

Barbara Benson, Teaching English as a Foreign Language Volunteer, Gabon, 1983-1985

A Day in the Life in Quarter Dikongo, Mouila, Gabon:

January 17, 1985: Got up at 6:30 am. Had to teach 6eme English classes today which is the equivalent of our 9th graders. After school, I cleaned up my house. Wrote a letter to a friend from Maryland ... Ekwe (a colleague who teaches with me who hails from West Africa) came over after he finished teaching classes and tried to fix my bike. It has a hole in the inner tube so the hole has to be patched. Kanga (one of my students) brought by two pineapples for me. That was sweet of him. Had a yummy lunch. Listened to music during siesta. Took a nap. Started again to read Of Human Bondage after a long time of putting it down. It is good after all. This afternoon, I went to the other side of the river and mailed letters and bought stamps at the post office. Then I went to the market to see a tailor. He is making a blouse for Lieve (another colleague who teaches with me at the CES who hails from Belgium). I plan to give her the blouse for her birthday. Then I went to my old faithful Malian store to buy onions and yogurt. Went to the home of Fassinou (another colleague who teaches with me who hails from Benin) and took a shower. Split a Regab (local Gabonese) beer with him afterwards. Talked about when to use imparfait with French. Stayed until 5 pm. and then I walked home. Get a ride with some guy as I was walking home. Sat outside for a little while watching the children collecting the peanuts that were drying in the sun. Then I went to the Hotel Lac Bleu to return an iron to Howard (the other Peace Corps volunteer in my town). Did not stay to take his aerobics class because I did not want to get dirty. Walked back home. Just after I got back, Ekwe came back over my house to fix my bike. He patched a hole but we discovered there must be another hole. So, it still has to be repaired some more. He was here until 7:30 pm. After he left, I closed my doors. Wrote a friend a letter. Read more of Human Bondage and got to bed at 9:45 pm.