

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
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Foreign Service Spouse Series

BUTLER FRANKLIN

Interviewed by: Jewell Fenzi
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INTERVIEW

Q: This is Jewell Fenzi on Monday, December 19, 1994. I am interviewing Butler Franklin, Mrs. Lynn Winterdale Franklin, at her home, Fall Hill, in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Mrs. Franklin's husband came into the Service in 1912, when the consular corps and diplomatic corps were separate organizations.

She was married in 1925, just after the Rogers Act joined the two corps to form the modern Foreign Service, and she immediately went to Hong Kong with her husband. Her Foreign Service career spans the decades from 1925 to 1948. After her husband's death she was administrative assistant at DACOR (Retired Foreign Service Officer and DACOR member Richard Butrick, now 100, recalled that she "ran the place"; Ann Castleberry, one of Mrs. Franklin's successors, remembered her as being "responsible, intelligent, respected, admired and well liked.") In 1959 Mrs. Franklin helped with legislation to benefit Foreign Service widows.

(Recording of Franklin daughter reading Lynn Franklin's 1913 correspondence has not been transcribed. Static on tape.)

Q: I have had so much help from Butler, who gave me your memoirs, Golden Pieces, and Amelia Fry (Amelia Fry is the biographer of suffragist Alice Paul.) gave me her 1978 interview [with you] and I am going to give a copy of that to Butler. Then I went to DACOR (Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired, club for retired Foreign Service officers, their widows and wives.), to research all of the [Department of State] Biographic Registers, and [read] all of the information starting with 1912 about your husband's appointments and promotions, all the way through to 1948. There's one fascinating thing in Amelia's interview that I would love to begin with today. I know you worked for Alice Paul (Militant suffragist who founded the National Woman's Party, and organized massive demonstrations, White House pickets and hunger strikes in prison while lobbying for the 19th Amendment to give U.S. women the vote. Paul later authored the Equal Rights Amendment.). Was that right after your husband died, 1952?

FRANKLIN: I didn't get the job [at DACOR for a year]. I took another job first to get training in how to help the Foreign Service. The job was with the NAA, National Aeronautical Association. I was with them for a year, then I went over to DACOR. There I worked for John Hamlin, Consul General Hamlin, who was [executive director] for the first five years, of DACOR, a marvelous person to work for. At that time we adjoined the Metropolitan Club, on "H" Street -- a much more humble place than the present.

Q: Well, thanks to Mrs. Bacon.

FRANKLIN: Wasn't she great? (Mrs. Franklin offers the transcript of the Lynn Franklin correspondence, which her daughter Jenny has in San Antonio, Texas. Fenzi accepts.)

Q: Oh, yes. What I found in the interview with Amelia Fry was that you helped, presumably through DACOR and through Alice Paul, get a bill through Congress to benefit 20 impoverished widows (Thirty-six widows are on the original list. Their husbands died before the Foreign Service Act of 1946, making the women ineligible for Foreign Service annuities.). Tell me how that came about. Did these widows come to you, or were you aware of the problem and you took it to Alice Paul, who advised the ambassadors? How did that all happen?

FRANKLIN: Well, you know it pretty well! I'm amazed, as I think back, it could happen, but it did. I was working along at DACOR every day, driving in from here. They had a little train for a while, which I rode sometimes and was very happy with. One day it suddenly occurred to me that DACOR at 1718 H Street NW [was not that far from] Alva Belmont's (Alva (Mrs. Oliver Hazard Perry) Belmont was the principal benefactress of the National Woman's Party. In 1929 she funded the purchase of the Sewall House, 144 Constitution Ave., N.E., in Washington, D.C., for the Party's headquarters. It was renamed the Sewall-Belmont House.) beautiful house that she'd bought [for the National woman's Party] right next to the Supreme Court, practically in sight of me. I thought well, now that I'm master of all I survey here [at DACOR] I can leave for a bit and go visit her.

So I walked [over] and walked in. Alice said, "My dear, you are Mrs. Belmont's cousin -- you're her first cousin by your grandmother, and her second cousin by your grandfather. Heavens alive!" She said, "Mrs. Belmont said to me one day, 'You know, my Southern people cut me off when I divorced the Duke of Marlborough (Alva Belmont divorced William K. Vanderbilt; her daughter, Consuelo Vanderbilt, divorced the Duke of Marlborough.) and would have nothing more to do with me. I've always been so sad about it. Take me down there!" So, she said, "We got into her little car and we drove down towards Fredericksburg and arrived at a town where the original emigrants had settled. We found the tomb of the two" -- Lady Margaret Sterling, who was in line to take the Crown of Scotland, was very important to the Scottish nation and had eloped with a young doctor and come to this country settled in this town. She died there, leaving two young children. Because the Revolution had started, they refused to have anything to do with the revolutionists -- you see, Scots were scared of associating with it. These two children were very poor. A fine old Scotsman there educated them. Mrs. Belmont unearthed all these facts, knew a good deal of it already, but she said, "Now, I'm going to see that this Lady Margaret Sterling has a proper tomb." So she built a nice little chapel and it's there now in the little town between here and --

Q: Was Alice Paul in the Belmont house at the time you visited her?

FRANKLIN: After they got the vote, the National Women's Party was very definitely founded but it had no headquarters. So Mrs. Belmont went to where they were taking apart the old capitol to build the Supreme Court. The bricks were lying around, and she said, "Now, Girls" -- [chimes in background] my dear two hundred year old clock -- she was surrounded by these girls, you see, "Pick up some bricks and come with me. I'm going to buy this other lovely house," the then-Sewall house. It had been leased to the

secretary of the treasury; his name escapes me [Albert Gallatin, secretary of the treasury to presidents Jefferson and Madison] and that's what we called the house at first for a long time.

She said, "Now, in the garden put these bricks around where I can have my tea table, and now we have something historic from the old original capitol." And they're there. You've been to Belmont House?

