In Francophone Africa. Well, after your West Africa desk experience what happened?

SHEAR: I was very fortunate to work with Dr. Samuel Adams, an ex-senior AID official who was called in from his post as U.S. Ambassador to Morocco, and his deputy, Philip Bernbaum. For six months prior to that time I had worked with Robert Smith, the Deputy Assistant Administrator and then Acting Assistant Administrator. It was thanks to him that I got such a significant career break. At the time I believe I was two grades beneath the position of Development Planning Director. To this day I am grateful for the confidence shown in me.

Because Dr. Adams had a great understanding of and a certain affinity for the French, we attempted early on to coordinate for the first time with the French in West Africa. What made that possible was the death of Charles De Gaulle. The French, now more cooperative, saw the need and desirability of having the United States share its aid burden in West Africa, provided it could be done in such a way as not to infringe upon their policy and their political prerogatives. We, of course, had an agenda that was not terribly challenging to the French; we wanted to be engaged in West Africa for basically humanitarian reasons. There were some Cold War overtones to the relationship with Senegal and the U.S. interest in maintaining some form of surveillance, with French assistance, over the so-called Atlantic Narrows through which Russian submarines passed into the Southern Atlantic and then into the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The strategic interests were actually modest, so the French did not perceive us as any major threat. De Gaulle, though, had been so adamant about the hegemony of France in West Africa that he

would not tolerate any cooperation with the United States or any other donors. I was, therefore, extremely fortunate to accompany Sam Adams to France for initial meetings between the U.S. and French governments on any form of cooperation other than military in the post-De Gaulle period.

Q: This was in what year?

SHEAR: This was in the latter part of 1970. We prepared very carefully for the talks, wanting to draw out the French with respect to their major programs. We had very little hard information on what the French were doing because our embassies and our AID offices had very little contact with the French in the field, and the U.S. Embassy in Paris was not very well connected with the French foreign aid agencies. Their agency for technical assistance is called the Ministry of Cooperation, and the Caisse Centrale/Minister of Finance is their capital development and lending agency. Both of these were under the very firm control of the French Presidency; they were juridically associated with the Foreign Office, but Africa was really handled by the senior advisors to the President of the Republic. The normalization that occurred after De Gaulle's death permitted the French Foreign Office to become more engaged, allowing us to deal with a broader bureaucracy and lower level French civil servants. We were also fortunate in that Sam Adams' counterpart was a very open minded and very astute Frenchman named Jean Audibert; the two got along extremely well.

I recall clearly the first encounter with the French in a very elaborate and grand meeting room into which Sam Adams walked, introduced himself and began to speak impeccable French. Here was the son of a chauffeur from the West Texas plains who had earned a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and a master's degree from the University of London, setting the French back on their heels with his mastery of their language and his own diplomatic poise.

Clearly the first meetings were exploratory ones, which pleased the French because it was also clear that we had no fixed agenda other than to open up a series of discussions and to see how we might cooperate. That led to annual meetings with the French that continued far beyond Dr. Adams' departure as Assistant Administrator for Africa. It also opened up areas of cooperation with other donors, especially the British and the Dutch. Shortly thereafter, we entered into bilateral discussions at the Assistant Administrator level with both of those bilateral organizations. The British, of course, were also very pleased (much more openly than the French) at our offer of cooperation.

When we first initiated our programs in Africa in 1960 we worked under the various accords the British government had with the newly independent Anglophone states. During the decade between then and our opening up discussions with the other donors, the U.S. executed a number of bilateral agreements under which its own AID programs could operate. But although we had a very amicable relationship with the English and found them quite easy to deal with, their programs were something else again. The programs tended to be fragmented, their projects quite small and mostly worked through a series of small grants. Our concepts of "projects" - investment in resources with specific predictable outputs, specific inputs, investments, targets that could be tracked in the course of a project and formative evaluation systems that allowed us ongoing assessments of a given activity - were unknown to them. They were rather fascinated by

the structured approach of the United States and showed some admiration for it. At that time, many their programs were highly politicized, and therefore the fairly small reactive and opportunistic projects that they had suited their foreign policy quite well.

Q: The Bank's [World bank's] orientation was to individual countries, not to regions.

SHEAR: That's a very important point. The Bank's orientation made funding regional activities very difficult. Our strategy, though, placed strong emphasis on bilateral assistance so that one could go with projects that were compatible with the regional effort but were not strictly regional.

Q: What Sahelian States were included?

SHEAR: The Sahelian States that were part of the effort and members of the CILSS which were Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Upper Volta, Chad and the Cape Verde Islands. The Cape Verde Islands were arid, poor ex-Portuguese islands 600 miles off the coast of Senegal that very much wanted an African identification, and this offered an opportunity for them to participate in a larger program.

Q: Was there some discussion about Cameroon and Nigeria, some of the northern parts of the coastal states?

SHEAR: Yes; in fact, Cameroon indicated a strong interest in joining. When the program began to evolve and it became evident that substantial resources were being mobilized, then the Gambia, Guinea and Cameroon came forward and suggested partnership. The Gambia was brought in as a partner and participant in the Sahelian States, and became a member of the CILSS about three years after the latter's inception. This occurred in large measure because Senegal's President Leopold Senghor did not want this country, which was completely surrounded by Senegal, left out. It was essentially more for political than economic development reasons. The leadership of the effort really came from President Leopold Senghor and President Moktar Ould Daddah from Mauritania. The other presidents were strongly supportive of these two heads of state when they took the leadership role.

Q: What were the pros and cons [of the Sahel Development program] brought up?

SHEAR: They put forward the issue that the Sahel by itself could not be a viable series of national economies. At no time had we ever indicated that the Sahel would be sufficient unto itself. We emphasized the importance of its relationship with the coastal states, and that historically there had been extensive trade between the interior and the coastal countries that should be encouraged. Indeed, the Sahel Program, while focusing on eight African counties in the interior and Senegal and Mauritania, clearly foresaw the need for expanding relationships and economic development with the coast. On the technical side, there was considerable skepticism on the part of some of the REDSO staff about the ability to develop the river basins because of the cost, about problems experienced with irrigation elsewhere in the world and about the nomadic system for effective production of livestock. These were all legitimate concerns.

Q: How did you structure the content of the program?

SHEAR: The program was developed in large measure by working groups we established within the CILSS. Each group was chaired by a Sahelian, usually the senior professional in his ministry (e.g., livestock, rain-fed agriculture) and included technical experts provided by each of the donors. The idea was to develop a strategy for each of the key sectors that would be multinational - and regional - in character. We looked at serious policy issues and mobilized external consultants who undertook special studies. For example, we had an excellent alliance between the major French research organization ORSTOM and the University of Michigan on cereals policy. We also began to look at population growth and its relationship to health and mother/child well-being, with a working group delegated, I believe, to the Dutch with some U.S. participation from a major NGO. In each instance the United States was a substantial financial supporter. The livestock group did its work in France, and our representative was Howard Helman, who had worked for me in REDSO. His role as the U.S. representative to the French Ministry for Cooperation strengthened U.S.-French coordination throughout Africa, especially in the Sahel.

Although we had great expectations for the output of these working groups, the overall effect was disappointing because we found it difficult to plan on a Sahel-wide basis. So we began to disaggregate the program into what turned out to be more realistic components. For example, we took a long look at livestock and livestock trade between the Sahelian States and the coastal states, and did some really important analysis. Some serious Sahel-wide policies were largely accepted and became the basis for cereals production and price policy. Livestock was by far the most difficult. We never did develop a really satisfactory strategy in that regard for the Sahel as a whole, though. After an investment of over \$100 million in livestock activities, an analysis revealed that the only interventions at all successful were in veterinary medicine. Production systems affecting nomadic herds were, for the most part, failures. Strategies for river basins were of major importance and somewhat intimidating because of the dimensions of the infrastructure necessary to develop them. The Senegal River Basin Commission, as I mentioned earlier, seemed to us a very good bet. Senegal, Mauritania and Mali were cooperating effectively, and so the United States contributed substantially to complete mapping the river basin at a cost of \$12 million. We also underwrote an environmental impact assessment of the impact of two dams: one a saltwater intrusion dam at the mouth of the Senegal River, and the other a high dam in Mali on the Bafing River (a major tributary to the Senegal) for a reservoir to control annual floodwaters and generate power. Here the Sahelian States were most effective in mobilizing international support, especially from the Chinese and the Arab countries (the petroleum exporting countries), who contributed over \$3 billion. While we could not, due to Congressional constraints, contribute capital to the dams, the United States played an important role in influencing the configuration of the dams, their impact and the resulting environmental consequences. This, I think, was an indication of how the program could be successful, because it had originated in the context of the CILSS committee for River Basin development. We decided early on to focus on one river basin as a prototype to see how we could mobilize the resources and analyze downstream development once the dams were completed. This has proven to be a very substantial investment with successful payout.

The World Bank was extremely skeptical based on just straight economic analysis of the dams, which I think describes well the limitations of economic analysis in multi-country planning. Both Senegal's President Senghor and President Ould Daddah of Mauritania felt that the development of the Senegal River Basin was crucial to the long-term economic viability of agriculture, especially in Mauritania. Despite the fact that the internal rate of return would be insufficient by World Bank standards, they urged that work on the dams go forward for long-term survival. While it was unstated, these were loans that would probably never be fully repaid. Also, a fair amount of money was in grants from the Middle Eastern oil-producing states, especially Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia. Chinese funds were on a loan basis. The European Community and the Canadians were also substantial contributors to this infrastructure. I am convinced that this would not have taken place had it not been for an overall plan that the CILSS had put forward and the fact that we could mobilize resources far beyond conventional sources of funding because of the existence of a comprehensive strategy.

Q: You approached some other projects from a regional perspective, such as the integrated pest management project, didn't you?

SHEAR: Yes. We initiated three very large regional projects that I had the opportunity to evaluate prior to going out to my next assignment as Mission Director for Senegal. One was an integrated pest management project in concert with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN, another a meteorological project headquartered in Ouagadougou in Niamey, in which the leadership was provided by the World Meteorological Organization. For this we had funding from half a dozen of the DAC members. We attempted to put in place radar to track the movement of the rainfall systems out of the Congo Basin up through the Sahel. When farmers were informed three or four days before the rains began, they knew when to plant crops. The third was the establishment of an organization in Mali called the Sahel Institute, which would track the demographics of the Sahel. Looking at growth, movements and the composition of populations would later demonstrate to the Sahelian States the importance of being able to limit both the growth of population and where populations resided, including tracking the rapid growth of urban centers.

I evaluated these three projects in 1979 before leaving Washington for Senegal. While I found many problems, the concepts proved extremely valid. The project that seemed most difficult and yet proved most effective was integrated pest management. This was a good example of a regional activity undertaken on a national basis. Although the regional headquarters was in Ouagadougou, there was also a regional center in Dakar for which I was responsible. We found a number of techniques for integrated pest management requiring minimal applications of pesticides - or none at all - and relying on natural counter measures. This has grown into a series of very successful programs extending well beyond the Sahel that now encompasses twelve countries. These three projects were difficult ones to get underway. The meteorological project is still operating at less than peak efficiency because of the difficulty in communicating the findings of the Center to Sahelian farmers. As communications improve, so will the effectiveness of the system.

Q: What were some overall effects 20 years later?

SHEAR: The net result of this extraordinary effort? Clearly we failed to achieve some of the goals. We didn't make the Sahel self-sufficient in food. In retrospect this may have been a useful slogan, but not necessarily a basis for policy. Early on we saw that food self-sufficiency alone wasn't enough in terms of long-term economic growth and we were really talking about sustainability of agricultural systems, including exports. So over time, policy was modified and the systems that we put in place for planning and coordination were flexible enough to change.

The Sahel Development Program and the Club du Sahel became more adaptable in response to the realization that it was harder to control overall program planning and project design for all of the Sahel. Increasingly donors became part of the Club process. If they did not have staff in Paris as part of the Club, they contributed to its budget and to the CILSS itself. The CILSS over time became a bloated bureaucracy that had to be reduced. Two very difficult evaluations were conducted of the CILSS; some of its financial practices have had to be cleaned up. Most important, though, has been the effect of CILSS and the program on the Sahel and its people. Development efforts accelerated on behalf of the Sahel after the creation of the Sahel Development Program and the Club du Sahel. Before that time, annual assistance averaged between \$600 million and \$700 million for eight (now nine) Sahelian States. After 1976 with the creation of the Club, aid more than doubled, reaching \$2 billion annually, and it has not dropped below that level to this day.

Considering the poverty of the countries and a lack of political importance to the donors, this level of continued assistance has been extraordinary. The funding has covered recurrent costs involved in the maintenance of infrastructure, which would not have been possible otherwise. It enabled the creation of successful dams along the Senegal River Basin, which we believe are environmentally sustainable, in large measure because of a U.S. investment of \$4 million for an environmental impact assessment. Very importantly, agricultural production systems now in place are much more resilient - not drought-proof by any means, but much more resistant to drought. Efforts to improve the nutrition and health of the Sahelian populations have improved and have become diversified; they are no longer solely dependent upon sorghum, millet or rice. Market gardening has expanded to an extraordinary degree, and fresh vegetables are now a substantial, normal part of the Sahelian diet. Sahelian farmers are also engaged in cash crops, and cotton is once again a major crop in Mali, Senegal and Chad. Further, the growth of cities has created new markets for farmers' products, since almost 50 percent of the Sahelian people now live in urban areas.

Significant too, is the growth of community responsibility, an extraordinary phenomenon throughout the Sahel hinging on the areas of human resource development and education. Sahelian citizens, particularly in rural areas, are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the national educational process. In a number of instances (Chad and Mali), they have initiated their own local educational systems, not unlike the United States. Communities have taken responsibility for raising school taxes, hiring teachers and in effect directing local education efforts. And while standards are still enforced from the capital, the latter is losing influence in that regard, and more formal education now exists at the local level. This is a vivid reflection of increased responsibility on the part of rural populations and communities. Part of that is the decentralization associated with structural adjustment reforms, but it is also the reassertion of the historical pattern of strong local governance and the strength of village populations as the

instrument for developing local will. Democratization is occurring throughout the Sahel, not uniformly but significantly in every country. While the central government is still enormously important, people are accepting more responsibility for their own economic well-being, their own education systems and their place within the political system. This is true even in places like Mauritania, which has traditionally been extremely hierarchical. There one sees increasingly, particularly along the Senegal River Basin, communities organizing to govern themselves.

Q: Let's pick up the rest of your story on the Sahel.

SHEAR: Twenty-two years after the initiation of the program, an assessment was undertaken by the Club du Sahel and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) at the OECD on the effectiveness of the overall effort. Some aspects of the effectiveness are a little bit hard to attribute to the Sahel program. At the same time, the coordination of assistance redirected a great amount of the resources into key areas. We think we can trace some of the progress in the Sahel to these efforts.

Despite the droughts that have occurred over the last 10 to 12 years throughout Africa, there has been no significant loss of life in the Sahel, while there has been a terrible toll and great human suffering in eastern Africa, in the Horn and in southern Africa. The Sahel has been spared in large measure because its governments have learned how to manage disasters and near disasters, how to move food, how to protect the crops and how to distribute food purchased for needy families. Production systems have changed for the better because of different cultivation and marketing practices. Production practices especially are based both for rain and irrigation on shorter-term maturing varieties of sorghum, maize and millet, with less emphasis on rice. But where rice has been successful (and it is increasingly so in the Senegal Valley), it is based on small-scale perimeters and not the large perimeters funded by the World Bank and the European Union. This is based to some degree on work by AID in Senegal during the time I was USAID Director. Bakel and Matam comprised probably 40 or 50 villages, each of which had responsibility for an irrigated perimeter never larger than about 40 hectares, so it was quite manageable.

Q: But there must have been a fair degree of resistance to making this change [reduction of grain subsidies]. You weren't directly involved at that time, but did you see any evidence in Senegal?

SHEAR: I did see evidence in Senegal because we sponsored one of the cereals price policy seminars. It was multinational and Sahel-wide. I was very much involved in that seminar. The papers that were presented were created by the CILSS with some help from the Americans, the French and others. The French were really cooperating in this area, whereas earlier they had resisted. And this, I think, again illustrates the effectiveness of the Club, creating an environment that allowed us to work cooperatively with the French in a very sensitive area. The significant leverage for structural adjustment was the great amount of resources being provided by the Bank and the IMF.

Q: I see. Any other thoughts about the Sahel? I think we're at the end of the time you spent in creating the program and carrying it out.

SHEAR: I'd like to talk about my work on implementing a bilateral program in the context of the Sahel program and policy. But first, I should cover the year before I went on to Senegal. I had a sabbatical year.

Q: Graduate level?

SHEAR: I went to the Sahel, funded by the OECD, to undertake an assessment of three of the major projects - a meteorological project headquartered in Niamey, an integrated pest management project headquartered in Dakar, and the Sahel Institute, a Sahel-based study and demographic institute headquartered in Bamako. And so I had an opportunity to return to the Sahel before going back to Senegal. The assessment took about two months.

Q: Is that the one nicknamed "witchweed?"

SHEAR: Yes. Witchweed it will grow around the roots of maize and sorghum and millet and it has a symbiotic relationship with those roots, not only crowding them but also sapping their strength. It's essentially parasitic. There are, however, strains of soy beans and cow peas (a black-eyed pea) that actually encourage the striga seeds to sprout, but because these plants are non-hosts to the striga, the striga cannot thrive, and dies. And so then, when you include those soy beans or cow peas in rotation planting with maize or sorghum or millet, the striga seeds can be largely eliminated. It is a very effective way of controlling a very troublesome weed through new crop strains.

Another example of integrated pest management was how we dealt with a mealy bug that was attacking cassava throughout West Africa all the way down to the Congo basin. It was severely limiting food production of tubers, cassava being one of the principal foodstuffs, particularly of peasants. Cassava is an important crop because it can remain in the ground with no ill effects for up to two years before it is harvested. In the laboratories in Senegal (and I was directly supervising that project later as the Director in Senegal), our project team recommended that we bring in a very small, almost microscopic wasp from Brazil, which attacked the mealy bug. Now I was very concerned about doing this, because worldwide there have been negative consequences of using exotic countermeasures against insects and mammals (e.g., mongooses in the Caribbean). So I insisted on very thorough tests and lots of qualified observers, and we finally assembled a whole commission of scientists to judge the project. If it did go awry, there'd be blame to share. After a good deal of trepidation on my part, we went forward, and it turned out to be an extraordinary success. The wasp in question feeds on the mealy bug in Brazil, which, of course, is the origin of cassava, and without it, it dies. It does not find an alternate host, and this is exactly what happened in our case, and the mealy bug no longer exists in West Africa. We began to breed these little wasps by the millions and flew them to various sites. Along with giving them to other pest management control agencies within governments, we supplied a host of nonprofit organizations and private voluntary agencies, and within a decade, the mealy bug had disappeared. When I revisited this issue at the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture in Ibadan recently, they cited this as one of the extraordinary examples of international cooperation led by AID. It's a great success story.

Q: Of course. You were discussing 1979 and your sabbatical year; any other highlights?

SHEAR: I undertook to put together a small publication for the Overseas Development Council called "New Directions in Development Cooperation." In it I compared the Sahel Development Program to the Southern African Development Cooperation Committee (SADCC), the Caribbean Basin Initiative and the Mekong Delta, which were all multinational long-term development efforts, regional programs and development efforts.

The conclusions I reached were not very surprising; by and large their success was dependent on the volition of the participating countries. I saw SADCC as having a substantial prospect for success, which seems to have been realized in terms of some of the trade agreements which have been reached. Caribbean Basin and Mekong - Mekong being in a much more politicized environment and the Caribbean Basin Initiative being much more difficult than any of them because of the small scale of the economies and the dependence on the United States in terms of the openness of our trade. With greater U.S. cooperation, it might have been much more successful.

So I guess there were no universal conclusions coming out of this, no general messages, but it certainly was an interesting piece of work to be involved in. Following that, of course, I went to Senegal.

DEREK S. SINGER
Office of Technical Cooperation, United Nations
Senegal (1972-1973)

Mr. Singer was born in New York City and graduated from NYU and SAIS. He served in numerous USAID missions in Zaire, Kenya, Ecuador and Cameroon. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1999.

SINGER: Anyway, as this was happening I got a job with United Nations, my first and only job with them. I worked for a group in Senegal, called OTC, the Office of Technical Cooperation, which was a branch of the UN Secretariat. At the time, they operated under the general rubric of UNDP, but independently as an agency, dealing with public administration matters. That was their specialization. So, actually, when I went to Senegal, I was, for the first time, with a multinational team. The official language of the country and of the team was French. This was the first and only time in my international career I got to operate in French or a foreign language as my daily working language - the language not only of the country but of my office, too. Also, it was the first time I was a definite minority, as sort of a WASP or White Anglo Saxon (more or less) Protestant American male, this was kind of unusual, particularly in those days.

Q: Who were the other members of your group?

SINGER: They were French speakers, chiefly French nationality, some from French colonies, but they too, of course, had French nationality residually, a couple of Europeans - a Dutch

person, and a young Japanese, were on the team. Let's see - maybe there was also one from Scandinavia, but fundamentally I was the only American. Correction: I WAS the only American there and the only Anglophone, basically, on that team, and that was a very interesting experience. We worked in the President's palace - Leopold Senghor was the President still, and the revered founding father of his country, of course. He literally had us working in his palace, a sort of internal advisory committee for the Office of the President. We did a variety of things, and I was the training officer for the team. So, I carried over, at least, those credentials from my previous life with AID. It was an interesting job. I was also assigned to teach a course at the University of Senegal, among other things, as part of my job, to which government officials were assigned by their offices . . .

Q: What was the subject of the course?

SINGER: Basically, public administration again, similar to the kind of the middle level course I was teaching in Kampala a few years before. I traveled a lot around the country and gave short courses to government civil servants in different provincial capitals of the country, and so forth. It was a very interesting experience. It was just a year's contract, though.

Q: What were the other team members doing?

SINGER: They were doing internal advisory work, basically, on organization and management, personnel, finances, evaluation and monitoring of programs, accounting, procurement, that kind of thing. It was partially training and partially hands-on direct assistance to government workers, that we were doing. The biggest satisfaction I probably got out of my time there was the fact that UN policy, at least at the time, was to have a direct, immediate counterpart in the same office in which we worked. This was not as an assistant, but as a true counterpart, as such. We were supposed to be dealt with and treated by our superiors on a completely equal basis. Each one of the members of the international team, myself included, had then, a true Senegalese counterpart with whom we shared professional responsibilities.

Q: How did it work?

SINGER: I think it worked very well, certainly on my side it did, with the person I worked with most of the time. They did change in midstream, but with both people I worked with, it was a good relationship. In fact, we even kept up with . . .

Q: They were up to your speed, in terms of knowledge and capability?

SINGER: Pretty much. Part of the job was for me to try to help, where I could, to get them up to speed where I didn't think they were, and to do it, tactfully and diplomatically as well. So, that part of the job, I found to be very satisfactory. But I did not enjoy the UN bureaucracy. I found it worse than our own, worst than the American bureaucracy had been.

Q: In what way?

SINGER: Mostly the nationality angle. While I enjoyed working on a multinational team, the UN had national quotas, and I believe they still do, in some positions, and in some organizations

where they work. I found that very hard to accept and adapt to: to be hired because you were an American or Japanese, or whatever it happened to be, to fill a quota - this does not make for the best morale in the world. If you think that you are really there because they hired you to do a job and they felt that you could do the job best, and to be frequently reminded of this, well, it was not a very good experience as far as I am concerned.

Q: Do you think the team had any impact on the government?

SINGER: It think it probably did. I think for some of us it did. It was best for those of us who managed to travel around and get out of the four walls of the palace (which was prestigious but confining). I found that being able to get out and travel around the country, giving short courses and giving a longer term course at the University in Dakar, I certainly found a real impact there. So, that was an interesting and a different kind of a year.

ERIC J. BOSWELL
General Services Officer
Dakar (1973-1975)

Eric J. Boswell was born in Italy in 1945. After receiving his bachelor's degree from Stanford University in 1970 he served in the US Army from 1967-1969. His career has included positions in Dakar, Quebec, Beirut, Amman, and Ottawa. He was interviewed by Edward Dillery in November 1998.

Q: What were your impressions of the training, the orientation and all that sort of thing looking back if you can remember?

BOSWELL: It's back a long way but I remember it quite well. I think most of us do remember, just like basic training in the army, we remember the A-100 course. I remained good friends with many of my classmates for the entire length of my career afterwards. We all watched each other's promotion records closely and so on and so forth. It was a nice friendly competition. As for the A-100 course itself, I think my first EER [Employee Evaluation Report] which was sort of a memorandum EER which came out of the A-100 course started with "Eric Boswell let the course wash over him as he went through it, perhaps because he was familiar with Foreign Service life." I think it said something like that. That was my very first report in the State Department, not a great start. I viewed the A-100 course more as a socialization experience and less as hard facts learned. I already had languages so I didn't have to go to school for that.

I was assigned to Dakar, Senegal. I thought it was an exciting process when you get your first assignment somewhere in the middle of the A-100 course. It was not my first choice. My first choice was Bujumbura, Burundi, but at the time, 1972, there was one of the periodic genocides going on in Burundi. I'm not sure if the post was in any kind of evacuation status or whatever they called it at the time, but it was felt that first tour junior officers should not go there. I ended up going to Dakar, Senegal, as general services officer in February or March of 1973.

Q: Was it at that point that you decided what we now call cones?

BOSWELL: I was coned on entering. That was a time when you did that which I still think is an extremely good idea and I hope we've gotten back to it. I know we've been moving in that direction. It was a very bad period when people were admitted without cones and then there was that extremely poor process for coning people especially for the administrative and consular cones, both of which suffered greatly I think during this process. I was examined as an administrative officer, and admitted as an administrative officer. I was asked to select my cone, I'm trying to remember whether it was on the written exam or on the oral. I think it may have been right at the beginning on the written exam. I didn't have any question what I wanted to be, I wanted to be an administrative officer.

I was doing a masters, which I never completed by the way, in public administration but I was always interested in how things worked and I wanted to be able to supervise early in my life. Being an administrative officer or consular officer was certainly the way to do it. I thought the career tracts for an administrative officer were probably better than for a consular officer and I think I was right, at least then. I came in as an administrative officer but unlike most others I came in as an administrative officer with my eyes wide open. I knew what administration was. My father had done administrative work. He was a generalist but he had done administrative work. I knew what I was getting into. I was very pleased to be an administrative officer. That was a time when the assistant secretary of State for Administrative was a man named John Thomas who I very much hope gets called, or has been called, even though he was not Foreign Service because he really created the administrative cone the way we know it today. He is the guy as I understand it, who made a point of trying to identify good administrative officers even during the exam process and certainly as junior officers. He felt himself to be responsible for the cone and did a great deal to select, nurture, monitor and mentor junior officers who really wanted to be administrative officers, a fairly rare breed.

There was a habit at the time when officers of other cones were having problems with their careers, they would re-cone to administrative as a place where sort of anybody could do this work. It was a way to save officers with very, very mixed results for the cone. In any case, many of the administrative officers that came in during my year or right around then eventually made it to the very highest ranks of the Foreign Service to ambassadors, to assistant secretaries of Administration, and to other management jobs. This was really a good crop.

Q: How did Thomas keep track of you?

BOSWELL: I'm not entirely sure how he did, except that he was a man of enormous energy and he had a very talented staff at the time which included people like Chuck Bakey, Doug Laingen, Dave Mount, and I think Don Bouchard may have worked for him for a while. These people, some of them younger, some of them older at the time, kept an eye out for him. I'm not sure how he did it, but he trolled very successfully for good administrative officers and really did keep an eye on them.

Q: I'm encouraged to think that our service is good enough that that kind of operation can work and should.

BOSWELL: It takes a hell of a lot of effort. In fact I think it was John Thomas who identified a young security officer who is now the head of AID [Agency for International Development].

Q: *Atwood.*

BOSWELL: Brian Atwood. Brian told me this story, as a matter of fact, that I don't know how Thomas identified him, he either ran across him on a trip he was taking or something but it is not generally known that Brian Atwood was a security officer when he came in serving I think in Madrid on his second tour. I don't know if he was serving in Madrid as a security officer or whether John Thomas plucked him out and sent him to Madrid in an administrative job, I think that may have been more like it. In any case he identified him. That was the kind of hands-on work that John Thomas did.

Q: *Did you feel from the start that there was kind of a fraternity of administrative officers?*

BOSWELL: I didn't feel it in the A-100 course because we were all a very mixed bag, but I certainly started to feel it in FSI training after the A-100 course starting with the administrative core course and the general services course. There were people from my A-100 class, from a couple of classes on either side, and even a couple of people who had served somewhere else overseas. I made as good friends in the administrative core course almost as I did in the A-100 course, people that I have kept in touch with for many years afterwards.

Having said that, I didn't think administrative course was a whole lot better than the A-100 course except as a socialization and get to know you kind of place, and in the subcourses, in the GSO [general services officer] training. They washed over me as well because I didn't have any way of relating to the issues and problems that they were talking about. It would have been much better if I had had this course after, for example, rotating in a post overseas. We've never really been able to do that but the ideal I always thought was to go to your first post, work for two months, and be shipped at great expense back to the State Department for a few weeks of administrative and GSO training that would then be relevant because you knew what you needed to learn and what you needed to absorb.

Q: *Let's talk a little bit about Dakar. What was it like there?*

BOSWELL: You know Ed, in a sense it is pollyannaish but I absolutely loved every one of my overseas assignments, though I can't say the same about every domestic assignment. I have loved every one of my overseas assignments but you always have a special place for your first post. It was an extremely difficult post I thought. Dakar is a very nice capital city. It is very beautifully situated with all the amenities, and bells and whistles, and fresh mussels every day, if you want them flown in on Air France available at your local restaurant.

But it is still an African post and the administration was extremely difficult. It was a large embassy and I was the sole GSO. [When I arrived in February 1973], I had replaced a GSO who was a specialist. He was in his 50s and who knew everything there was to know. He was just a real sharp guy, I can't remember his name. I never met him but I lived in his apartment so I knew

he was sharp because he had a great apartment. I really felt completely at sea. I had an administrative officer who was relatively junior at the time as well who left post after four or five months. There was a gap of something like six months in administrative officers which I guess is the common story. I really did feel at sea.

I had a very good ambassador, Ted Clark, who had several AF [Bureau of African Affairs] tours as DCM and ambassador and who was very nurturing of his junior officers. He paid particular care to me but he didn't know anything about administration. I felt that I was learning very much as I went along. As a result I think I lost about 20 pounds; I wasn't heavy when I started. It was really a nerve racking assignment. Anybody who has been a GSO in the Foreign Service, particularly a junior GSO, has all kinds of stories that they can tell and I've exchanged them with many of my colleagues. We all view this as a hell of a testing ground and we never wanted to be GSO again. I felt that I had no serious preparation for the job, so it was really seat of the pants. Fortunately, I like administration and I wanted to do it but I found it very trying.

Q: How many Americans were there in the whole administrative section?

BOSWELL: I'm not sure that I could tell you but I know that there was an administrative officer, and I was the GSO. There was no budget officer. We were serviced out of the regional budget shop in Abidjan. We had communicators, but no security officer. I don't believe there was an American personnel officer. I think we were also served by a regional personnel officer. It was basically me.

Q: You were the administrative officer.

BOSWELL: For six months I really was the administrative officer except that the Department in its wisdom felt that a junior officer by himself really couldn't carry all this load. They sent a roving administrative officer out who became my friend, mentor, colleague, and a very good friend for many, many, many years afterwards and is now a career ambassador named Mary Ryan.

Q: That's interesting.

BOSWELL: That was the beginning of an association that lasted my entire career which I valued a great deal. Nevertheless even when she was there on TDY [temporary duty] I was doing most of the work since I was the guy really assigned to the post. We had a problem after that because the new administrative officer that came in was a man who got in deep, deep fraud problem trouble, fortunately after I left. He was a crook essentially. I didn't realize it when it was going on. He only supervised me for a few short months and I escaped it. I found out ultimately that somebody had blown the whistle on him.

There had been an IG [Inspector General] visit and they had found all kinds of problems. He was kiting checks. He had browbeaten his cashier into not cashing his checks, just gave him the cash but not passing the checks through for collection. There were various other frauds that were going on and he left the Foreign Service under duress right after that assignment. It was not exactly great preparation for a junior officer, that's for sure. Fortunately the auditors didn't find

anything wrong with what I did then, I guess, because I never heard anything about it. I was inspected while I was at post before this administrative officer was there and I had a good inspection. The head of the inspection team was a man named Jim Moran and I have a feeling that he had something to do with my being assigned to the Operations Center after this tour because otherwise I was completely lost.

My only contact with the personnel system was a letter from my CDO, my career [development officer]. I didn't know what a career counselor really did. He sent me a form letter saying would you send me some ideas of where you want to go on your next assignment. Like the dumbest possible junior officer I wrote him a letter back that said that I had been doing a good job here in outer darkest, I had worked extremely hard, felt myself prepared and I would welcome an assignment to either Paris, London or Rome in any order that they wanted. That was the extent of my first bid list. Having worked in personnel since then I knew what kind of response a letter like that gets, it really gets a glazing over of the eyes.

