

0. Albert and Helene Schweitzer during WWI - Story
Preface

1. Early Life of Albert Schweitzer
2. A Change of Life for Albert Schweitzer
3. Albert Schweitzer Leaves Europe
4. Albert Schweitzer Goes to Africa
5. Albert Schweitzer Arrives at Lambarene
6. Albert Schweitzer and His Jungle Life
7. Settling into African Life

8. Albert and Helene Schweitzer during WWI

9. Albert Schweitzer and His Hospital in Gabon
10. Death and Legacy of Albert Schweitzer

When World War I broke out in Europe, the Schweitzers' home area of Alsace (in France) became part of Germany. Thereafter, French people in French Equatorial Africa (the French Congo) considered Dr. Schweitzer to be their enemy. Albert and Helene became prisoners in their own home.

The local people, whom the Schweitzers were helping, were furious. Eventually, the military realized that Albert's medical skills were needed, and he was allowed to resume treating patients.

When the war came to Africa, however, the locals began to question what had happened to the white people's rules of peace. They asked Albert and Helene why the whites, who had brought them a religion of love, could not practice this philosophy among themselves.

The couple had no answers to such questions.

The war changed Africa. It also changed the Schweitzers. Albert and Helene were sent to Europe where they were interned in a French prison camp.

Albert tried to keep his mind active by pretending to play the organ on a tabletop, but the health of the couple suffered severely. Then Albert learned that his mother had died by being trampled to death by the German cavalry. It was too much for him.

It took Albert five years to regain his emotional health. He found therapy in rebuilding organs that had been damaged in the war. Eventually, he returned to playing concerts and giving lectures. Then he accepted a call to pastor a church in Sweden.

Dr. Schweitzer talked with young people about the core of Christianity which, he explained, was humanitarian work. These young people grew to admire him and many wanted both to learn from him and to follow his example.

Albert wanted to return to Africa, but Helene had never fully recovered from the prison camp and could no longer tolerate the tropical climate. Yet, Helene knew that Albert's work was so important that she made the sacrifice of separation and insisted that he return to Africa without her.

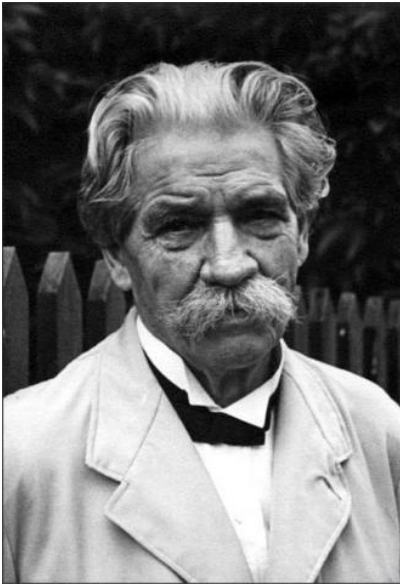
For the rest of their lives, the Schweitzers would endure long periods of time living apart.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Albert-and-Helene-Schweitzer-during-WWI-Albert-Schweitzer>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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Albert Schweitzer

Rea Berg's Blog,

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