Q: Well, I haven't, and I was going to go over there last week. I called but they said, "We're renovating, don't come now." So, you went to Alice Paul and said, "I have" these -- they must have been friends, women you knew, 20 of them-

FRANKLIN: Yes, when I walked in she said, "Oh, my dear, I'm so glad to see you!" (she laughs) I said, "Can I help you?" "Good heavens," she said, "can you help me? Come right here." So I was very close to her from then on and would go over there every day after my work with the Foreign Service (Mrs. Franklin did volunteer administrative work for Alice Paul, 1958-62. She seems to be confusing her initial meeting with Paul with later meetings. It is more plausible that Butler Franklin gave Alice Paul the information on the widows.). She said, "You know -- of course you have money, if you're related to Mrs. Belmont?" (laughter) I said, "I'm sorry but I have to work and my husband's died. You know, even his insurance, when the husband retires, dies with him; the Foreign Service is not flush. I do work gladly." Well, I don't think she ever paid me. I never accepted money from her because I never stayed long enough to earn it. But she knew that I didn't have money.

She said, "I know 20 other Foreign Service women in Washington who are in your position. When their husbands retired, they had to decide would they take his whole retirement pay, which was half of his regular pay, and go on, or would they divide it in half, half of it to go back into the till, and wait until he died and then they'd get it. But it would be so little, and they were educating their children. None of these 20 whom I know would take the money, and would say, "I'll work, I can do something to support myself, put it all in now and let's go on together."

Q: Do you remember who some of those women were?

FRANKLIN: Actually I don't think the list was never given to me. [The list was published in the May 1953 DACOR Bulletin.] However, she said, "Now, this is an outrage. Those women have given their lives. They promise when they marry a Foreign Service officer that they will not leave their homes to earn money."

Q: Did you do that as a Foreign Service bride?

FRANKLIN: Of course, had to stay home and take care of my children.

Q: Had you actually made a promise that you would?

FRANKLIN: Oh, yes, that was an oath.

Q: Did you sign something for the State Department?

FRANKLIN: It was understood when he proposed to me -- he said, "You will never be able to work and earn outside money. I'm sorry, and I have little enough, but I think I have enough for both of us." (laughter) We knew perfectly well [how much] it was. So, Alice Paul said, "I know these women, I'm in touch with them. Now, you are on the legislative committee" -- they'd made me a member -- "you go back, and at your next committee meeting you ask two of your lawyers who are ambassadors to come here with you. We'll have a little tea set up here in the garden, I will talk to them and we'll see what to do."

I remember the two ambassadors very well. I can't remember their names, I'd have to see the list.

Q: Now, Henry Balch wasn't an ambassador but he was consul general and he helped you in some way, because he was from Alabama. You knew him in Mexico?

FRANKLIN: He comes a bit later. Of the two who were with me, one was a well-known writer (Mrs. Franklin is probably referring to Richard Fyfe Boyce, author of "The Diplomat's Wife", and Robert Buell, chairman of DACOR's legislative committee who, according to Boyce's A History of DACOR, attended the hearing on S.1502 in July, 1959. Neither was an ambassador. Amelia Fry's 1978 interview with Mrs. Franklin is also a source for these remembrances.), and Miss Paul was delighted with him. Both of them always loved Miss Paul. She said, "Now, Gentlemen, you go and find someone who is buddy-buddy with a senator." One of these men suggested Balch at once. He said, "Balch has just retired, he's a friend of Sen. [John] Sparkman of Alabama (Senator Sparkman had already introduced a Foreign Service annuity bill, S.1287, that passed in 1956)." She said, "Good. Get him on the phone right away, ask him when he sees Mr. Sparkman have ready the bill, and this is what we'll say." And they sat down and started to compose it, and they didn't finish it until they got back to my office when we worked on it for days.

They took [sent?] it to Balch. He was vacationing in Asheville, North Carolina. "Yes," he said, "I'm going to see Sparkman very soon." And he took the bill and then called back to us: "I saw Sparkman, Sparkman said, 'Yes, I'm in favor of this, I think it's very sensible, I'll do something about it.' So we can be sure he will.

And he did. Then, before the hearing Alice Paul said to me, "My dear, I can't go, I never leave the house." She didn't. She was very elderly, and her feet... She said, "You go and tell them about Margaret Brent, the greatest woman lawyer ever in this country (Mrs. Franklin is confusing Foreign Service legislation and a hearing on the Equal Rights Amendment where, a decade later, she represented Alice Paul.). You need this bill and the legislature can do it."

Well, the hearings were held and I was notified to be there. And when I went in -- Miss

Paul wouldn't go -- I opened the door in the great building that sits on the other side, and there were the two ambassadors, the hearing was about to proceed, and the gentleman said, "Mrs. Lynn Franklin will represent Dr. Alice Paul" and the whole room stood up!

Q: How nice.

FRANKLIN: I gave my little speech about Margaret Brent as Alice had told me to do (This was not for the Foreign Service legislation.). She said, "That rings a bell with them, because Margaret Brent was a very unusual person." Sure enough, in a few weeks the bill passed and I began to get \$200 a month; now I get \$800 a month. It's increased through the years.

Q: Now, Margaret Brent was a very early feminist, but why did Alice Paul want you to mention her to the congressmen?

FRANKLIN: Because she said it's such an unusual case of a competent woman being governor of Maryland so influential in Virginia politics that Virginians said if she would move to Virginia they would give her 4,000 acres. She did, and the first thousand was a field where I have this property now, in the valley of Fredericksburg. Margaret Brent: she was a great person.

Q: What was her era?

FRANKLIN: She was a Roman Catholic. She came to this country in 1632. When Queen Elizabeth died, Roman Catholics were in a bad way, you know, and her father lost everything and sent his children over. Margaret was his oldest daughter and he'd trained her. Sir Richard Brent, he was well-known in England, and sent his -- the brother was no good and they gave the brother all of Kent Island right down the side of Maryland, and they wouldn't give Margaret more than 70 acres. She said, "But I brought 22 people, I need 1,000 acres." "Oh, no," they said, "you two girls (?), 70 is enough for your house." That was Lord Baltimore, you know." But all this, you see. From the beginning we had no standing. But in spite of that, she did so well, and saved Maryland -- we'd have lost it to the nation, it would have gone off as a separate island or something would have happened to it if it hadn't been for Margaret.

