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JANE SMILEY HART

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dhahran, Saudi Arabia	1949-1951
Bride of Parker T. Hart, first Consul General in Dhahran	
Birth of daughter	
Visit of Emir Saud Bin Jilowi	
Culture Shock Cairo vs. Saudi Arabia	
ARAMCO wives	
Living conditions in Dhahran	
Visit of Ambassador James Childs	
A western woman in a Moslem country	
Executive Secretariat under Dean Acheson	
Princess Johara and treatment of slaves	
King Faisal	
Ambassador Loy Henderson	
King Abdul Aziz	
Palestinians	
Tensions with Israel	
Teaching in the Dar al-Hanan School	
Washington, DC	1951-1955
National War College	
Editing Dick Sanger's book on Saudi Arabia	
Birth of second daughter in Mclean, Virginia	
Partnership of Foreign Service life	
Cairo, Egypt	1955-1958
Ambassador Henry Byroade	
President Nasser 1956	
Formulation of United Arab Republic	
Suez Canal Crisis	
Evacuation of women and children from Egypt to Rome	
Adjustments during separation	
Wives of Egyptian Revolutionary Command (Mrs. Sadat)	
Return to Egypt	

Ambassador Raymond Hare
Ambassador Charles W. Yost
Ambassador James C. Dunn
The Calvert system of teaching

Damascus, Syria

1958

March on the American residence
David and Peggy Nalle, USIS
Bouran Aziz of Syria
Visit to first century synagogue

Thoughts on Cairo and FS

Taxi accident
Change in perspective concerning charity work
Stub Bowles
Influence of American women abroad
Sense of service

Under Lyndon Johnson

Conference in Cyprus 1961
President and Mrs. Lyndon Johnson
Dinner at OAS building with King of Nepal
Dinner with Queen Elizabeth 1967
Start of Association of American Foreign Service Women (AAFSW)
June Byrne Spencer
Head of International Student House

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

1961-1965

Other travels
Cockroaches and locusts
New King Faisal
Princess Iffat
Wedding of Prince Bandar
Yemeni uprising
Author of chronology of history of Yemen, published in The Middle East Journal
Humorous story about presenting credentials in the Yemen
Violet Dickson
Flood of 1963

Turkey

1965-1968

The Cypress Issue
Assassination of Ambassador Rodger Davies
Visit of Cyprus Mediator, Cyrus Vance
The Turkish American Women's Cultural Society

INTERVIEW

Q: Regrettably, the interview did not record from #1 to #87 which had to do with Mrs. Hart's education and meeting with Parker Hart (Pete) in Cairo, Egypt. Jane Smiley Hart graduated from Cornell University, where she received her Bachelor of Arts Degree, and attended the School for Advanced International Studies in Washington, DC for one year. Before her marriage, she worked briefly in the Executive Secretariat of the Department of State under Dean Acheson, and she considered him the most astute Secretary of State the Department has ever had. She taught English for one year in a public school in Alfred, New York, and became Book Review Editor of the Middle East Institute Journal, with which institution she has maintained a close relationship for many years. It was as an editor for the OSS [Office of Strategic Studies] in Cairo that she met Parker Hart, both undergoing treatment for floexner and amoebic dysentery respectively in a local hospital. They were married in New York on April 23, 1949, departing for Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, two months later.

Parker T. Hart had been in the Foreign Service since 1938 and had, as a young officer, opened the first post in Dhahran. Returning with his bride in 1949, he was to be the first Consul General of the new post, which meant that from the beginning of her Foreign Service life, Jane Hart was to be a senior wife.

In Dhahran, she had one man of all work, sometimes an Ethiopian, sometimes a Goan, but had to do the cooking herself. The temperatures were very hot, but living in the oil camp she did not suffer from the same culture shock she had experienced in Cairo, Egypt. She enjoyed being part of a small group in the early days of Saudi Arabia. Their first child was born there, at which occasion Jane felt privileged to receive a call from the fierce, wall-eyed Amir Saud Bin Jiluwi, who brought his full party (or Ikhwiyyah) with him and gave their daughter the name, Madhawi, shining pearl in Arabic.

You were talking about the full party that the Amir brought with him. You were listing all the people that that entailed, that he brought with him to visit you at the time of the birth of your daughter.

HART: Yes. He came to visit. My servant was so upset. He was supposed to provide tea and juice for the group, but I had to go in and calm him down before we could have our (tea). He was alarmed by all these men with swords and, incidentally, in all colors ... some of them were black, some brown. There's never been a color bar in Saudi Arabia, and this by itself was alarming to my servant.

Q: Well, I don't understand why he (the Amir) would come to the birth of your child.

HART: He hadn't heard. He knew that I was expecting. He felt that if something had happened, condolences were due, and if a son was born, it would be a huge celebration. It was, in fact, a daughter, and I hadn't expected to notify him, because I thought I understood what they thought about daughters, but I was quite wrong. They also celebrate daughters, but it's within the family.

Q: I see.

HART: And so he was very touching and very beautiful with the little girl. And she smiled at him. It was a very nice moment, so we named her Margaret, which means “shining pearl,” Just the way “Madhawi” means.

Q: That's amazing to me in a Muslim country that ...

HART: Well, he was a fast friend.

Q: ... that a foreign woman ...

HART: We had spent our honeymoon there, you see, at his capital in Al Hofuf. We'd gone there over the desert track between oil tanks in a dust storm and gotten there, and he'd given us a room on the roof our first night under the moonlight. In the morning, we were wakened by the clanking of the men grinding coffee beans in brass pestles, and he took us to all the old 'ains (or wells), There were seven famous 'ains in Al Hofuf at that time, very colorful, and he thought it was a proper start for our marriage. And indeed it was. It was very romantic. So, naturally, he wanted to see the outcome. (laughs)

Q: That's a lovely story. But you had been in Cairo before, so I suppose you didn't really have a terrible culture shock going to Saudi Arabia. Or did you?

HART: Oh, Saudi Arabia at that time was totally different from Cairo, not an urban (area). At that time, it was tribal. Now, there's not a single tribe that doesn't have permanent land, but in those days it was the reverse. There were very few tribes that had land, so it was a very different (place). In my time in Cairo, I'd been entirely tied to the urban life there. I'd never been out much on the desert. I'm sure they have the same desert civilization further out, but they didn't have it at the time I was there. [There was not] any urban civilization in Arabia. But I don't think the culture shock bothered me.

