



0. Albert Schweitzer Arrives at Lambarene - Story
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It was 1913 when the Schweitzers finally arrived in Lambarene, their new home-base in Gabon (then known as French Equatorial Africa).

Two canoes, full of native children, raced to meet them. They had won a school contest to the mission school for the honor of bringing Albert and Helene to the mission. They transferred them from the flatboat to a hollowed-out canoe for the short journey to shore.

When they arrived there, Albert was disappointed that the building materials for the new hospital had not yet arrived. The site for the hospital hadn't even been selected. He had been promised a translator, but no one could locate him.

Then, a student ran up to Albert and indicated for him to follow him. He was led to an area where many natives had gathered for medical assistance. He tried to tell them his medicines had not yet arrived and without medicines he was nothing more than a witch doctor. He indicated to them to come back later.

Soon Albert heard the drums sending out a message throughout the jungle: "The witch doctor had arrived!"

The missing interpreter was finally located and reportedly told Albert: "Oh, one thing you will learn about blacks. They will let you down every time."

Albert reportedly answered:

The BLACKS will let me down? What about the whites? Where is my hospital? Where are my supplies?

Albert looked for a temporary substitute for the hospital and found an abandoned chicken coop. It was better than nothing. Helen cleaned it out and Albert repaired the roof and white-washed the walls.

Three weeks passed before the medicines arrived. The natives heard the boat whistle and began to line up in front of the make-shift hospital.

Albert and Helene looked out upon all those sad expectant eyes and began work immediately.

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Albert Schweitzer

Working with Albert Schweitzer, Bobby Roberts

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