Q: And getting back to the hearings, who was Mr. Hayes (Wayne L. Hayes, (R.-Ohio), Chairman, Subcommittee on State Department Organization and Foreign Operations)? A congressman who opposed this? Because, let's see, you say Senator Sparkman proposed the bill, and after a while in spite of terrible opposition by Mr. Hayes, -- "the one person I can't stand," you say (laughing) "and a few others, we lobbied all the time." Now who was Mr. Hayes -- a congressman, a senator? This will all be in the Library of Congress somewhere, I can look that up. So, you got your pension, and you're still getting --

FRANKLIN: Wonderful, it's made all the difference.

Q: I'd like to skip around a bit, if we may, let's go back in time. I found, also in a State Department Register the biographic information on Margaret Hanna. You seem to have known her.

FRANKLIN: Ahhhh, my mother-in-law's best friend.

Q: Really! Well, she was appointed "confidential clerk to the chief of the Bureau of Indexes and Archives, Department of State, at \$900 a year, in November 16, 1895." She must have been one of the first women at the State Department in any official capacity.

FRANKLIN: Very unusual. I remember her very well. Of course, much older. But my husband adored her, she was like a sister. That was a help.

Q: How long did she stay in the Department? The last thing I have here is, "On February 28, 1923, she was detailed as a special assistant and designated also as special disbursing officer of the Department of State to the Delegation of the United States to the Fifth International Conference of American States held at Santiago, Chile in March of 1923." That was very early. I don't think she ever became a Foreign Service Officer, because by that time she was at the end of her career. But that's about the time that the first woman Foreign Service Officer, Lucille Atcherson, came into the Department.

FRANKLIN: That's right.

Q: So I'm interested in all of this early feminism, because you certainly were a part of that -- as much as (laughing) a mother of four children could be. But I found that very interesting, that Margaret Hanna had played a part in your life, too.

FRANKLIN: She didn't speak for that bill. She left something that was of importance. I don't know, dear, I wish I did, I wish I kept track --

Q: Anyway we know that she was there. I have a friend whose great-grandfather was Mark Hanna and I'm trying to get her to take an interest in Margaret Hanna and find out more about her. She's just tangential to what we're talking about today. But now, if I may, I'll go right back to 1925. I think it's absolutely extraordinary that you as a young bride from this bucolic, tranquil Virginia countryside plunged immediately into the Foreign Service, went off to Hankow, Hong Kong, Sautillo, Chefoo, Amoy, and Barcelona, and there were uprisings and political turbulence everywhere. And in the midst of all that you had four children.

FRANKLIN: Oh, because the Foreign Service took such good care of me.

Q: They did?

FRANKLIN: Oh, absolutely, you were sacred. We lived magic lives, but we were poor.

Q: In China you weren't really poor. Those salaries must have seemed like a king's ransom in China in those days.

FRANKLIN: No, we never had enough --

Q: You never had enough even then? (laughter)

FRANKLIN: Not really, because they expected so much of us. And we moved in such high circles we were supposed to do our part and give tea parties and parties and things back, and we never did.

Q: Well, we were never able to do it on the scale that the local people did.

FRANKLIN: No, but we didn't worry.

Q: No, you were just imaginative and did the best you could with what you had, right? Even in those days.

FRANKLIN: That's right.

Q: Even in those days. Because although though you had Fall Hill, you had no personal income.

FRANKLIN: No. My parents needed it, it was a farm and they were dependent on it for their living. We paid the taxes and the fire insurance ourselves every year till -- now I'm still doing it.

Q: May I ask why a generation was skipped -- why Fall Hill was given to you instead of to your mother?

FRANKLIN: Well, it was given to Mother until I was 30. I was 25 when we married and didn't have it yet.

Q: So when you were 30 it automatically came to you.

FRANKLIN: Yes.

Q: So Fall Hill supported your parents while the Foreign Service supported you, in a manner of speaking, is that it?

FRANKLIN: That's right.

Q: And you really received no income from here to augment your husband's-

FRANKLIN: No, it was the other way around. He was helping them.

Q: He was helping keep Fall Hill. And now we'll talk about that for a little while, if we could, then we'll go on to the Foreign Service. Fall Hill went out of the family at one point, and then Mrs. Hearst (Mrs. William Randolph Hearst.) -- how did that come about -- how was it sold out of the family?

FRANKLIN: After the Civil War all the boys had been fighting -- we were dyed-in-the-wool Confederates, you know, and one brother inherited it, finally. He'd gone to California with my grandfather and they had splendid jobs. His wife wanted to go back there, didn't want to stay and live in Fall Hill. So they decided to sell it. They sold it to a very fine engineer, Mr. Smith, whose brother, was pastor of the Episcopal church, which gave them status. They had it for 15 years. It was a horse farm and very productive; it was nice.

And then his daughter was killed by one of the horses and he decided to sell it, so he sold it to Judge Hillyer, whose original home in Washington was what is now the Sulgrave Club.

Q: Oh, yes. And Hillyer Place is very close by.

FRANKLIN: He was very well off and he established a very good orchard, and he had a golf course, and the house was beautifully fixed up. He did a good deal of repairing -- he put on a kitchen and did all sorts of -- well, that was Judge Hillyer. And Mrs. Hillyer was very artistic. They had it, and this young brother of my grandfather's had inherited it and his wife couldn't stand to live in Virginia, they must go back to California. So they sold it to Smith, who sold it to Hillyer. So Hillyer had it, then he died and Mrs. Hillyer decided -- her son was blind and she couldn't handle, it was too much, decided to sell it. So my grandfather had worked for 15 years for the Hearsts-- he was ranch manager for all their property including a million acres in Mexico, where he got blackwater fever and nearly died, but he survived.

