

Charles F. Darlington Oral History Interview – 12/3/1971
Administrative Information

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Biographical Note

Darlington was the Ambassador to Gabon (1961-1965); also accredited to the Central African Republic, Chad, and Congo (Brazzaville). This interview focuses on Darlington's role as Ambassador to Gabon, meetings with President Kennedy, the African Bureau of the State Department, American Foreign Aid, and Foreign Service under the Kennedy Administration, among other issues.

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Charles F. Darlington
Charles F. Darlington

James B. Rhoads
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August 15, 1974
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Charles F. Darlington

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Oral History Interview

with

CHARLES F. DARLINGTON

December 3, 1971
Mount Kisco, New York

By William W. Moss

For the John F. Kennedy Library

MOSS: Ambassador Darlington, I'd like to begin by asking you if you can recall the meeting that you had with President Kennedy [John F. Kennedy]. It was prior to your departure for Gabon, was it not?

DARLINGTON: Yes. He very kindly received me alone in his office and chatted with me for several minutes about Gabon. He said, "You are the man who left one of the oil companies." And I said, "That's right." And I added, "I probably made a terrible mistake." And he said, "Why do you say that?" And I said, "Because now there isn't a single Democrat left in the international oil business." He laughed, and talked for a few minutes more about Gabon. Then – to my great surprise for I was listening and watching the President so intently that I hadn't noticed the room filling up in back of me with photographers – then all of a sudden he cut his words short and said, "Turn around." And there I saw seemingly dozens of people with flashlights and all, and several pictures were taken.

MOSS: All right. You had another meeting with him when you were back on leave, or did you not?

DARLINGTON: Yes, I did. I was on home leave after having been at my post for a little more than two years. It was in November of 1963, just before his assassination.

MOSS: Yes.

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DARLINGTON: He was terribly busy and it seemed for a while that he wasn't going to be able to receive me. I had nothing particular to say to him, it would have been just a courtesy call. But then he did decide to take Tom Estes [Thomas S. Estes], the current ambassador to Upper Volta, and me together. We went in and waited for a while in the anteroom. while little John John [John F. Kennedy, Jr.] played around. And then the President received the two of us. I think that Estes had somewhat more to talk to him about than I did for the President of Upper Volta, M. Yameogo [Maurice Yameogo], was thinking of a visit to the United States. Gabon had been very quiet up to that time, the troubles didn't break out until late that winter . . .

MOSS: With the exception of the soccer match fiasco at Brazzaville.

DARLINGTON: Yes. That's right. That had occurred. But still that seemed to have blown over. So I didn't have a very great deal to talk to him about. After a few minutes we got up, Tom left the room first and I followed. As the President walked over to his desk I noticed his back was hurting him; he straightened up and put his hand on his back, a gesture I know well for I've had a bad back off and on. And then, most sadly, immediately after that he took the helicopter from the White House lawn to the airport and flew to Dallas where the next day, or the day after, he was shot.

MOSS: Right. Let me move to your ambassadorship in Gabon. And let me ask you to think about your relationship with the (State) Department. I know that in the book you mentioned that you started out writing rather long cables to the Department and later found that they really weren't being appreciated or . . .

DARLINGTON: No, it was long dispatches.

MOSS: Dispatches. Excuse me.

DARLINGTON: But not cables. Our little Embassy did not have enough money in its budget for cables which had to be sent via commercial channels at regular rates.

MOSS: Not cables. And you found that they appreciated cables, brief cables, more than the long dispatches.

DARLINGTON: Right.

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MOSS: Could you elaborate on that a little more?

DARLINGTON: Well, I'm afraid that I found that out only quite a bit later. I've always been one who enjoyed writing and I've always been a little bit penurious, you know, about sending cables, trying to save money. My main experience with the State Department harked back to days when saving money was much more important. So I wrote these dispatches and later on when I came back to the Department I went down to the file room where they were and I found the initials of very few people on them. These beautiful, and I thought useful, reports had gone practically unnoticed.. Subsequently, Williams [G. Mennen Williams] told me that he never read anything except a cable and only the shortest ones of those. The volume of work in the State Department and the paper being exchanged was so great, became so great, that if you wanted to receive any attention you had to write a cable. I think Galbraith [John Kenneth Galbraith] in his book pointed that out.