Nick Baskey, a person who ultimately became a good friend of mine, who was my career counselor in what was then the junior officer branch, wrote me back a letter that started "Dear Mr. Boswell" and I knew I was in trouble right there. "Dear Mr. Boswell: Thank you for the amount of thought that you've put into your next assignment." That was my first and last contact with the personnel counseling system. Fortunately I was selected through a mysterious process to go to the Operations Center. I think Jim Moran may have had something to do with putting in a good word for me. I was offered a job in the Operations Center which I jumped at.

Q: Before you get to that, first of all, I think general services is the most difficult job with all of the responsibility you get. You are in charge of all the physical assets. The only thing you don't have is money, but you've got everything else. With your first tour, how did you get a feeling that that worked into the whole embassy itself?

BOSWELL: You're perfectly right about how difficult a job it is and how vulnerable you are. There are a number of ways that you can go astray particularly in a country where there is a lot of fraud, a lot of corruption, where petty corruption is a way of life and where you really hadn't had any training and you're not getting any supervision really from anybody that knows anything about it. The rest of the embassy viewed administration as simply the provider of comforts and/or the obstacle to comforts as the case may be. A junior GSO was on the receiving end of just what seemed like perpetual demands, many of which I couldn't accommodate. For a guy who likes to please that was difficult. I didn't get the feeling of being treated as sort of a lesser being, that didn't happen. I think the ambassador and DCM both were careful not to allow that to happen and also as I said I was providing services that everybody wanted but it was not particularly fulfilling, that's for sure. It was not fulfilling. It was very, very trying.

In fact, and I think others who have been through the same thing at more or less the same time will have the same observation, I tended to divorce myself from the embassy community for the sake of my family and my own mental health. I made friends at first with French expatriates (I spoke French fluently; I had a French mother) though I found the French expatriates in Dakar to be an absolutely awful group. Many of them were transplanted Gevenois and very racist as colonists. I quickly got past that circle and got to know a few Peace Corps volunteers who were

more my age. I got to know Senegalese and I got to know them through Peace Corps volunteers, not really through my job. These were Senegalese students and the young people of my generation. They were wonderful, wonderful people and we had a ball. Life in Senegal was lots of fun and very rewarding but life in the embassy was not particularly.

Q: Did your outside contacts help you at all in what you did in the embassy?

BOSWELL: No. In fact I didn't allow my embassy life to sort of carry over into my outside contacts. They did not. I had a certain number of outside contacts that were embassy contacts but mostly they were people that had something to do with the embassy: vendors, contractors, entrepreneurs of various kinds, less officials. I unfortunately didn't have a whole lot of contact with host country officials. General services officers should, though I didn't, because the FSNs [Foreign Service nationals - locally hired staff] tended to do it.

Q: Which calls to mind, how many people did you supervise in that job?

BOSWELL: I'm not sure but it was a lot. I've used varying figures I think over my life but about 60 to 70 is probably pretty close. This was at a time when virtually everybody I supervised was an FSN. These were not personal services contractors and your other kind of semi-FSNs which you could have, these were all direct hire [local] employees.

Q: Had they been there a long time?

BOSWELL: It varied. In Africa these embassies hadn't been opened forever. I think embassy Dakar had probably been open maybe 14 or 15 years by the time I got there. There were a couple of people who tended to be French, TCNs [third country nationals], who had been there a very long time. The Senegalese, and there were other Africans as well, had been there less time. I would say somewhere between six or seven years would be somebody fairly senior, and that was not a European expatriate of some kind.

Q: What was the caliber of that, TCNs and FSNs?

BOSWELL: TCNs were quite good though there were no real giants as I recall. They were basically clerks who did what the administrative officer said and they were not powers within their own rights. There weren't these kinds of very senior FSNs that would really be the engine that kept the embassy running, they just didn't exist anywhere in Africa I don't think.

Q: I was going to say you might have run into them in other places.

BOSWELL: I certainly ran into them in other places in the world and most of them were extremely good and thank god we had them, though they were a power in their own right. You had to in a general way impose yourself.

Q: This again just adds more pressure on the GSO or the administrative officer.

BOSWELL: Exactly. I am sure there were all kinds of frauds going on at that post that I had no idea about. Some of them were found in subsequent inspections but I certainly wasn't equipped to find them out or to detect them so I'm sure it was going on, and not only by FSNs. There were problems with Americans as well including the AID director who subsequently I think resigned under duress and may have gone to jail for his activities in another post after Dakar. There was plenty of bad stuff going around and I'm sure plenty of waste and mismanagement going around but no real structure to it.

Q: What was the position of the embassy in the whole community? Was it an important institution?

BOSWELL: It was the second most important institution after the French embassy but there was an enormous distance in relative importance. The French embassy was by far, by far, the most important embassy in Dakar for obvious reasons. The French were pervasive in the administration of the ministries in Dakar and there was a major French military presence in the country. There may have been as many as 15,000 French residents in the city who simply did business there, that's very heavy. There was also a very large Lebanese presence. The French were really the powers and I think the U.S. ambassador was not a hugely important figure.

Q: You didn't have any of the type of crises that we now?

BOSWELL: Not the type of crises that we now experience and that I've experienced and that you've experienced so frequently with a breakdown of civil order, evacuations, emergencies. There was one huge crisis, an on-going crisis when I was there that took much of the attention of the embassy, and that was a major drought which affected the Sahel. I don't know if you will recall but in the early '70s in West Africa there was an enormous drought that was one of the worst that they had ever had. It particularly affected Senegal severely and it practically disintegrated Mauritania in terms of the Mauritania traditional nomadic society, it just disappeared in Mauritania. Mauritians since then have lived in camps along roads as far as I can tell where they can get food handed out to them. The pastoral way of life in Mauritania essentially died with the death in the '70s by starvation of their herds of cattle.

This was a very striking thing and it impressed me a great deal about the activities at the American embassy because we were focused very much on drought relief, very much on aid. It was a major effort on the part of everybody and we could see the effect of what we were doing, which was very gratifying. We could also see the effect of the drought very easily and quickly. I will never forget seeing cows dropping dead from hunger in front of me, just collapsing in front of me. I remember going on a driving trip to The Gambia, that sliver of a state that penetrates up a river into Senegal and at the edge of Gambia is where the tropical forest zone begins. Even down there I remember seeing camels. Nomads had brought their camel herds down that far, way out of their normal range, to get fodder and food. It was really a horrendous experience. You didn't see it so much in the city. Dakar being the former administrative capital of West Africa was very urban and sophisticated, and even relatively prosperous at the time, but the countryside was completely devastated.

Q: What kind of aid did we give?

BOSWELL: My recollection was it was food aid, large amounts of food aid. There were various other projects. There were projects to build dams, and this and that and the other thing, but this was an emergency and food aid was really what was happening. Many of my Peace Corps friends were hired by AID at the end of their Peace Corps tour. They wanted to stay in Senegal and participate in this effort. Some of them even made careers in AID, as astonishing at that seems, because most Peace Corps volunteers view AID folks with a very jaundiced eye as basically bureaucrats interested in good living, being comfortable overseas. A very wrong image, but that's the way it was.

Q: How did you find out about your next assignment?

BOSWELL: You know I'm not sure, that gets a little fuzzy. I believe there was simply a cable informing me that my next assignment was the Operations Center. It may have been a cable that said do you accept this, but I don't remember that. I think it was just a cable informing me that I was going to be in the Operations Center. I was thrilled because I knew something about the Operations Center from A-100, we had a tour of it. It was considered an elite assignment, a very good assignment. It was not administrative. I had the end of my tour in sight which was not an insignificant thing. I was very, very pleased.

Q: When did that happen?

BOSWELL: I arrived in Senegal in February of 1973 and I left after a two year tour, so I left in February. I had a little bit of leave and went straight to the Operations Center, checking in March 1975.

FRANCES COOK
Cultural Affairs Officer, USIS
Dakar (1973-1975)

Ambassador Cook grew up in West Virginia and Florida and attended Mary Washington College, earning her BA in 1967. She took the Foreign Service exam during her senior year of college and served at posts in Paris, Sydney, and Dakar, before becoming Ambassador to Burundi. Ambassador Cook was interviewed by Ann Miller Morin in 1986.

COOK: I loved the political aspect of being a cultural officer, but my long-term interests really were here at State, not there [at USIA]. And every time they got a high level request like that, they'd [USIA] just arch up their backs even more. I frankly don't know how Dick Moose pulled off my eventual assignment to State [as director of] AF/P. I don't know how he did it. I think they did something again. Each time they had to go to the head of USIA. I don't frankly know how he pulled that off. But then I was able to transfer over later. It was hard. There was a constant fight.

Q: After these nineteen months they pulled you out of there to prevent you going...

COOK: That's my understanding that's what happened.

Q: To Brussels.

COOK: And sent me off to Dakar. When we joined the Foreign Service in those days you had to list three areas that you would like to serve in and one of the three I listed was Africa, because I had French and I basically listed the three areas that had French. There were more back then, but I listed three. I'd left off Asia, you might recall, so I didn't list any Indochina. So that left me with not too much to choose from. I went there as cultural affairs officer in a country where culture was at least as important, if not more so, than politics under President Senghor [Leopold Senghor, First president of Senegal.]. It was an absolutely phenomenal experience. It launched me in Africa, and I think anybody that starts out in Dakar in Africa - I know of no exceptions, there are bound to be some but I know of none - remains interested in Africa. That really started me. I was a cultural affairs officer, but there my job was very different, too. Part of my job there was teaching an American civilization class at the university. I'd never wanted to be a teacher but I did that.

Q: Did you enjoy it?

COOK: It scared me to death. I've never been so frightened of anything in my life, as teaching. As I told you when I took my exam, I hadn't had much American history, so I was sort of one lecture ahead of the students. And in the French system it's not a give-and-take. It's not a class with a discussion, it's a formal lecture where they write down every word you say.

Q: And feed it back.

COOK: Yes. I taught it for two years. I loved Samuel Eliot Morrison from that period. I think I can probably still do some of it verbatim. But the other part of my job, which turned out to be the one of the longest range interests and by far one of the closest friendships I've ever had, somebody I also venerate, was with President Senghor. I was his private English tutor.

Q: Were you?

COOK: That came with the job, too. I saw him every month. I saw him more frequently, in fact, than the ambassador. Senghor mixed culture and politics in a way that I think is absolutely glorious and obviously responds to some kind of need in me. I couldn't have been happier working with anybody. He would talk politics as easily with me as he would talk culture.

Q: You were teaching him English?

COOK: Yes, Frances, who could barely pass freshman English grammar, was teaching grammar to the first African who had ever received a doctorat d'etat in France in grammar! I went once a month, but I would spend two entire days of the weekend before - the class was always a Monday morning - I would spend Saturday and Sunday, entire days, preparing Senghor's lesson,

because I was not going to embarrass either the United States, or myself, by not having it exactly right. He is recognized as one of the world's great grammarians.

Q: Oh, for heaven's sake!

COOK: Again it's these kind of things where you just get stretched

Q: I should say you would. Horrible, horrible thought.

COOK: I basically had three jobs there. I was replaced by two people, which was a great bureaucratic compliment. [laughs]

Q: I should say. Well now, when you taught this US history, what language were you using?

COOK: English, in the English department. The class was American Civilization. Because the French underwrite the university there, every year - I hope it wasn't doing anything illegal - every year I got a kind of French government salary, a paycheck, at the end of the year, which I would take and give to buy, for example, milk for children in the village that had a sister city relationship with some city in the States. It gave me great pleasure to cash a French government check, so I would give it out to villages like that, and do things like that with it. But I received it at the end of each term, I remember.

Q: You got around Africa much?

COOK: I'd been there just six weeks when I got sent off to a conference in Nairobi, so that was really very exciting again. Got off to see that part of Africa. Then, later on, I went to a conference, I remember, in Lagos. But my real travels came later when I was working in the department. I'd probably been in maybe six or eight African countries by the time I came back. But I developed an absolute love for Africa, and for the people, and for what they always managed to teach me about myself, and about life. I miss it when I'm not there now. My last tour was in the Middle East and I missed Africa, I really did. You've had more tours in the Middle East, but I don't know if you've had that kind of immersion in Africa

Q: No, I haven't, only in North Africa.

COOK: It really gets under your skin. The Senegalese are just so fabulous. They're intellectual. They have a very rich culture. Politics, it's the most democratic country on the continent. The politics were just starting when I was there and so that was a lot of fun, obviously because of the job and because [of] culture and Senghor, I just had total entrée and access to any kind of program you wanted to do.

Q: What about your living arrangements? I forgot to ask you about those when you were in Sydney. You had a house or...?

COOK: Yes, I had a lovely little house like in Georgetown. It's called Paddington and it's sort of where the yuppies live. They didn't have that term then, but it's where the architects, the lawyers,

the MBAs [lived]. It has lots of quaint little restaurants and so forth. It's a beautiful place. It's actually prettier than Georgetown because it's on a hill overlooking Sydney harbor and the second story of every house has a balcony overlooking the harbor. It's gorgeous. It's really prettier than Georgetown, but it's the same idea. It was a house built with convict bricks which was very pretty, which meant it was quite old. The convicts were sent there by the Brits.

In Dakar I had a wonderful apartment, a huge thing up on the main building in downtown Dakar on the same place where the embassy was and the foreign ministry. It was an enormous apartment for representational purposes, with big balconies on three sides overlooking the ocean. It was really very pretty.

Q: Overlooking the ocean?

COOK: Yes.

Q: You got good views.

COOK: Oh, yes, wonderful. I still had my eye on the horizon, I guess.

Q: Did you have help in both of these places?

COOK: I did. In Dakar I'm proud to say I'm the only person who had a female cook. I'm also proud to say I had the best cook in the whole mission, probably in the city.

Q: How did you get a hold of her?

COOK: She worked for somebody else who said, "We think she's pretty good." She was illiterate, absolutely adorable, a little short woman from the Casamance, from the southern part of the country. She could do Senegalese and French and American with equal flair. Because she couldn't read you'd have to read the recipe to her once and she never... that's all you had to do, was once.

Q: Really?

COOK: Yes. And she would work alone, and do dinners for sixty people, with a little help from the men afterwards to wash up. Phenomenal capacity. Just a really good friend. I'd like to go back and see her.

Q: You couldn't take her with you? She didn't want to come, I suppose?

COOK: I was coming back to Washington then and it's very hard to... I brought somebody back this time and it's so expensive.

Q: I know it is, because you have to pay their transportation and everything.

COOK: And US minimum wage.

Q: Yes, of course, minimum wage and social security. Do you have to do that?

COOK: I'm not doing that because I think he's leaving next Wednesday. It's very expensive, but I couldn't have survived these first four months without it because I've been on five trips since I've been here. I couldn't have done it with all the deliveries and stuff that go on when you're moving into a house for the first time. I've always lived in an apartment here. So anyway, I didn't take her with me, but she was superb. Rudy Aggrey was my ambassador in Dakar. He was very distinguished. He was the son of a very distinguished African educator. He had a French wife. A very dignified man, who I think was a very good choice to represent us with Senghor. And that was really my job, too. We had a cultural center so I did programming there. The IV committee, again, was really the access into politics and IV programming and so forth. It was the first place I'd ever in my whole career made calls at foreign ministries, because we had to get the IV programming through them. People think that you grow up in the business doing that, but the kind of career I had, you didn't. I've had huge gaps in my career. I didn't go to a foreign ministry until I was in my third post. I've never been a desk officer. I've never been a DCM, these various kinds of things that happened to people earlier on.

Q: You leapfrogged.

COOK: Sometimes when I work with junior officers now I realize that maybe it's the first time they've done this. People assume that I have done it and I haven't. I did various little things. But I remember Dakar being the first place I went to the foreign ministry. I never went to the Quai d'Orsay when I was in Paris, because of the kind of jobs I had. Sydney, I was in the consulate. I've done things in various stages, and I think it's all come together. But it hasn't been in any kind of logical progression, which is what we pride ourselves on.

Q: You were there two years in Dakar?

COOK: Yes.

[break]

Let's talk briefly about the two parts of that job where I was a USIS officer, that stretched me, I think, as much as any assignment I've had in the Foreign Service. They were two jobs which normally wouldn't be performed by a Foreign Service officer, but I realize came with that job when I arrived.

One was teaching at the university. I had never taught before, but I became a professor in the English department of American civilization and I gave lectures once a week. And in the French system, as you know, the students basically write down every word you say. It has to be a very formal lecture and the test is based on that. They do very little reading, at least the African students. I'm the person, as you might recall, that only had one American history course in her whole life. I'd specialized in French and European history, so Samuel Elliot Morrison became a very strong companion of mine in Dakar. During the university year I spent the entire weekend before the lecture preparing my lecture on American civilization for that week.

The other thing that I did on those weekends, but this was only once a month, was that part of my job and traditionally was there, was being the private English tutor to the President of Senegal. Now that would be a great honor, I think, in any embassy. But Senghor absolutely frightened me to death, because he is as you probably know, one of the world's premier grammarians. He is the first African to ever receive the doctorat d'état, in France, in grammar. And trying to teach someone like that, and he took very much a grammatical approach - not the FSI conversational approach - meant again that I had to prepare grammar lectures, and deal with one of the great minds of the world on the subject, which was hardly anything that you would expect coming into the Foreign Service! As a result of those meetings with Senghor we became quite close. I really liked him enormously and I worked eventually to get him off of just the grammar approach, and had him doing Faulkner and other things, aspects of American literature which I thought corresponded with the kind of poetry that he would write. He talked to me a great deal about politics during these sessions, because that was what he was involved in. He was also one of the most cultured men on the face of the earth. He was one of Africa's premier statesmen and still is. As a result of these lessons, basically twice he asked me to be his escort officer on official visits to the United States. So it got me into a lot of areas that a very junior cultural affairs officer wouldn't have expected. But in terms of just a job, it was difficult doing those two things because I was as ill-equipped for it, as doing the peace talks in Paris. No one quite totally relaxes in the presence of a chief of state, but seeing him so regularly, so young in my career, I think made it easier for me later to deal that level. I don't mean it to sound arrogant, because I'm never totally relaxed in the presence of a chief of state, but I had that very early on, which is very unusual. Great familiarity, and used to the protocol in the palace and this, that and the other. I found that dealing with someone on his level, and he's so head and shoulders above most African chiefs of state, frankly, I felt that, if I could cope in those sessions with him I probably could handle other things later on.

So those were the two aspects of that job which were a bit unique. I was replaced by two people when I eventually left Dakar. The other thing that was important for me on the Senegal assignment is that, and I think this is generally true of most young FSO's I know who have served in Senegal, they develop a lifelong love of Africa. I've never really known there to be an exception to that. There's something about the combination of the culture, of the people, of their involvement in African events, and just living there that often turns FSO's, who are as young as I was, into African specialists. At that point I had served in my third geographic area. If I had an expertise at all, it was Europe, because I'd been to school there and I had served there. I basically stayed with Africa after Senegal.

Q: [By that time] your posts were so different, which one did you find the most interesting? Was it Dakar?

COOK: I would tell you quite honestly that each one was the most interesting for different reasons. It would be very hard for me to...

Q: And the same would apply as to whether or not you liked them, because sometimes you like the one that is the most difficult.

COOK: There are some things I liked and disliked about each one. Sometimes it was, you like the local culture and didn't like your boss, or vice versa. But each one I thought was a growth experience for me. Each one presented very, very different kinds of challenges. I never felt restricted in any of my assignments, at what I could get into, by my bosses. There were some minor exceptions to that and I really resisted and basically overcame it. But I think if I had had a very narrow job, and a supervisor insisted I stayed in a very narrow channel, none of the posts would have meant as much to me as they did. While I was cultural officer I was working in politics. When I was a consul general I was working on commercial things. I was always able to combine it in a way that kept it constantly interesting, at least to me.

Q: Did you have any difficulties with loneliness abroad? You always lived by yourself?

COOK: I really never did. I think the exception to that, and this is really more a female perspective than an FSO perspective, I found that in developing countries, particularly, it is very hard to have close female friends among the nationals of the country you're assigned to. That's true for their cultural and educational reasons, namely that, as a single person, it's very hard to be close to a married woman of a foreign culture. They're almost all married.

Q: There aren't many career women.

COOK: I find that female support systems are very important for women professionals. They've been important to me through my whole career. They're perhaps more important to me than many, because I don't have any sisters. I always had a lot of friends in the third world among females, but never really the close kind of support relationship that I think is good for you. Now I had those kind of relationships there with Americans and with men and women, but it wasn't that kind of qualitative relationship that you have in Europe or in Australia or in Washington.

Q: So that would make it a little bit lonelier. I should think it would be exacerbated the higher up the ladder you go. More visibility. When you're chief of mission, it's lonely at the top.

COOK: I think that's absolutely true, and you cope in various kinds of ways. One way I've always coped is being a great letter writer, my whole career.

Q: You keep your circle of friends going.

COOK: I keep in touch with them. I've been less good on that recently than I used to be. I found I wrote a lot of letters in Australia and Dakar, for example, and keep it going at a distance.

Q: What about a hardship post as opposed to a non-hardship post? Did you find because they are more difficult, you're putting more of yourself into the assignment?

COOK: They're more difficult climatically, and in terms of isolation, and in terms of how long it takes to get to a place, and in terms of the diseases, perhaps, you're exposed to. In terms of the living, they frankly are easier for a woman, who has to manage a house, in addition to an office. In these "hardship posts" you have generally a competent house staff, at least you have one you can work with and train. In Washington or in Europe, you have to do it yourself. I think that even in the department currently, there is a great underestimation on what that really means, being a

female, or an unmarried male officer. You basically carry two full time jobs, and the job gets much harder to do, and much more time consuming, the higher you go up. Running a residence is a full time job. I've had six years straight of doing that, and I came home really tired. I realize that there was basically no time off, ever. I think the same is true for unmarried male officers. There are very few of them. Where it's more the norm I think for senior female officers, it's unusual for a male officer. But serving in the third world in those conditions, I think, makes that part of the job easier than it would in Europe, for example.

Q: Because the help is still available?

COOK: It still is available, and in Burundi it was better than anything I've ever had any place. You can't judge it by the isolation of the post. It was far superior in Burundi, than what I had in Egypt.

Q: Did you have help when you were living in Australia?

COOK: Yes, I did. I had a series of non-English speaking Spanish and other maids. It was difficult to communicate with them, and I wasn't there, and I never felt very secure about my house. I had Portuguese maids in Paris and it was just... it wasn't the same. You don't have the support on the other fifty percent of your job that you have in the third world.

Q: I know. It's the part where you're the most vulnerable, too, your actual physical surroundings, and how often your bed is changed and that kind of thing.

COOK: I find the hardship post is true on the things I listed. I don't find it's true in terms of what is provided for you to be able to do your job.

RUDOLPH AGGREY
Ambassador
Senegal (1973-1976)

Ambassador Rudolph Aggrey, whose father immigrated to the United States from Ghana in the early 1900s, entered the USIA in 1951 after receiving a Bachelor's degree from Hampton Institute in 1946 and a Master's from Syracuse University in 1948.. His career included positions in Nigeria, France, Zaire, and ambassadorships to Senegal, the Gambia, and Romania. Ambassador Aggrey was interviewed by Jack O'Brien in 1990.

AGGREY: David Newsom asked me, and asked the Agency, if I could come to the Department to become director for West Africa. And the Agency allowed me to do that. And I came over and served from '70 to late-'73, at which time I was nominated by President Nixon to be ambassador to Senegal and The Gambia.

Q: That meant that you had spent a lot of good time in State, to be prepared for an ambassadorship. At least you knew the bureaucracy and some of the communications patterns and so on. So did you consider yourself well prepared for this ambassadorship?

AGGREY: I thought that I was well prepared for it because I had spent a total of about seven years in State in my two assignments. I had traveled widely in Africa. I knew its problems. I knew its people. At the same time, I had had to deal with U.S. interests in the Department of State, in a supervisory role for West Africa.

I knew the system. And I knew the personalities as well. So when I was proposed to the bureaucracy for the position, I had, in fact, briefed two previous ambassadors-designate to Senegal. And finally, the word came down, "Well, why not this man?"

Q: Sure. Well, how did you divide your time between Senegal and The Gambia?

AGGREY: We had a full-time chargé in The Gambia, who was a senior career officer. The first one who served with me was a senior officer. The next one was mid-career, transitioning to senior. I spent most of my time in Senegal. But I did go to The Gambia about once a month and when special events or circumstances dictated.

Q: Well, then comes an assignment which must have come to you out of the blue. And the more we read these days about Romania, the more questions I have about what it was like when you were assigned there as ambassador. That would have been in 1977?

AGGREY: Yes. Well, I've found, in my experience, that nothing is wasted, if you do it well. And that one thing can lead to, or prepare you for, another. And sometimes people who are impatient and wonder why they should do this particular job--that it ought to be short-circuited--find out later that they're very happy they did.

My learning French, after having thought that I had been given a raw deal on my exam, but going back and learning it, allowed me to be assigned to France and to have wonderful assignments and wonderful experiences. Having those experiences in Paris gave me a wide knowledge of Francophone African leaders, including the president of Senegal, and many other places. And when I went to Senegal, I was able to be efficient and I had many contacts that enabled me to do my job.

While I was working as director for West African affairs, my French was sufficient for me to do some interpreting at the White House. Among the persons I interpreted for was the president of Upper Volta, [Sangoulé] Lamizana. I sat on a jump seat behind him, and he sat between Mrs. Warren Burger and Mrs. William Rogers, respectively, the wives of the Chief Justice and Secretary of State. To the right of Mrs. William Rogers, was Nicolae Ceausescu, the president, then, of the Social Republic of Romania. And Ceausescu's interpreter, a Romanian he brought with him, was seated next to him.

At the end of the dinner, as we were getting ready to leave and I was escorting President Lamizana, President Ceausescu came up and introduced himself. We spoke and I interpreted and I met his interpreter.

I mention all of that to describe my first important encounter with Romania and the Romanians, and that later I was to be accredited to a country where the person I had met at the White House dinner was President Ceausescu. And after his regime was toppled and, in fact, he was executed, one of the foreign ministers of the successor regime was the man who was his interpreter that evening.

Q: Oh, really? Is that so?

AGGREY: So I say that certain things are often connected in interesting ways. One of the first films we did, when I was program manager for motion pictures and television in USIA, was a cooperative film on President Nixon's visit to Romania. So I met the Romanian television team. I saw the images of the country. And I said to myself, "This is a place where I wouldn't mind serving."

Now, at one point, speaking to the director general of the Foreign Service about where I might like to serve after I left Senegal, the question of Eastern Europe came up. And I said, "Well, I don't know that there's any place where I would really be especially effective. You have so many East European specialists. But if I had a change, perhaps Romania."

And when the time came for me to leave Senegal, several new missions were mentioned. For many reasons I was not nominated for certain posts. I would not be assigned anywhere else in Africa because Secretary Kissinger had a policy of moving people out of the region of their specialization. It was felt that I had earned another embassy on the basis of my work, but just where it would be outside Africa was a big question.

Several missions came up which would have pleased me. I won't mention them. But they didn't come about, for various reasons. And finally Romania was discussed, and the secretary of state decided that I should go to Romania. There were some people in the Department who felt strongly that I should not, as there always are, particularly when the move is from one region to another.

But I did go to Romania and I spent almost four years there. Everything that I had learned previously helped me there, and I wasn't as lost in that world as many people thought I would be. My French gave me access--not facility, but access--to learning Romanian, which I had to do. I was more than fifty at that time, and learning a foreign language, at that age, is not as easy as it is when you are in your twenties. But I learned it well because I needed it.

Also, Ceausescu had visited Senegal while I was there. President Senghor had introduced me to him. And President Ceausescu said that he had a special representative in Washington at that very moment. Pictures were taken of the three of us, which were part of the news coverage of Ceausescu's visit. So that I'm sure that when the Romanians began to say, "Who is this Aggrey that as ambassador they're proposing?" somebody would say, "Oh, maybe he was that black

ambassador that we met in Senegal, who Senghor said so much about." So I wasn't an unknown quantity.

So I think that I had two wonderful opportunities in serving in Senegal and The Gambia, and in Romania. And I feel fortunate to have had each post--overseas post--that I had. There were some others that I would have liked to have had, that I didn't get, like nearly everybody in the Service. But I think I had a very rewarding array of posts and assignments.

ALLEN C. DAVIS
Deputy Chief of Mission
Dakar (1974-1977)

Ambassador Allen C. Davis was born in Tennessee in 1927. He served in the US Navy from 1945-1953 before receiving his BSFS from Georgetown University in 1956. His career has included positions in Monrovia, Moscow, Algiers, Ouagadougou, Dakar, Kinshasa, and ambassadorships in Guinea and Uganda. Ambassador Davis was interviewed by Peter Moffat on June 26, 1998.

Q: What were you thrown into at that point?

DAVIS: After the Army War College, with a little bit of lobbying on my part, I got an assignment as deputy chief of mission at Dakar, Senegal. Our ambassador there had worked at USIA and in the Department of State in some of the same kinds of things I had been doing earlier on. So it was a delightful opportunity for me to work with Rudy Agree. That started in the fall of '74 and lasted for 3 years.

Q: I think Senegal for us conjures up images of a near-Parisian life on the coast of Africa. It's certainly one dominated by relations with France. Did you find that the U.S. had any room for maneuver in Senegal?

DAVIS: Certainly we were always conscious of the dominance of France and the overarching importance of the relationship there between Senegal and France. But about two or three things stand out when I look back on those 3 years, '74 to '77. One, the cultural relationship was pretty strong, and President Senghor was such a respected - and many ways admired - international person that it was important to have a good relationship with him. We did. As a matter of fact, one of the members of our mission was teaching him English, was reading American and English literature to him on a regular basis - by that I mean one or more times a week.

Relationships both official, unofficial, and personal were extremely good. Occasionally we ran afoul of the French. The most dramatic incident for me occurred about two thirds of the way through my three-year assignment. Ambassador Agree had gone home to Washington for consultations and I was in charge of a pretty good-sized mission. I enjoyed it a lot because we had a really competent and devoted staff. One night a little before midnight I got a telephone call from the Department of State saying "There will be a plane leaving Buenos Aires in a few

minutes and on board the plane will be one of the principals in the so-called 'French Connection' drug episode/crime celebrated in movies." One particular movie comes to mind. "The Department would like you to inform the Senegalese government that this is going to happen, go to the airport, ask that someone go with you there, have the police alerted. In fact, have the police arrest this man and have the government hold him until we can have him extradited to this country - to the United States - to stand trial." Well, imagine. This is in the middle of the night.

The relationship with the people in the foreign ministry was such that here's what happened: First of all, I called the foreign ministry with no hope whatsoever of finding anybody there and discovered that the number two man of their foreign ministry, a man named Francois Bob who had been at the presidency in charge of youth and youth affairs - was in his office. I said, "What do we do?" He said "Let me call the person in charge of political affairs and he will go with you to the airport." Imagine. In the middle of the night. We went to the airport, we met the airplane, an Air France plane, the man in question was a French national - and as it happened, after spending a great deal of time both looking in the airplane and the airport, it was obvious that he was not there. The Department had not told me that he didn't get on the plane. In fact, he hadn't. So, all came to naught that time. The cooperation could not have been more complete, more cordial, more forthcoming - really unbelievably positive.

Several days went by and nothing else had happened except that the day following this episode we got from the Department of State a message explaining that although the man had the ticket and the reservation, he never showed up for the flight, so he didn't travel. This was a once a week flight from Buenos Aires through Dakar to Paris, or maybe it stopped in Marseilles on the way. I think the man was originally Corsican. Dominique Orsini was his name. The time of the next flight was approaching. The Department had not been able to provide us with anything else, so on the afternoon of the day of the flight, I took the precaution of calling once again and talking with the undersecretary of the foreign ministry involved and said "In case the Department notifies us that the man is on the flight this time, could we now make arrangements during the daytime for this so that we don't have to bother you in the middle of the night - and the fact that you most surely will not be in your office again in the middle of the night." He said "Yes, We'll do it the same way. I'll alert the police, the political counselor of the foreign ministry will be out there to meet you." We did that, went to the airport, the man was on the plane with his wife and a small child, he came into the airport, the police very quietly surrounded him as he came out of the men's room, and hustled him away quietly. I rushed back to the embassy and sent a message - maybe telephoned - to say "They've got him!"

And then began the most extraordinary tug of war. The French, where his statute of limitations for things he was accused of doing in France, including murder, had run out. He was no longer wanted under French law, but the French went through an incredibly elaborate charade of opposing what we had done and called it "piracy" and "kidnapping." You have no idea how elaborate this was. And my relationships with the French Embassy, especially with the counselor with whom I had been on good terms all along, were shattered. He became so cool and so difficult during this whole episode that it was extremely unpleasant for me.