[Mrs. Hearst] was devoted to him. I spent half of my childhood with the Hearsts in California at Piedras Blancas [San Simeon], that lovely old place -- it's now the museum, you know. His wife died in 1903 and he decided to come home when he heard that the Hillyers were going to sell it. Mrs. Hearst asked him, "Captain Taylor, what are you going to do now?" He said, "I'm going back to buy my old home, which is for sale again." She said, "I'll buy it for you." She went to her desk and wrote a check for \$25,000. "Here it is!" she said.

So he came back and bought it and moved in. But he wasn't well. He made his will and left it to my mother until I was 30 and then to me. He had three daughters...

Q: He must have thought you were very capable.

FRANKLIN: Oh, some, just a precocious child, I probably wasn't even precocious, really;

a very ordinary child. But I was named for my grandmother, and I adored her and she adored me, it was a very lovely relationship, I think of her a great deal. He moved in and died in two years. In his will he said Fall Hill should descend to whoever is named Butler-

Q: And that was you.

FRANKLIN: --in memory of my wife. So I have left it to my oldest son.

Q: So then here you were, as a lovely young Southern belle, and Lynn Franklin came calling. In 1924?

FRANKLIN: Well, that was due to the Service. Mother was a great favorite around because she was bright, and knowing she would inherit this [Fall Hill] eventually. She was friends with people down the river who were very well off, they came from Nebraska with a lot of money. They went traveling, and one day the phone rang, and they said, Mr. Berger, the richest said, "Bessie, we've had the most wonderful experience. My friends and I came up through Central America, went to El Salvador for the night to get our boat home, and the consul there was acting ambassador (The U.S. mission in El Salvador was a legation until it became an embassy in 1943. Lynn Franklin is not officially listed as chargé d'affaires ad interim, but as consul could have been the ranking official at post during the period 28 April 1921 when Minister Peter Augustus Jay left post and 12 July 1921 when Montgomery Schuyler presented his credentials.); his name was Lynn Franklin and he was so charming and so good to us that the populace gave us an enormous party for him. These Salvadoran people can be very, very nice and when we went to leave the next day, they'd hidden all our luggage so we couldn't leave, we had to have another party. (laughter) So I've invited that young man to come and see me when he has a vacation, which should be pretty soon." This was in '23. "Would you like to meet him?" My mother said, "Oh do, bring him here." She had a little simple lunch. My first cousin, Brooke, a little older than I, was here from England with me, and we two girls put on the lunch, cooked and served it, were very modest and shy at this charming young man, and he was the young man who loved the place and he loved -- Mother played the guitar and she sang.

Q: So you two girls put on the lunch, cooked it yourself.

FRANKLIN: He said I have just been transferred to Hong Kong because I got into a little trouble here in El Salvador. After one of these parties I had to take one of the very big bigwig's daughter home late at night and my car broke down, and I had to walk a while to get help. And when I got there at dawn, the parents announced, "You have been alone with our daughter all night. You have to marry her." And they put in a plea to the Department of State that [that was one of their] strongest laws, and the Department said, "Thank you, but we will transfer him at once to Hong Kong," which they did. For which he was very thankful, but they realized that he had had enough of South America. He had had all of those little countries, including Peru. You see the reason why, he was a Quaker,

and when World War I broke out his mother just begged him not to join. But these young consuls were joining up and down the coast (Central and South America), getting to Europe and the fun, as they thought, poor things, in France and all the rest of it, and leaving all the work to Lynn. So he worked himself to death those first years, much more responsibility than he should have had. That was why he was so promoted, and when he got to El Salvador he was really in the position of an ambassador, because they needed one. While they felt they wanted him to develop and have European [other?] experience, that is why they sent him to Hong Kong. So it [Lynn's future] looked very bright.

But my aunt was investigating carefully. She said now there is something wrong. She said he was asked to build the new [chancery] in El Salvador, and he was sent money, I think it was about \$5,000.00 in gold...

Q: Which was an enormous amount of money in those days.

FRANKLIN: That was a lot, but it built the building. And he had \$2,000.00 left over, which he put back in the [diplomatic] pouch and sent back to the Department of State. Six months went by and they said. "We want you to know that we are holding that money against you." Lynn said "I didn't steal it. My clerk saw me put it in, he saw me close the pouch, and has written me an affidavit. The clerk testified that he knows it was properly sealed when it went abroad, on the boat home. And I never will say that I [took the money]. I'll leave the Service first, if I have to." So my aunt discovered this, and she said, "Butler, you can't marry that man. He's got something against him." "Well, that's too bad." "But I just didn't steal it, that's all." Well, was it two years later, they found a boy Lynn had taught Sunday school to in Washington had been a clerk in the mail room at the Department of State and had stolen it. And [Lynn] was completely exonerated. Did you find that in your record? It's somewhere there.

Q: Yes, part of that story is in Golden Pieces. And then you mentioned that there was some action to vindicate him.

FRANKLIN: Now verge a little into the super natural. We could see from here the whole town and we could see the fair grounds going up right in front of us down there, and the gypsies had fortune telling going on. So Brooke said--she was my age, we were 25 [BF said earlier that her cousin Brooke was older]--"Let's go down and see what she says." This wonderful old crone was at her tent. "Good gracious! I see a strange man, he's a professional of some kind, but I don't know what kind of profession it is." But she said, "He is going to ask you to marry him. I see lots of water." And she said, "You must do it, my dear. You must do it." That was all. So I walked out of the tent and Brooke said, "Oh, how exciting." and went in and came out saying, "She didn't tell me a thing." I said, "Well, let me give her another fifty cents." "I've told you enough," she said. "There's your life. I can't do any more. Goodbye."

Well, we got to Hong Kong, married. When my little son was on the way I couldn't play golf. I was sitting in the golf house and Lynn came in--the horrible thing of the gold in El

Salvador was still hanging over him and he couldn't get promoted--and he said. "You know, my dear, I heard my mother's voice out on the golf course. It said, 'What good can come to thee unless thou leavest?'" He said, "I do believe I am going to be exonerated." And that night some gypsies came into his office and said, "We have come to you because we are supposed to leave for Argentina where we belong and we have bet enormously on the races here, and we know we are going to win. But if we leave now, on the boat, we won't be able to collect a cent. Would you have the British authorities keep us here until the races are over?" So Dad said, "OK," speaking Spanish with them. And they came in two days later and said, "We did win, now give me your hand. Oh," she said, "great good is coming to you and you mustn't (unintelligible) it. And here's a cross of rough gold." (unintelligible) and gave it to him. And off she went. And when we got home that holiday he heard that they [the Department] had discovered the theft. Clearly done. So his promotions went on.