Q: So you didn't really feel any great culture shock. You know what I mean. There are periods I've had ... at my first post ... I was almost nauseated with culture shock. I'd never been out of the United States.

HART: I think Cairo was an enormous shock to me in every way, and perhaps anything else after that was less so.

Q: That's interesting.

HART: Particularly during the War ...

Q: Yes.

HART: ... because I had been robbed on the street and I'd had a lot of very strange experiences in Cairo during the War ... which you expect ... but it had prepared me for a lot of variety in a different life entirely.

Q: Having your baby overseas, too, your first ... was that a frightening prospect or were you young and just took it in your stride?

HART: I think I was awake one whole night, just propped up in my bed, thinking, "What have I done?" And I felt, "Well, a day at a time."

Q: Yes.

HART: But the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO) wives were extremely kind to me. Many of them had young children. One was a nurse, and when I would have any problems, I'd call up Scotty, and she'd say, "Oh, that's perfectly normal. That's fine." Or Pat Singelyn would come over and help me. You always find friends somehow in the Foreign Service.

Q: But in those days, did you have an Embassy doctor or a regional doctor an American?

HART: Oh, my no. We only had seven officers at the post, and they were all bachelors, except two later on. So we had no (American doctors). We'd been put in the oldest and least accommodating housing, because we were trying to build a consulate. Unfortunate choice of sites, because it was being eclipsed by the sand about as rapidly as they built. It had been put out near the airport where the sand blew pretty badly. It was a great problem building a consulate out there, but it was finished before we left.

Q: And it's still there?

HART: Still there, and It's been revised, remodeled, many times. I understand now it's extremely pleasant, but now they moved to the ... it's been changed totally since I was there. There's nothing really that ... my husband was in a military portable at the airport, and I was in a little portable downtown which had a screened porch facing the wrong way, so that it sounded like thunder sheets all the time.

We succeeded in getting the temperature down to 94 degrees so we could sleep, but it never got below 94 degrees in the hot season. So we would stay until we got heat rash and then we'd go to Eritrea and get rid of the heat rash and then come back again. But it was even worse before -- no air-conditioning. Pete had been there at that time. So to us, it was relative, you know. -- It was an improvement over what we expected, so it was actually quite merry. We enjoyed it. We had nice friends there and we saw Arabs. We met Arabs, and that, to me, was very rewarding. I learned a lot.

Q: I'm sure.

HART: I was admitted to harems, which I don't know if they exist or not now, but this was

extremely rewarding for me.

Q: Tell me about the baby. Did she have heat rash, and did you have a hard time in the beginning with her adjustment?

HART: Oh yes, yes! We found an Italian woman who was very practical, and she helped me, because, of course, you had a water problem. The only way we could wash ... this was before portable diapers, disposable diapers ... so the wash was a problem, because the local water was so hard. You couldn't wash the diapers in it, so I had her help me lug the sixteen buckets of water we had to have from a certain tap to do the diapers. That was my big problem.

And the other problem was, of course, the right food, because in those days we didn't have as much good food as we should have had. But in the end, we were able to get on the ARAMCO list and buy frozen food through them. But we solved, you know, we solved all our problems.

Q: Did you have to boil the water?

HART: Yes, but that wasn't the main problem. The problem was the heavy ... it was very, very hard water.

Q: Did you have other domestic help?

HART: No, just one helper usually. The problem of domestic help was that they had to more or less live in a camp with Arabs or others connected with ARAMCO or else live with us in a very limited accommodation. And I do remember the worst moment that I had in Dhahran was entertaining Ambassador Rives Childs (The Honorable James Rives Childs, AE/P Saudi Arabia, 1949, AE/P Ethiopia, 1951), a rather elegant gentleman, when we only had two bedrooms, ours and the one for the baby. So the baby moved in with us, and right next door, the baby less than six months. So, you know the schedule they're on, and right next door had to be the Ambassador, and we had to feed him proper meals. It was more than a challenge.

Q: And you were the cook.

HART: I was the cook.

Q: And with local food, too. I mean, you didn't have a commissary.

HART: And Ambassador Rives Childs had no children, so we had to explain to him why certain things were necessary. All mothers understand that there had to be complete transformations going on in the bathroom every hour or so. (laughs)

HART: It was fun. He was very nice, I must say.

Q: I think Foreign Service wives in those days were pioneer women really. I think they had many experiences that were quite primitive. Can you tell me a little bit what their reactions were to you as an American woman, white woman? Did you feel any ... not prejudice, but ...

HART: Oh, great curiosity.

Q: Curiosity.

HART: And a certain amount of ... the men treated me like an honorary man, so much so that, at one point, I was even issued a Saudi driver's license, which no western woman has been issued in the current time. They felt there weren't going to be many of us there and that we were something different, I was frequently taken in with the councils with my husband for a period of time and then, during the meal, escorted into the harem, something which is not done for other Arab women. So it was a curious ... I had a curious status. But then in the harems, I was treated with great curiosity. The first time I went to Hofuf, they wanted to undress me to see what my undergarments looked like. We had rather an interesting afternoon. I found a huge variety in the harems, because the harem not only includes wives, it includes nieces and cousins and daughters and children that have been taken into the family who don't have parents. A harem is a large affair. It's a place where all the women are, and servants, the retainers. So you learned a lot in the harem. They had nice sessions, and I would always be asking what does that mean and what are you talking about and why are you laughing. And they would say the same, "What is your response to us? How do you feel about us?"

Q: It was all translated? They did not speak English, did they?

HART: At first I hobbled along, because there was just one Palestinian woman who was sort of semi-literate in English. I've never been fluent in Arabic, but at the time I was able to gather what was going on and make certain responses and, through her, when we got into a jam, she could explain what they were saying. Later on, when I went back to Saudi Arabia, I found that you could use various other languages as well as English. They had expanded the harems, as they had expanded their horizons in every way.

Q: And what other languages? French?

HART: Yes, there were Lebanese and Syrian women in the harems and Jordanian women and, of course, many Palestinians came in at the time. One of the interesting effects of the 1948 debacle in Israeli/Arab relations was that so many Palestinians went forth to earn a living elsewhere. Many of them ended up in Arabia, teaching and doing engineering projects as maintenance people. There was a large Palestinian population when we were there.

Q: So did you learn Arabic yourself?