Anyway, back to Dominique Orsini. While he was incarcerated, things became very difficult to deal with and Ambassador Agree still hadn't returned from Washington so finally such pressures

were put on the Senegalese government - and we were hearing this as kind of back channel - the foreign ministry was keeping me informed about what was happening. The judge seized with the case and going on the premise that maybe the Senegalese government was not on firm grounds to have taken someone in the international section of the airport - he, in a kind of a ruse, decided he would have a hearing - Dominique Orsini would appear before him, he would release Dominique Orsini or Dominique Orsini would walk out of the door of the courthouse or the court room. Then the police would say, "Now you are on Senegalese soil" and arrest him. Which is what they did.

They put him back in jail and informed me that on the next Pan Am flight to Washington they would like to see Dominique Orsini extradited. Now we didn't have an extradition treaty, but the Senegalese were so responsible and attached so much importance to their international reputation - and this was typical of Senghorians in so many ways - in doing what they felt was the honorable thing - that they asked me to arrange - on very short notice - to have him taken out on - I believe it was a Monday evening when the Pan Am flight came through (these flights were always very late in the evening or in the middle of the night or early the next morning).

In order to make sure that I wouldn't have to make decisions far above my capacity, I asked the Department if they would send someone to give me a hand. We were kind of short-handed - vacation time and what have you. A man from the office of Sheldon Vance, who was then in charge of Drugs and Terrorism or something similar. He was deputy assistant secretary level from that office - flew to Dakar on I believe a Friday to be there to help make decisions. For example, one of the decisions that had to be made: the Senegalese would say "What can you do if we turn him over to you on Saturday morning? Can you hold him in the Chancery?" Hold him in the Chancery?! We didn't even have marines at the time. So rather than risk his getting away, Vance sent out this deputy assistant secretary, a very accomplished lawyer, and we passed a very, very tense Saturday and Sunday. It was only on Saturday afternoon that we learned we didn't have to take custody of him.

On Monday evening, we went to the airport. Just imagine this scene: at the airport was the French consul, with whom I had had a very good professional and quite satisfactory personal relationship until now - as hostile as you can imagine because we were doing something which he felt his government could not condone. The wife of Dominique Orsini was there, who had flown down from Paris with a lawyer. They were being forced to stay behind a glass barrier. The deputy assistant secretary and I were taken through with the police and the man from the foreign ministry accompanying us.

When time came to fill the airplane with passengers, this paddy wagon came swerving out onto the apron and from the rear of this paddy wagon was an explosion of people, including this bull-like character who had been arrested. While he had been in prison, he had tried to cut his wrists and had managed to wound himself a little bit. They put a lot of bandages on and he had pulled the bandages loose. So as he came out the back of the paddy wagon, these bloody bandages were flying. And from the airport waiting room are shouts of "Kidnappers!" And he is saying, "Assassin!" Unbelievable pandemonium. Finally they got him under control enough to get him up the steps of the airplane. He was a big, strong fellow. They turned him over to the two FBI - no - who would they be - who was sent here with the deputy assistant secretary?

Q: DS? Diplomatic Security?

DAVIS: No. Not diplomatic security. They probably were from the Bureau of the Treasury. But anyway, they were agents. And they got handcuffed to him and got him into the plane and sat down with him. But he still made so much of a ruckus that the crew of the plane refused to take off. He was in first class and the other passengers were protesting. They said they weren't going to ride on an airplane with all this going on. So then the pilots came back and fortunately, fortunately, this deputy assistant secretary--a professional lawyer who had years of experience - was there. He says that the crew has asked that he be sedated. I said "As far as I'm concerned, he can be sedated, but am I the person?" He said "Yes, you are the one who has to make the decision." I said to... why can't I remember the deputy assistant secretary's name? Anyway, he said "Sedate him." "How?" Then we had to call the Peace Corps doctor, who came with, I think, Valium and injected him with Valium. He calmed down enough so that the last view any of us had of him, he was sitting and sipping champagne between the two agents and the deputy assistant secretary who then accompanied him back to Washington.

He was tried about a year later. I was home on transfer and I was asked to appear at the trial. During the trial, the main thing I was asked to testify on was whether I gave permission or asked that someone sedate him. I said, "Yes I did. I asked the Peace Corps doctor to come and do it - with the advice of the State Department's representative, who was there." And that turned out to be not so much of an issue - in the decisions - but it was clear that the defense - Dominique Orsini's defense - was trying to make it a major issue. Orsini was assassinated in jail less than a year later, and his defense lawyer was assassinated on the streets of New York during the immediate months after that. It was a very tense time for me and the family and I particularly remember that when we traveled both to New York and when we stopped in Philadelphia during those trips - that before we would go to sleep at night we would push furniture against the hotel doors to help to at least alert us if something were going to happen in the night. I guess it's one of the scariest times we had until we later were in Uganda, where there was a constant threat of physical harm.

Q: Did the French continue to protest diplomatically and otherwise after his departure?

DAVIS: After he departed, the embassy never lodged official protest with us, but there were kind of publicity campaigns that were instigated in France and I think *L'Observateur* had several commentary articles that took us to task for using high-handed tactics and by-passing the tradition niceties and grabbing this guy, sedating him, and taking him away. Now, I'll tell you kind of the bottom line in the French attitude. After it was all over, and my relationship with the counselor got rebuilt a bit, he would use expressions like "Well, it couldn't have happened to a more appropriate person." So it was obvious they knew very well the kind of character with whom we were dealing. They knew in the long run what some of the beneficial effects could be, but they were very, very loyal to either the individuals or the officials in Paris who weren't going along with this. So they defended the official line to the hilt.

**MILES WEDEMAN
REDSO
Abidjan (1974-1978)**

Miles Wedeman was born in Maryland in 1923. He received a BA from Swarthmore College in 1943 and his LLB from Harvard in 1949. He also served as a lieutenant overseas from 1943-1946. After joining USAID in 1962, he did development work in Nigeria, Liberia and Uganda. He was also assigned to Korea, Cambodia, and Syria. Mr. Wedeman was interviewed in 1995 by John Kean.

Q: What were some of the development issues that you dealt with that didn't have so much to do with the issue of personal aggrandizement, but represented a struggle to find the means to address some of the really difficult problems, like how you introduce successfully broader irrigation programs in West Africa where irrigation was not very well established as a concept or a system?

WEDEMAN: Sometimes it was not easy to disentangle personal aggrandizement or ambition from what ought to be done. Overall in West Africa, the program was dominated by the Sahel and the huge effort to fund development in the Sahel. It was not easy to find viable things to finance. We, for example, did interesting preliminary work on small irrigation schemes in Senegal, assessing what already existed in Senegal in terms of what the local resources were, not just economic resources, but community ones as well.

Q: That's one of the things about irrigation: unless the community works together it doesn't work.

WEDEMAN: You're right. One community in Senegal had developed a very modest irrigation proposal for one village along the upper Senegal River. It was an excellent idea for a pilot project. It ran into the problem of being too small for the players concerned, the Senegalese Government and to some extent foreign donors. At the same time, you had a huge multinational project going forward at the mouth of the river, an enormous thing . . .

Q: Which river?

WEDEMAN: The Senegal. It focused on massive irrigation and agricultural development. The people at REDSO said it wouldn't work, and it wasn't working, even then. Generally REDSO'S recommendations were directed at doing something on a small scale. Don't think of it as something that's even going to be replicated, but see what you can do on a small scale, and see if it will work. You've got to have a project going for a while before you can render any judgment on whether a particular irrigation scheme is going to work. But it's hard to convince people in AID that you've got to have that kind of patience. People are shifted around in AID on relatively short tours. I was myself. You are gone after two or four years and the institutional memory is consequently weak. It was hard to get people to be patient and think small not big.

Take another area: livestock. AID had a great deal of interest in livestock in West Africa. The question was what could be done to promote livestock, not only livestock production, but also livestock processing - transport, butchering, marketing and exporting, from the ports along the west coast of Africa.

ARTHUR M. FELL
USAID Deputy Director
Dakar (1975-1978)

Mr. Fell was born in Bloomington, Indiana in 1935 and graduated from Indiana University. He served in AID missions in Cameroon, Senegal and Nairobi. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1997.

Q: What was your position in the mission [USAID in Senegal]?

FELL: I was the Deputy Director there. The director was Norman Schoonover who, we could definitely say, was an old hand in AID going back to the Marshall Plan days. He started here in France probably in the 1950's. He had extensive experience. Also, like Al Disdier was one of the rare people in AID who was totally fluent in French. He spoke perfectly fluent French and was an extraordinarily good writer and was good at putting together project papers. In those days we were sort of building up our program in Senegal. We had one major project in the Sine Saloum area. It was an agricultural extension project where we were working closely with the French, in fact we were financing a lot of French technical assistance in that particular project in what they called the groundnut basin.

Q: Was financing French technical assistance proper at that time?

FELL: No. I don't think there was any particular restriction that prevented us from doing it. I think we bought into a whole agricultural extension program in the Sine Saloum particularly the cereals aspect of it. We paid a portion of the cost of that agricultural extension project which included some French technical assistance. In fact in Cameroon, we were paying for some French technical assistance when I was down there.

Q: Was this the fact that we couldn't provide people with punch?

FELL: We either couldn't produce people or we were being cooperative in many local places. I remember at one point, I forgot a major project we did in Cameroon, the CUSS, The University Center for Health Teaching. We agreed with the French that whoever won the bid, we would go in 50-50 in the actual construction of the building itself of the university health training center. As it happened a French company won it and so we paid for half the cost of constructing that building. There have been many cases where we have done that. I saw many in my experience. I didn't see many going the other way where Americans were being financed by the French. That was much rarer if at all.

Q: In Senegal what was the strategy that was emerging at that time?

FELL: I have to go back to something. I don't think in those days and I'm talking about in 1975, we looked at things at least in West Africa, from a policy standpoint. We were not looking at things from a policy or regional development standpoint, and we didn't realize or think that we would be able to have much influence on the actual policies of the countries themselves. We didn't realize many of the policies like the monetary policy, the agricultural policies, the input policies, and the pricing policies which were very statist and state oriented, that we would have any influence on those. If we had thought we would, I don't think we'd even have tried it. We thought more in terms of transferring technical knowledge and improved methods somehow. I think experience showed that many of these projects were destined to fail because they were in a sea of policy ambiance that wouldn't be conducive to the success of the projects themselves. I think we came to that realization maybe 10 years later. But at that time we looked at Senegal and saw food problems, and health problems, which were the main issues. If we were looking at food problems we saw three major centers. That is: 1) the fleuve area in the northern part of the Senegal River basin area where big doings were beginning to take place. Studies were being done as to what could be done to develop the Senegal River basin; 2) in the Sine Saloum area which was the groundnut basin area and what could be done to improve practices because people were worried about land degradation, peanuts wearing down the soil and all this; 3) in the Casamance area which is the southern part of Senegal which was potentially a rich area and also a rice growing area. We thought that a lot could be done to improve rice production. Looking back on this I think we were a little starry eyed about a lot of these things. We didn't think we would have influence on the government on the policy level, so we just thought we would work on the technical aspects of it. I'm not sure we posed ourselves that question. In the Senegal River basin, we were wrestling with the question of whether USAID would come in on the infrastructure or not. At this time in USAID we were drawing back from the whole idea of infrastructure.

I'd say in the 1960's we'd done a lot of infrastructure, we'd done a lot of transportation. You look around Africa. We'd done Ibadan water supply in Nigeria, we'd done the Chisamayo Port in Somalia, we'd done the Trans-Cameroon railroad, and projects all over Africa. We had quite a strong office for doing that in the Capital Development Finance Office. That office had finally been abolished; many of the engineers had been let go. A lot of the techniques and capability of doing infrastructure were lost from the agency and the idea of basic human needs came into the legislation in 1973-1974. The agency moved away from some of the infrastructure type projects we'd been doing. We began to do more grassroots type work. We were not talking about policy there as much as trying to affect the daily lives of people. Even this, now in looking at it, was through rosy colored glasses. Affecting daily lives of people. We can't work with every individual artisan. Even the types of projects we were doing were destined not to have a very major impact on the societies or countries where we were working.

That was the way things were going. We lost that infrastructure capability in the agency. We were wrestling with this question in the Senegal River basin because those were major infrastructure projects. Basically the idea of it was there would be two dams built on the Senegal River. To make a long story short, we finally concluded that USAID would not contribute to the infrastructure itself. Since the infrastructure was going to go forward anyway, and the French

were going to build the dam at the mouth of the Senegal River called the Diama Dam, a major project, and Germany would finance a dam at a place called Manantali in Mali, another major dam, we wouldn't be involved in those dam projects, but we would help with the river basin authority doing agricultural research for the projects that would justify this major infrastructure. Also we agreed, and this was a very important thing to do, probably the first environmental impact study of a major river basin development that was ever done. We eventually hired a firm called Gannett and Fleming, an American company, that did quite a sizable environmental impact study of the river basin. Probably more important than the result of that study itself was the fact that we did such a study. We sort of staked out the fact that before you do a major river basin or major infrastructure you ought to look at it from the environmental standpoint. Whether they had the techniques or the state of the art or even the political power to get any of the ideas into the design or the way the project operated, I'm a little dubious it really took place. But it certainly staked out the fact that sort of activity ought to take place. At that point another office had been set up, sort of an appendage of the USAID Dakar. It was an office to work only with the Senegal River Basin Authority, the OMVS office that was set up by Harry Petrequin who led that office. I think Glen Slocum eventually came in and worked in that office and had several people. They were independent of the USAID Senegal. We did a major study of one of the irrigation perimeters up there called MATAM. That was done by Bechtel, but the project was never financed. That office was eventually abolished and folded in to the USAID.

Q: We must have had some very grand visions of what we were able to do in that area.

FELL: I don't think we, being realistic, had very grand visions. I think we looked at ourselves as a secondary donor, a minor donor compared to the European Development Fund or to the French, who had much more of a stake in what was going on in Senegal. After I left Senegal in 1978, the mission grew considerably and the program grew considerably. It would be for others to determine if that was wise or not wise, or if it were a good investment.

Q: It was later that it began to grow.

FELL: Our budgets in those days for Senegal were on the level of \$5-6,000,000 a year.

Q: Were there other significant activities that you worked on?

FELL: We developed a program for the Casamance in those days. I remember Norm Schoonover was down there and tried to figure out what to do in this Casamance. There wasn't an obvious answer to this question, because we had sort of conflicting opinions as to what could be done in the Casamance. You had water; there was a lot of salt intrusion, and the locals had their own little systems for dealing with the salt intrusion for growing rice in those areas. And we were getting as many, and you've probably seen this in development projects, conflicting opinions from experts on what could be done, and what should be done. We eventually thought there were things to be done in the Casamance that could improve rice growing. Frankly I don't know what the end result of that project is. I think we did a \$20-25,000,000 project in the Casamance. It started very slowly with studies looking at it. We'd just planted the seeds for studying these various projects when I left. I don't know whether it had paid out or not. I think that one opinion was that the farmers had figured out a pretty good technique for doing things themselves and that

we weren't really going to add much unless we could really find much improved seeds and a much improved technology package. This was one of the big things that was going on.

When I think of things that consumed our time in those days, we had a project going on with the West African Rice Development Agency in Liberia, WARDA. Their teams would come in and come out and come in and come out, much of it financed by USAID. This was one of the major conundrums of West African development that local consumption of food was veering towards rice and wheat particularly in the cities, and the local production was based on sorghum and millet. Since all these other products had to be imported, what could you do about it? You could try to wet down consumption so there wouldn't be so much import. You could also try to work on the production side of it. Was there a way of producing rice cheaper in West Africa to feed the local market. That was the reason why the Senegal River basin project was somewhat appealing, that there would be possibly irrigated rice projects for local consumption. Now this is a major question of West African development. Probably looking back on it now it was not the center of the universe. I think now we are coming around to it. We are getting off in to philosophy a little bit. The problem now is you've got to go back to comparative government 101 and economics 101 maybe. The way the governments are managed and the participation of the governments themselves, whether the people really have a stake in them, whether the judicial systems are operating well, whether things are more transparent, and just the whole governmental apparatus and political system, how that was operating, really turns out, I think, to be more important than we thought it was. These other things will all fall into place eventually if the political systems are functioning better and there's less corruption, there's more transparency, and more democratic participation. We see countries with a lot of natural resources and maybe some technical capability that don't do very well at all because they just don't attract investment.

Q: Did you find the government environment in Senegal not conducive to development?

FELL: I think in many respects it was not conducive to development because Senegal was an appendage of French West Africa that had atrophied. Originally the administration was set up to sort of administer all of French West Africa, and then it reduced back to Dakar, and there was sort of the illusion of grandeur, and you had a large administration. Many of the technical people didn't want to go out in the countryside and work. And I think we had a lot of the thing we hate to mention, the "C" word, the corruption word. Low and high level corruption at all different levels and political deviations. Good intentions getting politically deviated. I remember a World Bank project that a friend of mine was working on. A very close friend of mine, one of the closest friends I had in Senegal. We were discussing internal rates of return and why projects didn't bring in their projected return. The World Bank had done a very careful study with the segments of roads that would have the highest rates of return, what should be done and what shouldn't be done and what should be upgraded. Finally, when it came down to it and they actually did the work, none of those segments were financed, but other segments were financed for different reasons. Because some Marabou wanted the road paved to his house, and someone else wanted it paved to his village. So none of the economic analysis meant anything. I knew another project that had been managed by another close friend of mine. It happened to be another World Bank project which was an appealing idea to begin with, which was trying to take school leavers and give them vocational training. There had been many attempts at this kind of thing in West Africa. This is one that was attempted in Senegal in those days, was for middle level

practical vocational training. Here again when you start pulling the cabbage leaves apart you find out there was a lot of deviation of project design from what it was originally designed to do. The centers were not put where they should have been located. There were gasoline coupons that were missing, and there was a lot of mismanagement and things like this, which disrupted the program which eventually collapsed and never succeeded. Yet the idea seems very appealing, take school leavers and give them vocational training. Yet these projects just didn't work because they got deviated.

GLENN SLOCUM
Program Officer, USAID
Dakar (1976-1979)

Glenn Slocum was born in 1940. After finishing graduate school at the University of Maryland in 1969 he joined AID. His career includes positions in Cameroon, Senegal, Paris, Washington D.C., and Burundi. Mr. Slocum was interviewed by W. Haven North in November 1998.

*Q: Okay. Let's move on from Cameroon. What was your next assignment [after Cameroon] ?
New Assignment in Senegal on the Senegal River Basin Development Program - 1976*

SLOCUM: I left Cameroon in February 1976, took my home leave and arrived in Dakar for my next assignment in May. Senegal was a different experience in many ways: both professionally and personally. Looking back on it, I realize I was very fortunate to have the supervision and guidance to prepare me in the basic skills of being a USAID Foreign Service officer. Senegal and the Senegal River Basin Development Organization, known by its French acronym of OMVS, presented some new challenges. I began to see some of the less pleasant aspects of our work. In Senegal a new setup was being tested that had not been totally vetted bureaucratically. So I found myself in a situation that I would describe as bordering on the untenable. As background, Dakar had housed the Regional Office for West Africa, just as Yaounde had been the RDO for Central Africa. With the onset of the Sahel drought in the mid seventies, the USAID Mission became the bilateral Mission for Senegal, though the Mission Director had management oversight for Gambia and Guinea, which were staffed by a junior officer in each post. There were now separate AID offices in Senegal, Mali and Mauritania. Soon Guinea Bissau would also have its own USAID Mission.

I arrived in Senegal at the time that AID/Washington, and notably the Sahel Office Director, David Shear, believed that the OMVS long-range plans to develop the river basin resources for agriculture and other economic sectors merited direct support. Therefore, the Africa Bureau set up within USAID/Senegal a separate office for OMVS programs. It was into this office that I was recruited to be the Program Officer under a senior Foreign Service Officer who had been promised independence of authority and programming decisions from the bilateral Mission Director. The Senegal River flows out of the highlands of Guinea, through Mali and then forms the border between Mauritania and Senegal, ending up in the Atlantic Ocean at St. Louis, Senegal. The idea was that this important water resource needed to be managed better and

harnessed. There was a long-term development plan done by the UN and the FAO to build infrastructure on and along the river. It was a very ambitious program of dams, navigation, agricultural development such as irrigation schemes, and related development projects. A valuable lesson in the ways of bureaucratic maneuvering was beginning. What had not been accounted for by the AID/Washington senior managers who supported an independent field office was very strong opposition from the field to having a special AID entity in Dakar, even within the bilateral mission. Two of those people were the Mission Director and the U.S. Ambassador to Senegal. When my first boss, Harry Petrequin, a fine man whom I enjoyed working with, lost the battle to keep the operation independent, he bailed out and got reassigned. Then, the office in which I sat became a little bit of a bureaucratic battleground between the forces in Washington which wanted an independent OMVS program and those that felt it should be subordinated to the bilateral program. Unlike the earlier days in RDO/Yaounde, where no USAID entities existed in central Africa outside Cameroon, West Africa now had bilateral Missions in all three OMVS countries. The Agency tends to vest most of the authority and value in its bilateral field Missions. It's our culture. It's how we operate most typically. Bilateral Missions have always been our primary focus and modality of delivering assistance packages. And so, despite the good ideas of senior managers in Washington, the bureaucratic instincts of their field managers outweighed the concept and policy directive of more senior people in Washington; a fascinating case study in policy making versus bureaucratic power. This was a painful, but necessary, lesson in the ways of the bureaucracy for me in this assignment, which was only my second overseas posting.

Nevertheless, we were able to develop a viable program. The OMVS Master Plan called for major infrastructure investments, including the building of two major dams estimated in their early design at over a billion dollars. AID, and many of the donors, felt the feasibility and economic soundness of the dams were questionable. The dams did get built, by the way, but not with U.S. money. However, the dams would be required to undertake the other investments, because they would regulate the flow of water to permit multiple cropping on irrigated perimeters. The doubt was: would such schemes bring in more revenue than the cost of building the dams?

The Senegal River represented the only resource underpinning agricultural development in the basin. So we had a region agricultural research program, which supported complementary activities in the countries' national research institutions. Our assistance helped to coordinate and reinforce the national programs by transferring results from one institution to the other two.

The OMVS organization, and its member countries, dearly wanted us to participate in the infrastructure program, but the era of AID's participation in major capital projects was past. But we did do some interesting things that were beneficial to them. I talked about the regional agricultural research program, which helped prepare the national research organizations for the impending era of major irrigation schemes. Mauritania and Senegal had irrigation projects already, of course, but the dams would, in principle, see these perimeters replicated on a larger scale.

Q: What kind of research are you talking about?

SLOCUM: For a number of expected irrigation projects, from massive perimeters irrigated by pumps to low-technology gravity schemes.

Q: For what kind of crop?

SLOCUM: The planners expected the river basin to be a kind of bread basket for the population of the three countries. So they were looking at rice and wheat, in addition to other legumes and vegetables. However, the economics of irrigated perimeters was a major issue, because imported rice costs quite a bit less than rice produced on these plots. You no doubt recall all the studies done on the economics of rice and, more broadly, cereals production, in the Sahel. Donors were faced, though, with the political reality that the dams were going to be built, and the hope was that a rapid expansion of land under irrigation would somehow validate the infrastructure investments.

The second major activity was the environmental assessment of the whole basin, for which we contracted with an engineering firm. However, the scope of work for the study prevented any conclusions which called into question the fundamental OMVS development plan, which meant the two dams. I haven't described what those dams were. There would be a retention dam in western Mali at a place called Manantali which would hold the water back and regularize the flow downstream so that a regular flow of water year round would permit irrigation perimeters in Mauritania and Senegal to grow up to three crops a year. The second dam would impede salt water from the ocean to go upstream. This barrier dam was planned, and later built, at a place called Diama, about 30 kilometers north of St. Louis, Senegal. The idea was that these two dams would create a regular supply of fresh water for agricultural and other purposes. Despite reservations, some of the donors, including the World Bank, the AFDB [African Development Bank], the European Commission and France, supplied the financing to do the detailed designs, and later to do the construction of the two dams. In fact, AID's contribution was at the margins. The environmental assessment and regional agricultural activities were meant to show a commitment to the OMVS without buying into the actual development plan. It was the best we could do to manifest endorsement of the plan, until the decision to help resettle the population around Manantali, which would be displaced.

There was some concern about the impact on fisheries, but this did not persuade any donors to hold up on contributing to the river basin plan. They recommended some adjustments to the salt water barrier dam which would permit fish to continue their migration patterns. I am not sure whether that was ever agreed to or not. The other thing we did, which I think was very helpful, was a complete mapping of the basin by the U.S. Geological Survey, ground-truthing, which would help improve the engineering design of the planned developments, mainly the irrigated perimeters.

There was another project which I should mention, the Matam Irrigated Perimeter Project. Its location of responsibility within our office was always controversial, because it was an entirely bilateral project, but because it involved an irrigated perimeter, the AID/OMVS office had responsibility for its design. This was a sensitive point with the USAID/Senegal Mission Director, who always felt that bilateral projects, wherever they happened to be located in

Senegal, were his responsibility. In the retrospective of time and greater maturity, I understand his point of view, but the dispute over turf within the USAID Mission was unfortunate.

The Matam perimeter project design turned into a million-dollar feasibility study, conducted under an AID contract with Bechtel Corporation. I should provide a little more context and background here on the overall OMVS program. An OMVS Master Plan had been drawn up in the 60s. It included not just the main infrastructure I've already described, but pre-feasibility designs on a number of possible sites for large-scale irrigation schemes. After all, this was the payoff for the member states. The Matam perimeter was one of these designs. Prepared with assistance of the FAO, this pre-feasibility study suggested the supply of water pumped from the river into a series of depressions in the ground nearby which would store the water so that water would be available during the dry season to allow cropping seasons the year round. The Bechtel feasibility study showed that the soils of those depressions were too permeable to retain the water for irrigation purposes. It would simply percolate down into the aquifer. So, Bechtel requested an amendment to the contract in order to hire a drilling rig to analyze what was known to be a huge underground aquifer. There was already a lot of hydrological data on the aquifer, and the new drilling was simply to see if it would be a suitable source of ground water which could be pumped to irrigate the perimeter. Based on this new work, Bechtel developed an alternate design, which became a two-inch thick study, proposing the use of pumped groundwater for the perimeter (instead of surface water from the River). What went wrong? The Senegalese Government had not been consulted appropriately, at least in their view. It had a firm policy, from which they would not budge, against using underground water supplies for agricultural purposes. The policy was meant to conserve the water supply for human use. It was worried about permanently depleting the aquifer, which would create greater problems later on.

Q: There was no agricultural involvement there then?

SLOCUM: I'm sure that another donor did develop the perimeter near Matam according to a variation of the FAO plan. Matam was one of the few urban areas along the river, and it could supply the demand for the production as well as the labor needed for the site. USAID/Senegal was also developing a classic perimeter scheme at Bakel, which is further east towards Mali. This included an early use of solar energy for pumping.

Q: Was there at some point a major proposal for development in agriculture in Senegal during your time?

SLOCUM: Those all became bilateral. There already were a series of irrigated perimeters.

Q: But that was after your time there.

SLOCUM: No, they were already going on funded by many donors: France, Germany, the EC, the World Bank, UNDP, FAO, and so on.

Q: In terms of the USAID side, was there a major agricultural program?

SLOCUM: Yes, both along the river and in other regions, including the Casamance region of southern Senegal. There was a major activity up at Bakel, which I described briefly earlier, and there were some smaller programs in Mauritania. It's hard to talk about my OMVS period without reference to my later assignment in Mauritania. At that time I reengaged with the river basin issues from a Mauritanian perspective. When I got to Nouakchott in 1988, AID was designing a major irrigation perimeter project which did not reach the approval stage. We eventually phased out our Mauritania program because of human rights problems, which is another story we will get to later.

It is important to keep in mind that the Senegal River was the only major resource in Mauritania, northern Senegal and western Mali. There was a great deal of activity from all the donors funding these irrigated perimeters. The OMVS would be dealt a major setback later, when Senegal and Mauritania fought over access rights. I will describe this in more detail later, since coincidentally I was in Mauritania ten years later. But imagine: the countries had committed and indebted themselves for at least one billion dollars for the loans provided for those dams. And two of the three member countries reached a complete impasse which took years to work out. This would seem to justify, in retrospect, the caution of donors in the late '70s, even though the source of their hesitation was economic, not political.

It would be interesting now to see how those irrigation schemes have worked out. When I was in Senegal, we worked with other donors in experimentation on different irrigation schemes. Aside from the recession agriculture, there was also some attempt at applying various schemes of drip irrigation. A team from Utah State visited several times to look at the possibility of doing another irrigated perimeter in the delta near St. Louis.

Q: What was the major reason that the area failed to flourish over time, the drought?

SLOCUM: The drought shut down the access of maritime vessels to the interior, and that was economic death. Viewed in this light, one can appreciate the strong desire of the countries to open up the river once again. Maritime navigation was one of the main elements of the OMVS master plan, but also its longest-range objective.

Q: Anything else on your time in Senegal?

SLOCUM: I haven't said much about life in Senegal and Dakar. Dakar is a large and fairly well-developed, sophisticated city. Former President (and French Academy member) Senghor put emphasis on culture and education. Located in Dakar are a national theater and a renowned national dance group. The issue of priorities can't be ignored, however. One-sixth of Senegal's population, perhaps more, live in Dakar. But there is a gap between the economic well being of the dakarois and the rest of the Senegalese. I haven't been back to Dakar in ten years, but as in many African countries, one finds that the higher costs of urban dwellers are financed on the backs of the farmers. Senegal has always had the reputation among donors as perpetually living beyond its means. As I say, there were some disappointments initially because of the bureaucratic battles and I was too young and naive to know that such battles are part and parcel of what we do. And, I had been so protected and coddled in Cameroon that it was a bit of an awakening to discover this reality. But we all have to grow up some day!

Q: Did you work with the Senegalese a lot?

SLOCUM: Oh, yes, and with Malians and Mauritians. The OMVS was staffed almost entirely with professional Africans from its three member states, and we worked constantly with them. In fact, since the USAID offices were, at the time, right across the Place de l'Indépendance from the OMVS offices, we were in each others' offices every day. We had a close working relationship.

As for the Senegalese, they are products of a fairly good educational system, at least it was good when I was there. I found the Senegalese with whom I came in contact well trained and motivated. At the time, President Senghor was still in power and he would later cede power to his successor. He put great emphasis on intellectual and cultural values, so that one found a somewhat higher level of competence among the Senegalese with whom we came in contact than in other African countries, perhaps. However, to complete this answer, I need to refer to later experience and impressions. I'm afraid that Senegal has acquired a less positive reputation in donors' eyes. From my work at the Club de Sahel and subsequent contacts my business partners have had, I'm sorry to report that Senegal appears to have entered a cynical phase. Corruption is rampant, official decision-making is undisciplined, and Senegalese have learned some bad habits. This could be a case for tough love on the part of donors. But I speak from afar and from secondhand impressions.

Q: What was your view of OMVS as a regional institution? Is it a viable one?

SLOCUM: It was very viable because there was so much at stake. And, as I have mentioned, the organization had a good professional staff. I do not know what the impact of the Senegal-Mauritania war ten years ago was for the OMVS in the long term. I have not been back to West Africa in nearly 10 years, unfortunately.

Q: Were the countries cooperating with each other?

SLOCUM: They were then. Unfortunately, with the outbreak of the tension between Senegal and Mauritania in 1989, it really put OMVS on the back burner. So you had these huge investments in the dams and a highly contentious political situation between the two countries and I have no idea how they are paying off those loans for those dams. I would guess there would be some pretty serious debt issues because of the collapse of political committee.

HERMAN J. COHEN
Ambassador
Senegal (1977-1980)

Ambassador Herman J. Cohen was born in New York City. After graduating from The City College of New York, he joined the Foreign Service in 1955. His career has included positions in France, Uganda, Zambia, Zaire, Senegal and Rhodesia.

Ambassador Cohen was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on August 15, 1996.

Q: Why don't we stop at this point and we'll pick it up you left France for where?

COHEN: I was ambassador to Senegal.

Q: This was when?

COHEN: This was at the beginning of the Carter administration in 1977.

Q: You became ambassador to Senegal in 1977. How did you get your ambassadorial appointment?

COHEN: Well, I was recommended by Assistant Secretary William Schaufele whom I worked with in Paris, sort of took care of his many visits to France. We knew each other, and he recommended me, and it went through.

Q: I take it there wasn't tremendous competition from the appointee side?

COHEN: No. Among the African countries that attracted political appointees, Senegal was one of them because it has a very attractive climate, a nice country to be in, so it has had its share of political appointees.

Q: When you were in Senegal, you were there from when to when?

COHEN: I arrived in August of '77 until July of 1980.

Q: A good solid three years. What was the political situation in Senegal while you were there?

COHEN: It was fairly stable. It was one of the few African countries you could call democratic in the sense that they had elections. Opposition parties were allowed to operate and they were allowed to criticize the government. They had a fairly free press. It was a friendly country; it was always very pro-American, even though their main support came from France. They had a very distinguished president, Leopold Senghor, who was highly respected for his cultural achievements. He was a poet.