Q: In spite of that rather inauspicious beginning, I did some research. Your husband served under ten secretaries of state, and under 7 presidents--Taft, Wilson, Harding, Coolidge, Hoover, Roosevelt, Truman. Now isn't that impressive?

FRANKLIN: We never voted, never went into politics, we never were, and that is such a remarkable feature. We were absolutely unpolitical. And still are.

Q: Now tell me about meeting Wallis [Warfield] Simpson (The future Duchess of Windsor, for whom Edward VIII abdicated his throne. Her first marriage was to a naval lieutenant who she divorced in 1927.) in Hong Kong. Her name wasn't Wallis Simpson then, it was Spencer. Her husband was a river boat pilot or something, and she wouldn't go with him, to the little hotels that he stayed in...

FRANKLIN: -when we were married. He had \$300.00 and we left here after the wedding. He said, "Now, I've got \$300.00 to get me to Hong Kong with you." Well, he went by to see a rich old aunt who in his past had given the great Chicago (unintelligible) and she took my hand, "My dear, how do you do" and gave me a kiss but she didn't offer the (unintelligible) -- (laughter) So we went off to the hotel. The (unintelligible) was the best hotel room in San Francisco, you know, nothing less would do, he must have taste. And there was a letter from the captain of a huge Standard Oil tanker and the Norwegian captain saying, "Dear Consul: Sorry not to find you here but glad to hear you're married and would need a trip across the Pacific. Would you be my guest? You may have my bedroom and I will sleep in the wireless room, which will be vacant. We'd all enjoy it very much; there will be no other passengers." This was a huge old tanker, the SS. Java Arrow going across. He was elated: "Oh, We've got a free ride home." It was a magic, wonderful way to travel on a honeymoon.

Q: And it shows you, also, the stature that our Foreign Service people had in those days, too.

FRANKLIN: Unquestioning. It's there now, and it's a valuable asset to our government,

and it must not be underestimated.

Q: Absolutely. And then Mrs. Robert Low Bacon, Virginia Bacon, came to Hong Kong while you were there.

FRANKLIN: Well, you know that story about the little suit?

Q: Yes.

FRANKLIN: And they've still got it. They still show it-

Q: Oh do they? It's at DACOR-Bacon House?

FRANKLIN: The other day we went there for dinner. My daughter Jenny, the oldest, joined, a life membership. She's rich, married a rich man. They told her, "We've got the little suit up in the attic." While we were still living in the hotel in Hong Kong, before the baby was born, Lynn said, "[Congressman Robert Low Bacon (R.-NY)] and Mrs. Bacon [are] coming, and he is such a benefactor. It's through him that we have diplomatic immunity. He got it by law. We didn't have it before then (This is incorrect, however, Congressman Bacon may have introduced legislation to benefit the Foreign Service. Mrs. Bacon did become a Foreign Service benefactor. In 1985 the Bacon House Foundation, created by her in 1975 as an educational institution, was merged with DACOR's Education and Welfare Foundation to form DACOR Bacon House Foundation. These paragraphs are of interest for noting the demands placed upon Foreign Service officers and their spouses by congressional visitors.). It was Bacon, Bacon did that for them. And he said, "That is such a joy. You know we travel like kings and queens." And he said, "I'll do anything for these people." And she has let it be known she wants to shop. "Would you go with her?" I said, "Of course." So I was down there at the office with a little suit on that my very rich cousin in Richmond had given me, she'd had it made in Paris, nice little suit. And Mrs. Bacon looked at it. "Oh, my dear, do go with me to shop. Could I have a suit made just like that?" I said, "Of course, it would be wonderful." So Dad put us in the luxury chairs with the boys, you know-

Q: Sedan chairs were they called?

FRANKLIN: Two boys carrying a chair for each of us, to the silk shop with instructions to tell the silk merchant that Mrs. Bacon must be given anything she wanted. She chose a very beautiful purple silk. They took my measurements too and said, "We'll have it ready tomorrow when the boat sails." And we went down the next morning to see them off, and sure enough, the little box arrived. Forty dollars, or something like that. Sixty years later I went to a meeting in Washington with my very up-in-the-world sister-in-law, whose father had just died -- anyhow, we went to the Bacon House to hear a lecture on China, and at the top of the steps as we arrived, she saw me. "Mrs. Franklin, I'm wearing the suit!"

Q: Isn't that extraordinary -- that she was still the same size I think is so wonderful.

FRANKLIN: So then they all sat in her wonderful living room there, now given to us [DACOR], and she went sound asleep. (laughter)

Q: Tell me about the sedan chairs. Did you have curtains? Were you covered in?

FRANKLIN: They kept them open --

Q: So you could see where --

FRANKLIN: We didn't travel closed in because that was for the brides and the people that can't be shown. Oh no, they were proud to show us. Two for each of us, it took four men to get us through. The men all had bicycle bells that they rang constantly and called out, "Great ladies coming, great ladies coming! Mind!" It was great fun.

Q: And at that time you were about 25 or so years old?

FRANKLIN: That was just after we were married.

Q: To be a great lady and be whisked around in a sedan chair. But I think you handled this with great aplomb, to go over to a foreign culture like China.

FRANKLIN: The Chinese loved us. They had the keen sense of the importance of diplomatic promotions, oh, yes, no country ever received us with such knowledgeable interest as China. We loved it, we would have gone back to China any time.

Q: And you did. In 1930 you went back to Chefoo.

FRANKLIN: Yes, we had Chefoo for quite a while. We had Amoy, we ended up in Amoy, we were there three years. And my little daughter, the one who spoke that tape [reading Lynn Franklin's early letters] learned the Chefoo dialect, and that is the dialect Singapore has. So she can jabber away with the Singapore people, and they just love it. Now she is 60 years old.