MOSS: Yes. There's much talk in a great deal of our material about a philosophical and practical diplomatic, or what you will, conflict between the so-called Europeanists and the new breed in the African Bureau. Did you sense any of this from your post? Were there any things that seemed to be blocked because of the intransigence of the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) oriented people for instance?

DARLINGTON: Not particularly. I did sense that there wasn't too much knowledge of what was going on in Gabon, too much appreciation of what was going on, in the Department. I was a rather old-timer and so I didn't feel that I needed much support or guidance, and in fact very little did come through. I think that the dichotomy or conflict that you speak of was noticeable to some extent throughout all the former French colonies of Africa. The European desk in the Department was, of course, primarily interested in our relations with France and this did affect our relations with this group of countries, but I cannot say that I felt it particularly in Gabon.

MOSS: Yes. Part of the assumptions that have been made are that in aid for instance to the new African countries we no longer cleared this with the metropole countries, you know; that it was going to be a one to one, United States to the African country arrangement.

DARLINGTON: Well, I was meticulous in clearing them. All of my proposals, before I put them forward to Washington, I took and talked over with the French Aid Mission

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and also with the French Ambassador. I had the most cordial relations with the Ambassador and the French aid director and I felt that we owed close consultation with them because of

the much larger burden that France was bearing. It was important for Gabon, and also for the effectiveness of our own efforts that our aid mesh with that of France.

MOSS: And if I understand from your book they were very sensitive about just what we were getting into.

DARLINGTON: They were sensitive, and I'm afraid that ultimately we got into a little bit, more than Paris wanted but that was after the mood in Paris had changed. I think we were able through good personal relations to keep things on a happy basis with the French representatives in Gabon, but we were less successful with certain French businessmen who were always suspicious of our motive, and as time went on their influence on Foccart [Jacques Foccart], in the cabinet of General de Gaulle [Charles A. de Gaulle], made Paris increasingly hesitant about, fearful of, expanding American influence in Gabon. We had of course two big positions in mining: in manganese and in iron. While we were not involved in the exploitation of Gabon's uranium, the fact that Gabon was almost the sole source of this material so important to de Gaulle's "Force de Frappe" made Gabon a particularly sensitive area in French eyes and had a bearing on French attitudes towards our interests in manganese and iron.

MOSS: Let me ask you about the whole philosophy of aid with respect to Africa and Gabon in particular. You talk of it in your book in a way as a means of leverage upon the recipient country and this, you say, would not be as effective if you put it through multi-lateral vehicles and channels. Is the purpose of aid leverage, or is it a give-away? Are we being generous, or are we being political? What is...

DARLINGTON: Well, Mr. Moss, your use of the word, leverage, which I think I did not use . . .

MOSS: I can quote you I think.

DARLINGTON: You can? Well, all right.

MOSS: Well, I believe that I can, page ninety-seven: "As a general matter give me bilateral aid; this is where the United States gets leverage."

DARLINGTON: Yes. All right. But I think that that word doesn't do justice to my point...

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MOSS: Right. Very good.

DARLINGTON: . . . because leverage implies that your first interest is to get the other nation to follow policies that you want followed, and people

immediately think of votes in the United Nations, leverage to buy votes in the United Nations. I conceived of our aid more as a means of showing to the people that the United States was aware of them, interested in them and wanted to do something for them. I thought of it more in terms of its effect on the people and on their feelings towards the United States rather than on the government and what different ministers would do, because the latter were more informed and realized that our aid was pretty small.

MOSS: Yes. Yes.