HART: I tried very hard, but I did not do the classical. One reason I didn't was, I'm afraid, as a sort of Christian compunction about "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet," which had kind of choked me a little bit. But my husband seized the mettle and did learn the classical, and I instead worked on the colloquial. I must say, the classical would have had very limited usage for me, because I was dealing mainly with women and children, and the colloquial was much more useful anyway.

Q: I think you're so right. I remember taking Urdu at the Foreign Service Institute, and when I got to Pakistan and was using a few phrases, people were backing away from me. (laughs) They said, "Oh, what high Urdu you speak, and I felt like I was spouting Shakespearian Urdu, you know.

HART: Yes, it doesn't really get there. But for a woman, you start learning the names of the vegetables and the parts of the house and the nieces and nephews and things like that, it's much more useful.

Q: Just so it isn't, hopefully, slang or bad Arabic.

HART: Yes, you have to watch that.

Q: But it's useful to you for what you're doing in the kitchen and so forth. I see here, too, just to go back a little bit, that you had worked in the State Department's Executive Secretariat under Dean Acheson, is that right?

HART: Oh, that was very interesting, yes. Oh, it was such a thrill, because the OSS started to break up, and I was put in the Liaison Office in the State Department. From there, of course, as it ceased, I had some friends in the State Department, and they said, "Do stay on. We'll put you in a temporary job in the Executive Secretariat, and something will open up."

One day, I was asked to take up some correspondence to Dean Acheson. As I walked in, he was frayed and very overworked, as always, but dressed for the country. It was a Saturday, and he said, "Do you type? Sit down." And so, I was, from that moment on, absolutely charmed by this man, this wonderful man. When I went to Arabia afterward, I was at a party, and if you remember, there was a lot of criticism of Acheson at the time, because of the Hiss thing (the trial of Alger Hiss), and some businessman got up at a dinner party and said, "I can't decide whether Dean Acheson is the number one Communist in America or not." And before I knew it, I was on my feet, absolutely stunned, and I said, "Well, I can tell you, he is one of the greatest Secretaries of State we've ever had!" And after I'd said it, I thought, "I have no right to do this," and I sat down with absolute horror! (Laughs)

But everybody clapped. And I had a Christmas card from that man for six years ...

Q: Oh, I love that. (Laughs)

HART: ... which is a nice finish to it! But I gained such respect for him intellectually, and it was a wonderful experience, though temporary.

Q: I see. Well, I just wanted ...

HART: I'm still a friend of his wife's. She's a lovely lady. Alice Acheson.

Q: Oh, yes. His son ...

HART: Yes, and David and Pat.

Q: One thing, then, getting back to Saudi Arabia, I read somewhere that slavery was still legal until 1962. Did that ... did you notice that? Did it figure in your life?

HART: Oh, we noticed it enormously. And, to me, it was extremely interesting, because I had never understood what happened when we freed the slaves here, and I saw it firsthand in Saudi Arabia. It happened that one of my best friends was Princess Johara, and Princess Johara had a large group of slaves, being a royal lady. She was very kind to them, and they were all members of the household. When I called, they were all in the harem. They ate the same. And when there was a large party, they all had just black dresses or plain dresses, but they were always strewn with emeralds like everyone else at a big party. I suppose they were on loan.

She was told, "Today's the day we free the slaves and this is what you do. You must pay them so much and then tell them they're on their own, and if you're going to keep any, you must tell them what their wages are going to be." Well, obviously, paying wages was something that was hard for her to do. She didn't have that much cash, so she laid off most of them. She paid them a large amount, and they presumably went off. But most of them went across the street. They spent their money immediately. And then they set up kind of hovels across the street in a vacant lot and they kept coming back and saying, "But you're responsible for us. We've always been with you. You can feed us, that's all we ask." So they were coming to be employed other places, but without any specific credentials, no letters of recommendation. One never knew what they could do. And they were going to Princess Johara for food. I could see that freeing of the slaves was a very anguishing thing. Slaves with no instruction, what it meant to be free. They're not going to be free.

Q: Very comparable to our Southern slaves.

HART: Yes, it was a terrible time, really, with a lot of these people wandering around. It's a wonder it didn't cause more trouble than it did, but the reason it didn't cause more trouble was that most people were like Princess Johara. They just didn't do arbitrarily what they were told to do. They kept on feeding them and saying, "Well, maybe you can go work with my sister, and maybe my brother needs someone. I know of something ..." You know, gradually, they solved it, but it was the most terrible moment really.

Q: Is it the same today?

HART: There is no slavery, that is right, and everybody's paid, I think.

Q: But are there class distinctions that linger? Prejudice?

HART: Well, certainly when I was there, I would have said Saudi Arabia was totally classless. Perhaps the biggest thing they had was the sexual barrier, and that, too, was explained to me with

great ... Prince [later] King Faisal gave me the best explanation I've ever heard for that ... that they were down almost to extinction. The lands that they used to raise their cattle, camels and sheep on, were becoming less green every year. This meant tribal wars were becoming worse, which meant that there was a premium on having sons who could fight your battles with the other tribes for the diminishing land. The women were protected from these wars at the center of the camp in a tent, isolated, because they were the producers of sons. When the situation got so bad, there was so much sterility, so many women of infertility, so many women who couldn't bear children, that a woman who could was something like a saint. All this protection really was a custom, not Islam, but it came directly out of their ...

Q: ... practical needs.

HART: ... practical needs. And King Faisal himself said, "You know, we've got to rethink all this, but it's difficult to change customs so firmly entrenched, and particularly when the old ones say, 'Ah, yes, this system served us when we were really in desperate straits. Don't give it up. One day we may be back where we were.'"

Q: And also, we Americans tend to think it's a great put-down of women, when actually, in their minds, the women are greatly esteemed, because they are supposed to have the highest goal in life, the highest purpose in producing children.

HART: Yes, they were very much protected and taken care of when I was there. I did see only two examples of misused women. Certainly I see more than that here, so I would defend the Saudi system for them, not for us, of course, but for them at the time. It's changed drastically by now.

Q: We can get on to that when we get to your second time there. But this first time, Saudi Arabia became a charter member of the United Nations and a member of the Arab League. I understand it was a time when they were trying greatly to prevent the formation of the state of Israel. You had alluded to that a minute ago.

HART: Yes.

Q: Did that enter into your relations with the Saudis at all?