Q: And then it was in Chefoo that you met Roy Chapman Andrews. Now that must have been an experience.

FRANKLIN: I'll never forget that. How charming [he was] and telling us about the great philosopher, what was his name. Roman Catholic, who dug up the oldest relic of civilization in China, other than Mr. Black who was head of the museum while we were there. (pause) It does come to me if I wait a minute.

Q: Well, it was a long time ago.

FRANKLIN: But the thing you asked me about first was Wally Simpson. She followed us

along through the years. We never saw the last of her. And we arrived [in China] on that tanker on our honeymoon two weeks via Japan and a storm came up and I couldn't step ashore so they put me in a breeches buoy and hauled me up and over down onto the wharf, and all my clothes and everything else.

The embassy [in Peking?] was vacant, the ambassador was not due until the next day when we arrived, but they said they had instructions to give us a lunch. Oh, lovely. I opened my trunk and got out my best doo-dads and dressed up, and we arrived at the home of the officer in charge, and another little rickshaw pulled up behind us, and out got this very charming looking obviously American girl. And very simply dressed, just a little shirtwaist and skirt, and holding a lovely piece of silk, and she sort of waved up at my husband. And he said, "Oh, how do you do, Mrs. Spencer." And we were ushered in, of course, and had a wonderful lunch. There were eight or nine officers there, and all making quite a little fuss over us, nothing tremendous you know. And then Wallis took me aside and she said, "Now look here, this man has this gold fish pond in his patio." And he follows us, the host, and she says, "You see when you feel blue, you will be depressed, and there is a blue gold fish. And then you'll feel better, and there is a red gold fish. And then there is a white gold fish, and that's your country." Little things like that she did all the time. Kept them all laughing.

And she had been taught to drive a car by one of the officers and had bumped into a wall with it and busted it or something. I think (pause) well, I don't know...nevertheless, Lynn took me aside that night and he said, "Dear, I don't want you to have anything to do with that woman." Her husband was in charge of the Patango, which is a little steamboat that we captured in the Spanish American War, and it was so damaged that it could never be repaired [for sea travel?], so it was put on to the river between here and Canton, to go up and down forever, and her husband is the captain. And the poor fellow came in to see [Lynn], and said, "I couldn't bring Wally here to stay in these dreadful little hotels. They love her in Peking, she's fun and she's doing the embassy good, so I won't ask her to come back." And then he would cry and get drunk. Said, "It was the most pathetic thing he ever heard of. No influence for you my dear." Well, I didn't have to worry because I never would have seen her again anyhow, except when we got to Canada.

A car pulled up at his office and a chauffeur came up and said, "Consul, we have Mrs. Simpson in the car. And if we get her out of the car to come up to you--she needs papers--she'll be mobbed." He said, "I know. I don't want to have that happen. I'll go with you." So he packed up his seal [the Great Seal] and went down and did the business in her car. And that was so unusual. I knew that a year before when we were in Sweden, the man who invented Electrolux...(telephone rings)

Q: The one thing I was hoping we could put on tape is your experience with the architect in Curaçao when you thought you were going to get to help with the plans for the new residence because of your experience.

FRANKLIN: I was so hopeful, because I loved the idea of guests, and we never had a

guest room that was very presentable. I was storing up little tips for him, and he arrived, and I had a good lunch for him, and he said, "Now Mrs. Franklin, that will be all. I don't have a single woman in my office advising me in any way. No thank you, I need no"--quite frank with it. And he was a big shock. I didn't remember his name. I should have.

Q: Do you think he was from FBO [Foreign Building Operations] in Washington?

FRANKLIN: I know he was. He was one of the biggest, because this was a big thing for the Dutch government to do. It cost them a lot of money.

Q: Of course it was. And your husband was consul general and it was a house you were going to live in, and entertain in, and yet after you fed him lunch very nicely, he said thank you very much, and that was it.

FRANKLIN: "No advice at all. I have no women on my staff."

Q: I think that is a very interesting story since the ambassador's wife in Azerbaijan, in Baku, is having exactly the same problem almost fifty years later. No one is taking her advice at all about how the residence should be built and developed.

FRANKLIN: Dreadful, yes. She has to pay for it just as much as anyone else.

Q: Of course.

FRANKLIN: You remember Curaçao, the way that hill goes up and overlooks the landing part where the ships stop?

Q: Yes.

FRANKLIN: And then our new offices way up at the top. Well, I was up there in Lynn's car watching [the FBO man], and he was looking at the terrain and talking about Dad and how they would get together, and that's when he said that to me.

Q: Oh, you were up at the site where Roosevelt House [official residence] and the consulate were built, and he said that to you right there.

FRANKLIN: I'll never forget it, on the site, before they started to build, when they were planning, which was the time. "No advice from you."

Q: So you did not give him any more advice?

FRANKLIN: Oh, not a word. I wouldn't have for anything on earth. That was our discipline. That would have been impolite. I wouldn't have thought of saying a word. And your present official [spouse] isn't saying a word either, I bet.

Q: Well, the way she vented her frustration was to write a letter home. (telephone rings) I think since we are sitting here in the little back sitting area, and we have just been looking at Spanish Civil War recruitment posters, with women, implying very strongly that women are needed for the militia, we'll talk about your evacuation from Barcelona, on the SS Exeter. I found that was on July 25, 1936. And you had your mother and three children...

FRANKLIN: And a new baby born in Marseille, five, six days later in the Clinique Buchard where all the prominent foreign babies are born in Marseille. Very auspicious, good birth. Lovely.

Q: And when the baby was born, you heard that your husband had been killed in Barcelona.

FRANKLIN: Two nights, well one night later. They regretted having to get me up out of bed to hear his voice, but I was there.

GUIDO FENZI: I think it was the other way around. He knew the story was going to be in the paper the next morning, and he called before his wife saw it.

FRANKLIN: It had already been in the paper. "Don't pay any attention to that," he said, "I'm not killed."