DARLINGTON: But whereas with the people, if you could show them that the United States was giving just a couple of jeeps, then they would say, "Well that's something that's being done for us. The American people are really thinking of us." To my mind that was immensely important. I'm terribly sorry that aid to these small African countries has been virtually cut out . . .

MOSS: Yes. I think that . . .

DARLINGTON: It has been terminated for a number of years now and, in fact, the whole aid program is in disarray. But I will never forget the goodwill and affection on the part of people- and I'm thinking not primarily of people in the city, in Libreville, but out in their little villages - when they saw the American ambassador come through and in person tell them, "We're giving you some drugs; we're giving you some boats; we're giving you this and that." They thought, the American people are doing something for us. The amount might have been trivial- at the highest point we only got up to 780,000- but the effect in human terms was immense.

MOSS: Let me ask you about the Williams administration, if you will, of the African Bureau. How did you feel about it as an ambassador? What did you think of the activities of Williams, of Wayne Fredericks [J. Wayne Fredericks], of Henry Tasca [Henry J. Tasca], people like that. How did they impress you?

DARLINGTON: Williams devoted an enormous amount of energy to this African assignment. While his manner contained rather more showmanship than I would have liked, yet I do think that he was able to get over, get across to the Africans this idea that I've just been elaborating to you that they mean something to the United States. Tasca and Fredericks were both excellent people

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and I think kept the whole show working in a thoroughly practical and diplomatically mature way.

MOSS: Am I correct, I think I understand from the cables that I've been reading that - what's his name? - Diamanti [Walker A. Diamanti]?

DARLINGTON: Yes.

MOSS: . . . went from Gabon back to the bureau, is that correct, during the time you were there?

DARLINGTON: He did. Yes.

MOSS: Could you say something about his activities? Was he the desk officer for Gabon when he went back?

DARLINGTON: Yes. This material becomes public, doesn't it?

MOSS: It will eventually, but you may put whatever restrictions you wish upon it. After the material is typed up I will send you a copy and send you a questionnaire asking you what restrictions you wish to place upon it. Then we will write up a legal agreement and we will be bound by whatever you say.

DARLINGTON: I see. Well, I would say that in respect to the staff that I had in Gabon, I was fortunate. I received good people from the department. Our administrative officer was excellent. My vice-consuls were good. But I wasn't too blessed in the two deputy chiefs of mission whom I had: Walker Diamanti, who was there first, and then William F. Courtney. They both had peculiarities of personality and emotion that in my mind rendered them less useful to Gabon, to me, and to the embassy than they might have been. I haven't read the personnel reports of the inspection team. You know we had an inspection team come to Gabon just at the time of the coup d'état and I think that they must have formed some rather unfavorable impressions of Courtney. I don't mention this in my book because...

MOSS: Yes. Of course.

DARLINGTON: He took a very emotional view towards a lot that was going on.

MOSS: Let me ask you as a man who has spent a great deal of time in diplomatic work and so on, what is your feeling about the foreign service, particularly at that time

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during the Kennedy administration? There are a number of people who feel that the foreign service, ever since the fifties, has really been taking some hard knocks, and in a way this continued in the Kennedy administration in a slightly different way-- the White House people saying, "Oh, the foreign service is just a bunch of old fuddy duddies, you know, they can't do anything," the ingrained bureaucracy and so on--this kind of challenge which seemed to have

really bothered some people. Your colleague, Ambassador Poullada [Leon B. Poullada], for instance, really had quite a time with this evidently. How do you feel about it?

DARLINGTON: What you say is true and I think it's gotten worse in the subsequent years. What we hear and read now is that the foreign service is even more demoralized and questions its role even more than ten years ago. I quite agree that for many years now the foreign service has suffered, you might say, from a number of developments. It was enormously expanded immediately after the Second World War, and then it was expanded very much again on the Wristonization [Henry M. Wriston] program. The result of all that is that you made the service very large compared to what it had been earlier and you brought in a lot of people without the temperament and the background and the training that is really called for. I'm afraid I'm a little bit old-fashioned in my view on this. I feel that a foreign service, a diplomatic service, is one of the places where you've got to have a good bit of elitism. You've got to try to seek out the best people, but doing it on a mass basis, which has been the case more recently, tends to weaken the whole service, and as it becomes weakened authority and power are taken away from it. The very size of the State Department, the vast amount of paper that's handled, and the size of the foreign service has militated against its effectiveness.