HART: I think the Saudis have always been very opposed to America's (support of Israel). It goes way, way back to when Loy Henderson came through and talked to the King of Iraq and the King of Saudi Arabia ... the old king, Abdul Aziz. And both those kings told Loy Henderson then, "Don't forget that when this freedom comes ... (this was way back) ... that we want to be in on it too. We're in a state of revolution. We want our own governments and our own independence." When this thing happened to the Palestinians, it was a blow to all the Arab states, something that is very hard for people who were not there in those days to understand, the states who had been under colonialist rule and those who had tried very hard not to be.

Saudi Arabia had never been colonialist, but they understood the desperation of their neighbors

and they felt that America had taken the wrong side and that they had prevented the Palestinian Jordanians from having their proper freedom. And I'm afraid they still think so.

Q: It's never changed.

HART: It's never changed.

Q: It's worse than ever, yes. What a shame.

HART: It's just a different point of view from their point of view.

Q: So, did Pete have many discussions at that time?

HART: I think it colored almost all our relations and there was no discussion of air bases or mutual defense or oil or anything else that didn't end with their saying, "But you really should see to it that the Jews become part of the life here and not try to dominate these states and these people. They should have their rights and they should be allowed to develop as all of us are being forced to develop. Westernization has reached us, and we have no choice. We have to give our people (the same)."

And they were very reasonable, but very heated. So a lot of time was spent in all our posts in the Middle East on this subject. They got awfully tired of hearing the Holocaust story from us and how many Americans supported the Jewish cause. They never accepted it.

Q: No. I think that's understandable. I think it still is today.

HART: It's still a very live issue.

Q: Unfortunately, the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) went terrorist.

HART: Well, the Palestinians, you see, came down into the royal household. They told their story and they told it in the first girls school that was founded there in 1960, In the Dar El Hanaan School. As a teacher, I went, and little girls were being taught about Palestinian liberation and how "It's been a great problem for us, a thorn in our side in having adequate relations."

Q: Interesting, too, that wherever the line was drawn, as in India where the British drew just a line between Pakistan and India ... and there's Cyprus now with a line drawn down the middle ... with Israel and Palestine and so forth ... it seems the problems are endless. Kashmir, for example.

HART: Yes, compromise doesn't come easily and artificial borders don't seem to answer.

Q: We come in and just arbitrarily draw these Durand lines and then problems come. Is there anything else about that first tour that you'd like to tell me about?

HART: (Laughs) I think you've drawn more out of me than I've thought of in years. So we

should go on.

Q: All right. Well, then in 1951, you came back to the United States, and Pete went to the National War College. That must have been one of the first classes. I've forgotten when the first year was, but I'll find out.

HART: Yes. It was 1952, and we had a wonderful experience. It was just the right time in our careers to get the broader view.

Q: And you lived at Fort McNair?

HART: No, no. We lived with a friend, because it was only a year and we were going out immediately afterwards. But it was a year's study for both of us.

Q: What did you do?

HART: I just went on studying about the Middle East and trying to gain. I edited some things. I edited Dick Sanger's book on Saudi Arabia. I had been an editor at the Middle East Institute, did some book reviews for them, and learned more. It's a funny thing when you go to these posts and so many experiences are coming at you, you don't have time to consolidate them. When you come home, you think about them in a different light. You start reading and figure out if what you thought you saw was what you saw. I think this is an important part of making it your own. So that year was very useful.

Q: And what did you do with your daughter? Did you have good help while you worked? Babysitters? Or did you do it all?

HART: I have mostly done it all. I have only occasionally had day help here in the United States. It happens that some of the hardest working periods of our lives have been here, but we're both workers.

Q: I call it an upstairs, downstairs life.

HART: Yes. It is an upstairs, downstairs life. You work very hard all day at the house and then five nights out a week, which I think we had ... five nights out a week for about twenty five years. And we regarded that as part of the job. I'm not sure they do now. Maybe they're right, I don't know, but there were so many strands to put together, and unless you met some of these people, you weren't going to meet them all day, you had to put those strands together somehow.

Q: I want to talk about that spouse issue a little later, definitely. I'm sure our views parallel greatly. But after the one year, is there anything about the National War College that you'd like to say?

HART: Oh, I think it's a terribly valuable thing for Foreign Service officers to understand the military viewpoint and vice versa. I believe it's one of the most valuable programs that a senior

officer can be involved in before getting an embassy ...

Q: And now, they've added ...

HART: ... for the wives, too.

Q: Oh yes, if they will participate. Now, too, they've added the foreign officers.

HART: Oh, have they? That I didn't know.

Q: Yes. There was a bit of disgruntlement among the students there, because they felt that they could not be as free in the classroom and as open with a Pakistani or an Israeli sitting there, but General Lawrence and Bruce (Laingen) both felt that what the foreigners could contribute was so much greater and worth it than these inhibitions, that they've kept it on, and it's a wonderful addition to the university, I think.

HART: It's interesting.

Q: And so, It's given the military more of a State Department view. You see, we think of it as the State Department picking up on what the military think. But this time, it gives the military a little more sophistication concerning the foreign/military side of things.

HART: Well, I think I would say about our early experiences in the Foreign Service that the State Department emphasis was upon Foreign Service officers as listeners. The United States really had not had in the Middle East a very lively foreign policy, and there was so much we had to learn.

Q: Yes.

HART: I think the listening aspect was very, very heavy.

Q: And reporting it.

HART: Reporting it.

Q: Learning how to report it back.

HART: Learning how to report it and make sure that you were reporting it accurately.

Q: Absolutely. Well then, Pete right away, after that War College year, became Director of the Office of Near East Affairs in the State Department for three years?

HART: Yes, we had a wonderful group.

Q: Right. And what kind of activities did you do? Or were you mostly ... did you have other

children in those three years?

HART: Yes. 1953 I had a second child, a little girl also. We were living in McLean, Virginia, and it was very ... at that time, a little bit longer commute than it is now. But we had a very normal family life and tried to fit all of these other things in. Mainly, in this case, just to get to know the staff, entertaining ... we took that sort of line. Of course, all the embassies wanted to know who the substantive man in the State Department was on this, so we had a good deal of wooing from the embassies. We met a lot of people whom we were going to meet again overseas at their posts.

Q: Yes, very important.

HART: And this is one of the reasons why we're so peripatetic, I think, is that we have a feeling in the Foreign Service that it's a series of concentric circles. If we fail to make connections here, when we go to post, we might not be set up to start work immediately, if you know what I mean.

Q: Yes. It takes a year to get into it, and a year to produce, and a year to really do some good, serious business.