Q: So you never really thought that he had been killed. But what a shock it would have been had you read it in the paper without him calling you. How long were you separated from him?

FRANKLIN: It was nearly a year. We had put our son in a little boarding school in Majorca run by an American, a wonderful man with children. He went to Italy to reopen, and Mussolini, said, "No you're not a Catholic. I won't have you." And this [Fall Hill] was vacant, and so Peter Ray Ogden, to him keep going, we said go right on to American and go into Fall Hill. My brother doesn't need it. My brother had been promoted, and gone to live in Philadelphia. And Peter Ray did that, and he established the International School here, three years and they had prominent people. Woodrow Wilson's secretary came and taught English. The man who had the Mendel museum--the monk that discovered how hybrid corn is developed--he came with his instruments and taught here and put his boys over in Mary Washington College, they cooperated. It made a very nice school, and it ran here for three years, and then we came home, we had to live here.

Q: He had the school right here in Fall Hill?

FRANKLIN: Yes, I turned the whole house over to him, furniture and everything. And they were very nice about it. They didn't hurt a thing. And the stock, we had the little farm going, and the horse and the cow, and the chickens and everything. Lovely boys. They

had about 30 children.

Q: And he had been headmaster at the school in Majorca where Butler went while...

FRANKLIN: Where Mrs. Simpson, the Duchess of Windsor's nephews were enrolled. Because I went over there to see my little boy, and their mother was there, and she was fussing about the Duchess. Said that she is dragging the name of our family in the mud. She was furious. Even so, we think she is smart.

Q: Before we went to lunch we were talking about the Duchess coming to the consulate in Fort Erie, or was it in Niagara Falls, and you said she couldn't get out of the car because she would have been mobbed. What was she coming to the American consulate for?

FRANKLIN: She wanted to go to the United States. She couldn't travel any further without it [proper document].

Q: She no longer had her U.S. citizenship.

FRANKLIN: No. And Lynn said, "I have refused this to the man who invented the Electrolux. He came to me three years ago when I was consul in Sweden. The Swede, you know, and said, "I have invented this Electrolux and I am going to the United States with it." The chauffeur said, "He won't get out of his car and come up to your office." And my husband said, "I'm sorry, I cannot do that. I cannot transfer my instruments [seal] out of the office. And [the Swede] was so furious that he said, "Then I'll go to Argentina and start it, and he did." We didn't care, because in six months he had come from Argentina and was establishing very well in the United States. That was Electrolux. I loved to tell this to my Electrolux people. For the Duchess, it was just the opposite. He could have refused, because he had refused (the inventor of Electrolux, name unintelligible) when it would have been to the commercial advantage to the United States. But he wouldn't give up his prerogative as a consul, and move his stamps and things down to a car just for that. But for the honor of a Duchess and the pride of a woman, he would. He didn't want trouble with the mobs.

Q: That was nice of him to do that.

FRANKLIN: We rented a house from Lady, oh the name of the famous, woman in Canada...Oakes. Her gorgeous mansion. The government did rent the best house they could find for us. Because we had so many children. They never refused when Lynn asked them, saying, I need that. The government usually let us have it, so we had the best house in Niagara Falls. And now all of this was so important, and now I have forgotten it. We were living there, and the railroad went right through the yard at the back. Lady Oakes's huge garden, and Lynn came in one morning, and he had been on the Peace Bridge. He had to be one of the signers of the Peace Bridge with Canada. And one morning they whispered something to Dad, and he said, "Dear, the train is coming through and they are going to stop in our yard. Come on, let's go up and see. So we

walked up to the tracks and it stopped, and there standing at the back was our great American/English hero, Winston Churchill. And the mayor was with him, and he said, "To introduce you, Consul, to Mr. Churchill. He is coming for the night, and he wants to see the Peace Bridge." That wouldn't have happened in the ordinary run of activities, but it did happen in the Foreign Service.

Q: Then from Niagara Falls you went to Curaçao, and then your husband retired. And then you began your career. We have already talked about the bill to give financial aid to the Foreign Service widows and we have talked about your job as executive secretary at DACOR, when it was on H Street.

FRANKLIN: I was appointed to the Legislative Committee. I was the only woman on it because Lynn's marvelous friend was secretary of state (Mrs. Franklin may be referring to Mrs. Wilbur J. Carr, whose husband had been assistant secretary of state 1924-1937. Mrs. Carr was active in DACOR's early years. Richard Fyfe Boyce, in his 1969 A History of DACOR lists the following women, along with Mrs. Franklin, as members of the Legislative Committee: Miss Faye Boyle, Mrs. Cecil N. Broy, Mrs. Carol H. Foster, Mrs. Ruth Shipley.). What was his name? He died and his wife was put on the legislative committee at DACOR because she was so bright. And then she died, and then they asked me to take her place. She had wanted me to come and live with her when her husband died, and I didn't feel that I could because I needed to get home here at night, and I said, "No."

Q: What was DACOR doing in those days? What kind of activities the club involved in in those days?

FRANKLIN: Well, for the first time those old fellows would come in and say you know, "We've known for years that the moment of retirement would come, and we rather dreaded it. We simply [go] into the Department of State and [get] a handshake. But now we come here and find that it is an event, and it means something to you all, it adds another (unintelligible) to your list, and you appreciate what we did, we are very grateful." We had wonderful letters like that.

Q: So they really appreciated having DACOR as a acknowledgment, in a way, of their Foreign Service career.

FRANKLIN: They still do. But in the beginning it was particularly appreciated, I don't know why.

GUIDO FENZI: Because it had not been there before.

FRANKLIN: That's it. It was new.

GUIDO FENZI: I'm sure some of the retirees felt very neglected and forgotten. As you say, they got their handshake at the Department, and then it was sort of goodbye. And

DACOR certainly does fill a very important role, and a lot of the people who belong to the club clearly enjoy it very much. We are members, and we don't go too often, but we do go down.

Q: It's lovely now. Have you been up to see the place since it has been totally redone after Mrs. Bacon gave it to them.