Q: He was a member of the academy wasn't he?

COHEN: He became eventually a member of the French academy, and was the founder of a movement called Negritude which was designed to unite the whole black diaspora by emphasizing their African cultural heritage. So even though he was president of a small country, he had the prestige of someone much more important.

Q: Going out to Senegal, what did you see as American interest there?

COHEN: Well it was 1977, and we were still very heavily into the Cold War. We wanted to maintain Senegal more or less on our side. Senegal was very much involved in the Middle East because it is an Islamic country, and they are involved with the Islamic conference. In fact they were presiding over the Islamic conference in those days, so we wanted to get their help on various Arab-Israeli problems. After the Camp David agreements, Egypt was very much isolated in the Muslim world, so we wanted to enlist the help of the Senegalese to reintegrate Egypt into the Muslim world. I spent a lot of time going from the Egyptian ambassador to the Senegalese government discussing ways to prevent Egypt from being expelled from the Islamic conference.

Q: We had no strategic interests in Senegal either in trade or military bases or anything like that.

COHEN: No, we had no strategic interests, but it is interesting that some of our military interests were supported by Senegal. For example, we wanted to bail out the President of Zaire, President Mobutu, when rebels invaded in '78. We transported Senegalese troops to Zaire to deal with the situation. They gave us full use of Dakar airport to take care of that. We transported Moroccan troops to Dakar airport. One thing the military found very valuable in Africa was the use of that airport. It is one of the best in Africa. It is open 24 hours a day. You can get food 24 hours a day and refueling 24 hours a day, so we always wanted to keep in good graces for that reason. The British found it very useful for example in the Falklands War. It was exactly halfway between Britain and the Falklands, so we helped them with the airport. But in general it was the Middle East where they were very helpful to us, in the Cold War where they helped counter Cuban influence in the nonaligned movement. We didn't have any real strategic interests in Senegal, but we had mini interests.

Q: The Senegalese troops were renowned in the French army. Did they still have a respectable army that was useful in that period?

COHEN: We had a military attaché in Senegal that covered the region. He told me that the Senegalese army was considered one of the best because they did good maintenance; they did good training. They had very good esprit de corps. We did what we could to help them in terms of military assistance with engineering equipment. When I got there, they had had this equipment for 10 years and were still maintaining it. We also helped them with coastal surveillance. We started one of the first coast guard operations in West Africa where they could guard their fisheries. All of those countries there were losing resources because of illegal fishing by foreign boats. We also encouraged the Senegalese to send their troops into UN peacekeeping operations that they did do a great deal. Finally, later even after I had left, after the Liberia civil war started, we persuaded the Senegalese to send troops there; we financed that operation. We have always had very close military ties with them.

Q: What were your relations with the French? You had just come out of France. The French sometimes take a dim view of the Americans particularly in areas they consider their own special province there.

COHEN: Well the French did not worry too much about us. U.S. Business was not very competitive in those days, so the French never saw us as an enemy, and I got along very well

with the French ambassador. In fact, he was very interested in the fact that I probably knew more about French internal politics than he did. He was a career diplomat, and he used to get all these visits from these French parliamentary groups, and he used to ask me to give him a briefing about what I had known because I was political counselor in Paris. We got along very well. There was no sense of competition. We were always inviting each other. Later when U.S. business firms started to come in, then the French started getting nasty, but this was way after my watch.

Q: Were you under any brief to get out and drum up business and get American investment in there, or was this not at the top of our list?

COHEN: It was starting to become important, but not as much as it is today. The one thing I was working on was the discrimination of imports into Senegal against non-European community products. Under their agreements with the European community, they were required to have zero tariffs on anything coming in from Europe, and they could do what they want with other products. So, there was a zero tariff on Europe and there were various tariffs on our goods. I kept asking the Senegalese to give us equality with the Europeans, give us zero tariffs too. They kept arguing that the Europeans insist that they have zero tariffs with them. Yes but that doesn't mean you can't have zero tariffs with us. The agreements with Europe did not prohibit giving equal treatment to non-European exports. I kept going round and round, but I was always unsuccessful, so it was quite clear that they wanted to discriminate against us, or at least not displease the Europeans. So, that is what I worked on. I did try to promote certain American interests, for example, when they bought a satellite ground station, a downloading and uploading link for their telephone system, we did succeed in getting an American to make the sale there. That was a rare occasion; there really wasn't that much business to be done in Senegal.

Q: What about dealing with the president. Was he an aloof figure?

COHEN: No, on the contrary, Senghor liked to communicate with the United States. We got involved not just in U.S. Senegal relations but on broader issues. One thing that was going on while I was there was a war in the Western Sahara, the former Spanish Sahara. Neighboring Mauritania was one of the parties in the war. At one point later on they got out of the war. They had been an ally of Morocco, so Senghor was always trying to enlist our help in trying to find a mediated solution to that war. He was interested in many things. For example, Senegal was a member of the socialist international so they were constantly dealing with world wide issues, not just African issues. I was always welcome to see Senghor. I would make a request, and within 2448 hours, I would get an appointment. I never tried to abuse that privilege. I only wanted to see him when I had something interesting to say or to ask. I remember once it was for about six weeks, and I hadn't asked for an appointment. The secretary called me and said the President would like to see you. I said fine, wonderful, so I went over to see him. He said, "Well you haven't been to see me in a long time. I get very uneasy when the White House doesn't know what my views are, so I'd like to see you regularly." He felt that the ambassador was his channel to the White House.

Q: How did the whole Camp David process play out during this Carter administration time?

COHEN: First of all, the Senegalese were overjoyed by Camp David because as a Muslim country, they were forced more or less to break relations with Israel and join forces with the Muslims in an anti-Israeli posture. However, they really liked Israel. They were together with Israel in the socialist international. Senghor, being a great intellectual, had many Israeli friends who were constantly coming there. He was overjoyed by the Camp David agreements. He said, "Now at last, the Muslims can be friends with Israel." But, what he saw was that Egypt, rather than getting credit, was being ostracized. He was working very hard and was coordinating with us on ways to protect Egyptian interests. He had many Israelis for technical assistance, construction work and all that, even though they didn't have formal relations.

Q: You mentioned the Algerian, Mauritanian, Moroccan Sahara war. What was that war called?

COHEN: The War of the Western Sahara.

Q: The War of the Western Sahara. Did you get involved with our embassy particularly on Morocco and maybe Algeria and all in sort of taking sides? This became renowned at different times because our embassy in Morocco seemed to take the Moroccan side of the war.

COHEN: We didn't get involved. All we did was report the Senegalese opinion. Senghor himself was very pro-Moroccan. It all goes back to this business of Negritude where you had this feeling of solidarity among black peoples around the world. He also considered the Polisario to be surrogates of the Algerians. He said the Algerians and the Polisario were racists. The example he gave me was that whenever Mauritanian soldiers were captured by the Polisario, if the Mauritanian soldier that was captured was an Arab, they were put in prison in a prisoner of war camp. If they were black Mauritanians, they were killed. He totally rejected the Polisario and the Algerians as terribly racist, so he sympathized with Morocco. We never got involved with the ideological fight; we just reported what the Senegalese were saying.

Q: What about the Cold War? Was there a Soviet embassy?

COHEN: There was a very large Soviet embassy. It was sort of their main office for all of western Africa. There was a large Chinese embassy. Senegal tended to attract embassies. Countries would say they could only afford to have one embassy in these 12 countries; they usually placed it in Senegal because it was the nicest place to be and the intellectual center. So, Senegal despite its small size had about 45 foreign embassies. The Russians were very big there, and even though Senegal was a member of the nonaligned movement, they were very much pro-West, pro-French to begin with, and pro-American and pro-West. They did everything possible to assist us. For example, there was a very close liaison between the CIA station in Dakar and the Senegalese security service. They worked the Soviet embassy together, very happy there, and they did catch the Soviets in various subversive activities working with Senegalese opposition groups, that sort of thing. Also they were very helpful to us in the international field. I remember once there was a nonaligned summit conference in Cuba. A conference in Cuba was clearly going to have an anti-American cast to it even though there were countries from all over the world. We had heard that the Senegalese, understanding that the Cubans would try to control the conference, decided to boycott it. I got a message from Washington instructing us to ask the Senegalese not to boycott it because we wanted our friends in there to fight against Cuba. The

Senegalese said no. Finally I had to go up to visit Senghor at his farm in France where he spent every summer. It was actually his wife's farm; he was married to a French lady. He was very gracious, and he received me, and I explained to him why we wanted Senegal to be present. He understood right away, and he said he would send his foreign minister. When the foreign minister went, he turned out to be a terrible gadfly. The Cubans were very frustrated, because every time they would do something anti-American, the Foreign Minister would challenge them from the floor. So this was the general cooperative relationship we had with them. The Senegalese were not outwardly pro-American. They wanted to be nonaligned, but they were always helpful to us.

Q: What about our USIA? I always think of the USIA having difficulty in a French speaking French oriented country.

COHEN: Well, USIA was clearly not as strong as the French in the cultural effort. But, it is amazing how much the USIA was able to accomplish there. We did a lot in terms of culture. We had a lot of Americans coming there. We would talk about all kinds of things like jazz and literature, all sorts of things, and they were very well received. There was a lot of English teaching going on. We had three or four professors at the university under Fulbright grants. More and more Senegalese were going to the States for education. When I got there, I started the first club for Senegalese who had studied in the U.S., an alumni club. I found that in one group of about 15 men all had done their B.A.'s at UCLA. It looks like one of them went there and the others followed. These are guys who are very dynamic, getting into business, what have you, so USIA was having a very important impact.

Q: Did the Libyans play any role in there during this period?

COHEN: The Libyans were trying to be active there, but Senghor considered them to be racist just like the Algerians. He had visited Libya and found that they didn't like black people. He sensed this, so they didn't have relations, but they were next door in Gambia. Gambia is sort of an enclave inside Senegal. He was very leery of them and tried to work with us to protect against them. He found the Libyans were financing Muslim fundamentalist groups inside Senegal, and he did a lot to clamp down on them. Fortunately, most Senegalese did not take to fundamentalism, so he didn't have to work very hard at it, but he was always worried about the Libyans.

Q: Did race in the United States I mean did Senghor understand developments in the United States and what we were dealing with?

COHEN: Yes, he did. He followed it very closely. He appreciated people like Jimmy Carter and Lyndon Johnson and others he had seen as working hard to end racism and promote civil rights. He was sympathetic although he understood what was going on in the States and disapproved of a lot of practices. He was sympathetic to the U.S. government on that issue. He was a linguist. He got a Ph.D. in what the French call grammar, but what we call linguistics. He made a study of black American dialects in New Orleans. He claimed to me, although I was unable to verify it, that a lot of the jazz talk, the New Orleans dialect, derives from the Senegalese language, Wolof. He gave me words, for example, when an American says "I dig you" in Jazz talk, in Senegalese

language they say "Diggala" which means "I dig you." So, he had all these examples. Anyway, he was fascinated by the black experience in America, but he was not hostile to us about it.

Q: You were there during the take over of our embassy in Tehran with all the overtones of Islamic fundamentalism. How did that impact on you all?

COHEN: The Senegalese government was very friendly with the government of the Shah, and the prime minister of Senegal who is now the president, Abdou Diouf, was very close with the then prime minister of Iran. I can't remember who was the Prime Minister before the overthrow. They were constantly sending gifts to each other. The Iranians were very active in Senegal. So when the Shah was overthrown, the Senegalese sort of went into a state of shock. They were very upset about that. Nevertheless, the Iranians sent a replacement ambassador, one of the young revolutionary guard types who immediately started trying to stir up Muslim sympathies. He requested the right to make speeches at the Friday Mosque. The Senegalese turned him down. So, they were very leery about it, but they continued to maintain relations with Iran. The Iranian ambassador's house was opposite my residence. I was amused when every night they were showing films about the American atrocities committed during the Shah's reign. Otherwise it didn't impact much on what we were doing in Senegal.

Q: Were there any developments on the borders around Senegal at this particular time?

COHEN: Well, there were the beginnings of problems with Mauritania. The people in southern Mauritania, the boundary is on the Senegal River, the people living in the southern fifth of Mauritania are really the same tribes as in Senegal called the Afro- Mauritanians, as distinct from the majority of people in Mauritania who are Arab Mauritians. The Afro-Mauritanians were French speakers. They were more advanced than the Arabs, had better education and they tended to try and dominate, but they were discriminated against. They were a minority. More and more, we saw the northern Senegalese were sending arms to their relative across the river in Mauritania. We saw the beginning of a problem, but it didn't erupt until I became Assistant Secretary in 1989. There were full-fledged mass expulsions from each country because there were a lot of Mauritians who were small traders working in Senegal. So, the Senegalese kicked out about 80,000 of those, and the Mauritians in revenge kicked out a lot of Afro-Mauritanians. The difference was that the Afro-Mauritanians were Mauritanian citizens, so they were expelling their own people, whereas the Senegalese were expelling Mauritians. Anyway, we saw it coming, and we tried to get them to think about it. We really couldn't get their attention, however.

Q: Did we have much of an AID program there or any AID program?

COHEN: Senegal had one of the major AID programs in Africa, and is still going strong.

Q: In what areas were they working?

COHEN: Agriculture, health and education. Health was I thought the most successful because they reversed the trend of building hospitals in urban areas which never worked because the hospitals could never be maintained and they couldn't get the right doctors, so we concentrated

on bringing medicine to the villages. If you take care of malaria suppression, basic sanitation, and immunization of children, you have conquered about 80% of the diseases in Senegal. So, we had a massive program of establishing small health units in about 350 villages. It was a very successful program.

Q: How about efforts to tame the Sahel? Did that get any attention?.

COHEN: When I was there it was during the tail end of a big drought in the late 70's. During the drought in the Sahel, this big desert had advanced southward. So we were working on reforestation, digging of wells, and rationalizing the whole business of cattle herding. A lot of people had cattle that were not being exploited for economic purposes. Our work was all done to help stop the spread of the desert to the south.

Q: What was your dealing with AID? Did you as the ambassador have much control over what particularly new projects or stopping of old projects, or was this something that pretty much got started and had a life of its own?

COHEN: One thing I didn't try to do was micro manage the AID because we knew there were certain sectors the U.S. Congress and the AID managers wanted to emphasize, such as basic human needs, health, and education. What I tried to do was travel a lot to visit the grassroots and find out what the Senegalese people wanted. My gimmick for doing that was to visit Peace Corps volunteers. We had 100 Peace Corps volunteers, so I would go see them in the villages, and I would hang around and talk to the local chiefs. In my travels I found their main interest was getting more water so they could grow vegetables, sell them, and get a market economy going. So, I used my influence with the AID Mission Director to steer him toward that. He developed a project for digging wells. He had a project for 500 wells, so I was quite proud of that. I worked with them to steer them in certain directions; I didn't micro manage. What I told all of the agencies in Senegal, not just AID but FAA, Defense Department, and all the agencies represented there, I was there to help them. I considered the most difficult people to be in Washington. I said, "We all go to bat together to try and influence Washington." They understood that, so we had a cooperative relationship.

Q: How were your relations with the African Bureau at the time?

COHEN: They were quite good although I had one dust up with them. When we transported Senegalese troops to Zaire to help save Mobutu's regime in 1978, and when the operation was more or less over, the Senegalese said, "Okay, please send the planes and take us back," and somehow Washington refused to do that. I got very upset. I said, "How can we give these guys a one way ticket? We have to give them a two way ticket." I was told later that it was not the Africa Bureau; but it was Brzezinski in the White House who somehow decided it was not a good idea to transport them back. Otherwise, I got along very well. We got very good support. We didn't have much in the way of disagreements.

Q: How about the Peace Corps; how effective was that?

COHEN: The Peace Corps was very effective because they were essentially in the villages. There were very few sitting in the capital city, except for one or two doing educational work. We even had one tennis instructor. Most of them were in the villages where they became adopted children of the village chief working the village from the chief's compound. They were involved in all sorts of useful work like maternal and child care, nutrition, vegetable growing, educational projects and fish culture. They were greatly esteemed. I found it very striking that among the educated Senegalese, very few of them were willing to go out and work in rural areas. They wanted to stay in the cities in air conditioned offices. The only ones you found out there when you traveled were American Peace Corps volunteers or missionaries.

Q: This so often is the case.

COHEN: Also the Peace Corps learned languages like crazy. They were fluent in local languages and were greatly respected for that.

DAVID SHEAR
USAID Mission Director
Dakar (1979-1984)

Mr. Shear was born in the Bronx, New York in 1932. He graduated from New York University and Harvard. His career in the Foreign Service included posts in Nigeria, Tanzania, Ivory Coast and Senegal. He was interviewed by W. Haven North in 1998.

In September 1979 I became Mission Director for the bilateral program in Senegal. I oversaw our efforts in the Gambia as well; the AID representative in the Gambia was theoretically reporting to me. I was also responsible for a number of regional initiatives (i.e., the integrated pest management, the Senegal River Basin Commission, the Gambia River Basin Commission). We also provided, because we had a fairly good communications system, some legal and technical support of programs in the Cape Verde Islands and Guinea Bissau.

The program in Senegal had essentially gone through three phases. The first phase was from 1961 to 1972, when Senegal and most of the countries of ex-Francophone West Africa were really run out of the Senegal and West Africa Regional Office. It was administered from Washington, and there was minimal representation in the field. There were AID representatives in places like Niger, Bamako and Dakar, but only limited field staff, and the program was very modest in size. The operation was very inefficient to run out of Washington, and it showed, for example, the difficulty of writing implementation orders. AID uses PIO-Ts, PIO-Cs and PIOPs, which are Project Implementation Orders for Technical Services (that is, contracts), for Commodities and for Training. Prepared in Washington, these had to be sent to the field for review and negotiation and then sent back to Washington. All the financial controls were in Washington, and all project agreements had to be written there as well. It was an enormously cumbersome system, and as a result, not a lot happened. There was a high degree of dissatisfaction on the part of the recipients because implementation was so slow, and in many

ways Washington was perceived as being non-responsive to their needs and their changing requirements. The period from 1973 to 1980 saw significant changes.

In 1973 I had been brought back to Washington by Sam Adams (then head of the Africa Bureau) and Dan Parker (head of the Agency) to take on the drought emergency. We have already talked about my role in helping create the Club du Sahel. During that time we also reorganized management of our field activities, putting what we termed "Country Development Offices" (with less than mission directors' delegations of authority) in posts from Mauritania to Chad as a way of getting some management in all the Sahelian states. These were very difficult positions to fill, with very few amenities for families and working conditions still in the throes of the drought. These officers initially had to manage drought emergency efforts and later were charged with developing a Relief Rehabilitation Program supported by Congress with a substantial \$110 million appropriation. Maurice Williams, the Deputy Administrator of AID, was very nervous about that effort, fearing loss of funds and miscalculations of what would be an effective project in a very difficult environment. But we were very careful in deciding how projects would be approved and details of their criteria and financing. Our efforts turned out to be remarkably successful. Projects costing less than \$500,000 were designed to go forward very rapidly for the rehabilitation of boreholes and the rebuilding of damaged bridges, school buildings, administrative centers and grain storage centers. They were very specific, finite activities to reconnect the Sahelian States among themselves and then with their neighbors.

After using about \$70 million for this most successful effort, we got authority to devote the remainder into a longer-term effort. And establishing the Country Development Offices proved to be a very effective way to interact with governments that saw the value of having the AID officers there. The level of cooperation increased significantly. What we had done was to move substantial authority from Washington to the field.

From 1980 on there was significant growth of the Senegal program as a bilateral effort connected more to policy reform. It was just before that time, in 1978, that we moved from Country Development Offices to Mission Directors, increasing delegation of approval authority to the field and establishing larger and more self-contained posts.

When I arrived in Senegal, I was fortunate to have two Senegalese friends who were influential within the government. One was Jacques Diouf, who was the Minister for Science and Research and also responsible for agricultural research. When I was Regional Director in Abidjan, Jacques was the head of WARDA (West African Rice Development Agency) in Monrovia, and I spent a fair amount of time with him trying to unravel implementation problems of this curious organization being run from Washington. He experienced a high level of frustration, and REDSO was able to bring him considerable relief, I think, and in so doing we became good friends. The second person was Tidian Sy, the head of the National School of Applied Economics in Dakar who had worked with me earlier in Washington, representing the Sahelian interests in fashioning the Sahel Development Program. With the two of them helping me make appointments with others at their level, it was much easier for me to gain entrée into the government. They were enormously helpful.

I had obviously been aware of the program, having been Director for Central and West Africa in Washington. But when I got to Senegal, I found that that the theory of management at the Dakar Mission was to let the government be responsible for all or most of the running of the program. In theory that sounds very attractive, but in reality the program was lagging in execution. The AID officers who were in Dakar stayed in Dakar; they didn't travel to review their respective projects. The USAID ceded responsibility to host government project managers for virtually all aspects of the project implementation. Most of the USAID managers knew not nearly enough about their activities to be effective, so I decided to visit each of the projects every 60 days, asking the Senegalese director of the national service responsible for that project to accompany me. I found that in more than half the cases the head of the service had never been to the area where the projects were underway, was essentially trained in Paris, lived in Dakar, and didn't want to travel in the rest of the country. There was no valid excuse, because compared to a lot of other African countries, Senegal was small and had a relatively decent road system - you could get just about anywhere in a day or a day and a half with minimum discomfort. So we began to directly engage the interest of the directors of the services, whether it was in health or agriculture, and thus they better understood what was happening. We were able to correct other impediments, and implementation showed improvement fairly rapidly, energizing the AID staff and their personnel. I insisted that they not just wait for my visits but that they spend a good deal of time at the project site. Moving AID officers into the ministries for which they were responsible reduced the number of people in the AID mission itself by probably over 40 percent. When I forced them into the government offices where they were supposed to be working with their counterparts, there was obviously a good deal of resistance; some unhappy people didn't stay.

We needed a much more logical and rational way to assess the effectiveness of what we were doing, and we needed government at a high level to share this evaluation with us. So we developed what was in French a plan de redressement, that is, a joint plan of assessment and modification. I engaged the Minister for Plan in the process, and got the U.S. Ambassador, Henry Cohen, to participate. I also got Prime Minister Abdou Diouf interested in the process of donors working more effectively and cooperatively with the government, and so we took our time on the joint assessment. Over a six-month period we evaluated each of the significant projects which we had, probably fifteen. We brought in people who were highly skilled in evaluation to work with both my own staff and some excellent Senegalese staff, and as they reviewed the projects they also trained the latter in evaluation techniques and methodologies - to everyone's satisfaction.

That program evaluation culminated in a three-day seminar in which we reviewed each of the activities. We engaged the ministers - the Minister for Plan and the U.S. Ambassador presiding over many of the reviews - and it was an extremely effective technique for sharing responsibility for issues relating to these projects. Because we then had the basis of joint planning, we carefully spent the next six months developing the next phase of his program.

One advantage of committing to a long period of time in a post - I would spend at least two tours there - was seeing things in a different perspective. Doing so also gave me an opportunity to bring together some really wonderful people I had known elsewhere and to replace some less effective staff with more energized, sometimes younger people, people who spoke French and

people who were deeply interested in Africa and Sahelian development. An exemplary staff was assembled by the time we started redesigning the program.

We also had the opportunity to upgrade the Senegalese staff, which were really fine people but needed additional training. I established a staff development and training program, budgeted for \$150,000 to \$200,000 a year, which allowed for sending some of them to the States for training. Most, however, were trained in place or went to countries other than the United States. We hired a full-time Senegalese staff development officer, and brought in U.S. trainers to help frame the program, the methodology and the personnel evaluation system, and it worked wonderfully well. It increased the capacity of USAID enormously and made us less reliant on Americans over time - replacing three American positions with Senegalese. This made the Americans uneasy, of course, but also gained us enormous political credit as what we were doing became more widely known. Relations with the government became much closer, in part because of this.

Q: What were some of those projects that you were reviewing?

SHEAR: One of the major activities we were undertaking was a rural development program for health delivery systems. The project director was a Belgian doctor, and there was nothing wrong with his being non-American, but he was not terribly sympathetic to the Senegalese. At CILSS at that time was a remarkable American health officer, Michael White, who, when I was in Washington, had asked me to hire him to work with the Sahelians in planning the CILSS health programs. He'd done a wonderful job there, being fluent in French, a superb public health physician and very sympathetic with the Sahelians. After having spent two years in Ouagadougou, Mike and his family came to Dakar, and we evaluated the project. He became head of our health office as part of the joint assessment, first on TDY (temporary duty) and then full time. When we redesigned that project, which was headquartered in Kaolack, we gave a lot of responsibility for its day-to-day local execution to village elders. These villages were very hierarchical, with the elders having a great deal of authority. Earlier a lot of the funds earmarked for local health clinics disappeared, most likely stolen by those who were supposed to be implementing the activity. Motorcycles issued to the local health people either didn't work or were sold because there were no means to maintain them. It was extremely difficult to find American AID people to work in some of the more remote and difficult areas, so we began to engage Peace Corps volunteers as outriders of this project - the health extension people, if you will. Over time there would be more than 80 Peace Corps volunteers working on AID projects in Senegal, to the great satisfaction of both organizations.

In redesigning the delivery system for health services, we had to seek national legislation to change the policy context of the project. The Senegal government had promised national health care at no cost, and therefore there was no health care. We were behind legislation enacted to permit authorities in local *préfétures* (counties) to charge for health services and local physicians to charge for health services. Our growing relationship with then Prime Minister Abdou Diouf contributed to his endorsement of these policies. In the end we developed a list of 18 basic medicines to be stocked in the local clinics by pharmacists trained by us. Within two years, in each of almost 1,000 villages there was a pharmacist, a first aid person and a midwife. These people received compensation for services from the villagers on a fixed-fee schedule we devised. The village was responsible for the accounting, but one of the three people, depending on their

education, "kept the books." The elders were ultimately responsible, and if there was a loss of revenue or resources, they were under contract to make it up. They took this responsibility very seriously, and the project was highly effective, becoming a national program the year after I left Senegal and in use to this day. It has now made its way into Mali and several of the surrounding states.

Q: And the core of the program was these modest health and pharmacy centers?

SHEAR: Yes. They also permitted us insight into family planning and maternal and child health, areas we had found most difficult to penetrate. By becoming more familiar with local attitudes, we were able to deliver better health services and to introduce family planning practices, which over time have become increasingly successful. Incidentally, there was also resistance during the first two years when some religious leaders in Senegal thought that the Koran did not permit this. So we sponsored a national seminar on maternal and child health (we didn't call it family planning) and its relationship to the Koran. In attendance were these marabouts (religious leaders) and also some Koranic scholars, who presented a series of papers, and the conclusion was that the Koran stressed the importance of good health and its benefits to one's family. The responsibility of the husband, whether he has one or four wives, is their health and well being, and while it didn't come out with a positive specific recommendation, there was nothing negative about moving toward the spacing of children. It was really a rather interesting outcome that got a lot of national publicity.

The health program was also, I think, very important to our attempt to increase productivity at the farm level. Expanding efforts to maintain good health for workers during the time of year when they usually were the sickest was obviously very important. The people were most likely weakest when food was short, just before the rains. With the rains came malaria. Diarrheal diseases were rampant, sapping people's energy. Ensuring a means to deliver malaria drugs and provide first aid and guidance for various illnesses and injuries at the village level, we believed, would increase farm productivity.

Q: Right.

SHEAR: Clearly the morbidity lessened substantially. We did some assessments, but it was awfully hard to link cause and effect. The Sine Saloum health project has become the model for a whole series of health projects in Africa, and the way we used and learned from evaluations when we designed the project has also been used in a number of instances.

Another project I want to mention is related to agricultural production. Before I arrived in Senegal, quasi-government organizations called parastatals carried out the programs for agricultural extension and production. We found in assessing the programs that almost 50 percent of AID's resources went into salaries and personnel costs related to those within the parastatals, and very little got to the farmers themselves. To alleviate this situation, we began to work through local farmers' associations, and over time got the government to reduce support of the parastatals. Obviously this was very difficult because of the reluctance of the bureaucracy to find alternate jobs. I would have to say that redesign in this area was less successful than our health efforts (and much more difficult), but over time I think some real progress was made.

Activities in small, irrigated perimeters in the Bakel area near the Mauritanian border were extremely successful, because they relied primarily on local organizations and villagers for their execution. Some direct technical assistance was provided by parastatals and from a number of extraordinarily fine Vietnamese agronomists (who had green cards and after their work on the program would ultimately become American citizens). They brought with them grassroots knowledge of working at the local level and lived in Bakel (one of the hottest places in Senegal), doing very well under quite difficult circumstances.

A very large project we had in the Casamance, which was severely hampered by government bureaucracy, was a \$27 million integrated rural development effort focused on agriculture. We recast it, too, to rely on local organizations and communities to work on water control in an area that was increasingly salinized. These efforts were not nearly so successful because of the need to deal with government bureaucracy and the reluctance of the government to reduce those salaried positions.

We continued heavy emphasis on program implementation, so that by the beginning of the third year I was in Senegal, financial obligations were at the same level as disbursements. This was most unusual for AID programs, which usually had very large pipelines (undisbursed funds). By the time I left Senegal, we had reduced the pipeline from 300 percent of the annual obligations to the same amount committed annually. I considered that real progress. Obviously, this is but a crude measure of implementation effectiveness, but at least we were disbursing funds and moving things. The project managers were on site, and I then visited them about every six months. We conducted reviews of every project involving the head of service, and if there were major issues, we solved them as promptly as possible, usually on the spot. I enjoyed that aspect of my job enormously.

The other component of the program that I wanted to mention was moving to non-project assistance. As Senegal began to respond to the recommendations of the Elliot Berg report and as the Bank was mobilizing for macroeconomic restructuring within Africa, Senegal was a target country. Within the context of the Bank's push for economic structural reform, we had approved a PL 480 Title III program.

Concerning Title III, PL 480, the proposed agreement and the negotiating instructions were so onerous and complex that Ambassador Cohen thought we should not go forward with it. He felt Washington was just trying to kill the effort. However, I convinced him to allow me to lay out some negotiating guidelines for sitting down with the government, fully aware of the difficulty of changing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's instructions, as these tend to be written in concrete, if not steel. The subsequent negotiations were grueling, but they were successful. We actually did negotiate an agreement of \$21 million for disbursement over a three-year period.

Q: What was so difficult about it? What was the Department of Agriculture pushing for?

SHEAR: First of all, the agreement had four or five preambles requiring certifications that were almost embarrassing to request related to the legitimacy of the government. They covered authority to utilize the funds properly and their accounting systems - things that taken alone

might not seem so onerous, but collectively took on an aura of negotiating with criminals or with a company of some dubious history, not with a sovereign government. Further, reporting and labeling was extremely complex and difficult. For example, all bags delivered had to be labeled "From the people of the United States to the people of Senegal," even though they would be sold through commercial markets, and this created a good deal of confusion. I can't remember all the details, but overall the restrictions we had to enforce were quite absurd and demeaning.

Q: There were a number of self-help provisions, weren't there?

SHEAR: Yes, a lot of them geared toward agricultural production, which was helpful. Those made up the smallest portion of the instructions, for they were general guidelines that left details to be specifically articulated by us. We then had to go back to Washington for approval, but that was a useful part of the dialogue with the government about policy modification.

Setting up the financial accounting was extremely complicated. Fortunately, we had technical assistance funds and flexibility in training Senegalese government accountants and project managers. Without those the government never would have been able to satisfy the reporting requirements for the agreement. In the end it turned out to be a very successful agreement, and the government organized, per the instructions of negotiation, a committee to manage it. We also worked closely with the committee, and much of the effort devolved on local committees. For example, about \$6 million was used to stabilize coastal dunes from Dakar all the way north to the Mauritanian border. Local villagers were used in the effort, so we created short-term but significant employment and nurseries to grow cassierina trees for planting along the coast. Now when you fly along the edge of the Atlantic up to the Mauritanian border, you see a swath of green about 300 meters wide for 125 kilometers - one result of the Title III project.

Q: There were some issues over the kinds of rice, weren't there?

SHEAR: Yes. The Senegalese prefer broken rice, which was imported at relatively modest cost per ton from Thailand, the world's largest rice exporter. The rice they had to import from the United States was long grain, and was sold much more to the middle class. Although we have broken rice in the United States, it's all bought by the beer industry. We had a visit from the U.S. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, who negotiated with the new prime minister, Habib Thiam, and guaranteed supplying U.S.-produced broken rice, but when he returned home to fulfill the agreement, he was roundly defeated by members of Congress representing the beer lobbies. So Anheuser-Busch and similar "needy" organizations got the broken rice but the Senegalese did not. The Senegalese then consumed such large amounts of rice that \$10 million worth a year could be absorbed within the urban market without too much difficulty.