HART: Yes.

Q: That's why I feel the eighteen-month or two-year tours are useless, frankly. You have to have that third year to really get into using what you've learned.

HART: Well, you know my husband was quite a bachelor when I married him. He was thirty-eight, and several ladies from the State Department came up to me and said, "What makes you think you're going to marry him?" And my response was just that he'd asked me.

(Laughs)

But it gave me the idea that I was indeed entering a partnership, that he was a mature man who had selected me because I might help him along. So we did talk often about how most effectively to make friends that would be useful in our work. It was very much a part of our thinking ... not ambitious ... but just how are you going to get it done, you know?

Q: So Pete is how much older?

HART: Ten years.

Q: Ten years. So is my husband. I really can't get over the parallels here.

HART: Yes, it is interesting.

Q: And I agree that the time we both came in, there was that great feeling of partnership. And I do want to talk about that later, about your Georgetown Symposium contribution. Anyway, in the United States, you're having children and living in McLean, Virginia, and doing the suburban

bit.

HART: Trying to have a normal family life.

Q: Exactly. And then, in 1955, you went off to Cairo, where you had been before and where Pete was Counselor of Embassy. So who was the Ambassador?

HART: Henry Byroade (The Honorable Henry Alfred Byroade, AE/P Egypt, 1955; AE/P South Africa, 1956; AE/P Afghanistan, 1959; AE/P Burma, 1963; AE/P Philippines, 1969; and AE/P Pakistan, 1973).

Q: And at that time, the first Mrs. Byroade, I gather.

HART: Yes.

Q: What was your housing like there?

HART: We lived in the house that is now the Ambassador's house, and the Ambassador lived in the great Badraoi Mansion down in Garden City. The life was extremely social when we went there. It was like so many countries are when they're teetering on the edge of something. This was teetering.

Q: In what sense?

HART: Well, we knew that something was going to break. Nasser had gone too far. We knew that something was going to break, but we didn't foresee exactly what it would be. That was one of the reasons we kept talking to our Australian, Canadian, British, and French friends. We sort of smelled something in the wind, and, of course, it came in the form of Suez. (In 1956, Arab refugees from Palestine made several raids from Egypt into Israel. Israeli troops invaded the Sinai Peninsula in October. Great Britain and France demanded that Egypt and Israel stop fighting and withdraw their forces ten miles from the Suez Canal. Israel agreed to do so, but Egypt refused. British and French planes then bombed Egyptian military bases and landed troops in the Suez Canal Zone in November and captured Port Said. The United Nations arranged a peace agreement, sending a ten-nation police force to the Canal to keep the peace. The last British and French troops left Egypt by December, 1956, and all Israeli forces withdrew by March, 1957.)

Q: Nasser became President in 1956, just right after you arrived?

HART: Well, he actually had power sometime before we came, but he had turned down. ... We turned down the Dam (Aswan), and he'd gone for Czech arms. There was a big, new Russian mission situated right on the Nile in the center of town. He had really embarked on a kind of neutralist adventure with the Indians, which was expensive for everyone and left the British and the French, who'd traditionally had a strong position there, extremely nervous.

We sensed that they were going to do something, particularly when Anthony Eden came. We became extremely worried, because he was rather traditionalist. And, sure enough, they allied themselves with the Israelis and invaded. Dulles, Secretary of State Dulles, ordered the wives and children to leave, because he felt, I think, that the situation in Egypt would be insecure. He remembered in previous times street riots and so on, but also, I'm afraid, he used us as a political threat.

Q: He used the wives and children as a political threat, for leverage?

HART: Yes, because we actually went out in the teeth of the War. We actually were in the harbor when the British and the French were bombing Alexandria's west airport. We saw it happen. The "boys" were up on deck looking at it, and this seemed unnecessary to me, since the entire War was over in about three or four days, that we should have been sent up like that. We felt that we were in a way being used politically. Whether this is true or not, I really just don't know, but I think that women and children who are hearing all this "aak aak," and the children are screaming and are down underneath, you know, you're bound to have some negative thoughts about why you were sent into the teeth of this, when you could have stayed in your basement in Cairo quite peacefully while it all went over in a couple of blackout nights. You would never have had any trouble and you would have been with your family. We were separated from our husbands for six months.

Q: Yes, I was going to ask about that. But let me go back a bit. How long did you have in Cairo before the evacuation took place?

HART: Oh, long enough to really get our heels down ... about sixteen months. It was a very, very interesting period, and we did a lot. There was an American school there. There was a hospital and all kinds of benefit work. We worked together as a team with our Western allies rather well until the Suez thing came. We had a wonderful group, a philosophy group, that met on Sunday evenings. We used to talk about Buddhism and Islam. We had good relations with the American Research Center and the University there. The American University stayed going throughout all this. A wonderful man named Creswell, who was a great Islamic architectural authority, (was there), and he used to take us around to see the sights. Oh, it was a marvelously, culturally rich and personally reinforcing time. *(End of tape 1, side A)*

Q: You were telling me about your time in Cairo, Egypt, and how it became increasingly poisonous, the atmosphere. Did you meet Nasser? Could you give me sort of a pencil sketch of his character and what he was up to?

HART: Yes, indeed. I met both President Nasser and his wife. A particularly impressive time was during the Independence of Sudan, when he had a remarkable gathering. He was always extremely bright-eyed. We found this out later that it was because he took pep pills and was at his best about two o'clock in the morning. But he was a very handsome man, marvelous, erect military carriage, a good command of English, as well as very rhetorically persuasive, firm handshake ... very charismatic. It struck us at the time. He had this very neat mustache, beautiful, the fitted uniforms ... it struck us at the time that he was a type of person who would sell in

Eastern Europe or Western Europe or the United States or the Arab World equally well, a very unusual thing. It had a lot to do with his success. Time and time again, we would take journalists in to talk to him, and he would sell them completely on what he was doing. We would try to tell them gently at lunch that the truth was rather hard to find in him and that he was costing Egypt a great, great deal and that Egypt was a very poor country, but we could never make our point very clear. The journalists were always sold on Nasser.

Q: Interesting. Did he come across as anti-Israel or anti-American at the time?