MOSS: Yes. Now let me ask you if there was anything particular in the way the Kennedy administration, and I use the term very loosely, treated the State Department and the foreign service. How would you characterize it, the treatment of the foreign service and the State Department under the Kennedy administration? Was there anything particular about it that comes to mind?

DARLINGTON: No. No.

MOSS: Now let me ask the question in a different way. How do you feel that the career service responded to the new team, to the Rusk [Dean Rusk]-Williams team and to the Kennedy crowd coming in?

DARLINGTON: I don't know that I saw enough of that to be able to comment on it intelligently. You see practically all

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of my time was out in the field and there I concentrated on my own problems. Partly because I knew a lot of the senior foreign service officers from earlier years, I always had the easiest of contacts. We read that Kennedy centralized more power in the White House, and that he sometimes, I guess in common with Johnson [Lyndon B. Johnson] and with Nixon [Richard M. Nixon], thought that the foreign service was slow and rather a drag. Those things I don't know myself.

MOSS: All right. Let me ask you about firsthand experience then--and this is about the meetings of chiefs of mission of the various African

countries. Do you recall how many of these meetings you had and where they took place, and some of the details about them?

DARLINGTON: There was none that I attended. There was none during my time. I think there was a meeting of chiefs of mission just before I went out...

MOSS: Yes. Yes.

DARLINGTON: . . . that is in the early part of the summer of '61...

MOSS: That's right.

DARLINGTON: . . . and I don't think that there was another for quite a long time. When Secretary Williams paid his visit to Gabon at the time of the dedication of the Peace Corps schools, I was able to invite to Libreville my colleagues from the (Republic of the) Congo, Brazzaville, the Congo, Leopoldville, the Central African Republic, and the (Republic of) Chad, the (Republic of) Cameroon. Those five ambassadors came and stayed at our house and we had several days of meetings together.

MOSS: What sort of things were you talking about? Do you recall the substance of the conversations at all?

DARLINGTON: It was mainly reporting on the part of these people-background information. I can't recall anything of great significance was accomplished except this general exchange of views.

MOSS: Were records kept of the meeting and sent . . .

DARLINGTON: No, they were not. Records were not kept of those meetings by me or by my staff. Whether someone on the Governor's staff wrote down something about them, I couldn't say, probably yes.

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MOSS: You say they were exchanges of views. Was this a substantive kind of thing where decisions would have to be made later, or was it simply an information exchanging kind of thing?

DARLINGTON: Information exchange of a background character. Everyone is pretty well informed nowadays on what's going on because such a mass of cables goes back and forth every day between each embassy and the State Department, and other neighboring posts get summaries of that material so that you aren't really ignorant, if you follow your paperwork, of anything that's going on around you.

MOSS: That brings up the interesting question: What is the use of a meeting of chiefs of mission then in a given area, in a region? Is there a regional justification for such a meeting periodically, or aperiodically?

DARLINGTON: I think it's of only relative importance. I don't think it's of very great importance. It was pleasant to have these people up; it was pleasant to have Ed Gullion [Edmund A. Gullion] there from the Congo (Leopoldville) and Barrows [Leland Barrows] from the Cameroon, and the others. We got to know each other better and that doubtless is good.

MOSS: It was Leland Barrows from the Cameroon.

DARLINGTON: Leland Barrows, right. He was a hard, forceful, good ambassador. I thought he was excellent. Blancke [Wilson W. Blancke] came from Brazzaville. From the Central African Republic it was Burns [John H. Burns], while from the Chad it was Arch Calhoun [John A. Calhoun].