Indeed, Senegal's import bill for rice was equal to their import bill for petroleum. That meant about a \$300 million a year to support dependence on what is in a sense a luxury commodity. Rice can be considered a "convenience" food that can be prepared within 45 minutes. Millet and sorghum, on the other hand, need to be pounded and processed. Hence, rice was certainly the preferred food of the urban dwellers. There was then an impetus for the Senegalese to push for their own rice production (which I supported), but it turned out in the long term not to be very economical. Senegal produces a fair amount of rice now, but Mali produces more, and more

economically as well. Mali sells rice to Senegal these days, and that reduces the amount imported from Thailand.

Q: At that time was it irrigated rice that they were trying to produce?

SHEAR: Yes, and irrigated rice, even in low-cost, smaller perimeters, was still substantially more expensive than imported Thai rice.

Q: Rice production was part of the Casamance Program, wasn't it?

SHEAR: To some degree, but the Program was more focused on water control and growing vegetables and other grains. The major effort on the rice production was along the Senegal River. Rain-fed rice was a traditional crop in the Casamance, but it was mostly consumed locally.

Q: Did you provide any budget support, balance-of-payments assistance or support funds as part of the economic structural reform program?

SHEAR: Yes; that was a very important additional component of our program. We had, over a three-year period, \$10 million annually in structural adjustment funds, non-project assistance. To help us design the program, we engaged the person for whom I first worked in AID, Vince Brown, who had been the Nigeria Desk Officer when I was an intern. Vince had retired but came to Senegal to help us put together the program, and actually wrote the basic documentation. We also had exceptionally good assistance with conditionality requirements from the Minister for Plan, Mamadou Toure, who had been a senior official with the IMF and later head of the Africa Division of the IMF. Now retired, he remains a good friend. When we first started discussing the prospect of non-project assistance, he said very directly, "Well, tell me the terms of the conditionality," which was very unusual. He was a very sophisticated person to deal with and very knowledgeable. That first program approval was extremely important to the Senegalese government, because it required a certain level of foreign exchange availabilities for the IMF program to go forward. I had forgotten about this until recently, when over lunch Mamadou Toure reminded me that the Senegalese government was going to fall about \$8 million short equivalent of the foreign exchange needed for the IMF program to go forward (\$40 or \$50 million a year for the first tranche). I was able to accelerate the approval of the U.S. \$10 million non-project package by going to Washington and then hand-carrying the approval back with me. Mamadou Toure then could show the approval documents to the IMF, allowing the whole program to proceed. So the U.S. Government played a very useful role, not only with the money itself but also in leveraging IMF assistance.

Q: What happened to the reforms that went with such funding?

SHEAR: The reforms were not nearly as successful as we had hoped over the longer term, and indeed Senegal is still lagging behind some of its Sahelian neighbors in the reform process. I think part of it relates to the success of the Senegalese in generating foreign assistance. The Senegalese are very sophisticated and charming, and very skilled in dealing with donor agencies. And while Mamadou Toure was very sincere, he sometimes placed himself at risk in the role he took on when he became Minister for Finance. Despite his efforts, the established bureaucracy

was so strong in Senegal that it was very difficult, for example, to reduce the number of government employees. Other hindrances were the entrenched power of religious leaders called marabouts, and strong commercial interests tied to France that in some instances did not necessarily favor economic reforms. So Senegal, time and time again, would get very large structural adjustment loans from the World Bank and renegotiate the IMF programs, only to fail meeting the performance criteria.

Q: I have the impression that Senegal had a very rigid structure of government and parastatals and labor laws in this regard.

SHEAR: Very rigid, because the whole industrial régime was built around a sort of French mercantilist model, so there was very little flexibility. And it relied greatly on government subsidies and its relationships with major industries, the bureaucracy and the public service as a whole.

Also the unions in Senegal were extremely strong, particularly for an African country, and many were leaders within the whole independence movement. Senghor, the first president of Senegal, came out of the union movement. He had been a union leader, even though an intellectual, and he led one of the first major strikes. An extraordinary novel, *God's Bits of Wood*, which was about the railway strike in the 1940s, was written by the man who later became the Minister for Industry. The unions were very strong and resisted change, and since there was a very strong teachers' union as well, it was difficult to bring about educational reform. But other Sahelian countries with the same structure have managed to bring about reform, essentially because they've had strong enough leadership to force it through. I think Mali is a very good example, and Burkina Faso, too, where as the result of several revolutions, significant reforms have been instituted. A related fact is that Senegal has a self-imposed restraint, which is the respect for law. The judiciary in Senegal is extremely strong, and where Mali and Burkina Faso have had revolutions and coups d'état, Senegal has not. The very process that has given it much of its strength - the process of peaceful change - has been a major constraint to revolutionary economic restructuring. Politics in Senegal have become much more like the politics of Cook County, Illinois. President Diouf is now saying he will run for a fourth term, which, I think, is uncalled for and unfortunate. Power does corrupt, and so Abdou Diouf, who as a younger man and even as Prime Minister was a very important force for reform, has become a force for the retention of the status quo.

Q: And then there was the non-modern sector, the ground nut program, which involved the majority of the population - an area of extreme poverty. It was difficult to address, wasn't it?

SHEAR: Because Senegal was not that large an area, I think we knew the constraints to change in the non-modern sector, and sometimes we addressed them through health programs and some of the agricultural production programs. One challenge came from local religious leaders, the marabouts. Their followers, the talibous, who made up a large portion of the population, were obliged to provide the marabouts with a portion of their harvests each year. Anything that would change such a production system was seen as potentially a threat to the marabouts, so they were reluctant to support new agricultural practices. But despite their opposition, agricultural practices have indeed changed substantially. For example, the ground nut basin in central Senegal, the area

around Kaolak, had been undergoing the mining of its soils, but we've seen much of that arrested because of changing patterns of agricultural production. But it takes a long time for this kind of change to take place. Modifying the power of the marabouts took 20 to 25 years. In AID we tend to think in much shorter periods of time, in terms of project or budget cycles.

I failed to mention another important aspect of the reconfiguration of the program: the concentration of projects. When I arrived in Senegal, we had 30 separate projects in a portfolio of about \$25 million a year. We increased the aid level to over \$50 million a year by the time I had been there four years, but reduced the number of projects from 30 to 15 (and ultimately to nine) bilateral activities. This gave us much better units of management, allowing more focused attention of resources and, in the end, more leverage in bringing about needed policy changes.

An important component of the agricultural program was development in two river basins, one very large, one modest in size. The Gambia River Basin Commission was part of our responsibility, as was the Senegal River Basin Commission. I set up a separate office within USAID to deal with these because we needed different sets of technical skills, such as water engineering. There had been initiated, before my time, two excellent projects that were assisting with the OMVS. The OMVS was a regional organization comprising Senegal, Mali and Mauritania, headquartered in Dakar. It had authority for development within the entire Senegal River Basin and is comparable to the Tennessee Valley Authority in that it had responsibility for power, navigation and agriculture.

One earlier undertaking with the OMVS was the topographic mapping project of the entire Senegal basin, performed with great skill by an American company, Teledyne. However, this was very costly because it was a Department of Defense-type contract, which was cost plus. So Teledyne left behind some most expensive equipment. This was a huge embarrassment, but what they had accomplished was extraordinarily good. We even found that the Manantali Dam was being misplaced by 45 feet. That doesn't seem like very much, but it was a significant factor in an almost \$2 billion structure. The second project was an environmental impact assessment of the entire régime of the dam. Two dams on the Senegal River were being put in - one at Manantali, which is on the Bafing (a major tributary in Mali) and the other, the Diama Dam, at the mouth of the Senegal River. The goal for the Diama Dam was to prevent saltwater intrusion, because the river has such a gradual rate of descent. That dam was only 20 kilometers from the ocean, just above the mouth of the river. The environmental impact assessment AID funded was extremely well done. I personally conducted reviews of all its components - seven or eight very large volumes, each dealing with a different aspect, from fisheries to health to flood recession agriculture. Overall, it was extremely thorough and very important for the planning of water flows in the river and how the dams would be regulated. The Manantali Dam, a very large structure, would cost \$1.8 billion. The United States was precluded from contributing to the capital costs of the dam by Congress and also by the reality of budget constraints. However, because of the nature of our support for these two activities, because we provided staff training and support for the OMVS itself, and because it was headquartered in Dakar, we had a close working relationship with the organization and its High Commissioner. We also played a significant role in donor meetings convened from time to time to generate funds for both the Diama and the Manantali Dams.

Q: Weren't there some real questions, though, about the economic feasibility of these dams?

SHEAR: Correct. The World Bank was strongly opposed to these structures, considering them uneconomical. The Bank instead favored pump irrigation directly from the river. Of course, one of the benefits of the Manantali Dam was the power to be generated by four large turbines to be installed. We believed that these turbines would provide cheaper irrigation because we could turn to electric pumps rather than the diesel ones being used at the time. We also saw (never a concern of the World Bank) the political importance of the dams as instruments of cooperation between the three governments. And indeed, as the dam resources began to be mobilized, we were asked to provide technical help such as legal advice on the uses of the water and help with negotiating water agreements among the three states. We brought in one of the world's premier legal experts in this area to draft the necessary legislation, which was then passed by the three governments. At that time there was a civil war going on in the northern part of Mauritania and southern Morocco. Qadhafi was also making incursions into northern Mali as well as infiltrating the higher echelons of the government in Mauritania. For the U.S. Government, unlike the World Bank, the dams had importance for both developmental and political purposes. So despite the World Bank and well-known economists like Elliot Berg saying these were not economical and the United States shouldn't support them, we did, and strongly. I also saw the need for much more resilient agricultural production systems and therefore the utility of some forms of irrigation in the basin. The long-term result has been a lot of spontaneous development since the change in the water régime, the availability of the water and the growing accessibility of electric motors in the valley itself. One of the generators is now on line and the electrical system goes down along the Mauritanian side and then across into the Senegal side, so that some areas can now be irrigated much more cheaply.

Q: As I recall, you had proposed a substantial agricultural development project for the area.

SHEAR: Yes, and it illustrates the difficulty of even the U.S. Government recommending its own regional projects, as this activity required cooperation of the three USAID missions and American embassies in Senegal, Mauritania and Mali. It was a project I generated that was designed to increase U.S. participation through irrigation and to provide environmental safeguards through local health programs (building on our success in the Sine Saloum health project). Further, it was designed to help leverage other reforms within the policy constraints of pricing and trade still in place, particularly in Mali and Mauritania. We felt that by generating a project of substantial dimension (around \$12 million), we could both affect policies and foster agricultural production in the valley. We also sought to build on our success with small-scale perimeters in Matam and Bakel in northern Senegal. Charles Bray, then U.S. Ambassador to Senegal, was strongly supportive, and the two of us visited the other two embassies and missions and got verbal support from the ambassadors and mission directors - they could hardly withhold it. But they really dragged their feet and the project never went forward, essentially due to lack of cooperation on the part of our American colleagues.

Q: What was the reason? Did you understand it?

SHEAR: One reason was that this was a difficult period in U.S. relationships with Mauritania. The U.S. ambassador was at odds with the government over some (to me, nonessential) political

issues which dealt more with his personality than with U.S. policy. Nonetheless, he was not in a position to push for reforms. In Mali, I thought it was more the attitude of a mission director who did not want any external interference. He saw the regional project as impinging on his authority, which was most unfortunate.

Q: Where was Guinea in this? They were part of the OMVS, weren't they?

SHEAR: The main headwaters of the Senegal River are in the mountains of Guinea. Guinea applied for a membership in the OMVS on two occasions, and when finally brought in, also applied to the CILSS for membership in the Sahel consortium. They were turned down, mainly because they were totally non-Sahelian and Guinea-Bissau would then have to be brought in too, and Guinea-Bissau was not Sahelian either. Cape Verde was a member, because it also had Sahelian-type climate. This was an object lesson for me in the difficulties of getting a large regional project under way, even though rationally it made a lot of sense. Looking at what we could have done differently, we might have moved more slowly in preparing our colleagues in Mauritania and Mali. We did have meetings before the project was presented to Congress, and we got their support for it. Indeed, there was enough interest in it that Ray Love, the Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Africa Bureau, when on a visit to West Africa, came to specifically look at that project. He went back in support of it, I believe, but it still never went forward.

Q: You spoke about the studies that were done initially, but what were the investments you had envisioned, apart from the dam itself?

SHEAR: We thought that we could, over time, assist in the electrification of the valley, and I thought we could probably engage some aspects of the U.S. private sector in that, too. I had read about what had been done in the Philippines in terms of rural electrification, and I saw it as a wonderful opportunity. One had only to travel along the valley to see not only the poverty but also the potential.

Q: What about roads and resettlements and things like that?

SHEAR: Resettlements were something I did not want us to be involved in. There was a large project in Mali for the resettlement of 30,000 people at Manantali, and the AID mission in Mali was pursuing that. I don't believe the United States actually became part of it; the demographics and the political liabilities were so difficult that we decided not to participate.

Q: But there were some initiatives in rice production and food production in the flood-recession irrigation process. Was that something we were involved in?

SHEAR: We were involved in flood-recession agriculture associated with some of the small-scale irrigated perimeters. It was a good opportunity to introduce some of the more rapid growing sorghums for the flood-recession agriculture. The Senegalese in general were quite resourceful, having already used millet and sorghum in flood-recession agriculture for probably a thousand years. We developed some improved strains for them, but we were more deeply engaged in the environmental consequences of the dams. For example, we put in a thousand

pisometers throughout the valley to measure the changes in the water régime and the underground water in order to determine the effect of the dams on movements of the subterranean water systems.

There was another project we wanted to undertake, which I still think is very exciting. In an area just south of the Senegal River in Senegal there's a river that has been dry for about 50 years because of a series of droughts. When visiting some of the remote villages in that area, I was told by some of the older people about crocodiles along that river, which is now just a sandy bed. A whole series of dunes were built up around where the mouth of the river was, where it used to join the Senegal River. Well, there's a lake called Richard-Toll south of the Senegal River that provides the city of Dakar with its drinking water. The level of that lake would rise by about six feet with the construction of the Diama Dam at the mouth of the river, so it would be possible to direct some of the water from the Richard-Toll back into this river, changing its flow and renewing an area about 120 miles long for agricultural use. We had an environmental impact study done, and it showed a minimal amount of malaria risk, because it would feed back into underground water systems. It was a very exciting project, but it, too, never went forward.

Q: Sounds fascinating.

SHEAR: I think probably the most satisfying part of my career with AID was as Mission Director in Senegal because it was there that I was able to apply much of what I had learned over a lifetime. And we had resources to do some interesting things. Because of the way AID is organized to operate, we had to rely a great deal on contractors, consultants and others sent from Washington to help us with our work. When they arrived, they first had to be introduced to the operating systems of AID in general and to our specific mission. So we hired Booz-Allen, the consulting firm, to develop an operations manual for us. That way, people coming into the mission would know how to go to the controller to get an advance of funds, how local staff operated, their relationships with the embassy, how to deal with the government - every aspect of the AID operation laid out in a handbook. It was extremely effective, and AID thought it was such a good idea that they distributed it to the rest of the AID missions in Africa in the hope that it would stimulate them to do something similar. Obviously it had to be tailored for each mission, and we had it updated once while I was there. It was an enjoyable undertaking, and we were fortunate to have the resources to do such things on the management side.

I also set up a staff development and training program which proved to be enormously successful. As a result, we upgraded the capacities of that mission tremendously. We were also the first mission in Africa to introduce automated data management and computers, which we trained about 20 Senegalese secretaries to use. Thanks to Spell check, our Francophones could correct their English spelling, and it worked very, very well. The Senegalese were thrilled to be engaged in that, and because of power outages we put in a battery room to give us some grace time when the system was threatened. In retrospect it was just a wonderful experience, and a really positive one for my wife, Barbara, who was the community liaison officer in the embassy for over three years and contributed substantially to our success there as well.

Q: Given your long experience with Africa in particular, what do you say to people who tend to paint a discouraging picture, a bright spot here and there but by and large shrouded in despair,

about whether they're ever going to turn around and become more positive in their development? One crisis after another - natural or political - seems to lay Africa low. How do you respond to people discouraged about working on Africa's development?

SHEAR: The answer is complex, and to understand it one has to look at the continent's historical origins. It's a wonder that anything positive has happened in Africa in the last 50 years, if you look at the impediments to its progress. First of all, Africa as a continent is the most poorly endowed of any other except Australia. Africa is essentially a very large, geologically senile plateau. Where rivers in Europe, Latin America and Asia all yield to access the interior, every river in Africa has cataracts within a hundred miles of its entry point to the ocean. The one exception is the Nile, but the cataract is 200 miles inland. But all of the others are within a hundred miles of the coast, so access to the interior was in large measure denied except to the Arabs, who came across the desert. Africans were subject to slavery by traders from the Arab states, Europe and the United States. Africa, more than any other continent, suffers from dreadful endemic diseases, where even now virtually everyone, every African, has at least two parasitic diseases sapping their strength and their energy. Malaria and diarrheal diseases result in an extraordinarily high mortality rate in most populations.

So Africa was poorly endowed except in very limited areas, like along the Rift valley where, because of volcanic action, rich soils developed. For the most part, the soils of Africa are senile and they leach very easily. High rainfall doesn't necessarily mean high productivity. Africa as a continent was virtually separated from the rest of the world until four centuries ago, and then it was opened up first to slavery and then to colonial rule. With the independence movement beginning in 1960, leaders of most African countries had no a model of progressive enlightenment such as what the United States garnered from Europe and ancient Greece. Instead, in Africa independence meant that a new ruling elite told everyone else what to do, and the leaders were in power for their own self-aggrandizement. So Africa has been plagued not only by a series of great physical impediments, but by tremendous political impediments as well. Only in the last decade has Africa has really begun to break away from that political past, with new leadership coming forward. Within the last five years, Africa has moved increasingly toward states that respond to popular will. There are more and more democracies or near-democracies like Senegal, responding to the will of the people. Look at the 50 years of Communist rule in Eastern Europe; what have we had? With only 40 years of independence in Africa, and given the background and the impediments just described, it's hardly surprising that Africa isn't more advanced toward political democratization.

WALTER C. CARRINGTON
Ambassador
Senegal (1980-1981)

Ambassador Walter C. Carrington was born in New York in 1930. He received a bachelor's degree from Harvard in 1952 followed by a LLB in 1955. He served in the Peace Corps in Tunisia and as director of the Peace Corps in both Sierra Leone and Senegal. In addition he fulfilled an ambassadorship to Senegal.

Ambassador Carrington was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on March 9, 1988.

Q: And then were you involved in international affairs?

CARRINGTON: Then I left the Peace Corps and went up to New York to become Executive Vice President of the African American Institute and served there until 1980 when I was appointed by President Carter to be Ambassador to Senegal

Q: How did this appointment come about?

CARRINGTON: So I remember the next morning I got a call from a friend of mine down here who said, "What the hell is going on? Louis Martin thinks you're crazy. Here the President has offered you this ambassadorship and you're waffling and so forth." And I told him I was waiting to find out what country it was. And so my friend said, "Well, Louis tells me it's Senegal." And so as soon as I heard it was Senegal, I called back and said yes I'd be happy to take it. Senegal is a country that I had very special kind of relationship with.

And George McGovern walked into the hearings. He was on the committee. And McGovern was also then chairman of the subcommittee on Africa. And he said, "I understand there are some problems," he said, "but I notice there are five people here who have been waiting quite a while for appointment in Africa." He said, "Let's lay these other things aside and bring the five up as a group." So he took us up as a group and asked us a few questions, and sometime in August the official appointment came through, went down, was sworn in, and arrived in Senegal--I remember the date because I arrived there on my son's sixth birthday on the 18th of September.

Q: Did you have any particular instructions before you went to Senegal about what was to be done and what the State Department wanted or anything?

CARRINGTON: Well, I had a very peculiar kind of orientation. When I went to the Department, I went through the normal kind of group orientation, etc., but when I came down to specifics, the Desk Officer for Senegal had just left. A new guy was just sort of coming on and I was kind of caught between stools. I never, ever sat down and talked with the Assistant Secretary, Dick Moose, before I left. I had one brief meeting with one of the Deputy Assistant Secretaries. I had really very little in the way of any kind of orientation or any specific instructions in terms of anything that was a result of sort of sitting down head to head conversations.

I remember writing the remarks I was going to make to President Senghor when I presented my papers, but I had no real specific sort of charges in terms of our policy in Senegal. I knew what the issues were that were of concern to the Department in terms of--well, I had read all the cables, etc., and talked to some of the people. But, as I say, I was hampered in the sense that I did not have a Desk Officer who really had been there very long or who knew much about what was going on.

Q: What were the issues at the time you were there between Senegal and the United States?

CARRINGTON: Well, as I said, I arrived there on the 18th, on my son's birthday. I arrived there early in the morning, went to get some sleep. There was going to be a party for my son that afternoon. In the middle of the party I'm called away. The Foreign Minister wants to see me.

Now, I had just arrived in the country. I hadn't presented my papers. The Foreign Minister wanted to see me urgently. He was off to a meeting. I think it may have been a UNESCO meeting. And the issue was coming up as to the expulsion of Israel from this body. And he urgently wanted to talk to us about what his position was going to be, because the US had been urging the Senegalese to vote no on the question. And I remember there had been some discussions about this before I left Washington. And my position before I left Washington had been that since it required a vote of an affirmative majority that an abstention for our purposes was as good as a no vote and that we ought not to press the Senegalese for a no vote. We should try to get them to abstain. That was agreed to, and I got the assurance of the Foreign Minister that Senegal would abstain on the vote. And they did. So I was able to report back on my first day that I had this meeting and that the Senegalese were going to go along and were going to abstain.

As I remember, there were a number of Middle East connected issues that came up during those first few days when I was in Senegal. And like three or four days after I arrived there, there was a large delegation that came from the United States headed by the President's scientific advisor. And the question came as to whether I would accompany them to the meeting with the President since I hadn't yet formally presented my papers to the President. And Senghor said, fine, he wanted me to come along. So I took the delegation there.

There were at the time issues of cooperation between the United States and Senegal having to do with some of our space program and NASA wanted to have a tracking station there in Senegal. And that was one of the things that we negotiated during my time there.

Q: There was a tracking station?

CARRINGTON: Yes.

Q: Well, did you find, going back, you were sort of like an old shoe going back to Senegal. So you really didn't have to spend much time getting oriented.

CARRINGTON: Yes, that was a great advantage. It was an advantage in two ways. One, in terms of being able to really hit the ground running in Senegal. And, number two, I don't think I had the problems that often non-career people have when they go to a post.

Q: You'd been on three country teams before.

CARRINGTON: Yes, right, and I knew Senegal. And I was very blessed with a very strong country team.

Q: I was going to ask you, how did you find the Embassy staffing? Not numbers. But I mean effectiveness.

CARRINGTON: I thought it was an extremely effective country team. I was fortunate in being able to pick my DCM, and I picked a guy who was just.

Q: Who was your DCM?

CARRINGTON: Ed DeJarnette, who later became Ambassador to the Central Africa Republic after he left Senegal. The AID Director, Dave Shear, was somebody whom I had known before, and he was I think the best AID Director in Africa.

Q: So actually when you went there your appearance was really atypical, because you were really accepted as one of the boys?

CARRINGTON: Yes, because I had had this experience with Peace Corps. I had had this 10 year experience with the African American Institute, so I had been involved in African affairs. I was not somebody coming out who had to learn things from scratch, so I was very fortunate. I have always considered myself to be not a political appointee but a professional appointee. So that was a great help to me.

Q: How did you find, for example--and, again, keeping this unclassified, but it's a question that I put to everybody--how did the CIA work with you there? Any problems?

CARRINGTON: Not really. I was able to establish a good rapport with the Station Chief, and there wasn't the problem of a back channel communications. And there were a number of things that we were able to work very effectively on together.

As somebody who came from a kind of a liberal political orientation, one of the things that I found that my experience both when I was with the Peace Corps and with the Embassy--and maybe I was as you said atypical experiences--but I always found in all the countries I was in that the CIA people were among the brightest and the most enlightened of the people working for the US government, so that I have always had a very positive feeling towards the CIA people I've seen in the field. Now, I may have gotten a very skewed sample.

Q: Well, this is why I ask this question. Sometimes it's a problem, sometimes not. But you found it to be an organization which gave you good information. How about your political section? Were the officers able to get out and around?

CARRINGTON: Yes.

Q: You were getting good input?

CARRINGTON: Yes. I was. They were getting out. And I found that their analyses of the political situation were very good. And I had no major disagreements with the kind of analysis that they were producing. I thought that they had a really good feel for the situation. Dave Rawson who was the chief political officer I thought was first class.

Q: What were our major interests, say, with Senegal in dealing with some of the other countries, like the Gambia. There was the Chad; Libyan thing was heating up at that time. And Senegal had a very important role and we sort of had a subsidiary role.

CARRINGTON: Yes. First of all, the Senegalese were among the strongest voice, well in fact I think they were the strongest critics of the Libyans in Africa. And in fact the Senegalese were the first country to kick the Libyan embassy out, you know, the People's Bureau, as they called it. So that the Senegalese were also very concerned about Libyan activities in Chad and things that they were trying to do to destabilize the Gambia. Of course the Senegalese are very sensitive about the Gambia because the Gambia is a country which is sort of inserted right in the middle of the country following the Gambia River. So they are very concerned about this. And in fact I would send messages back urging that we take a much stronger stand against the Libyans than we were at the time, and reporting back the Senegalese views of this sort of thing. And they were very concerned about what the Libyans were doing in Chad. So that there was a real working relationship on that issue.

I mentioned the fact that Middle East issues had been a real concern. The Senegalese had recognized the PLO and the PLO had a mission.

Q: Palestine Liberation Organization.

CARRINGTON: Yes, the Palestine Liberation Organization. But the view of President Senghor was that he thought that by so doing he could moderate the views of the PLO. So the Senegalese, always in international forum; refused to join with other Third World Countries in moving for the expulsion of the Israelis from these organizations.

Q: I think it's important really for the record, Senegal is basically an Islamic country.

CARRINGTON: Yes. Ninety percent of the population is Muslim. Now the president was a Roman Catholic, but the overwhelming population is Muslim and the politics of the country really revolve around the two large Muslim brotherhoods. And they were always very supportive of President Senghor. In fact, I remember when I was there with the Peace Corps in the '60s, the Israelis had a big embassy. In fact, in the apartment building I lived in, there were a couple of high functionaries of the Israeli mission and I got to know them quite well. And they were involved in a lot of development projects in the country. And of course in the '67 war was when most of the African countries broke diplomatic relations with the Israelis the Senegalese did also, but the Senegalese were never part of that group that tried to push for the expulsion of the Israelis from international organizations.

The other thing was that on the issues that were involved in the non-aligned movement the Senegalese were anti-Cuban and generally voted with the West or in ways that the United States would approve. They were very, very strongly anti-Communist.

Q: Would you find that when you went to the foreign ministry to explain our position say on Cuba and Angola or Ethiopia or wherever, or on other issues, that they would listen or was it a pro forma listening? Were they interested in what we had to say?

CARRINGTON: Yes. Yes, they were. As I say, the fact that the first day there that the Foreign Minister sought me out to discuss this whole question on Israel. The Foreign Minister Niasse was very well regarded back in the State Department, and he was one of the most outspoken people in some of these non-aligned meetings opposing the Cubans, etc.

I'm trying to think of what issues there may have been where we might have had any real serious problems with the Senegalese. I really can't think of any.

Q: If something occurs later, we can add it to the record. How about your relationship with the French? I would imagine that the French Embassy would play a very strong role there.

CARRINGTON: They did. In fact, my closest collaborator on the European side was the Belgian Ambassador. The Belgian Ambassador always thought that the French were up to something. And so he would be always sharing information with me about the latest perfidy that the French were up to. There's no question that on economic issues and a lot of other issues that the French and the American, and the French and everybody else were really in an adversarial sort of relationship. And it was at a time when the Senegalese were anxious to break away from their sort of complete dependence on the French economically. And so the French were always very concerned about what the Americans might be up to or anybody else.

Q: Were we giving economic assistance to Senegal at that time?

CARRINGTON: Yes, we were. Yes, Senegal was receiving aid. In fact, Senegal was the headquarters for our aid effort for the Sahelian states, and so we were doing a lot in terms of bilateral aid to the Senegalese as well as regional things having to do with the Sahelian region in trying to help them recover from the effects of the drought. And we were also giving some military aid to the Senegalese. And I think if there was any place where we had problems was that our aid that we were giving them was very modest because the Carter Administration generally was not willing to do a lot on the military side. And, in fact, the Senegalese did better I think under the Reagan Administration in this regard.

Q: I would have thought the French would have been in there because the Senegalese troops, of course, were a major component of the French Army with a proud record.

CARRINGTON: Yes, the French were still there and, in fact, the French still had a base in Senegal. And the French were the major financial backers of the Senegalese in all spheres, and in military as well.

Q: Moving sort of to our side, you mentioned that you didn't meet Moose before you left. What was your feeling about your support from the African Bureau? Was it a strong bureau or not a strong bureau? Interested, not interested?

CARRINGTON: No, I think it was interested. And I think we got support--I remember there was one issue that I think the Senegalese were most concerned about, and that is that during I guess it was, I can't remember the year, may have been '78, '79, when there was a problem in Zaire. And

Moroccan troops went in to help that situation and they were funded and transported by the US. And they used Dakar airport. And as a result they tore up one of the runways. And the Senegalese wanted the US to repair the runway. And that was an ongoing battle and we could never get the US to agree on that.

The other issue at the time where the Senegalese wanted a moratorium on the debt that they owed, and that was a subject of a lot of negotiations and was never really resolved during the time I was there.

Q: You were there when Senghor stepped down from office.

CARRINGTON: That's right.

Q: How did this happen?

CARRINGTON: That I think is one of the most amazing things that I think I've observed in my years of working overseas. Senghor had been the leader of Senegal from before independence. He was still in excellent health, both physically and politically, and could have stayed president for as long as he wanted. But Senghor strongly believed in the democratic tradition and wanting Senegal to remain a very democratic state, and felt that this idea of people staying on forever as president was not good. And his party had not too long before won reelection, so things were going well for him.

But the thing about Senghor was that if you would go to a political rally where he was making a speech on politics or on economics or what have you, etc., it was a very perfunctory sort of performance. You go with him to the opening of an art museum or a library and the dynamism, the enthusiasm was quite a different thing. Senghor was unlike most politicians everywhere. For him politics was not the be-all and end-all. Senghor is first and foremost an intellectual. I think he felt the time had come when he really ought to step down and there were a lot of other projects he wanted to carry on, a lot of books he wanted to write and so forth.

And so he decided that he would step down and would hand over to his constitutionally designated successor, the Prime Minister, Abdul Diouf, who had been Prime Minister for 10 years under Senghor. And then all kinds of rumors spread and the cynics were all saying that this was all a ploy, that it would never happen, or that he would still control things behind the scene, etc., etc. And there were a lot of questions about what was going to happen, how it was going to take place, etc. Some of the opposition began to raise all kinds of noise. And the President of the Supreme Court, Kebba M'Baye, one of the most impressive men I've met, stepped in and was able to convince everybody that this was real and genuine and was not some kind of a ploy to avoid the next election and so forth and so on.

And I remember on New Year's Day of 1981, they had this President's ceremony in which all the diplomatic corp and everybody was there, when President Senghor stepped down and Abdul Diouf was sworn in as the new President. And Senghor was as good as his word, he retired completely. Did not try to hold on to the party apparatus as, for example, Nyerere did in

Tanzania, and stepped aside and retired to his villa near the university and has been writing, pursuing various intellectual projects. [...]

SAMUEL S. REA
Program Officer, USAID
Dakar (1980-1984)

Mr. Rea was born in New York City and raised primarily in Pittsburgh, PA. He was educated in England and at Princeton University and SAIS. At an early age he became interested in Africa, where he subsequently served for many years of his career. After joining USAID in 1966, he was sent first to Tanzania, after which he returned to Washington, where he worked with State/AID matters concerning Nigeria, Botswana, the Sahel Development Program, Madagascar, and policy coordination. He also served in Paris, and from 1995/1997 was a member of the faculty of The Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF).

Q: Why Africa? Why not some other part of the world?

REA: Post-independence Africa was where the line was thinnest. It was the area of the world at the time with the greatest need and the fewest knowledgeable people to help.

In my senior year I began to prepare quite deliberately for my Africa career. I applied to graduate school at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (S.A.I.S.) in Washington. S.A.I.S. was at the time one of the first and among the few schools to offer African studies at the post-graduate level. But I wanted to experience at least a piece of Africa on the ground before starting to study Africa from books. One day when I was doing research at Teachers College for my thesis, I was thinking about how I could manage this. An item on the T.C. bulletin board caught my attention and I walked down the hill to James Robinson's Church of the Master in Harlem. There I signed up to participate in Operations Crossroads Africa, Robinson's summer work program then entering its third year. I spent that summer after graduation, 1961, with a twelve person group of college students. We traveled widely in Mali before joining with Senegalese and Gambian university students to lay the foundations of a primary school at Popenguine, a pretty coastal village south of Dakar. Weeks after returning I enrolled at S.A.I.S. in September, 1961. There I spent my next two years studying Africa, along with various required courses in economics and international law.

Q: Did you write a thesis then, too?