HART: Anti colonialist, pro Egyptian nationalism, pro a great Arab future and renaissance, pro the common people, but this was somewhat opposed. Though he'd come from a village himself, he was a highly privileged military man. The Revolution in Egypt was superficially a revolution, but to this day, it hasn't penetrated to the village very far. This was something you had to live with to understand. It didn't quite appear as it was to people coming through. He was an impressive person, but a man with a short fuse. He and several of his lieutenants really were to have short lives. They played it both ends against the middle, you know. I think the drug-taking was obvious at the end.

Q: He died of a heart attack or something, didn't he?

HART: Yes, they all had heart attacks. I think it was probably related to this terrible use of Speed.

Q: Probably.

HART: And they had most of their meetings far into the night, two and three in the morning, very active and lively, ambitious group of young military men ... something new in Egypt.

Q: And, I think, Sadat was a great surprise to a lot of people, after Nasser. They thought this cannot be bettered. He cannot possibly match up, but I think he did.

HART: He was a more thoughtful man, and I think he had registered the parts of Nasser's program which worked. He recognized the economic chaos and tried to confront that more sensibly, because the basic problem that every Egyptian ruler faces right at the start is that even if he divided everything up, there would not be enough for the *fellaheen* (poor peasant) to eat. So, it is by nature an unequal society ... hard to have a revolution when you face that basic fact and hard to face your foreign policy when you realize it's a question of who you can be sycophant to, who will help to pay your bills.

Q: Right.

HART: And that really is what Egypt's situation is basically, too, today, I'm afraid.

Q: I guess so.

HART: But the wives of some of the Revolutionary Command Council were wonderful, the new wives of those officers. Some of them are graduates of our American college and outstanding women. Mrs. Sadat is one.

Q: Yes, I guess so. And Nasser was trying to form the UAR (United Arab Republic) then? At that time?

HART: Yes.

Q: And rally all the Arabs?

HART: Well, we were later slated for Amman. That was most interesting, because we went up to Syria from Egypt and saw how that attempt at union failed. He really was much too Egyptian to make that work. Whatever union he wanted, he wanted to dominate.

Q: I think that's the time that Lesley Dorman was there. I believe she was evacuated too.

HART: Yes, that's right.

Q: You mentioned the death of three Embassy children, and she also alluded to that. Can you tell me a little bit about that? What transpired and how the community reacted? It didn't happen all at once. It was three different cases, wasn't it?

HART: We had actually a terrible situation. A fire in a packing crate burned up two children of a couple who were on our staff, and everyone was trying to comfort them. After a couple of months, they were on a party on a Nile houseboat, and something happened to the houseboat. It capsized, and the husband and father of these lost children was drowned. Nobody ever knew whether it was a mistake or a suicide, because there was a terrible pall over that family. But then, in addition to that, as if that weren't enough, we had all these political pressures as well.

The Assistant Air Attaché had a very physically precocious little boy, whose brain was simply not adequately developed for his body. He was always doing the most amazing physical things and not knowing what he was doing. He apparently, while the Air Attaché was looking after him ... the Air Attaché's wife was on the phone for a brief minute ... and he climbed up on a chair and dove over a balcony, seven flights, and was killed on the pavement below. So we had to greet that Assistant Air Attaché. That was one of my jobs. It was my job to sit with the wife and go to the funeral during the other situation, and it was also my job to greet the Air Attaché and his wife at the airport and to tell them that their chief's wife had had to be present at the death of their child. I can never quite forget all that suffering.

I'm happy to say that even that boy's death had a good outcome, because they had a more balanced second child immediately, named him with the same name, and he's now grown up and married and a great success ... made it. The mother's opening comment to me at the airport indicated that she knew exactly what she had been up against. She said, "We always said if we could get him to be age five, we'd be home free." They knew they had an exceptional child. They

were a marvelous couple, how they took their loss.

Q: Was he “hyperactive?”

HART: He was a very hyperactive child. So these were both terrible moments in the lives of all the mission. We all tried to rally round as a family. They hadn't their larger families there, so we tried to be their larger family.

Q: And at that time, you had the two girls ... or did you have other children?

HART: Yes, we had the two girls. That's all I've ever had.

Q: Oh, I thought you had four children.

HART: We were going to have a third child at the time of the Suez, and then I developed tumors and couldn't have any more, so that was it.

Q: Oh.

HART: The two was the finish, but we're fortunate to have them!

Q: Absolutely. Gorgeous. This is one of them here? (Points to picture on the table.) Beautiful girl. Looks like her Daddy. So, in 1956 then, you were ... the Americans were evacuated?

HART: Yes.

Q: And did you take the long drive to Alexandria? I believe that Nasser's officers were accompanying this caravan of cars. Is that right?

HART: Yes.

Q: And were you frightened?

HART: Well, we hated to leave. My older daughter had a temperature of 104 degrees so we shot her full of penicillin. I don't know what she had, but it did work ... the penicillin. She was lying in the back of the car. The convoy took some time going, but I spent that first night on a couch at somebody's house ... I'm sorry to say I've forgotten whose ... in Alexandria. Then the next day we were gradually boarded on this tender and taken out to the harbor, but unfortunately the battle was going on, so we couldn't leave. The next night was spent in the harbor with all the pounding going on, and the boys (without their mothers) were given tin hats and ordered up on the deck to watch the battle along with the ships' officers. They loved that, of course.

Q: What boys?

HART: The young boys among the evacuees. The whole mission was evacuated, and we had AID people and we had people from the “other agency,” whom none of us knew, also joining us,

and business people and quite a few people from other lands. We had Canadians, and all sorts of people wanted to get aboard the ship. It was quite a gang.

Q: Do you remember the name of the ship?

HART: Oh, boy. I did remember it for years, because they were wonderful. It's gone now, but they were simply wonderful to us. We all wrote letters about the captain. They had a little sign up "If we'd known you were coming, we'd have baked a cake," and they had baked a cake actually. All the sailors slept on deck and they gave us their bunks. Of course, we doubled up and slept on trunks and everything, but it was only a day. Then, we got aboard a big transport, Marine transport, in Crete and went on from there to Naples.

But the funny part ... by this time, we hadn't gotten used to it ... some people did get hysterical and got upset. Some people wanted privileges that weren't available. Some people had had to give up dogs and got upset. We had the usual range of problems that you have under those circumstances, but we got safely to Naples. We had good weather.

But the morning after we signed into our hotels in Naples, we heard all this bombardment going on, and then is when you could tell we'd all been afraid. Everybody called the desk, "Has the Third World War started?" Well, we got this wonderful reassuring response from the desk lady, "Oh, heavens, no! It's just the saints' day we're celebrating. (Laughs)

Q: (Laughs) Those Italians with their festas! And their fire-works!