MOSS: How did the whole Congo operation, the Congo-Kinshasa operation with the United Nations look to you from your vantage point, almost next door, not quite? How did it affect your operations, if at all, and what did you see was going on there at the time?

DARLINGTON: I don't think it affected my operations particularly. You see, while it was next door, so to speak, on the map, it was in fact quite remote from Gabon. The Congo's problems did not impinge on Gabon. I did have the opportunity, during the conference of the Heads of States of the African and Malagasy Union (the UAM), to bring the Foreign Minister of the Congo who visited that Conference into contact with other foreign ministers present. I gave a luncheon for him and several of the other leading foreign ministers,

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including Aubame [Jean-Hilaire Aubame] of Gabon, Emile Zinsou of Dahomey and Kane Lompolo of Niger. This evidence of support of the United States I think was helpful and contributes to the Congo being admitted at this Conference as a member of the UAM. This one incident was about the extent of my involvement in Congo affairs.

MOSS: Do you have any opinion of the role of the United States in the operation in the Congo, the strong backing up of the UN forces, even a commitment that might have gone beyond the surface commitment to the strong UN position in the Congo?

DARLINGTON: I'm sure that I supported it at the time, but as I have said it did not have much bearing upon what I was doing. Gabon was occupied with its

own problems, and the range of its interests in Africa did not extend much beyond the circle of its sister states which had been part of the French Community.

MOSS: Yes. I have two cables, well, one cable, no, I'm sorry, it's a dispatch. Again I'm getting my terms mixed up. There's one dispatch that you sent back about the Gabonese police force. I think Mansfield [William H. Mansfield III] drafted the thing, it went out under your signature.

DARLINGTON: You have been reading the dispatches, have you?

MOSS: Oh yes. Well, I haven't really read all the dispatches. I have the national security files [files of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs] . . .

DARLINGTON: I see.

MOSS: . . . of some dispatches in my care up at the Kennedy Library. So I've been reading some of the things. It's by no means a complete file on this, to be sure. But there was the one six page dispatch on the Gabonese police force. Your recommendation was that there was no real need for U.S. aid to the Gabonese police force, that they're doing quite well, thank you. And I was wondering if this was in response to a general survey of various countries by the counterinsurgency program people.

DARLINGTON: It must have been.

MOSS: Yes. This was my conclusion.

DARLINGTON: Yes. We must have received an instruction to send in our ideas on that.

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MOSS: Yes. I didn't have the outgoing, only the incoming.

DARLINGTON: We must have received that. That would not have been a topic that I would on my own initiative have reported on.

MOSS: This piece of paper I have here is a very faint Xerox copy of a Thermofax copy of a letter from President Mba [Leon Mba] addressed to Robert F. Kennedy, president of the United States. I believe this was a letter in which President Mba was talking about a need for aid for the Makamba railway. And he addressed it and put it in the regular mail instead of sending it either via you or via the Gabonese Embassy in Washington. And I just noticed that the address here at the very bottom, you can see it very faintly, is Monsieur Robert F. Kennedy, President des États-Unis d'Amérique.

DARLINGTON: Yes. Yes. I recall that letter. As a matter of fact I had a good bit to do with writing it for the president.

MOSS : Did you?

DARLINGTON: Yes.

MOSS: Will you describe the occasion and your part in it and so on?

DARLINGTON: I can no longer describe these things in detail because a good bit of time, almost ten years, has gone by and my memory has faded. But I was tremendously interested, as I said before, in aid. Now one of the great interests of Gabon at that time, economic as well as political, was the building of this railway. At that time it did seem a strong possibility. Bethlehem Steel (Corporation) was really interested in it. Later on their interest declined. We had Peter Telfair there, the Bethlehem Steel representative, a man who had been in the country a long time and who was liked by the President. He was a forceful individual. All of the ministers, particularly the :minister of economic affairs, Anguile [Andre-Gustave Anguile], talked about this thing. It was the really great development project that the Gabonese government had on its mind. The government's aim was to get support from the United States which meant not only some United States funds, but also support from the United States in the international bank. To get that support was one of the main interests of Gabon, and I made it my business to help.