REA: S.A.I.S. required second-year students, then as now, to do a long paper of 75-100 pages. I wrote mine on the foreign policy of Senegal, as the African country I then knew best. I should also mention that between my first and second year at S.A.I.S., I spent the summer at American University writing the "government and politics" chapters for the Department of Defense's Area Handbook on the Ivory Coast. [...]

Q: What did you do on those [DAP] missions? How did you get some sense of what was required?

REA: These teams prefigured the Club/CILSS Working Group to the extent that we included a specialist on each DAP team for each of the sectors of the matrix agriculture, livestock, HRD, etc. The big difference, of course, was that the DAP teams were almost entirely American, each led by the best person Dave and Don Brown could find in AID. The first team, as I mentioned, was led by Princeton Lyman. At that time Princeton was Chief of the Project Design Office in the Africa Bureau. He later went on to a great career, serving as our Ambassador to Nigeria, then to South Africa, and ultimately as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs. But in the Fall of 1974 our assignment was to visit and report on the potential for development in Senegal, Mauritania, and Mali, and to make recommendations for what AID should do in our respective sectors over the next five years, and more generally in the longer term.

Lyman's DAP team numbered about twelve, as I recall. We set out in September 1974, passing through Paris for a briefing by the Cooperation Ministry, before arriving in Dakar. In each of the three countries we began by meeting with the AID/Embassy people and with the host government. Then we would all fan out to follow our own leads in our respective fields of interest. I had not spoken French outside of the classroom since my experience with Operation Crossroads in Senegal and Mali in 1961. Even so, I probably spoke French more fluently than most of my colleagues. Each of us talked with whomever we could, mostly host government officials but also with Peace Corps volunteers and the representatives of private voluntary organizations. We visited potential project sites. Although we were limited to about a week in each country, we nonetheless brought back first-hand impressions which helped us interpret critically the documents we collected on the ground and received later on.

From all of this, our main task was to describe the dimensions of the problems and recommend what we should do to tackle them in the medium and long term. Obviously, this exercise was intended to be a first crack, not the last word, but even so, the decisions taken on the basis of our recommendations often had long-lasting effects. In my area, human resources, for example, the Government of Senegal asked us to support the reform of the formal school system. My recommendation was that we should not do so until the GOS had demonstrated that they really meant business. This is a judgment that has held up until now, some twenty years later.

Q: Why?

REA: This is a good example of the importance of the field visits which our DAP teams performed. Anything we could have read in Washington would have told us that Senegal's school system was in terrible condition. Illiteracy was on the order of 85-90%, despite the fact that the government was allocating over a quarter of the annual recurrent budget to education. About 60% of that went for primary schools. Money wasn't the prime problem. But it was abundantly clear from what we saw when we visited Senegal that the education system was dominated by the French heritage and that there was little will among the ruling elite to change matters. The French cultural ascendancy was symbolized by the literary eminence of then-President Senghor.

His government was French educated. Even 14 years after Independence, in 1974, French was still the language of instruction in every primary school throughout the country.

True, the GOS saw that change had to happen. In 1971 the GOS had even passed an "Education Orientation Act" to say as much. Nyerere's "Education for Self-Reliance" had an effect on thinking even in Senegal, across the continent and the language barrier. But my clear sense when I went back there was that the political will was not yet behind education reform in Senegal as it had been in Tanzania. Senegal's formal education system was not yet ripe for fundamental change. And even if the GOS had been committed, education reform there would have constituted a huge task over many years a job for which AID would not have had as strong a voice as other donors such as the French themselves and the World Bank. Unless we were all speaking with one voice, it would not have worked.

Q: What did you recommend?

REA: We were very apprehensive that the rains could fail again any season. Food production was emerging as our principal focus. So I preferred a pragmatic approach. In our report I recommended that AID should help establish an effective and efficient rural education system, one which would include elements of non-formal training institutions, post-secondary professional schools, and an extension organizations. Rather than doing this country wide, at least in the beginning, I recommended that we should help improve these elements and step up what they could do for farmers and their families in the geographic areas where we were already supporting agriculture programs, such as the mid-term production projects.

For example, in Senegal we were committed to helping SODEVA, the parastatal agency responsible for agriculture in the Peanut Basin. I recommended that we work in that area through the government non-formal education agency, Promotion Humaine, to deliver literacy and skills training to farmers and their families. This training would be designed to enhance their ability to absorb new methods and, at the same time, to take greater responsibility for improving village life. I further recommended that we support the work of ENEA, the government school for training rural planners and administrators. For the longer term, I proposed that we carefully monitor the effectiveness of this training in order to help formulate an eventual program to improve rural education more generally in Senegal. This approach, it seemed to me, would make for a more coherent assistance package and would lead us by stages into a solid long-term program.

Q: That's right. Well then of two years in Paris you had a year and a quarter, so what happened then?

REA: Seven or eight months after I got to Paris in September 1978, Dave Shear was named the next USAID Director in Senegal. He was to begin there in November, 1979. Sometime in late Spring 1980 Dave asked me to consider joining him in Dakar as his Program Officer. Even by then I had already decided that I needed to get back to the field, and I jumped at the chance. Professionally, I was eager to apply some of the concepts we had developed under the Sahel

Development Program. I also considered Senegal as my African home, ever since my experience there in 1961 and several visits back during my work with the SDP. Most of all, Dave and I worked together in a very creative way, and I knew no one with his degree of energy and vision.

Q: When did you move there?

REA: I arrived in Dakar on January 10, 1980 to replace Gene Chiavarolli, one of the Africa Bureau's most outstanding field officers, then and later. Although Gene had moved on, I had been fortunate to travel to Dakar from Paris for a few days the previous October to talk with him, so we had some face-to-face continuity.

Q: Well, what was the situation in Senegal at that time?

REA: For a number of reasons, the U.S. looked on Senegal then as a key African ally. This had to do principally, I think, with Prime Minister -- later, after 1981, President -- Abdou Diouf's influence in the U.N. and with the relatively democratic way in which he managed the government. But we all recognized that Senegal was in rough shape economically. The country required both short and long term assistance, far more than we could provide alone on a bilateral basis.

Senegal was the Sahel in microcosm, except that it had direct access to the sea. In the short-term, Senegal's balance of payments was in dangerous imbalance. As I recall, the debt service payments as a percentage of export earnings had grown from 5% to nearly 25% in the four previous years alone. The Government of Senegal (GOS) had been locked in discussions with the IMF, the World Bank, and France during 1979 to come up with a rescue plan. Behind this budget crisis, of course, was a long-term productivity problem which grew out of a stagnating rural economy. So the rescue plan had to correct the budget imbalance as soon as possible, but at the same time it had to identify means of expanding agricultural production. These were the very questions we had dealt with in framing the Sahel Development Plan for the region as a whole. For this reason, Dave was up to speed on the day he arrived.

Q: What happened?

REA: As an outcome of the consultations with the Bank, the Fund, and the French, Prime Minister Diouf presented to his National Assembly his Reform Plan, the Plan de Redressement. He had done this only two or three weeks before I arrived. The Plan laid out in a general way a two-step approach to stabilize and then stimulate the economy. Naturally, donor support would be crucial to the success of the Plan. Dave agreed wholeheartedly with the approach. We enthusiastically adopted the Plan as our platform for working with the GOS and with the other donors, with the aim of getting Senegal's economy moving decisively.

Shortly after he had arrived, with Ambassador Hank Cohen's endorsement Dave made a proposal to Senegal's Minister of Plan and Cooperation. This was that the U.S. and Senegal carry out a joint assessment of the AID program as it had developed in the period since the drought, 1974-1979. The Minister agreed. Dave further proposed, and the Minister accepted, that we follow the assessment with a revision of AID's program plan for the period 1983-1987. This revision would

incorporate the lessons to come out of the assessment. It would also make sure that our future program worked in close support of the new Plan de Redressement.

The GOS accepted the proposal. The joint assessment would last six months and would consist of three parts: first, an evaluation of four major AID projects, selected to represent the four categories of work in which our program was engaged (rain fed crops, irrigated agriculture, livestock, and village health); second, a beneficiary study to be carried out by ENEA (the National School of Applied Economics), to talk with the people in the field affected by these four projects; and third, an analysis of the entire economic context, to be performed by Elliot Berg. Both sides understood that this six month review would be followed by the joint planning of AID's next five year program. The GOS also accepted Dave's proposal that both the assessment and the planning phases would be supervised by a joint management committee co-chaired by the Minister and the U.S. Ambassador.

Where I came in was, again, along the lines of what I had done in forming the Sahel Development Program, to direct this twelve month exercise under Dave's supervision and to pull the results together into a Country Development Strategy Statement (CDSS) for the next five year period. All this accomplished, we submitted our strategy to AID/W in January 1981. As you can imagine, 1980 was a most intensive year, involving the best advisors we could find plus as much of the U.S. and Senegalese community as we could bring in to critique our assistance program and to help us reshape it.

Q: How long had we been involved in Senegal before you got there? Did you remember reviewing any of the old programs?

REA: AID had operated in Senegal at a low level and in a general sort of way from 1961, the year after Independence, right through the great drought. In 1962 we had made a \$2 million grant for secondary schools, although I don't know the details about that. For each year after that our program totaled \$300,000 or less, for studies connected with agriculture water resources, seed improvement, and so forth and for self-help projects and tech support. We seem to have had a special interest in the Casamance region, the portion of Senegal lying south of The Gambia. I didn't see the traces of any old projects.

In the pre-drought era our Dakar office was responsible for the region which included Mali and Guinea, as well as The Gambia and Mauritania. Capital projects, especially roads and dams, were a priority then. But with the exception perhaps of a regional training program and the rice research conducted by WARDA, whose headquarters were in Liberia, I can't think of any significant regional project which included Senegal itself. So it was not until 1973, with the drought emergency relief effort, that AID got busy in Senegal per se in a large way. By 1975 our Dakar regional office had been converted into a regular country Mission for Senegal.

Q: So you had a major collaborative program exercise with the government. Was the Senegalese government really participating, were they part of it?

REA: Yes, they were, at all levels, as much as their time would allow. The trouble with collaboration, of course, is that it requires so much time! This time constraint applied to the

Senegalese in spades, since they had every other donor at their door, along with ourselves. But at the top levels we kept the GOS up on all we were doing, what we were finding out, and what we were considering it would be best to do, and we received their input and consent. At the middle levels, we included Senegalese officials on all our evaluation teams. And at the grassroots, as I've mentioned, ENEA was interviewing "clients" to find out what these beneficiaries of our projects felt about how useful they were. This all fed into the redesign of the projects. I should add that we also made an effort to get the point of view of PVOs and Peace Corps volunteers working in the same areas as our projects.

Q: How did you find working with the Senegalese?

REA: French-educated Senegalese, which include all the officials we worked with, are excellent diplomats, charming, evenly courtly, with a flair for formal meetings and elegant turns of phrase. They are accustomed to dealing with the West. More basic than manners, however, Senegalese are born traders, and they understand they must give a little to achieve their main agenda. Consequently, it was not easy to discern from their words and actions if they were convinced by our findings or only saying what they knew we wanted to hear. There was also the "10 percent" factor, where some individuals were interested in their own gain. But dealing with the Senegalese was very pleasant and our work there had at least the illusion of progress. Perhaps some of that was real. Time will tell.

Q: Did you get anything done?

REA: In the short term, at least, yes. In the review and redesign of our program, I think we met each other half way. The GOS got what they needed most urgently, namely, help with their budget crisis, and we got their consent to try some new approaches, particularly in agriculture and health. The long term is another matter. I don't hear encouraging words from the folks that know Senegal well today. But our joint lack of success in achieving the results we expected to see by now may stem less from the GOS's lack of political will (although that was certainly a factor) than from Senegal's social inertia -- 70% illiteracy, 45 year life expectancy, and so on. In fact, we declared in our Strategy that we saw the sorry state of the population to be the number one obstacle to reform.

Q: What difference did this planning exercise make?

REA: Maybe the best way to answer that is to contrast the program we designed and began to implement with the program we inherited from the 1974-1979 period. There were four major differences, I think. First, non-project assistance (NPA) played a greater role in our new program. This form of assistance financed necessary imports and helped to ease the balance of payments crisis. The NPA program also generated local currencies which we used for projects, as well as for paying the local costs of policy studies. These studies, in turn, provided us with good material for our so-called policy dialogue with the government. In our FY 1982 budget for Senegal, reflecting the old program, NPA accounted for about \$17 million of the \$35 million total. By FY 1984, NPA was up to \$32 million of the total \$54 million. A second way in which our program changed after the evaluations was to place much greater emphasis on building up local producer groups and off-farm private sector entrepreneurs. The big increase in local

currencies from our larger NPA program helped with this. Third, and I've talked about this, we stressed collaboration with other donors based on the IMF/World Bank program which had not been available in the past. Beginning with the donor's conference at the Bank's headquarters in Paris in October 1981, we had one or two donor get-togethers each year. I remember best the meeting in April 1983, held in Dakar with Club/CILSS support, at which we donors went over with the Government of Senegal the entire agriculture sector reform plan.

Fourth and finally, following the evaluation we did our best to consolidate all our efforts from six areas of the country into three, those with the best prospects for agriculture production. This clustering represented more than just an administrative decision in favor of greater efficiency. It was really a determination to do what we could to maximize yields, and as such it was a reversal of the humanitarian relief policy which we had adopted after the drought. Earlier we had gone after the hardest case areas, like Bakel, in the far east of the country on the border with Mali.

Q: Why did you take on the hardest cases?

REA: This was part of the disaster mentality which ruled in the early to mid-Seventies in the Sahel. We were afraid that the rains could fail again in any year. The people in these remote areas were the most vulnerable, and reaching them with food was the most arduous and expensive. For these reasons, the extreme cases got the most attention. When our emergency frame of mind relaxed a bit, the natural next step was to build on the relief programs in the places with which we were by then familiar. As a result, to stay with the Bakel example, project design teams sent out from Washington in 1975 designed in Bakel an irrigated perimeter project, a range management/livestock project, and even that experimental solar power facility I mentioned a while ago. I recall from my position on the SDP team in AID/W that when Norm Schoonover arrived as Director in Dakar in 1975 he cautioned strongly against this scale of effort in such a remote outpost. But by then the projects had already been approved. Norm had recommended that we take the most promising areas and build on them. This is the approach we finally adopted in 1980.

Q: This is the philosophy of the poorest of the poor versus the poor majority conflict in AID. That experience?

REA: At least a variant of that, yes. After 1980 in Bakel we got out of the solar energy project when an evaluation exposed it as a white elephant. We also wound down the range management/livestock program which proved to be too difficult to administer properly at that distance. We moved the irrigation project out of our bilateral program and into the Senegal River Basin (OMVS) office. This office, which came to be led by Vito Stagliano, was located in the same building in Dakar as our bilateral mission but was answerable to a council composed of the three Mission Directors for Mali, Mauritania, and Senegal.

Q: Did the perimeter approach work?

REA: We were able to increase yields significantly but the effects were quite localized. Also, we always had to question whether the cost of better pumps, for example, would be covered by the value of the higher yields. The perimeter approach contrasted with the plans for year-round

farming which the large-scale development of the Senegal Valley would permit. This approach required that two large dams be built, one at Manantali in the east and the second at Diama at the mouth of the river at Saint-Louis. That great scheme was the concern of our OMVS office and was, as you say, another story.

Q: What were some of the other programs?

REA: To answer that, let me back up a minute and set the context. Our goal -- food self-sufficiency -- was the same goal as we had set for the Sahel Development Program as a whole. We believed that this goal demanded a two track approach. It meant, first, a concentration on increasing agricultural production in ways which favored the maximum participation of the population, with care given to soil regeneration and fuelwood concerns. Second, this goal called for an important effort to improve the health and to upgrade the skills of the population, the producers themselves. This second track included setting in place a means for reducing the rate of population increase. By reducing the number of zones in which we worked, our expectation was that the two tracks would work together with the same beneficiary groups and reinforce each other.

The Senegal program doubled in size in the time I was there and became one of the largest AID country programs in Africa. As Director, Dave Shear was nothing if not resourceful, and the Senegal program famously came to incorporate the entire inventory of AID's funding spigots available at the time. We even helped open some new ones. For example, we launched the first PL-480 Title III program in Africa. Under this arrangement, Senegal accepted a loan for the purchase of U.S. food and we agreed to forgive the loan to the extent that Senegal took the local currencies which resulted from the sale of the food and then used them to support development projects which we and the GOS agreed on together. Also for the first time in Africa we married a Commodity Import Program (CIP) to an agriculture sector grant. The CIP generated the local currencies needed to pay in-country costs of the activities which the dollar grant initiated.

A further example of innovation, not of spigots but of programs: we designed the first Private Voluntary Organization (PVO) sector grant to be approved by the Africa Bureau. Our object was to train entrepreneurs and organize farmer groups at local levels, and thereby support the policy to decentralize the agriculture sector. A final example of program innovation would be our introduction into the Sahel area of family planning and nutrition programs linked to village health.

I remember thinking at the time that our Agency did not have a single fund or type of program available to Africa which we did not make use and this included, of course, the panoply of central programs administered by the (then) Science and Technology Bureau. There may have been one or two we missed, but our programming was certainly "creative" in this regard.

Now to come closer to your question about our other programs. Beginning with the agriculture track, I have to reiterate that we tried to support the Reform Plan as well as we could. The IMF/World Bank adjustment program called for four essential rural reforms: in agriculture extension practices, in the way farmers were supplied with fertilizers and seeds, in the old, state-run "cooperatives" by replacing many of their functions with farmer organizations, and in the

way credit was provided to rural producers. All four reforms were intended to work together in the same direction, towards the progressive decontrol and commercialization of rural production. The results of our evaluation, not surprisingly, corroborated the wisdom of this shift in policy. So we modified our projects and designed new ones to support the Reform Plan along these lines.

Of the program we inherited, the most important part was our support to Senegal's three largest Rural Development Agencies (RDAs) SAED in the Senegal River Basin, SODEVA in the Peanut Basin, and SOMIVAC in the Casamance. Because AID was a major supporter of the RDAs, we found ourselves in the thick of the reform. As I said before, these three RDAs in the mid-Seventies represented the best means available of increasing production quickly. But now it was time to transform them, if possible, from organizations which controlled inputs and set conditions, to what might be called enabling or extension agencies, pure and simple.

So we designed ways to activate farmers groups in these three geographic areas, while attempting to streamline the three RDAs to become effective extension agencies in support of these farmers groups. At the same time, we also sought to build up the agriculture research agency, ISRA, to introduce more effective farm practices, with an emphasis on farming systems research. We designed ways to improve soil and water management using, for example, agro-forestry techniques. In addition, we worked to increase Senegal's cultivated land area, especially in the Senegal Valley, as I've mentioned, but above all in the Casamance, where water was also relatively plentiful.

Unfortunately, the major project we mounted there the Casamance Integrated Development Project under the able direction of U.S. project managers resident in the Casamance, Charley Steedman and then Bob McAllister, became a classic example of the inherent weakness of the integrated project approach. The many facets of the project, which all had to be coordinated to achieve the desired effect, overwhelmed the limited host-country management capacity. I must say, it also taxed greatly our own ability to provide inputs on time, as needed.

Q: Well, some final comments. Looking back over your career, what is your feeling about U.S. foreign assistance in international development? Has it made a difference?

REA: In Senegal, anti-salt and water retention dikes have led to a 20% increase in cultivated land in the Casamance region of the south. In the north, encroaching sand dunes have been stabilized through tree-planting funded with Title III resources. Other donors expanded on our success so that, today, the entire northern coast covering 4000 hectares has been reforested and is now Senegal's primary vegetable production zone.

DAVID M. WINN
Political Officer
Dakar (1981-1983)

David M. Winn was born in Texas in 1942. He graduated from Swarthmore College in 1964, received an MA from the University of Texas in 1966 and an

MPA from Syracuse University in 1969. He served in the Peace Corps and then joined the Foreign Service in 1969. He has served overseas in Vietnam, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, France and Senegal. This interview was conducted by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2002.

Q: Well, now what was the situation in Senegal when you arrived there in '81?

WINN: Well, it was kind of interesting for Dakar. Leopold Senghor had been president for I don't know, I can't remember how many years, 20 or 30 years?

Q: Something like that.

WINN: He just died as you know a few months ago. He had incredibly said, "I don't want to be president anymore. This country needs a new president." Unprecedented in Africa, he stood down in 1981, just before I arrived, and they had a democratic election and elected a fellow named Abdou Diouf as president, who became the world's tallest chief of state who, while I was there, visited the Emir of Bahrain, the world's shortest chief of state. There's a hilarious photograph of them greeting each other at the airport. Diouf, at almost seven feet tall is greeting the Emir and he looked like an emu or a giraffe. Anyway, so Diouf, a nice democratic, intelligent guy, not some warlord who became president and you had this political oasis in Africa. So, my political reporting revolved around how many angels could dance on the head of the pin, since Senegal did not read high on the Department's list of priorities. That's what it was like being political officer out there. Fourteen different political parties, but it was a showplace of democracy in West Africa. In Dakar, I replaced one of the great Africanists of the Foreign Service, a fellow named David Rawson, who had grown up as a missionary in Rwanda and later returned as ambassador to Rwanda. Well, here's a guy who knew Africa forward and back and I had to match his political reporting, which was not easy to do. I want to give credit to David Rawson. I confronted him. I was reading his political reports before arriving and trying to educate myself on Senegal, replacing an expert on Africa, so I really had to do a lot of scurrying around.

Q: Who was your ambassador?

WINN: Charles Bray was the ambassador and again, you know I keep calling everyone legends and I have to insert here what a high regard I have for all of my colleagues in the Foreign Service. It is a remarkable group to work with. Everyone that I recall is deservedly a legend. Now Charles Bray after that tour came back and he was quite a scholar. He was the elegant epitome of a Foreign Service officer. You know, the silver haired elegance, and he had been one of the young Turks back in the '60s and shot to prominence. After becoming ambassador to Senegal he came back and conducted a series of memorable seminars at the Foreign Service Institute and said, "I've had a wonderful career in the Foreign Service. I'm going to walk away from it." He went off to work for Johnsons Wax in Racine, Wisconsin where to this day he runs a think tank up there. But he was a bachelor, divorced, elegant, spoke beautiful French and taught me one thing I should have learned earlier. He showed me what a professional can do in a country that no one gave a damn about, and how to take every country seriously. He was a wonderful model of an ambassador who said, "I am the president's representative here. I'm not

going to make more of Senegal than it is, but I'm going to take this job very seriously." While it would be easy to make fun of the Senegalese with their pretentiousness, he never did. On the other hand, he tolerated with amused benevolence. He wasn't one of those pompous ambassadors. You knew you could joke with the guy, but he was an elegant model of an ambassador, that's Charles Bray.

Q: What about dealing with the Senegalese government? Did we have many issues particularly with them?

WINN: No, we were so thrilled with them, their observance of human rights. There was not really a lot going on frankly. It was a rare, rare visit for Washington. Indeed, it was mostly a cooperative relationship. We had no real disagreements with them. There was a fledgling insurgency down in the south Casamance region that I would go down there and report on. The most extended interaction I had with the Senegalese government was when Dakar Airport was chosen when the shuttle takes off from Cape Canaveral if something goes wrong, there are several airports throughout Europe and mainly Africa where the thing can come down. If it loses power it can land. One of these was Dakar Airport and it was fun negotiating the landing rights so the shuttle could land if it needed to. We had all sorts of exotic visitors for that. We had no real disagreements with the Senegalese. It was a huge regional hub of course from all over Africa--people take R&R in Dakar. I don't recall, I dimly recall just political reporting, but the rare visit to the foreign ministry.

Q: What about, were the Libyans messing around there?

WINN: Well, they were and of course... Senegal is a Muslim country, but the Libyans weren't doing a lot. If they were, the Agency was keeping an eye on it, not me. I made some attempts to make contact with the Lebanese community. Now the Lebanese community in West Africa is Sunni Muslim businessmen and they wanted nothing to do with me I'll tell you that. They were scared to death of me. They wanted to be low-key businessmen, keep us out of politics. So I tried in vain a couple of times and no Lebanese would even talk to me. If the Libyans were active there, they were just wandering around a little bit, but it was no big deal. The Agency, not me was keeping an eye on it.

Q: How about with the 14 or so political parties there?

WINN: Well, I would scurry around and visit them. It was quite amusing to read their almost incomprehensible French language in all of its various forms. They each had their own newspaper you know. Thank God my wife helped me. The other thing I did was cover Islam in general. I wrote a huge - we used to have air grams in those days - constantly reporting on the ins and outs. The people who ran the country after all, were the Islamic marabouts as they were called. Islam in Senegal was fascinating to begin with. Basically it was animism with a patina of Islam, the most bizarre things. So, tracking the two or three main parties, I've forgotten already, the main factional, whatever you want to call it, Islamic groups there who after all ran the country and named the candidates was kind of interesting. I'd go out in the hinterland. Think of the arcane nature of that and trying to balance it off against real democracy, which turned out to be pretty much. Remember Diouf? Just last year they had another election and his main

opposition figure whom I visited frequently, Abdulla Wade, actually became president. Diouf stepped down. It's all very incredible considering "democracy" in other African nations.

Q: Well, now, were any of the countries surrounding Senegal nibbling away at it or was it doing pretty good?

WINN: Pretty good shape despite the fact that it is a very poor country. The AID mission there is enormous. I think after I left they had a few shells lobbed across. The Mauritians got upset about something on the Senegalese border up north, that was after I left, but no one had any designs on Senegal. There were no border issues with the countries that surrounded it, some little skirmish with Mauritania after I left.

PRUDENCE BUSHNELL
General Services and Budget and Fiscal Officer
Dakar (1981-1984)

Ambassador Bushnell was born in Washington, DC into a Foreign Service family. She was raised in Washington and at Foreign Service posts abroad and received degrees from Russell Sage College and the University of Maryland. After working as a clerk at Embassies Teheran and Rabat, she became a Foreign Service Officer in 1981 and subsequently served in several posts before serving as Ambassador to Kenya 1996 – 1999. There she experienced the bombing of the Embassy by al Qaeda. In 1999 she was named Ambassador to Guatemala, where she served until 2002. During her career, the Ambassador served in several senior positions in the Department in Washington. Ambassador Bushnell was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: Who was the ambassador at the time?

BUSHNELL: Charlie Bray, who happened to have known my father. Dad was Executive Director of the American Foreign Service Association when it was first started and when Charlie Bray was very active.

Q: What was the situation of the Senegal when you got there? Would you describe it?

BUSHNELL: Abdou Diouf, who had been Number 2 under Senegal's first president since independence, had inherited the presidency when Senghor, known as the poet president, had ceded his position. Just before we arrived, Diouf ran for the presidency on his own. The United States was very taken by the smooth and the peaceful transition. It was (and still is) rare in Africa to see an elder statesman with the brains and the sense of service to step down.

Q: I'm interviewing now Phillip Kaiser who was ambassador there in the '60s. He talked about dealing with Senghor who was, apparently a delight.

BUSHNELL: Yes, he was an extraordinary person. Senegal and the U.S. had a great relationship. The government has always been very friendly to us, and we to the government. Dakar was an easy city with lots of great restaurants. Goree Island, from which thousands of people had been shipped to the Americas as slaves, was an International History Landmark and just off the coast. For many reasons, it was a wonderful first posting.

Q: Who was your administrative officer?

BUSHNELL: I had two. Stan Robinson was the Admin Officer for my first year, Don Hayes was Admin Officer the second year.

Q: Both the B&F side and the GSO thing. They are a lot of responsibility and these are supposed to be people who are well - the person with those jobs are supposed to know what they're doing.

BUSHNELL: You're right. One of the first things I did was to hire a spouse to be the bookkeeper in B&F, because I could do management stuff, but there was no way I was going to be the actual bookkeeper, actually keeping and totaling the sums up and stuff like that. Chuck Greco was the B&F person back in Washington. Chuck was and is a wonderful human being, and his office was very supportive of me. These were the days when the Executive Offices were kingdoms in and of themselves. This was a period when there was a fair amount of decentralization, so the Bureaus had a good deal of say over their money. Chuck, as I said, was very kind and patient with me.

Q: How did you find the Senegalese staff, the Foreign Service Nationals?

BUSHNELL: Great. I was promoted out of Dakar – even before I received tenure -- and I think the reasons were that I was comfortable dealing with people of other cultures and I had practical management experience. I respected FSNs and they respected me. In addition, the Senegalese are lovely people.

Q: Was there a French cast to the way they did things and all that you knew or was it a mainly Senegalese?

BUSHNELL: It was Senegalese. They are very warm and charming.

Q: How did you find the Senegalese bureaucracy, because the GSO more than anyone else has to deal with getting clearances, getting things done?

BUSHNELL: Entrenched, slow and needing a lot of hand-holding. We would hire expeditors to get our things out of customs. I found that through GSO work you get an interesting insight. For example, I was at a Country Team meeting once, filling in for the Admin Officer and, when it came my turn to say something I focused on the sudden problems we were having getting our pouches cleared through customs. I asked if anyone knew if the Senegalese government was upset about something. Evidently, it was. It didn't occur to anyone that there could be consequences in the administrative operation.

Q: Did you while you were there, pick up any of the resentment about who are you coming in as a mid career or was that a Washington phenomenon?

BUSHNELL: That was very much of a Washington phenomenon. What people at post cared about was whether their goods had cleared customs! I met people at their most stressful moments, arriving and leaving post. People were interested in how effective you were at your job, not how you had entered the Service.

More of an issue was the fact that my husband came as a so-called “dependent” (now termed “family member”). Remember, until the mid 70’s women officers who married were expected to resign. This embassy had experience with only one other male spouse, and that was not a good experience. Within the first month of our arrival at post, Dick was offered a job. He had both accounting and legal skills to offer. About a week later, a group of women spouses came to the house very put-out that Dick had gotten the job so quickly when they had been unable to get one at all. They felt, probably correctly, that the administration of the mission had thought that a male spouse had better find decent work soon. I felt very ambivalent. On the one hand, I understood exactly what they were saying; and on the other hand, I thought, why are you mad at me? It’s not my fault. Do you want me to tell Dick to quit the job? I certainly didn’t want him to.

Q: Were you able to put your real beliefs into some action about doing something about this or were you too far down on the totem pole?

BUSHNELL: No. It was my first post. I was checking things out -- how things work, where I fit, and that Dick be accepted. He was. The second year, Dick applied for and got the job as Community Liaison Officer – I think he was one of the first men to have that position in the world – without any fuss.

I was given a wonderful challenge to prove myself by Ambassador Bray. Dakar was one of the posts chosen for as a “designated language post.” This was an effort to see if it was possible to make every direct hire, including Marine guards, language speakers at least to the FSI 2 grade level. I was fluent in French and Bray clearly thought I could handle taking this over along with my other responsibilities. So, I became post language officer. The program was ultimately deemed unfeasible – in Dakar the ambassador’s secretary had to leave because she could not (would not) achieve the minimum 2/2. I won’t even talk about the Marines.

Q: How about on the social side? Was there much contact with the Senegalese at your level or not?

BUSHNELL: Well, we had the staff over a couple of times, but I didn’t do much representational entertaining. I wasn’t expected to, and didn’t.

ROBERT J. MACALISTER
USAID Project Manager
Dakar (1982-1986)

Robert J. MacAlister was born and raised in the New York City area. He studied history at Bard College. It was at Bard that he became interested in foreign affairs while working at the State Department. In addition, he served in the Peace Corps. He worked in the Ivory Coast, Zaire, Chad, and Senegal. He was interviewed by W. Haven North on August 14, 1995.

Q: How long were you in this division?

MACALISTER: I was there until '82 and then I was assigned to go to Senegal as a project manager for a very large, integrated rural development project. But just before that I went to a two or three month course—a staff training course; I forget what it was called now, but it was a graduate level development studies course which I thoroughly enjoyed and which, at that juncture, I felt was very appropriate for me. Before going out to manage a large project, it gave me the opportunity to become acquainted with some of the latest development theories. I found it very stimulating and helpful in terms of codifying my own thoughts.

Q: Do you remember what kind of development philosophy or policy was being promoted in those days?

MACALISTER: I didn't sense there was any particular policy being promoted within the seminar. It was certainly my impression that some of the core faculty were skeptical of the structural adjustment approach or at least of the trickle down theory. To what degree, even if you increase the per capita income statistically through investment, etc., and manufacturing, to what degree will this improve living standards. There was a lot of debate back and forth. I am happy to say that having been involved with Africa since 1963 or so, and having watched the apostles of democratic socialism like Julius Nyerere and Marxism like Toure in Guinea and whoever was in Guinea Bissau, etc., there seems to be a pretty good understanding that whether it was democratic socialism or totalitarian Marxism, it did not work economically. So I was glad to see that there wasn't a lot of time spent discussing whether or not socialism could work.

Q: And after the studies program, you went to Senegal, is that right?