HART: (Laughs) So we thought, "Aha! We're in a different world, a world of festas!"

Q: Yes.

HART: And we relaxed.

Q: But you weren't long in Naples? Did you all go to separate safe-havens, different places?

HART: The problems were really quite numerous. In the first place, a lot of the hotels then in Naples were simply summer hotels. They weren't set up for the winter, and we were facing the winter. The cold winds were blowing and the heating in the flimsy new hotel, where I was, was just non-existent. Everybody got colds. And, of course, we had troubles, because on board the ship children had caught mumps and chicken pox, which were going around through the families. So some women decided to take their kids and go home, especially since holidays were coming. Others decided they would rather be nearby, but not in Naples where the school was not satisfactory and food for children was difficult to get and the hotels were not well heated, but up to Rome. So I went up and rented a couple, two or three floors, in a pensione in Rome. A bunch of us moved up together there, and there we stayed for some months. Ruth Weathersby and Louise Belcher, quite a few of the USIS people stuck it out.

Q: Toby Belcher's wife?

HART: No, it was Pat Belcher's wife, USIS, and Jean Phillips. We were all together. This way, we pooled our (resources). One of us would be a babysitter, and then the others could go out and enjoy. With the mass of us, we could persuade the Italians to give the children something to eat before ten p.m., because they were making enough for a whole bunch of kids, so at least they could get a plate of spaghetti at seven o'clock. And this worked out very well.

Q: Interesting that you would mention that, because I'd always heard that the Italians love children, but my experience was it is not a country geared for children. I found it very difficult traveling with them in Italy, mainly because their whole schedule was off. You couldn't get milk. There were a whole lot of problems.

HART: Well, I had a very touching thing happen to me, because during the voyage my younger child was addicted to one doll. We were getting through the whole thing with this doll, you see, and somehow or other it got shredded. Tears ensued, and we felt we had to throw it out. So I threw it out and tried to find something else. It was very grimy, and I thought it might be actually giving her the mumps and the chicken pox. So we got rid of it. And to my absolute amazement, a week later, the Italian maid at the pensione turned up with this doll completely redone, new hair, she'd saved the head ...

Q: Oh, how sweet!

HART: She'd redone the costume exactly like it. She'd taken it to someone and had it all fixed up and presented it to me as a present.

Q: Isn't that nice!

HART: So, I thought that more than made up for her coming in every morning and flinging open all the windows and singing *Aida* in my ear. She was just very thoughtful.

Q: What was her name? The maid, did you say?

HART: Oh, golly, I don't remember, but all I know is she ...

Q: I thought you said (her name).

HART: No, I said she sang *Aida*.

Q: Oh! (laughs) The opera!

HART: She'd wake us all up singing *Aida* and flinging up the windows at dawn, but she was quite a person. In the end, we had a good time there. We went to all the sights and we were there for the fashion sales. I joined my friend, who was a secretary for Mrs. Luce, and went up to the hill towns in an old beat-up car.

Q: That was Tish Baldrige?

HART: No, this was Mary Leader.

Q: You had said, I believe, that you had helped with the evacuation in Egypt. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

HART: We had a lot of problems, because we had a wide participation at the Anglo-American Hospital, which was set up differently than it is now. The Victoria Hospital and the School ... all of those had to be closed because of our leaving. That was the first procedure. And then we had to notify everyone of what they could take and how they could do it. Then accommodations had to be arranged in Italy.

The military did theirs separately from the Embassy. We had to coordinate everything with Alexandria. The Administrative Officer there was Barr Washburn. (He was Consul General by now, I think) He was an enormous help, and I think did a yeoman duty. Really, he was tremendous. But when we got to Naples, we did confront several major problems, the woman with three small children was stuck. They were all stuck, one for each family, in one room. No way to wash diapers. No way to replace baby food, no anything. So I did, it happened, have a friend in Naples. His name was John Leader. He was with the Consulate, and I told him of my problem. I said, "We have to somehow arrange ... none of us has cars for transportation ... and for these women to be supplied, we must get a system of some kind."

He arranged with George Henderson's wife ... both George Henderson and his wife are gone ... but I had the privilege of telling them both how much this meant to us over many years that they loaned us the Consulate car for three mornings a week so we could go out and get supplies and alternate people to do so, with a list, and literally keep these young families going.

There's a wonderful story about Annyce Manch. She was in a terrible state, because her children were all the wrong ages. So was Bobby Middleton. Both those women lived to help others on other evacuations as heroines, having lived through it themselves and being sort of victims the first time around. They really had to be serviced. They had to be helped, Annyce had a brand new baby and then she had one five and one nine and one thirteen ... it was just hopeless.

Q: Now, they were coming out with you?

HART: They all came out with us.

Q: I believe Lesley Dorman mentioned a woman had a baby right away. It might have been Annyce?

HART: There were several breakups, marriage breakups, that were temporary at least. There were a number of illnesses, but by and large, we came to realize that after a period of time went by ... I would say, more like two or three months ... we began to realize that each family had to take its own separate way. You see, we were coming on Christmas, and many people thought

they would go home for Christmas. So, the little group that stayed on until April was quite small and strong, and we had by this time solved our problems.

Q: And this is all in Rome?

HART: All in Rome. I don't think much of anybody stayed on that long in Naples. I don't know of anybody that did. I'm sorry to say that the officers that were sent on to try to smooth our way, didn't. But that was, I'm afraid, par for the course. So most of us did band together to help each other.

Q: I wrote an article, treatise, for OBC (Overseas Briefing Center) on evacuations, and this was written in 1986, something like that, and it was amazing to me how little had really changed. The State Department hadn't changed that much in its ability to cope with families being evacuated.

HART: Well, the one thing I would say is that they had checks for us so that we could go on living, if we could pick them up at the Embassy, and that sustained us. We had the feeling that we were not, in fact, refugees. We saw, we had the privilege of seeing the Hungarian refugees arrive at the Rome railroad station, and that was quite a different order of things. We were taken care of financially. We'd been started on our way.

On the other hand, I sat for a full half day in the office of the Administrative Officer at Rome, in order to try to explain to him some of the really gruesome problems that were developing, and never succeeded in seeing him and concluded that they were really not very interested in the evacuees. So we did not have the cooperation in Rome that we had had in Naples. We were absolutely on our own. And only if you had a personal friend, did anyone in the Embassy pay any attention to you at all.