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Now helping meant helping them to present their case to the United States Government, as clearly and as factually as possible, and in a way that I felt would stand the best chance of success. In connection with that I can't remember whether I suggested to the president that he write this letter; I think I did suggest that to him. In any case I had a good bit to do with drafting it. I probably drafted the whole of it, and then he signed it. It went out from his secretary in that poor way wrongly addressed and wrongly sent. She was a French woman whom I was to discover was quite spiteful towards the American position in Gabon. Many of the French resented Bethlehem Steel's 50 percent interest in Gabon's iron. You can put two and two together.

MOSS: The two copies that I have were both Thermofax copies, one is from the White House central file which is the one you have here, and the other one from the National Security file which is a typewritten copy, and after Robert F. Kennedy it has in parentheses, "SIC."

DARLINGTON: Sic?

MOSS: S-I-C. (Laughter)

DARLINGTON: Yes, yes.

MOSS: And I rather wondered whether McGeorge Bundy had sent the original over to Robert Kennedy with a sarcastic note. (Laughter) I have no idea where the original is. It might be in the State Department files.

DARLINGTON: This I had a good bit to do with as I said.

MOSS: Yes.

DARLINGTON: These people had very little idea as to how to present something to the United States. In fact, in talking about it, they would be utterly unrealistic.

MOSS : Yes.

DARLINGTON: They had little sense about how the United States government would approach a thing like this.

MOSS: Yes. I understand that President Mba wanted to visit Kennedy, very much wanted a state visit like some other African presidents had had, and that he made a push not only through you, but through the United Nations, tried through Stevenson [Adlai E. Stevenson] to get an invitation.

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DARLINGTON: I was behind a good bit of that because I urged him to go to the United States. I thought it would be an excellent thing. I thought it would strengthen his feeling towards the United States and that we would become more of a counterweight to French influence in Gabon. I think I brought the topic up first. I urged him very much to go, but I knew that a state visit would not be possible. Others, among them his French advisers, were sort of spoiling my pitch on this, saying to him, "You shouldn't go unless you've got a state visit." So the first year, the first opportunity was lost on that point.

Next year I succeeded in persuading the president--and he agreed in some meetings with me to do this- to go at the time of the opening of the General Assembly when many chiefs of state went in order to make the general statement of their country's policy. And I said, "If you do that, I think I can assure you that when you go to Washington, the president may not do as much as give you a luncheon, but you'll undoubtedly get in to see him and be able to have a brief informal meeting with him. Possibly he might even offer you a luncheon, but in any case the Secretary of State would pay his respects to you in the proper way." And President Mba was favorable to doing that and then, during that summer, just a couple of months before he would have left there were some political rumblings in various parts of the country. They did not appear to me very serious but the President and the other leaders of his

party, Bloc Democratique Gabonaise, the BDG, felt it necessary to have a general convocation of the party.

MOSS: Yes.

DARLINGTON: And he became worried and felt it would be unwise for him to leave the country. I think that he very much underestimated his own political strength. He was awfully fearful of leaving the country, unless of course he went to Paris where he could pull strings in his own interest and from where he could return in a few hours. He was a great deal stronger at home, I think, than he gave himself credit for and his opposition was not intent on putting him out at that time. I believe that he could without danger to himself have gone to the United States and it would have been a very fine thing, but he turned it down.

MOSS: I get an impression, and it's just a superficial one and subjective one I admit, that the State Department was rather cool to the idea of a visit. Is this so, or not?

DARLINGTON: I don't think I took it up with the State Department at more than the desk level, or the level of Matthew Loomer

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who was the director of the office which handled this country. I think they all were cool to the idea of a state visit of which there was not a remote possibility, but I never suggested that. I think that I did receive a favorable response from this level of the department to the course that I was proposing to President Leon Mba to take.