MACALISTER: Right. Where I was put in the position of trying to manage a classic, integrated rural development project in the southern part of Senegal. You name it, we had it. A literacy component, a small rural works component, a credit component, a health component, an agricultural research component, an extension component and I have probably forgotten a couple of other activities. This was a multimillion dollar, multi-year contract run through the Senegalese Government. We had a regional development, para-statal (SOMIVAC) that covered the total region, and then one (PIDAC) that was supposed to cover part of the Casamance in which we were working. The official channels of government for implementing this project were SOMIVA and PIDAC and they were located in Ziguinchor, the capital of the Casamance region. Of course, the goal was to increase the general quality of life and standard of living of the people in the part of the Casamance where we were working. It was primarily an agricultural area.

Q: How many people in this area generally? What were we talking about in terms of scale?

MACALISTER: I forget. My recollection is that we were talking probably one hundred thousand people. It is one of the most densely populated regions of Senegal, if not the most densely populated region, because it has the best possibilities for growing. It is primarily a rice growing area with the best rain fall in Senegal. So one of the major efforts was to increase the production per hectare of rice. This was a real challenge, because it didn't just involve improving the variety of rice seed or the method of planting. It also involved the Casamance River which traditionally had been used for irrigation. However, because the rainfall had been very erratic over a number of years, the salt content of the river (which flows into the ocean) was very high-to the point that you couldn't use it for irrigation. Accordingly, we decided to develop small dams to block out the river coming into the rice fields. This got very complicated and was, in addition to being a tremendous challenge to me for many reasons, was also a tremendous learning experience.

Q: To start, what do you think was mostly accomplished by the project?

MACALISTER: Certainly one of the successes of the project was the small rural works. One of the reasons for its success recalls the tilapia ponds project in Zaire. Before the project would make available assistance for cement, or what have you, for the small dams- anti-salt dams we called them-we wanted to see a real commitment from the village. They had to commit themselves to do most of the work. Also, they had to be available for training concerned with how to keep these dams functional in the future. Again, I mentioned previously, the big hospital built by the European Community in Fort Archembeau in Chad, there was also a big anti-salt dam that had been built by the European Community in a part of the Casamance and the dam was not functioning at all.

We had a credit component. The credit program was successful as long as we had something concrete to use as collateral. We were making loans available for plows and oxen. We had something called a groupement du producteur which was something like village organization. If you were a farmer and you took out a loan to get a plow, you signed the loan paper, but also the president of your groupement signed your loan paper. If you didn't make your payments, nobody in the groupement could get a loan. That worked well. It shows the effectiveness of social pressure. Also you had something you could take back if payments were not made. Credit programs are difficult in Senegal because, in the past, every time a presidential election was coming up, the loans were forgiven. Farmers were not used to paying back!

We had a research component. We started to really promote communication between the agricultural researchers and the extension people. Traditionally, there had been a real divide and a long tradition of little communication between the extension agent and the research person. There was a research station in Ziguinchor where we had one or two technical people doing various trials.

I remember one day standing out in a rice field with a guy from the research station who had been working on varieties of rice that were somewhat resistant to salt where the dam had succeeded in shutting out the river. As I recall, we had had fairly good rain in the beginning of the season and then it slacked off toward the middle of the season. As a result, it had been determined that the land we were standing on had quite a high salt content because of the

capillary action of the salt seeping up onto the surface. As a result, the crop of rice that had been planted on this lot was wiped out. The extension agent turned to the man from the research station and asked, "What do we do now?" The research agent replied, "I don't know." To the best of my knowledge, this was the first time they had been in a rice field together to discuss the reality of growing rice in the Casamance. Now they were finally starting to talk directly to each other.

On reflection, I think those were the principal accomplishments. Also, we certainly had some improvement of rice production with the use of fertilizer. However, the use of fertilizer was sporadic. There was always the question of how much rain you were going to get and whether it was worth the investment in additional fertilizer. Also, the fertilizer was made available by a parastatal and sometimes the fertilizer would get there when you needed it, and sometimes it wouldn't.

Q: You had a health activity that you mentioned.

MACALISTER: Yes, we had some health education. We got started in a couple villages a revolving fund for village pharmacies that was useful.

Q: What was your view or do you have any impression of the Sahel Development Program because you were very much in the middle of it or at least of some aspects of it. That was, I guess, a big emphasis at that time.

MACALISTER: Sure. I am hesitating because it's so difficult to come up with a lot of precise results. I have worked on annual reports of the Sahel Development Program. I am sure that if I went back to them, I could cite you success stories such as the reduction of the incidence of the Guinea worm, or increased crop production, or so many wells dug here or there. However, when you look at the Sahel (which is one of the least favored spots on the face of the earth in terms of land and resources, erratic rainfall, etc.) , it is an extraordinarily difficult place to work. Consequently, I think that one can only have very long range goals. My goals would include a bureaucracy that is geared to serving people which are more transparent; and a strong family planning program.

We look at overpopulation and we see this steady syndrome of cutting down more trees, land erosion, overpopulated land being divided up into smaller plots. Developing a strong family planning program will take time. I can remember that when I went on the Sahel Regional Task Force for Health, I stopped at the Ministry of Health in Senegal. This was 1975. I had to whisper in the corridors about spacing births. In contrast, when I left Senegal in 1986, there was a big coverage on the front page of the most prominent newspaper about family planning. This is the tip of the iceberg. You are talking mainly about the elite [using birth control]. You can have all kinds of contraceptives, but if people- for social reasons-won't use them, then you can't have effective family planning. Once again we need to take a long-range point of view in terms of making progress.

In general, we need to constantly be alert to opportunities to learn from the past, and be very careful on how we spend our money in our efforts.

Q: The Sahel Development Program was, of course, a region-wide, multi-country endeavor. Did you get any sense of whether that approach was working or...?

MACALISTER: I must say that I didn't have an occasion to look at it from a regional point of view. I did have some dealings with the regional organization for development in the Sahel (CILSS) which had its genesis in the outcome of the droughts of the 70s. Another benefit from the Sahel development approach is that you look at the Sahel as a region, you emphasize planning and cooperation. One of the things I constantly ran into with a project manager in Senegal was that most of my bureaucratic counterparts really didn't gear their budget plans to some kind of a course of action. In many ways, their budget requests were based on how much they thought they could get, period. This question of planning was and is important.

BARBARA H. NIELSEN
Cultural Affairs Officer, USIS
Dakar (1983-1986)

Barbara H. Nielsen was born in New York in 1949. She attended Middlebury College, Indiana University, and Yale University. She has also served in the Peace Corps in Katmandu from 1972 to 1974. Her career has included positions in Montevideo, Tegucigalpa, Dakar, Santiago, Algiers, Stockholm, and Athens. Ms. Nielsen was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on December 16, 2004.

Q: You left there in '83. Where did you go?

NIELSEN: I went to Dakar, Senegal.

Q: That must have been more fun.

NIELSEN: Yes, it was a big breath of fresh air actually. Algeria was a dour country, but the experience was valuable and it was certainly interesting to experience Eastern Europe without being quite as heavy-handed as Romania, Bulgaria, or the former Yugoslavia would have been, and the climate was a bit better.

Q: You were in Senegal from '83 to when?

NIELSEN: '86.

Q: What was Senegal like when you arrived there in '83?

NIELSEN: Struggling, unfortunately. Senegal had done a lot of things right. It was a democracy. That's one thing that we want to give them full credit for. They had a very tolerant body politic. They have a lot of different ethnic groups, religious groups, which managed to tolerate and actually coexist rather peacefully with each other. They have a couple different groups of

Muslims. They're not always fighting. They disagree about when the moon rises and when the holidays fall, but they're not at each other's throats. Then, you have a small Christian minority which had been rather influential, President Senghor having been part of that. But again, there wasn't a lot of resentment of this small group. Senegal had a very difficult economic situation. The desert was fast encroaching and the livelihood of a lot of people was being wiped out by desertification, so they really were not becoming less poor. It was difficult for the country to maintain its economic standard. Instead, it appeared to be in decline. After independence, the French left. While they left an infrastructure, government offices and lots of buildings, universities, and so on, the country wasn't wealthy enough to really maintain all of that.

Q: Your job was what?

NIELSEN: I was the cultural officer. We had a cultural center and a library and a reasonably important exchanges program, including Fulbright exchanges. We did have cultural programs as well. USIS had gradually gotten out of the business of big cultural events except in Europe. While we didn't bring orchestras and large dance troupes, we did bring small jazz combos and sponsor art exhibits and things along those lines, which were well received and were fun.

Q: Did we have an English program?

NIELSEN: Yes. The thrust there was expanding American studies, which was something of a novelty because their tradition had been emphasizing ties with France. But there was a new generation of teachers who were interested in teaching about the United States, so this was fertile ground for training people who would have some knowledge of America and American studies, which meant history, culture, geography, literature, and language. Language wasn't the only thing.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

NIELSEN: Charles Bray.

Q: And the PAO?

NIELSEN: There were two. I was there for three years. The first PAO was Will Petty and the second PAO was Bob LaGamma.

Q: I'm told the Senegalese are a delightful people.

NIELSEN: Oh, definitely. They are very warm and very friendly and very welcoming. We got to know the Senegalese reasonably well. In spite of the economic distance between many of them and American diplomats, you could feel comfortable. They would invite you to their home and you could, of course, invite them. It's typical of sub-Saharan African societies. They really are very person oriented and people are quickly made to feel welcome.

Q: Did you find that you were in competition with the French cultural side?

NIELSEN: I wouldn't say that, no. I think there was plenty of room for everyone to be active there. It was a very nice experience, having been in Latin America, then to go to Africa, where we had not really been involved in colonizing or imperialism and didn't come in for a lot of criticism for any of those things. We were kind of the new kids on the block and were largely welcomed in our efforts.

Q: Did you get out or did you mostly work around Dakar?

NIELSEN: We didn't have a lot of program reason to travel. Outside of Dakar, there wasn't much in the way of educational institutions. There were many more in Algeria, with more decentralization. Dakar was still very much the centralized capital in the way that Paris always was in France. For tourism, you could certainly travel and we did do some of that, but not much for professional reasons.

Q: Were American TV and movies used there?

NIELSEN: Not so much, because of the language. American movies have traveled everywhere and still do, but the Senegalese looked primarily to France for their cultural stimulation.

Q: Did you get any feel for the rule of Charlie Wick back in Washington?

NIELSEN: Yes. He was very much an activist director. He had the ear of the President and that resulted in resources for USIA, which is all to the good. He did have his pet projects. You could credit him with the beginnings of WorldNet, USIA TV, which personally I never thought was such a great medium, but it was an attempt to be more modern than we had been. That was legitimate. It's just very hard to make good TV serve government purposes. We were not into entertainment TV.

Q: No matter how you slice it, it's a talking head.

NIELSEN: Really, yes. I actually don't mind some talking heads, but the WorldNet programming was never very gripping. I'd rather read what they have to say than watch them say it.

Q: Did you ever have any problems when you were there?

NIELSEN: Not really. You could get sick there, but I didn't. Our son, who was born before we went to Senegal, was an infant there, which worked out well. He did fine there. It's the kind of society which is very friendly to children, so you get to know people.

Q: What was your husband doing?

NIELSEN: His field was teaching English as a foreign language, though he didn't do that much of that, but because he was a trained teacher, he did teach. It was the beginning of the computer era. The early '80s were a time of introduction to word processing and the introduction of computers in our offices. He worked for the embassy and did a lot of computer training.

Q: Did you get any major visits that you got roped into?

NIELSEN: The most interesting thing of that nature was not official visits, since we did not receive any high level visitors that I can recall. President Clinton went to Africa in the 90s, after a long period of no American president having visited sub-Saharan Africa. However, when we were in Dakar, it was an alternate landing site for the space shuttle. It may still be, although we're not sending space shuttles these days. In any case, every time a space shuttle launched, we did have some standby duties. I vividly remember the Challenger blowing up in January of '86 because we were following the launch. But that was about the only claim to fame of Dakar in terms of Washington visibility.

SHIRLEY ELIZABETH BARNES
Supervisory General Services Officer
Dakar (1986-1988)

Ambassador Barnes was born in Florida and raised in Florida and New York City. She was educated at City College of New York and at Columbia and Boston Universities. Before entering the Foreign Service in 1984, Ambassador Barnes worked with the Ford Foundation in Africa and was active in African American women's organizations and in the advertising business. In the Foreign Service she served in Strasbourg, Dakar, East Berlin and in the State Department in Washington. In 1998 she was appointed Ambassador to Madagascar, where she served until 2001. Ambassador Barnes was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2004.

Q: Where'd you go then?

BARNES: From then I went to Dakar, Senegal, again as a GSO. I was a supervisory GSO in Dakar, Senegal.

Q: But this time in Dakar, you were in a French-speaking country and...

BARNES: Yeah.

Q: What was Senegal like for you out there?

BARNES: It was a nice place. I had been there several times before because these friends of mine whom I had met in the Congo had finally joined the foreign service and they were posted to Dakar. I went to visit them on a couple of occasions and I always liked it. In the 70's it was still a nice, charming, Frenchified city. By the time I got there in '86 it started deteriorating but it was still a fun place. I was happy to leave.

Q: What were the problems that you had as a GSO?

BARNES: I didn't really have too many problems in Dakar. I worked for Lannon Walker and he and his wife liked me. We got along well together and my problems were very minor in Dakar. I had a good time. I enjoyed working for Lannon Walker. He was a difficult man but he liked me, his wife liked me and that made my job a lot easier. And they thought that I could get results. I didn't have any problems in Senegal. It was just that the Senegalese would get that in their own structured society, there's a caste system. The Senegalese have a caste system and they're so into being this upper-elite classes in to being very French oriented and they're very ... believe it or not, very skin color oriented too. If you are an African American they would prefer that you would be a light-skinned African American. After a while I found them just to be very boring. On an individual basis I had some very, very good friends. But as a group, everybody said, "Oh, Dakar is great, you're going there" and I thought so too. But it was enough after two years, I was ready to leave.

Q: Were there any coups or problems?

BARNES: Nope. Abdou Diouf was there when I got there and he was there for a long time after I left. That was a very stable country, politically speaking. And so, you went to work, did your work, you went to parties you had dinner parties and then the only things that happened which was very painful for me at that point was that my mother died while I was there.

Q: Oh no.

BARNES: So that was the real downside, but other than that, it was a great enough post. I had a chance to ... my grand-niece, my niece's child insisted that they've got to get it right, they've got to get a brighter perspective. So I paid for her trip out there and she had a great time although it was kicking and screaming. Her father, "oh what are you doing out there with these savages?" And this and 'what do you want with this' and that, yadi yada yada, even though I was paying for the trip. It was a significant defining moment apparently in her life because she was very, very interested and impressed with what I was doing. She didn't know I was a GSO. She saw me running all these offices and all of this. She had a nice little time; it was a young girl that was there for the summer with her father and mother who were working at the embassy. So I got her a job and this other young girl. We had these little jobs, summer jobs, we run around and put paper on people's desks and she got paid for it for the three weeks she was there! So she had fun. So that was a highlight. And as I said, Dakar, Senegal was okay; I never want to go there again. I'd never want to live there.

Q: How did you find dealing with the government?

BARNES: Nice, nice enough people. They weren't difficult to meet with, get appointments with, get your paperwork done. It was slow sometimes, but sometimes it wasn't and again my staff was very good. People that I had to do business with knew what was going to happen. I found that the Senegalese, I knew it's bureaucratic, but so is the U.S. government. It was not any more or less. It was okay.

Q: Well then '88 I guess, you were...

BARNES: '88 I left Dakar and I came back for a short term assignment that Lannon Walker had sort of juggled some strings. He said, "What you need to do is get a short term assignment and then go to the National War College." And what I did was get a short term assignment it was called an MMP, something management and something.

Q: Policy I think it was.

BARNES: Yes, and Ed Dillery was head of it then.

ALICE A. DRESS
Chief of Economic Section
Dakar (1988-1991)

An Economic and Financial specialist, Ms. Dress was born in Indiana and educated at a number of colleges and universities, including George Washington, Tufts and Boston Universities. Initially working with the Department of the Treasury in Washington, DC and in Rome Italy as Treasury attaché, Ms. Dress joined the State Department Foreign Service in 1985, and served, primarily as Economic Counselor, in Kinshasa, Zaire, Dakar, Senegal, New Delhi, India and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. At the State Department in Washington, DC she held senior positions in the European and African Bureaus. Ms. Dress was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2009.

Q: What did you want to do and what happened?

DRESS: I was not keen to stay in Africa but I had bid on Dakar and George Moose, who was getting ready to go out as ambassador, called me and said, "I really would like you to take the job as head of the econ section in Dakar." Looking at my various options I decided to go where I was clearly wanted. Dakar was a nice post but much smaller than Kinshasa, which I didn't realize at the time.

Q: Well it used to be the real center, this is where we sort of ran our African program up until the '60s when all these countries broke down, became independent. But you were there in Dakar from when to when?

DRESS: Three years from the summer of 1988 until the summer of 1991.

Q: What was your job?

DRESS: I headed the economic section, but it was a small office. In Zaire we had the econ counselor, the deputy (me), two junior FSOs, a contract commercial officer and several local employees. In Dakar there was just me, a junior FSO, a locally hired secretary (the spouse of an American embassy employee) and two FSNs (Foreign Service Nationals) in the commercial

office. As head of section, I needed to be concerned with both economic and personnel issues. The ambassador was George Moose; my first DCM was Jennifer Ward, and my second was Prudence Bushnell.

Q: I've interviewed Pru.

DRESS: She was a great person to work for; management was her forte.

Senegal was predominantly Muslim, democratic and had a heavy French influence. The Senegalese were more physically attractive and stylish than the Zairois. The Senegalese were taller, handsomer with a wonderful sense of style. For formal wear the men wore long, magnificent robes called "grand boubou" and the women would tie up their hair in fancy scarves. Zaire was kind of a wild west, but Senegal, having been so closely associated with France for so long, was much quieter.

Q: Who was the president when you were there?

DRESS: Abdou Diouf and had been for a number of years.

Q: Was it a fairly stable sort of political situation?

DRESS: It strikes me as funny talking about it now, but at that time the only opposition figure was Abdoulaye Wade whom I thought of as an old man. But in 2000 he won the presidential election, which really surprised me because I didn't think he could have lasted that long. Senegal has enjoyed, compared to its neighbors, years of stability.

Q: What were American interests there from your perspective at the time?

DRESS: I don't think that they were particularly vital and the size of the post reflected that. We had commercial and political interests. The location of Dakar is strategic. Anybody going in and out of Africa ended up stopping in Dakar. It is the furthest point west on the continent.

Q: It was a very important point during World War II for ferrying planes going down to Brazil and then across to Dakar on their way to the desert war in North Africa or just on the way on to India.

DRESS: Pan Am (Pan American World Airlines) flew through Dakar on its way to and from New York, so we kept an eye on commercial aviation. Reynolds Aluminum had a bauxite mining operation in Senegal. By the way, bauxite is pretty unimpressive looking; it's just the black spots in sand. The mining operation was just sucking up huge gobs of sand, extracting bauxite and spitting the sand out. It was surface mining unlike the deep copper mines in Zaire.

Q: You were running across all the reporting. Did you feel you were in competition or could you cooperate with the French or were the French sort of...?

DRESS: For the French, Senegal was their backyard. Lannon Walker, the U.S. ambassador who preceded Ambassador Moose, spent two years trying to get the Senegalese to buy American wheat to make French bread. As far as the French were concerned you couldn't make good French bread with U.S. wheat because it was too soft. You had to use French wheat to make French bread. But through an amazing amount of effort he pried the market open a crack for some American wheat. At the time it seemed to be a big deal, although looking back now it seems small potatoes -- not that diplomatic work is all about negotiating nuclear disarmament treaties. Most of the time it really is about taking small, incremental steps to promote the national interest.

Q: Sometimes you set up these goals and say what the hell I'm going to get this done.

DRESS: Even in those days officers had work requirements. The Ambassador was able to check that off as an accomplishment. Subsequently, I got to listen to arguments from local flour millers and French people about how American wheat really wasn't suitable for making French bread. For all I know that may be true. I do know that the French bread in Dakar was excellent as was the French cuisine. Being on the ocean, fish dishes were outstanding.

Q: Was the Senegalese economy something that you could report on? Was it well documented?

DRESS: We got our good numbers from the World Bank and the IMF. When officials from those institutions came to town to monitor economic developments, they would stop by the embassy. The ambassador would brief them on the political situation and they would return the favor by sharing their latest take on the economy.

Q: How about George Moose as an ambassador? I ran across George when he was a vice council in Da Nang under Terry McNamara and I was consul general in Saigon.

DRESS: He was a good ambassador. He knew the country and the people; his French was good. I really didn't have much contact with him, however; I worked mostly with the DCMs.

Q: The DCM was who?

DRESS: I started my tour there under Jennifer Ward. Prudence Bushnell was DCM when I left post. Oddly enough both entered the Foreign Service like I did, through the mid-level entry program, and both had very successful careers.

Q: Dealing with officialdom was this a useful exercise or not? Did you get much from them?

DRESS: It's inevitable that one tends to compare posts. Even the Senegalese officials I dealt with were competent and well educated, unlike in Zaire where only a few officials at the top were educated. In Zaire we used to complain because lower level officials weren't available or weren't competent or slept at their desks. But looking back, I think it was more likely that they weren't getting paid so had little incentive to show up for work or were ill with malaria.

Q: In the Belgian Congo maybe three people were high school graduates or something. I mean it varies but in Senegal they had deputies in the French national assembly.

DRESS: Yes, the human resource bases of Senegal and Zaire were very different.

Q: What was the role of the French embassy and all?

DRESS: With both a diplomatic and military presence, the French had the place pretty much locked up. We were just kind of an after thought and they ran rings around us.

Q: A chasse gardé or something like that?

DRESS: Yes, it was a private hunting preserve for the French. In Zaire relations in the broader diplomatic and expat (foreign) community were warmer and more cordial, if for no other reason than we were so isolated and there were so few social alternatives. But in Dakar the foreign community was much wider as were the opportunities for travel and tourism.

Q: How did you find social life there?

DRESS: As I was saying life in Dakar was less cohesive and more cosmopolitan than in Kinshasa, which meant that while there was more to do, you had to work at it harder. In those days there was no community liaison officer (CLO) whose job it was to support mission morale by organizing events.

Q: Were there things such as organized trips or clubs or anything like that?

DRESS: I recall three or four carloads of us driving up to St. Louis for a long weekend. Settled by the French, the city was the capital of French West Africa at one time. With its colonial buildings, St. Louis had a faded charm. Another organized trip I recall was to an island several hours south of Dakar where a French couple had a camp site; after arriving on a boat, we overnighted, enjoyed dinner in the open sea air and visited some nearby villages the next day. Another outing closer to Dakar was when some of us from the embassy went to see traditional Senegalese wrestling (in French lutte traditionnelle). It was a great show. The wrestlers were big guys, covered with juju (magic) charms. To warm up for a match, they spent a lot of time posturing, chanting and boasting -- playing to the crowd and trying to intimidate their opponent. The build up was lengthy; the actual bout was a pretty quick take down.

Q: Was there any residue of the African-American movement in the United States? I think it was Stokely Carmichael who went to that area and I was wondering if there were any of those left?

DRESS: My colleagues in the consular section told me about helping the children of American Blacks who had been sent to Senegal to study with a marabout (Muslim religious leader). Occasionally problems would crop up when the kids got fed up and wanted to go home. They would run to the consular section and ask for help. It was also a place of pilgrimage for Black Americans because of the Il de Goree, the island of Goree, about a mile from the port of Dakar.

Q: Goree plays big in the slave trade annuals.

DRESS: Although few slaves actually passed through Goree (as compared to St. Louis or the Gambia), there was a house there (maison des esclaves - slave house) that had been turned into a museum. You could see where slaves were kept and the door leading out to the ocean where they were boarded onto ships. Goree was a lovely little island; many of the buildings dated from colonial times. They were painted lovely soft pinks and yellows and covered with purple and scarlet bougainvillea. It was a UNESCO world heritage site and a tourist attraction.

Q: Did you get any high level visits?

DRESS: I don't recall any high level visits to Zaire but in Dakar a CODEL (congressional delegation) came through, again only because it was a stopping point for those going in and out of Africa. Claude Pepper was the ranking member of the rather elderly delegation.

Q: Oh yes, Claude Pepper was from Florida who was in his 90s or that.

DRESS: This was my first experience with a VIP visit. Fortunately, the DCM was experienced and organized us for the care and feeding of the CODEL. That was the only high-level visit we had during the three years I was there -- another sign that Senegal was not a major interest for the State Department or even the African Bureau.

Q: How did you feel about your job? You were having a broader sweep in a smaller playpen.

DRESS: Coming out of Zaire, I thought I had mastered the set of skills I needed to handle a tour in Senegal with ease. If life were only that predictable. The substance was easy enough to learn, but I was faced with difficult management and personnel issues - things I did not have to deal with in Zaire. Shortly before I arrived in Dakar, the economic section moved from the AID building across town to the chancery. I arrived to find the office packed up in boxes and I was alone. There was no secretary and no junior FSO. I had to set everything up myself from the furniture to the files. The two FSNs (Foreign Service Nationals) in the commercial office were busy unpacking from their move and anyway they couldn't help me in the classified area of the chancery where the economic section was located. That's when I realized that management training only gets you just so far; it's experience that counts and I didn't have a lot in the management area.

Q: Yeah.

DRESS: It took months to get the section staffed and up and running. Before going out to post, the folks at State told me they wanted more substantive reporting and until the junior officer was on board, I was the only economic reporting officer at post. In a way, Dakar was a more difficult assignment than Kinshasa not because of substantive issues or living conditions but because of the management challenges -- and I didn't get any guidance from the front office. I don't recall if that's because I didn't think to ask for help or because the front office wasn't supportive.

Q: How did you feel about the Foreign Service when you were getting close to the end of your time in Dakar?

DRESS: After two assignments, both of which were great adventures, I had no second thoughts or reservations about my change of career. Even though I was scared when I went out to Kinshasa, after the initial cultural shock wore off, I never had any doubts that the Foreign Service was where I wanted to be.

Q: Things were changing and I see you had both Jennifer Ward and Pru Bushnell. Did you feel that this was a profession for a woman that you could move up ahead at this point or were you even thinking in those terms?

DRESS: I wasn't especially concerned about being female in the Foreign Service. As you pointed out, I worked with two senior women in Dakar. In June 1991, shortly before I left post, a woman ambassador arrived, Katherine Shirley. She was part of a tandem couple but her husband was assigned to another post.

Q: Her husband, Jock Shirley who had been for year's public affairs officer in Rome, was I think in Asia somewhere but I'm not sure.

DRESS: Anyway, I mention her because at that time we had a woman ambassador, a woman DCM and a woman economic counselor. I had the privilege of participating in her credentials presentation ceremony. Ambassador Shirley took the DCM, the political and economic counselors and the head of the Peace Corps to the presidential palace when she presented her credentials to the President Abdou Diouf. I even got to shake his hand. He was a very impressive figure, six and a half feet tall, slender, patrician looking, wearing a gorgeous boubou. That was a memorable experience.

Q: Well then you left Dakar when?

DRESS: Late in the summer of 1991.

Q: You were in a Muslim country did that play any part of our thinking or anything else? Or was it just part of the culture?

DRESS: Islam was so Africanized in Senegal that it was a kinder, gentler Islam. There wasn't a mosque on every corner and I don't remember hearing a call to prayer, but then I lived downtown on the Place de l'Independence. But Islam played an important role in Senegal and none were more important than the Mouride Brotherhood, founded in Touba by a Sufi mystic. The Muslim calendar is lunar and imams declared the start of high holy days like Eid al Fitr at the sighting of the new moon. But because of the rivalry between two of the most important religious leaders, we often ended up with double holidays because the imams couldn't agree on when the new moon was visible. Since the government also treated Christmas and Easter as holidays and Americans got July 4 and other U.S. holidays off, the embassy ended up with too many holidays. In order to work the required minimum number of hours per a year, the American staff had to come in to work without our local employees.

Q: Was there any concern with Libya messing around or not in Senegal?

DRESS: Not that I was aware. The only political unrest at the time was a break away movement in the Casamance, a region south of the Gambia. Senegal also had problems with its northern neighbor Mauritania while I was there. A lot of small shopkeepers in Dakar were Mauritanian and the Senegalese resented them for being sharp operators. There was flair up and the Senegalese started burning Mauritanian shops. A lot of Mauritians were left homeless, fled to the Mauritanian embassy for safety and then left the country.

Q: Okay, well then you left there...?

DRESS: I left Dakar summer of 1991, having been overseas five and a half years, and returned to Washington.

PRUDENCE BUSHNELL
Deputy Chief of Mission
Dakar (1989-1992)

Ambassador Bushnell was born in Washington, DC into a Foreign Service family. She was raised in Washington and at Foreign Service posts abroad and received degrees from Russell Sage College and the University of Maryland. After working as a clerk at Embassies Teheran and Rabat, she became a Foreign Service Officer in 1981 and subsequently served in several posts before serving as Ambassador to Kenya 1996 – 1999. There she experienced the bombing of the Embassy by al Qaeda. In 1999 she was named Ambassador to Guatemala, where she served until 2002. During her career, the Ambassador served in several senior positions in the Department in Washington. Ambassador Bushnell was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2005.

Q: Yeah. Well then, what is it now 80 what?

BUSHNELL: '89.

Q: '89. You're up to be a DCM.

BUSHNELL: Right.

Q: What sort of feeders did you get, because this is, the ambassador essentially selects the DCM.

BUSHNELL: Correct. I was on the list for Ghana but the ambassador wanted an econ officer. I was so, so disappointed. Meanwhile, my colleague, Judy Kaufmann's husband, George Moose, had been tapped for Senegal.

Q: I've interviewed Judy by the way.

BUSHNELL: Good, she's a really neat person. I didn't know George, though I had met him. After I had been turned down for Ghana I felt the need to rehearse my potential as DCM, notwithstanding my background as Admin. So, I asked George, "Have you ever interviewed a DCM?" "No." "Well, I need to be interviewing ambassadors. Do you mind getting together? You can give me feedback about how I present myself and I can give you feedback, given my experience in Senegal, about the kind of DCM you may want. We did the session in the cafeteria. Not long after, George offered the DCM position to me. So, five years after Dick and I had left Dakar as CLO and Supervisory GSO respectively, we returned as DCM and spouse. The FSNs were thrilled -- GSO makes good! They sent a big bouquet of flowers to welcome me on the first day and for the first few weeks, they would give me wonderful encouragement. I would see them in the elevators and they would say, "Oh, you're going to do a wonderful job. You're doing a great job. Continue, you'll be fine, don't worry about it."

Q: So you were there from 1989 until?

BUSHNELL: '92.

Q: Again, what was the situation in Senegal when you got there?

BUSHNELL: Well, by now, Abdou Diouf, to whom the first president of Senegal Senghor had handed off the presidency, had won elections on his own merits. The ecology and economy of the country remained fragile. University students rioted frequently because of proposed cuts to their subsidies. The political opposition was active. In the south of the country, a separatist movement, which had emerged now and then over the years, was once again causing problems to the government and in the north of the country, refugees from Mauritania remained a burden. There was a little bit of everything but, by comparison to other countries on the continent, none of the issues was overwhelming.

Q: How did George Moose use you?

BUSHNELL: He used me as the chief operating officer with significant management and coordination responsibilities. Inspectors who came the first year thought I was too focused on management and should be doing more reporting but I strongly resisted because I thought that should be the primary responsibility of the reporting officers, not mine. It was indicative of the Department's culture to place a higher priority on reporting than anything else.

Q: Well, because this has been the doom of so many DCMs because they did not manage and they just were enjoying themselves as political or economic officers just at a slightly high –

BUSHNELL: Right, and frankly, there wasn't all that much to report in Senegal. I mean, it's a pretty small country. In fact, George and the political officer would sometimes get in each other's way in terms of contacts, because there just wasn't that much going on. The portfolio I did take on, which I really loved, was the separatist movement and the rebellion going down in the south. George would send me down periodically to see what was going on and whether it was

safe enough for Peace Corps volunteers.

Q: It sounds a little bit like the Biafra experience.

BUSHNELL: Yeah, although far less violent. There were people killed, but it did not have the consequences of Biafra.

Q: Did the group, the Christian group, did they have special attributes within the economy or something? I mean, you know, the Biafrans, I guess there Ebos were very much the office workers, entrepreneurs and all that in Nigeria.

BUSHNELL: No, I think the separatists felt marginalized and concerned that they were not getting the resources due them. The Casamance area is very different from the northern part of Senegal – different ethnic groups; different environment and climate; different religion. Some felt they were not getting their fair share of respect or attention. The political manifesto of the separatists, however, was pretty ill-defined.

Q: Well now, you had regional responsibilities. How did that work with your responsibilities?

BUSHNELL: The regional responsibilities were primarily in the management area. There was the regional personnel office. We did budget work and certainly shipping and customs was a primary focus. I was very familiar with that.