FRANKLIN: When Jenny became a member she took me up and we had lunch. It was Thursday, when there are no women, just the old fellows get together. [But they said] "Oh, this is different. Come, Mrs. Franklin, and sit there." Oh, I was so pleased. That was a great victory. They were very sweet to me. I contribute so little, you know, my memory is so awful.

Q: When you were on the Legislative Committee, did...you know, DACOR really discriminates a little bit against women, like asking a women to be a full paying member, yet not letting us come to lunch every day of the week. I object to that a little bit.

FRANKLIN: Oh, it's foolish. It's very foolish. But you can't change so quickly. I don't know what will ever make a change.

Q: Women. Activism on the part of women. The women members themselves.

FRANKLIN: That's a point. And that's when you are willing to do the work. That is very hard work for her. You realize, harder for her than it would be for you maybe.

Q: I believe so. I believe there is some built in discrimination.

...I believe it's too late today, because Guido does want to get home...

(Tape recorder turned off, then on again, for conversation about Fall Hill furnishings that in unclear.)

FRANKLIN: ...in Barcelona, they did not promote Lynn at all, but they promoted the boy [in Madrid]

Q: Oh, Eric Wendelin!

FRANKLIN: He was very minor, yet he got a tremendous promotion. So we knew very well the man, the dear Southerner who was our ambassador at that time [Ambassador Alexander W. Weddell, 1939-42, was from Virginia]. We had been to see him in Madrid, we knew him very well. My people knew him. So I sat down and wrote to him, and I said does it seem to you fair--and I described what had happened. He turned around and [recommended] Lynn not only for a promotion, but [for] Sweden which is where he wanted to go, oh, a nice promotion, and ironed out the whole thing. It was so lovely.

Q: Well, you know Eric Wendelin was famous throughout the Foreign Service, because when the war broke out in July all of the upper ranking people at the embassy were up in the mountains, where it was cool, and he was alone at the embassy. So here he was, a vice consul, and he was the embassy voice, he was reporting directly to Washington.

FRANKLIN: That's right. I remember every word of it my dear. I was right there. And then he got all the promotions, and there was my husband left out. No, no, that must not happen. I spoke up for my husband, right straight to the ambassador. I wrote a personal letter, and the ambassador answered it to me personally, "I'm so glad you wrote me."

Q: Where is that correspondence? Do you still have it?

FRANKLIN: No.

Q: What a shame. It would be lovely to have that.

GUIDO FENZI: That is another good story.

Q: It certainly is.

February 17, 1995

Jewell Fenzi's transcript of brief telephone interview with Butler T. Franklin

Butler Franklin II on Alice Paul: I remember when I first met her, Alice Paul, at the Sewall Belmont House. She was just a little woman, and had sort of a gray feeling, gray hair. She wasn't stylish or anything like that. She was simply dressed, in a way, like the pictures you see of communists in drab clothes. I found that rather odd.

She was quiet, but energetic. I got the sense when I met her that I didn't create any kind of impression on her. I was really little more than just my mother's son. As time went on and I had an chance to watch her and listen to her, I began to see her directness and purposefulness. She was very feminine about it, but she never lost her focus on what she was trying to do. She was, in my mind--and I have thought about this--the kind of woman who was a leader, a woman who represented principles and ideas.

All the opposition swirling around her, really didn't change those principles. The people around her who did the marching would look to Alice Paul, and from Alice Paul get that very firm resolve, the clear understanding of what their objectives were. You know, these kinds of things that leaders do. She was very much a leader rather than a manager or supervisor. She had a formidable memory, had no trouble remembering names. She made people feel that they were special to her. She was formidable.

The times when I did talk to her, or listen to her conversations with Mother, her focus was on the issues and the principles [of equality for women]. I could see that in her, and that's what the people who worked for her loved. It was like a constant light shining there, and that's what my mother responded to. And those who did respond to that shining light became very valuable to Alice Paul. She had an unusual leadership quality. Mother loved working for her and her ideas.

She was never trivial. She was quiet and polite, but she was always engaged, always spoke with reason. In a group, Mother would dominate the initial part of a conversation, Mother was carefully brought up. Her Southern graciousness and hospitality, and her diplomatic background, took care of the pleasantries, the niceties for Alice Paul. But if a business point had been raised, Alice Paul would speak, and everyone listened. She made quite an impression.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Spouse: Lynn Winterdale Franklin
Spouse's Position: Consul General

Spouse Entered Service: 1912
You Entered Service: 1925

Left Service: 1949
Left Service: Same

Status: Widow of Consul General

Posts: Lynn Franklin's career data from Dept. of State Biographic Register, 1948

Place/Date of Birth: Merriman, Nebraska, February 28, 1899

Maiden Name: Robinson

Parents:

Frederick Hampden Robinson, Rancher/Farmer
Bessie Forbes Taylor

Schools:

Sacred Heart and Holy Family Parktown Convent, Johannesburg, South Africa
Columbia University; 1-year course in newspaper writing
Mary Washington College, secretarial refresher course (after husband's death)

Profession: Homemaker, Clerical Typist, Estate Manager, Landlord

Date/Place of Marriage: Fall Hill, 1925

Children:

Butler Thornton Franklin, 1926 (son)
Jenny Lynn Franklin Guth, 1927
Bessie Forbes Franklin Turk, 1929
Lynn Winterdale Franklin, Jr., 1936 (deceased)

Positions held:

At Post: Volunteer - Secretarial and clerical helper to husband throughout career
In Washington, DC
1957 - Administrative Secretary, National Aeronautical Administration (now FAA) Paid
1958-62 - Office Manager, DACOR (Diplomatic and Consular Officers Retired) , Paid
1958-1962 - National Woman's Party, Assistant Manager to Alice Paul, Volunteer

Honors (Scholastic, FS)

1917 - Graduated Parktown Convent with Honors in French, with entry to University of
Cape Good Hope
1918 - Girl of the Year, Parktown Convent, Johannesburg, South Africa
1944 - Woman of the Year, Fredericksburg, Virginia

End of interview