MOSS: Yes. They did agree.

DARLINGTON: I think I got from the Department all that I was seeking on that.

MOSS: Yes. Good. Let me just check my notes here for a moment to make sure that I've covered the points that I wanted to cover.

DARLINGTON: Sorry I didn't have my meeting with you a number of years ago. Almost ten years have gone by, you see.

MOSS: I get only a little bit of the flavor of the Williams visit for the Fourth of July celebration and so on in your book, some of it comes out in your wife's section. Could you talk a little bit about that visit? How did Williams conduct himself during the visit? What sort of things went on besides the meetings and so on?

DARLINGTON: I wish that I had kept some of those papers and kept a journal because it was a fantastic effort on the part of all of the embassy staff, including myself and my wife for we had every day of his visit scheduled in about five minute intervals, from seven o'clock in the morning on. Things he had to do, places he had to visit. And the schedule was very tight, and I had to keep him right on it. Of course we went all over the area and we saw the various Peace Corps schools. He made speeches at every one. We had speeches all written for him, of course in French.

MOSS: How was his French?

DARLINGTON: His French was all right. He has a rather particular accent, but that didn't mean too much to the Gabonese for he was such a warm and dynamic individual. And at that time we – that is, the Americans – were very much on the crest of the wave, so everyone, the Gabonese government and the Gabonese local officials were all intent on putting on the finest show for us that they could. So wherever we went we had groups of women dancing and arches of flowers over the streets and things like that, you know. Williams is an old-timer on getting tip and talking. I remember in

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one place the typist had missed out a line, but he immediately appreciated this and threw in a few words in French and got over the gap even though he hadn't read through before. He was tremendous at shaking hands, and that is something I liked and I did too. As soon as a speech was over he'd go round, round the whole assembled multitude and shake the hands of each of the women and the children and the men. Then we'd jump in the car and go off to the next place. My wife and I gave a luncheon on the day of the openings of the schools for over a hundred people. We had all of the celebrities of Libreville and the members of the government there; it was really a marvelous show. For the rest, Governor Williams was busy every minute – seeing things, calling on ministers. I kept him going all day long. And then in the evening there were parties for him.

MOSS: I understand there was the...

DARLINGTON: He was an indefatigable photographer. He took a great number of pictures. He took some pictures of me dancing at a party.

MOSS: Really.

DARLINGTON: Yes. And he had them mounted in one frame and sent over to President Kennedy. I saw it in the President's office. When I was back on home leave and after Kennedy's death I went to his secretary and asked her if I could have it and she said that I might. And I have it here in the house.

MOSS: Oh, do you? For heaven's sake. I'd like to ask you, very few

ambassadors seem to have any papers or journals – one or two will come up with one – do you have anything of this sort from the period that the library either might eventually have, or have a copy of?

DARLINGTON: No. It's to my great regret that I didn't keep a journal. And in fact it was suggested to me that I do so. Shortly after we got out to Gabon I had a letter from my neighbor Cass Canfield, saying, "Why not keep a journal?" Very foolishly I didn't appreciate at that time the tremendous experience that we were going to live through. I wasn't thinking at all in terms of a book, or of publicizing my efforts and I think my – I don't want to say this as any credit to myself – I think that my thoughts were devoted to doing the very best job I could out there and tending to every day's work, rather than thinking about how I could tell the world about what I did afterwards.

MOSS: Okay.

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DARLINGTON: I had such a tremendous amount to do because this was the first American embassy in that country. There was the organization of the staff, attending to the building and meeting all of these ministers and saying the appropriate things to them and telling them about the United States and keeping everything going in the dynamic way which I think we did.

MOSS: Yes. Very good. Thank you very much Mr. Ambassador. I don't believe I have any more to say. I have now run out of material to base further questions on and so I think I can only, at this point, say thank you very much indeed for giving us your thoughts and we certainly appreciate it.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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