

IN REPLY REFER TO

FILE NO.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

## AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE

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Lagos, Nigeria; September 4, 1943

L-294  
P1/2

Dear Mr. Campbell,

I'm not going to try to tell you in this letter about our life here and how much we are enjoying it, because Philinda writes about such things so much more interestingly than I can. I have noticed from your letters, though, that you are interested in meteorological statistics and particularly rainfall. It so happens that I have just received some fairly recent data on rainfall in Nigeria, and I thought you might ~~be~~ like to hear about it.

As you probably know, the rainfall here varies considerably in different parts of the country. The coastal areas are very adequately watered, while the North is rapidly falling under the deadly spell of the Sahara. Here in Lagos the annual average, computed over a period of 37 years ending in 1934 was 72 inches, while at Kano, about 525 miles to the north-east, it amounts to only 34 inches and falls as low in some places as 24. Given the fact that practically all of this rain falls in June, July, August and September, you will realize that it gets pretty barren up there during the first five months of the year.

The rainiest place in Nigeria is on the west slope of the Cameroons mountain, near Buea. (I am trying to limit the geographical references to places you can find in Rand-McNally. The National Geographic's map of Africa is much better.) At one place, modestly described in the "Nigeria Handbook" as "one of the wettest places in the world", the annual average is 375 inches. The driest month is January, with only eight inches; during July, August and September there are over 50 inches each month; I wonder how people breathe with so much rain coming down. Actually, there are no white people living there, although I believe there is a native lighthouse keeper on the government payroll.

Although there was a severe drought in the North last year which gravely damaged the peanut crop, we have had more than average rainfall in Lagos, and I think this year is going to be ahead of last in this respect. Last year there were 81.67 inches, with June, as usual, being the wettest month with 23.39 inches. This year we had 29.73 inches in June; on one day - the 14th - 6.23 inches fell. As you know, it has to rain pretty hard and steadily to get up to six inches a day.

September 6, 1943

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Sunday has intervened since the first page was written. We went out with the Rasmussens to their beach shack at Kuramo Waters - a spit of land between the ocean and the lagoon east of the entrance to the harbor. Their shack is much more like a shack than ours at Tarquah. A portion has a rough brick floor, but most of it has no floor at all - only sand, and they have no table and only one chair, which they brought along this time specially for Philinda. I must admit that I have degenerated (or perhaps I should say "deteriorated") considerably since I was a Boy Scout in Newark, Ohio, for I find that my lunch doesn't digest well when I am sitting in a hunched up position on the floor. Also, there was no way of getting away from the sand, and we soon had it all over us and in our mouths and hair. In spite of all this, we had a grand time, and Philinda got the best sun burn she has had since arriving in Africa. We both would like to get tanned up a bit so that we won't look so yellow from taking atabrine, and yesterday should be a big help in that direction. We were not burned enough to be sore, although I was excused from scrubbing Philinda's back with a stiff brush this morning.

I am hopeful that the weather will be better now for going to the beach. It has been so bad since the middle of May that we really have had little inducement to go out. Yesterday was perfect, though. Mostly there was a blue sky looking as if it had just been washed (as indeed it has), with big white cumulus clouds floating across just for variety. Once in a while there would be a black cloud, and once we had a sprinkle of rain. The weather reminded me a little of late April at home - that is, those Aprils that are rather warm but when a shower can come up in five minutes and disappear as quickly. On the other hand, there is a look of autumn in the vicinity, as the leaves of the big tree in front of the Consulate are turning bright red and falling to the ground. Those which fall inside the compound are carefully swept up by the gardener and buried in the garden in an effort to create a little humus in an otherwise completely sandy area. There is, of course, no time when the tree is really bare, for the new green leaves are already pushing out before the old ones fall.

Ordinarily we have a small rainy season in September and October. Last year this failed completely to come off; this year, though, we have been well ahead of average for August, and I hope there will be less now. I always thought that in this area the rainfall would be practically steady each year, but I find there are wide variations. Since the temperature largely depends on the amount of rain, it is never quite possible to say how the weather will be, although it is much more regular than in the United States.

Today is the seventh monthly anniversary of our wedding, and I don't think you have ever seen two happier people. I can say that definitely for myself, and I am sure for Philinda too. I know you will be happy in our happiness. With warmest regards,

*William*

I Second the motion ~ P.K.

*I Second the motion  
P.K.*