When you look at the neighborhood, Senegal was the dominant country. Guinea Bissau was a very small country. Mali was going through a transition from a military dictatorship to eventually a civilian democracy, but things were sort of tenuous. Mauritania was not much to talk of and still had slavery. So, when you looked around the neighborhood at who was the principal actor or partner with the United States, who had the greatest interface, it was Senegal.

Q: Was Qadhafi messing around there at that point?

BUSHNELL: In the region, yes, but not in Senegal, which was pretty conservative. Lockerbie was the primary political issue associated with Libya. The first Gulf War and the war in Liberia were of greater import to us.

Q: You were the safe haven for Liberia weren't you?

BUSHNELL: We were a transit point for a number of embassies. Dakar was a peaceful regional hub with good international air links.

Q: What was the role of the French there by this time?

BUSHNELL: Very strong. Dakar had been the capital of French West Africa and the French retained jealous feelings about the country. They were fully entrenched commercially; they had troops in the country and important political and financial relationships. It was a known secret that a lot of money was going back and forth. There were definitely relationships there between

people in high places in the French government and people in Senegal.

The French were very suspicious of our interests and growing influence in the region and before George Moose arrived, relations between the Americans and the French embassies had deteriorated completely. George was determined that we would get along better so he had me interact with the new French DCM – a very nice man. We frankly had a wonderful time going out to one of Dakar’s many lovely restaurants once a month to size up one another’s activities. I let him order the wine.

Q: Was it a happy embassy would you say?

BUSHNELL: I think it was a very happy embassy. That's not to say that everybody in the embassy was happy. We had delightful lovely weather, because Dakar is at the end of a peninsula. Senegalese are very nice people. There were plenty of restaurants, two Club Meds in the country, a fair number of things to do and a good sized community. Once a year, over George Washington’s birthday, we would be the hosts of the West African Invitational Softball – WAIST Tournament. Teams from missions in the region would gather to play three days of constant softball. It was fun.

Also, George Moose cared about the mission and people know when the ambassador cares. We took the Mission Program Plan and the process of setting objectives seriously but as an embassy, I think we were fairly relaxed.

Q: Did you get any high level visits there?

BUSHNELL: Yeah, we got lots of high-level visits. If you’re going to Africa, chances are you will come through Dakar to refuel. We had the VIP visit routine down pat. It included the requisite trip to Goree Island from which millions of people were shipped to the new world.

Q: This is a slave citadel?

BUSHNELL: Yes. An international historic landmark. So, yes we got lots and lots of visitors. Kathy Shirley replaced George as ambassador when he and Judy Kaufmann left in 1992. She continued the tradition. And, like George, she was a terrific person to work for and a very popular ambassador.

ROBERT J. KOTT
Deputy Chief of Mission
Dakar (1992-1995)

Mr. Kott was born and raised in New York City. He earned degrees from St. John’s University in New York City and from the University of Oregon. After service with the Peace Corps in India, Mr. Kott joined the Foreign Service in 1971. An African specialist, Mr. Kott served in, Togo and Cameroon as Economic

and Political Officer and in Malawi and Senegal as Deputy Chief of Mission. He also served in Indonesia and Canada. Mr. Kott was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2000.

Q: So, you finished your inspection detail in summer of '92 and you went to Dakar, Senegal as Deputy Chief of Mission, with Ambassador Katherine Shirley?

KOTT: Right. I should back up a little bit. When I was in Rome I got a phone call. Actually I think I may have been in Milan, inspecting Milan. I got a phone call from Washington saying that Ambassador Shirley had made a decision to retire early from the Foreign Service. I subsequently learned that she was married to Jock Shirley, former Ambassador in Tanzania and Counselor at the U.S. Information Service. He had retired and was living in their home in Connecticut, I believe, and Katherine was out in Senegal for I guess a year, year and a half by herself, and I think she just felt lonely. And she didn't like being away from her husband and family. So she decided that, I don't know if I should say this, but at turning 50 years old, and therefore eligible to receive pension and retire, she was going to do that. And decided in May to turn in her papers, effective in September and she was leaving post in early September, I think it may have been September 1st. So I got to post on something like the 8th or 9th of August and we only had three weeks of overlap and she was going to leave.

Now, even before I left Washington for Senegal I knew the Ambassador that had been nominated, and that was Mark Johnson who was serving as the Executive Assistant to the Undersecretary for Management at the time. So I'd met with Mark and I got a fairly good inkling of his thinking and timing, etc., etc., and I expected to be Chargé for perhaps a month or two, until Mark got out there. Well, the political process in Washington moved rather slowly and I think Mark may have started his hearings or was about to start his hearings when in fact the Senate went out and went into recess. Or adjourned I guess. Because it was an election year, and it was a presidential election year, Mark had not been appointed by President Bush. Wound up sort of holding the bag sometime in October, sweated out the election, Governor Clinton was elected President. I don't know what Mark was thinking, but I sort of held my breath because I knew I was going to be in for a long haul as Chargé. As it turns out, Mark was reappointed eventually, by President Clinton, and wound up coming to post in mid-June of 1993. So I wound up being Chargé d'Affaires for about nine and a half months, almost ten months, between Katherine Shirley's departure on or about September 1st until June 17th the following year.

Q: Why don't we talk about that period first and then later about what it was like to be DCM? What was the state of U.S. relations with Senegal in that period, what were the relations, what was the kind of thing you were talking about, what sort of embassy, was it a large embassy?

KOTT: First of all, the state of relations were excellent. Not because of anything I had done but historically we've had a very close relationship with Senegal. Senegal was always held up, rightly or wrongly, as being one of the more model democracies of Africa. I think it's a stretch to apply that term to Senegal, at least as we define democracy. But in the African context it was a relatively civil society and relative democracy. There were elections. Always, interestingly won by the same party that was in power since independence. But, basically free press and elections,

citizens weren't harassed, and that sort of thing. More or less respect for human rights. Relative again, to so many African countries it was pretty open and free.

Q: And stable?

KOTT: And stable. I think fairly minimal U.S. interests. Senegal is really a pretty poor country. We didn't have an awful lot of trade. Our interest there was largely, as I recall, its strategic position. They had a very good port. Its political influence, having been the capital of French West Africa. Certainly growing American influence there, as I observed it.

Q: AID program?

KOTT: Yes, large AID program although one that was diminishing when I was there. I think it had gone from a high of something like, a few years before I got there it may have been 35, 45 million dollars a year. Maybe at one time it was even a lot higher than that. But it was down to about 20 million dollars when I was there.

Q: You mentioned a good port and therefore of some strategic interest to us. Did our Navy, did we make use of that much, or just potential?

KOTT: Very rarely. Yes, more in the potential. I think we had one ship visit during a year, at least during my time there. But the French of course scaled us in Senegal, I think they have their second or third, probably their third largest land military force in Dakar, probably after Libreville and Djibouti. So they saw it, I suspect with greater strategic value than we did; they had a naval base there, they had an air base there. And they actually did have a few fighter aircraft based there.

Q: Were we in dialogue with Senegalese about other situations in the region?

KOTT: Very much so. What I inherited, getting there, I told you that President Abdou Diouf was in Washington visiting his friend President George Bush I. And basically what that was all about, we wanted, we, the U.S. government, wanted a greater Francophone presence in the civil war that was taking place in Liberia. The Anglophone militaries had dominated that situation, the Nigerians in particular, the Guineans, as you know, and perhaps some others, and for whatever reasons Washington wanted at least some counterbalance in a Francophone force. And President Bush asked President Diouf to send Senegalese troops down there. Diouf readily agreed as long as we agreed to pick up the tab. Because Senegal could hardly afford that. So I think that total amount of money that this wound up costing the American taxpayer might have been about 15 million dollars spread over several years. Mostly in terms of transport, equipment, clothing, food, whatever it takes to put an army in the field. We had some training going on with the Senegalese as well under IMET (International Military Education and Training) and other programs. But I don't think that was directly related to the agreement to send their troops down to Liberia.

In any case, to make a long story short, it was very, very busy 10 months for me. One of the major issues was just that. The presence of the Senegalese troops and our support for them, in Liberia. And when, I think six or eight of them were allegedly massacred in cold blood, allegedly

by Taylor's people in Liberia, Diouf and his government were enraged and decided to pull the plug and asked us to bring their troops back home. In fact that happened during the visit of Deputy Assistant Secretary of the day, Lenny Robinson who was in Dakar. I think it was in December of '92, and we went to see President Diouf. Diouf had his Prime Minister Habib Thiam sitting in the room and he had his Foreign Minister and he had his Chief of Staff of the military, General Seck, who subsequently became Ambassador to the U.S. and is still here. And I think to the surprise of even Habib Thiam and the Foreign Minister and the General, he said, "I would like to ask you something, Mr. Robinson, I would like to ask you to bring our troops home." And we said, "Yes sir, we understand." We knew this was coming, we just didn't know when the shoe was going to drop. And he said, "I'd like it done in a month." I think we were able to meet that deadline, save for a day or two. We had convoys of C-130s coming through Dakar airport. Happily I had defense people on the ground, in terms of both my Defense Attaché as well as our military assistance fellow who was really the key mover there, he was a great guy. And we were able to meet their timetable. As I said, maybe we were a day short.

Q: Were we talking to Senegal about other situations, other than Liberia? Did Senegal participate in any UN forces?

KOTT: Yes, they did. In Cyprus for example, they were one of the major African contingents in Cyprus. My memory is not serving me well, but Senegal has a tradition of participation in peacekeeping. And that was one of the reasons why we had such a good relations with the Senegalese, of course, we could count on them for things like that. As long as way pay the tab, or somebody paid the tab.

Q: How about Peace Corps?

KOTT. Peace Corps, yes. But let me just tell you why else it was such a busy period. It was also election time. President Diouf was standing for reelection in February. And then there were going to be legislative elections I think in May of '93. We had the Liberia situation, we had the election reporting and Washington had a lot of concern about that because there was the issue of transparency, we wanted the Senegalese to conduct transparent election, at least procedurally. Of course probably hoping that Diouf would win, since we were such good friends and had such good relations with him. But we didn't want to be perceived as sort of tinkering or insuring that. That was the job of the French. We devoted a lot of resources, as I recall it, at least a million dollars that we coughed up from our AID program, we moved to election transparency and monitoring and providing ballot boxes and voting booths and all kinds of schemes. Not always to the pleasure of certain quarters of the Senegalese government. They didn't want too much transparency, at least... you know, publicly they couldn't say that, but I remember the Interior Minister of the day being not a very pleasant sort of fellow, when we had the ceremony handing over the ballot boxes, with myself and the AID director and the press were there, I remember he made a big stink out of how he couldn't fold up his ballot and get it into slot, because the slot was cut to take the ballot vertically when in fact he thought it should go in horizontally. And the slot wasn't big enough. And I was about to punch him in the nose, because all these boxes were built locally of course, through quite an expenditure. Happily our aid director was a bit more diplomatic and he said, "No problem Mr. Minister, we'll cut new holes in the ballot boxes for you."

As it turns out, on election day, we went out, especially the AID director, the Political Officer and myself, and a few others, doing a little unofficial election monitoring and to see how the equipment was being used. We went by a high school and we found that most of it was still stashed in the high school godown. It wasn't being used at all. Very little of it in any case. I remember writing a diplomatic note protesting that after the fact. They said, "Don't worry, we just didn't have the means to get them, the ballot boxes, delivered out into the country side. We'll use them for the legislative elections in a few months time."

So that was busy. The Liberia situation was busy. I was new to the post. My French was rusty. It was a large mission. We had about 400 employees, including I think there were a total of about 90 American slots. They were not all encumbered, but there were a good 70 or 80 Americans at post. Three hundred odd Foreign Service National employees. It was a managerial challenge. Four or five agencies. Again, the newness. Learning my way around town. The diplomatic corps was an active diplomatic corps. There were 50, 60 Ambassadors represented there. Dealing with the French was probably more difficult than dealing with the Senegalese, that's for sure. In fact the Senegalese were very easy to deal with, I had very good relations, with the Foreign Ministry in particular, but across the board. Access was fairly easy for the Americans because we were major aid donors and because we were good friends with the Senegalese. And I think the Senegalese quite frankly wanted to balance the French relationship.

Q: Did this 10-month Chargé period involve much travel or did you pretty much have to stay, the shop was running?

KOTT: I had to stay. The one weekend I went away on personal leave down to the beach, was just post election period and there was an assassination of a judge. Which presumably was politically motivated but I had to get my car to get back home. It was a minor crises, Washington was concerned of course, what was going on. So, yes, I had to stick fairly close... In fact I didn't really learn Dakar in those 10 months. I used to go between my office in the Embassy down the corniche, which was about a three or four mile stretch, worked long hours. Of course there were a lot of social aspects to the job too, because being Chargé I couldn't say, "No", so there were the usual rounds of cocktails and dinners. It was a very tiring, very fatiguing time. I was very happy when the Ambassador finally arrived to post.

Q: Well, you were very happy when he arrived, on the other hand the situation that you were in, being Chargé for 10 months, having briefly served with the Ambassador who had chosen you as the deputy and then another Ambassador coming who had in fact endorsed your assignment but didn't initially chose you, that's not an easy situation. For either of you. How did that play out?

KOTT: I don't know. We got off to a very good start I think. I made sure that Ambassador Johnson was first of all well briefed from afar, number one.

Q: Before he came?

KOTT: Yes. He'd call me once in awhile and asked me to supply him with reports, telegrams, what have you, especially when he was preparing for his hearings. I think he valued the

Embassy's input as much as, if not more than, he was valuing the input that he was getting in the Department. Certainly the briefing book or the book that I had orchestrated and prepared for him from the Mission, that covered the issues, the functions of the mission and even the diplomatic corps, served him well. He got off to a good start. He was a very fast read. He certainly had enough time to prepare for his arrival, since he initially knew he was going to be Ambassador back in October the previous year. He himself, assuming he was eventually going to get there, had seven or nine months to prepare for it. He is a bright fellow and as I said was a quick read, a quick study.

I made it very clear from the outset that I fully intend to take the back seat. That although I'd been in the forefront, viewed as the American representative in Senegal, that I was not the Ambassador, that he was the Ambassador and that I would be a deputy and do what he wanted. Presumably, doing the in-house managing while he became the outside man. And he seemed to agree with that quite readily and became very active in terms of interlocuting with Senegalese government. Established quickly a good relationship with President Diouf. He used to visit with President Diouf about every six, eight weeks, for a very long, one-on-one session, which we would prepare him for of course, by doing up again a briefing book of issues that we wanted him to address with the President. These things usually took place about five o'clock in the afternoon and he'd be over there for 90 minutes, two hours. Next day write up his reports to Washington. He retained that tradition that his predecessors had, I'm sure, established, going back for many years. Again, the relationship has always been pretty close.

Q: When you were Chargé did you meet with the president one-on-one or just when there were visitors like Larry Robertson?

KOTT: I asked George Moose, who was the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, and who was the Ambassador in Dakar prior to Katherine Shirley, if he wanted me to on my own go in and try to see the President every so often. He said, "No". He didn't think that was appropriate. Of course, we didn't know how long I was going to be Chargé, I think perhaps in hindsight, had we known that I was going to be in charge for nine months I probably would have tried to establish a closer relationship with both the Foreign Minister and the President. Happily, at the level just below in the Presidency and in the Ministry, I had very good access. The Secretaries of Cabinet, the Counselors at the Presidency. If I needed to go over for any reason, I could. And since I wasn't an Ambassador and since George Moose decided that's the way he wanted to play it, that's the way we did it. I did see him occasionally. My first quasi-official visitor to post, I think two or three weeks after becoming Chargé and only six after being at post, was Jimmy Carter, former President Carter. Who was there not on a state-to-state visit but through the Carter Center and his peace-keeping efforts in Liberia and his habitat efforts and his health initiatives. We went over to see President Diouf together and others, Prime Minister Thiam. For reasons like that I would go see the President, but generally not.

Q: Now, as DCM, the things changed a lot for you or...?

KOTT: I suppose. I didn't find it tremendously difficult because I convinced myself in advance I knew I'd have to play a different role. I remember the then Finance Minister, a rather outspoken and lively character. When I paid a call on him one day he said, "You know Kott, life's going to

change for you. It's going to be difficult. Everyone looks on you here as the American Ambassador, you are on TV all the time, making speeches, giving aid..."

Q: Shaking hands.

KOTT: Shaking hands, smiling. He said, "You are going to have to fade in the background, and you are not going to like that." And I said, "Mr. Minister, I am very aware of that and I thank you for your advice but I have already reconciled myself to it." No it wasn't too bad of a transition. We still were able to... Happily at least on the social level, with the diplomats, the Ambassadorial friends that I made and who had accepted me as an equal, if you will, were good enough to maintain that relationship. So socially we didn't suffer. On the work side, there was enough to do in the Embassy to keep me busy and the Ambassador gave me, as long as I kept him informed, he gave me a pretty free hand to manage the Embassy. We kept him informed, not that he necessarily needed us to keep him informed, but, on a pro forma basis we kept him informed so that he could do his thing with the government of Senegal. Which is what he was good at.

Q: You were there until summer of '95, you were there together with him for two years or so?

KOTT: Two years. We had a very good professional relationship.

Q: Was he there at post most of the time, after finally getting there?

KOTT: Yes, absolutely. I think summer vacation in '94, for a month, I took over the post and then in '95 actually I think we both left, he on vacation and me on the permanent change of station about the same time. And another fellow took over the Embassy for a month or so. Professionally, we saw eye to eye. Mark launched an initiative, which I executed for him, which was a downsizing effort. We didn't really get much thanks out of Washington for saving them six million dollars a year, but we did. We cut something like 14 or 16 American positions from the Mission, which if you do your sums and calculate how much it costs to support an American and a family overseas, in Africa, we calculated that per annum savings was some fantastic figure, six, seven, eight million dollars a year. Something like that. Washington just sort of hummed at that. This took us a year. We used to meet weekly with staff, we made them justify their positions, both in writing as well as with the head of the agency orally. We negotiated this and there really wasn't much blood-letting either. It was a country team effort. I was very proud of it, actually. I think the Ambassador should have been, since it was his idea. But, it was sort of met with ho-hum in Washington, "that's your job", "that's what you're paid for" kind of thing.

Q: And you probably weren't under a lot of pressure from Washington to cut x percentage, or x number of positions?

KOTT: No, we really weren't.

Q: It was sort of a free good that you were presenting?

KOTT: Yes, Senegal, it's the favorite of the African Bureau, for all the reasons that we talked about before, the history of good relations, relative democracy...

Q: You did have a lot of American visitors there?

KOTT: Not CODELs. I don't even remember if we had one CODEL all the time I was there. We did, I remember the National Security Advisor came out. As the last stop on a six nation African tour, with his gaggle. Tony Lake was there. We used to get EUCOM people down, I know I think one of my first visitors was a four-star out of EUCOM. And then I know we had a three-star and a two-star over the years. So, a lot of military visitors. State Department, George Moose came out once when I was Chargé, the DASs (Deputy Assistant Secretaries) used to come through fairly regularly. I'd say we'd see a DAS every three or four months. State Department DAS. Besides that, we weren't overly burdened. The bureaucratic visitors, of course, the AID characters and the military characters coming through, but that was work-a-day.

Q: How were Senegal's relations with its immediate neighbors in that period? Was that a problem? Mauritania?

KOTT: Mauritania was somewhat strained. Border issues, refugee issues, ideological issues. Senegal you know is a Muslim country nominally, 94% of population, but very secular in practice. Of course Mauritania is I think the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. Senegalese were wary of the spread of what I call political Islam. And we would keep an eye on that, too. That was certainly one of the briefs that we had, especially the station.

Q: Was there much evidence of that?

KOTT: Yes, there was some of it. The Iranians had an Embassy in Senegal, in Dakar that the Senegalese kept a close watch on, the French, DGSE (Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure – Directorate-General for External Security) probably as well, and certainly we. We knew that they were trying to make the inroads, spreading the gospel of fundamentalist Islam, through intermediary organizations. Funding Islamic groups, charitable institutions so-called, mosques, that sort of thing. Senegal when we were there was holding the presidency of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. So there would be periodic gatherings of the Islamic nations, from the heads of state level on down, in Dakar. Saudis were represented but they were of course very conservative, but very moderate at the same time.

Q: This was not too long after the Gulf War. Did Senegal...?

KOTT: Senegal participated. They were the first African nation to sign up on the Allies side and sent off quite a large contingent, the numbers escape me, but they also sustained not in action directly, but they sustained the largest number of losses, other than Iraqis of course. Because one of their airplanes went down. I think it was a C-130 if I'm not mistaken with 90 or 100 young men on it.

Q: On their way to or from...?

KOTT: Yes. Exactly. So on a per capita basis they took the largest number of loses. They benefited after the end of hostilities, I guess there was some provision in American law for the supply of equipment. Perhaps it was equipment that was used in the Gulf, to those who participated with us. Senegal got some of the largest...., I'm not saying that that's what motivated them to sign on board, I think they felt a certain closeness to the U.S. and when President Bush and Secretary Baker asked them to participate they did. I think it was pretty typical of the relationship. It's a good relationship.

And the other neighbors, in a nutshell, let me just think, relationship with Mali was pretty good. Minor irritants along the border, cattle rustling, that sort of thing. Gambia – generally improving. When I was there, actually I was Chargé during the summer, there was a coup d'état in Gambia. Kind of stupid how it all happened. I don't think it started out as a coup d'état, I think it started out as certain faction of the military down there, protesting their treatment by the civilian government, President Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara. There was an American naval vessel in Banjul port, that had just left Senegal a day or two earlier. I've told you we had one ship visit a year. I had seen it off on its merry way to Banjul and lo and behold, a few days later it was back in Dakar with the ex-President of Gambia on board.

The American Ambassador, Andrew Winter, and the Captain of the Navy ship were visiting with the Vice President of Gambia, as a courtesy, protocol visit, when this band of Gambian soldiers came marching down the streets firing a few rounds. The Vice President went into the President's office next door and they huddled for a few minutes I'm told and the next thing I know is the President and the Vice President asked if they could go on board the ship and take refuge. They thought a coup d'état was happening and they didn't want to get caught in it. I guess the captain asked the Ambassador and the Ambassador looked back at the captain. Anyway, the decision was made, rightly or wrongly, and everybody got on board the ship, including the American Ambassador. I don't think that Washington was too happy about that.

To make a long story short, I had a long weekend at the Embassy intermediating between Gambia and Washington, because they were out of radio contact and we were passing all the messages, and it was all-nighter for a couple of nights. George Moose said to us that he wanted the Senegalese to accept President Jawara at least temporarily, to give him political asylum. The Senegalese weren't very happy with that message. It was a weekend, the Foreign Minister was out in his village, although I was able to get in contact with him. I was dealing with the military, I was dealing with the Presidency, I was dealing with the Foreign Ministry, I was dealing with any Senegalese of any responsible position that I could get a hold of over the weekend. Ultimately we were persuasive, we won the day, President Diouf relented and allowed President Jawara to take at least temporary refuge in Senegal. The U.S. Navy ship steamed back into port, on Sunday afternoon five or six o'clock and the Administrative Officer and myself as Chargé went down. We greeted the Gambian delegation. The Senegalese housed them, it was an interesting time.

The relations were always a bit iffy with the Gambians. But, they are kissing cousins, one and the same people. One of the problems is that Gambia separates the three quarters of Senegal which is north of Gambia and the one quarter of Senegal, the land mass that is south of Gambia, which is called the Casamans. There has been an insurrection ebbing and flowing in the

Casamans for many, many years, which unfortunately takes lives on both sides. That is to say Senegalese military side as well as the insurgent side.

Q: Did you ever visit that area?

KOTT: Yes, once I took a trip down through Gambia into the Casamans. It's a beautiful area. Didn't see any activity. This was a real guerilla operation, on and off again, and it ebbed and flowed, depending on the state of negotiation, which was always ongoing. Complicated situation which I understand is still not resolved fully.

Guinea Bissau – again, up and down. When I was there relations were okay with Guinea Bissau. Subsequently there was a coup d'état in Guinea Bissau and Senegalese went in to support one side and actually did not acquit themselves very well. This was all after my departure. Lost a number of their personnel down there.

Q: I think I asked you at one point about Peace Corps?

KOTT: Yes. We had a large Peace Corps contingent, I think close to a hundred. We also had a Peace Corps regional training center. Not far from Dakar. The Embassy was invited, the Ambassador or the Chargé would be invited out there occasionally, to speak to the trainees.

Q: Trainees would be going to other countries...?

KOTT: To other Francophone countries. Both Senegal as well as Guinea and Mali I think. It was really just a training center. These young recruits would pass through there for a few months, learn French, other skills, go off to their assignments. But yes, the Peace Corps was well entrenched, and accepted in Senegal. We supported them, we even had a sort of a host family program. I don't remember the exact name of it, but it was sort of Adopt a Peace Corps Volunteer. And I had two.

Q: On sort of a continuing basis?

KOTT: Yes. When the kids, I mean young people, would come into town, if they wanted to they could bunk in with us, take meal with us. The relationship was individual and it depended on the family and the volunteer. Some would just like to come over for a hot meal and maybe a bath, others would like to stay with their families. It was kind of a nice relationship, to be able to have the volunteers in, maybe for the holidays, you'd have them in for Thanksgiving dinner, or Christmas dinner.

PAUL GOOD
Executive Officer, USIS
Dakar (1996-1997)

Paul Good was born in Kentucky in 1939. After receiving his bachelor's degree at Cascade College he received his master's degree from Ball State. His career in USIA included positions in Thailand, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Nigeria, Australia, Yugoslavia, South Africa, Morocco, and Senegal. Mr. Good was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in August 2000.

Q: You're in Senegal and Dakar from when to when?

GOOD: Just from August to May '96, '97, and then came back to Washington. I turned out to get a good PAO, who came down about the same time I did in '96, who had administrative sense, and that's really all it needed. There was some cleanup to do, some lines to redraw, but we had a good staff, particularly our administrative side. What had not been allowed to happen, we allowed to happen, and that was to let her do her job. With her doing her job, things went beautifully.

Q: Yes.

GOOD: We had, unfortunately, a difficult administrative officer, who was eased out at the same time I left. I was eased out to. I'll get to that later. But he had some kind of a medical problem that caused him problems, caused us problems. He ended in Paris at RAMSI. I figure that was probably just desserts, if you know RAMSI.

Q: No, I don't.

GOOD: RAMSI is the regional finance operation for Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. The employees are very tough French employees. They don't take direction gladly. I'm sure that they have given him no end of a rough time, because they were home, and he was a visitor, and they knew he'd be leaving. And you know how FSN employees can help lash the bastard.

Q: Oh, yes.

GOOD: I really could have left after six months without any difficulty. I told the area director that I thought that my job should be abolished and go back to the way it had been before with the regional visitor on occasion as PMO. He agreed. It turned out that I left a few weeks early because the ambassador got himself into a sexual harassment situation, which if you interested in, I'll tell you, but which ended up with the administrative officer having to leave and his wife, who was causing the problem, having to leave.

Q: How did this come about? I think this is an era of "all sudden sexual harassment came up," and historically, it'd be interesting to see what was considered that sort of thing at that time.

GOOD: Well, my problem, my mistake was in not filing a suit within a 45-day period. I was rusty; I was in transit; I was overseas; and as you know, some ambassadors still act like proconsul. Dane was an experienced officer; he'd been ambassador in Conakry before he came to Dakar. He'd started out as Peace Corps in Eritrea. He and wife had been in Peace Corps.

Bright guy, his wife, who was bright and wrote well, was still in the 1960s mode as an ambassador's wife.

I had heard before I got the post that he had had problems with the handling of his female staff in Conakry. I found out, to my dismay, that he had not learned anything since. We got along fine. He made me chairman of the housing board, which is probably not a winning position, but at least it was nice that he allowed me to have that. We had a good crew on board.

The administrative counselor, of course, was not happy about having a board that wasn't under his thumb. We, all the board, agreed that we worked for the ambassador; we didn't work for the admin officer. Of course, we would make our recommendations, and if the ambassador didn't like them, well, he could change them, of course. That was his prerogative. But the admin officer, took off after USIS as well, and made some accusations, which weren't true, and I called him on it. I said, "This is not accurate." It had to do with personnel; it was my job; and he was unhappy that I was bucking him. A lot of us from the embassy went off for a weekend in the bird reserve up at the Mauritanian border. The ambassador came up. I was touring with the deputy admin officer; we were buddies. My wife had had to be evacuated within the first month of our tour in Senegal with the precancerous skin condition.

Q: Oh, yes?

GOOD: They wouldn't let her come back.

Q: Because it's right on the Equator.

GOOD: Well, it is, and it started in Morocco, after I left for French language training. We thought that we had reversed it in the States, and it had calmed down, but when she got down there, it flared up again, and the regional medical officer said, "Get out."

Of course, that was one of the reasons also I had told the area officer that I wanted out as well. My job was done; the PAO was handling it well; the staff was good; and so let me go. I would have rather have stayed through the ICASS installation later in that fiscal year. I would rather have left in October after the new fiscal year started, but never mind. When I came back from this weekend, I saw that the administration officer had not corrected his actions on USIS. I saw that he had left on a medical. Now he had, just before this, spent a half hour of an all staff country team meeting, going through major minutia, or minor minutia, however you want to look at this. Everyone was looking at him, "What's going on with this guy?" The ambassador didn't say anything, just let it run out. As I was leaving the room that day one of the officers turned to me and said, "The guy's sick; something's wrong with him."

When we got back from the weekend we found he'd been medically evacuated. I wrote him a personal note, put it in an envelope, addressed to him saying that I hoped that he'd come back improved because this is, how did I phrase it? I alluded to the fact that "I hope that your breakdown is cured by the time you go back, because your wife deserves better than this," something to that effect. She was having a hard time; it was obvious. I was unwise to have put that line in of course. His secretary didn't like him either. She opened the envelope hoping that

there would be something there that she could get involved with, and showed it to his wife. She took it to the ambassador, saying that I was harassing her.

Well, the ambassador of course, should have done what any reasonable manager would have done, saying, "Excuse me, that's not harassment. Get out of my face. Stop that." She was working in the consulate, so he had control over her as an employee. But he didn't, because he did not know how to handle women. We had had this problem with him twice with the housing board. He'd overruled the board's decision because of State women who didn't like the decision. He wouldn't do it for the men, but he would do it regularly for the women. He had problems in this with his wife as well. We found the presidential visit, excuse me, the Hillary visit advance team was shocked to see how she was demanding things of the visit, and the ambassador wasn't stepping in, although the advance team didn't want these things to go on.

So what it amounted to was that he allowed the administrator officer's wife to continue to harass him. Now my feeling is in retrospect, that her husband was aiding and abetting, using her as the front for his efforts to get back at me personally and USIS in general. What I didn't know was that the question of medical records had arisen and that the ambassador told the security officer to check in Washington, and to check with the post to see whether I had gotten into the office to see what was going on. When I found from the ambassador that he was concerned that I had seen the medical records, I said, "Mr. Ambassador, aren't you aware that the fact of his departure was registered on the circulated travel list on Tuesday of that week? We all knew why he had gone, those of us at least in the administration or heads of sections knew everybody who had traveled and why they traveled." I said, "It was no secret."

The ultimate result was that when, we agreed, he and I, that it was finished, that I had done what he wanted, although I hadn't done it quite the way he wanted. He had told me that he wanted me to apologize to her. I said, "For what?" "Well," he said, "I don't know, but apologize to her so she's off my back." So I said, "Okay." But because I'd gotten burned with a written communication internal at the post, I wrote a postcard note and sent it. I had mailed it at the post, and it had gone to the States and come back. I'd sent it APO. He thought that I had done this purposely to annoy him. He said he had expected an instant apology although he had told me, "Now don't talk to her. I don't want you talking to her." So I couldn't apologize in whatever fashion to her directly. I had to do it in writing, so I did it in mail, rather than internally. I got a call from the DCM back in the States, I was home on spring vacation. He said, "What's going on?" I told him what had happened. "Well," he said, "you're in trouble with the ambassador." "Well," I said, "I'm sorry, but I did what I did." When I came back and talked to the ambassador about it, he still didn't like it, I'm not even sure he believed me. But I said, "Look at the postmark on the letter. The postmark was dated shortly after we talked. Just because it took a long time to get to her is not the issue."

So we agreed to drop it. He said, "Well, you've done what you can do, I hope over with." But the next day I got called in by the RSO (Regional Security Officer) and briefed or interviewed on the medical problem. I considered that to be a violation of the agreement that the ambassador had made that this was finished. So I wrote him a note and said that I didn't think this was kosher, and that I thought that, as a Christian, he should apologize for breaking the agreement.

His conclusion from that was that I had shown disrespect for the ambassador's position. He told the PAO, not me, to get me out of town before he returned in a month.

There was no recourse at that point. I talked to the DCM about it, and he said, "You know, what can I do? I agree with you. The ambassador however can't handle this. His wife feels that he has got to show some power. He's got to get himself back in charge and this is what she's demanding of him." This is my reading of what I was told. He said, "If we at our age, Paul, can't stand on principle, when are we going to be able to stand on it?" But he rode through it. He's now ambassador in Gabon. I came back to the States, which really was better for me.

End of reader