Q: I have found that some of the most successful evacuations have been when the spouses have rallied round, particularly I'm thinking of Marlen Neumann in Afghanistan, receiving all the people from Pakistan ... now Bangladesh ... that was a beautifully organized plan. I have found in my research that when families do rally together, it's the best way.

HART: It's the best way, and you cannot expect detailed service from an Embassy, particularly if the evacuation goes on. So, I would say that they learned in 1956 that, first of all, you should either disperse those families in the mission as soon as possible or you should tell them, "look, this looks like a long term," or return them as soon as possible. But this ... we were left there for six months and really had very little service.

It was completely a personal thing at the end. Those of us who lasted it out were very few and very fast friends for life. But I'm not saying I think the Embassy should get into it more, really, because you have to face that fact that once your mission is broken up, it's broken up. When you're evacuated and you go to another country, you're really on your own. The Department is giving you a check and helping you from a certain period of time, but you're supposed to make a new adjustment.

Q: Interesting, because Caroline Service went off to India. They were going off to India when in mid-ocean, her ...

because surely he would come later. But she was there for a year with her children ...

HART: Well, I think there were many who suffered over the years.

Q: ... and if it hadn't been for Loy Henderson, our good friend, she would have been miserable. But she was taken right into the house and community, and she really had no official status whatsoever.

HART: It's an unhappy time for those of us who are partners of our husbands, but I think it ends up being the termination of a mission. When you go back again, it's the start of another mission. That's something perhaps people should take account of, because when we did go back, it was a different mission ...

Q: Of course.

HART: ... with a new ambassador and new look, and you had to pretend that you really were beginning a new post, though perhaps with some foreknowledge, because we did in fact go back afterward. Most did not. Most went on to other assignments, because it was so long.

Q: Was Ambassador Byroade still there when you returned?

HART: No, he left, in fact before we did. His mission ended.

Q: So then who came?

HART: Ambassador Hare.

Q: Raymond Hare?

HART: Raymond Hare ... wonderful professional. (The Honorable Raymond Arthur Hare, AE/P Saudi Arabia 1950; AE/P Lebanon, 1953; Director General of the Foreign Service, 1954; AE/P Egypt, 1956; AE/P United Arab Republic, 1958; EE/MP, Yemen, 1959; Deputy Under Secretary of State, 1960; Career Ambassador, 1960; AE/P Turkey, 1961; Assistant Secretary of State, 1965) And he took immediate hold of things, and we had a new mission in no time.

Q: And how much longer did you stay on then?

HART: Let's see. It was 1958 we went to Damascus. We went to what was then known as the Northern Region, because the UAR was in effect, so we moved over. You see, my husband had been assigned to be Ambassador to Jordan. He'd been appointed Ambassador to Jordan, but Jordan merged with Iraq briefly. Then it happened Syria merged with Egypt, and Charlie Yost, our good friend, had been made Ambassador to Syria, (The Honorable Charles Woodruff Yost,

AE/P Laos, 1954; AE/P Syria, 1957; AE/P Morocco, 1958; Career Ambassador, 1964; Representative at United Nations, 1969). He was done out of his post. We were done out of ours. So the Department decided to give Pete Hart Minister rank and send him as Consul General to Damascus, and Charlie later went to Morocco.

Q: I see.

HART: So for a brief period, we lived in the same house. Charlie and Ilena and our family lived in the same house in Damascus, Charlie insisting when Ambassador Dunn came through that we sit at the head of the table, which was the funniest thing. We all got a big laugh out of it. He said, "This is your appointment. You're a Consul General with Ministerial rank, and I'm without a post, as we know, so you sit there." It was very funny, and Jimmy Dunn thought it was a scream. So we had a good laugh over this.

Q: Ambassador James Dunn, where did he come from?

HART: Well, he had been Ambassador in Rome, and I don't exactly know what his mission was at the time. (The Honorable James Clement Dunn, Assistant Secretary of State, 1944; AE/P Italy, 1946; AE/P France, 1952; AE/P Spain, 1953; AE/P Brazil, 1955; Career Ambassador, 1956). I just point this out, that sometimes you get in these awkward situations where the man who definitely outranks you insists that you should, because your appointment is valid, and his at the time is not. Charlie insisted that, much to our embarrassment, but he was a wonderful man, Charlie Yost, and very sweet and thoughtful to us all. He was at the time, I'm sorry to say, quite ill. It was to kill him later. He had amoebic dysentery twice, and it killed him.

Q: Is that what he died of?

HART: Well, the cancer resulting from it.

Q: Yes. What a shame. His son, Bob, is a good friend of ours in the Foreign Service. (The Honorable Robert Lloyd Yost, AE/P Burundi, 1972; AE/P Dominican Republic, 1978). So I was going to ask you about that in Jordan, and you've answered that. In February 1958, your tour in Jordan was aborted ... that's what you meant by that?

HART: Yes. We first went to the south of Egypt so that I could be in a quiet place where I could teach the children, because they, of course, had been taken out of school to go to Jordan. We were actually on our way to Jordan when this happened, so we simply went south in Egypt to Aswan and by boat to Wadi Haifa and held school for the children until we heard what the Department was going to do. Our replacement had already come, and we wanted him to move into our house.

Q: So you went to Aswan and ... what was the other?

HART: Geneva.

Q: And how long were you there?

HART: I think it was probably about three weeks before the thing was straightened out.

Q: Did the children suffer from all this moving around and discombobulation, do you feel? Not just educationally, but emotionally?

HART: I was to find that one of my children to this day feels as at home in the Middle East, I guess, as she does here. The other one, I think, possibly had a reaction against too much moving. She's stayed in one place.

Q: Is that the older or the younger one?

HART: The older one. She's stayed pretty much in San Francisco and she's married and works there. So I guess it's an individual matter. As far as the schooling was concerned, we found out later that all Foreign Service officers' children were suffering from the same thing ours were, namely, the lack of new math and the lack of adequate American history instruction. Our kids were short in both and had to be tutored in both before we were through so that they could go on.

Q: And you having been a teacher, you did have to teach them at one point?

HART: Yes. I had the Calvert System a couple of times. I had to use the Calvert System. It's not bad, but, of course, anytime you are already the parent and the sole support and you also have to be the teacher, it's a little narrowing for the child. But when my daughter went to the University of Chicago some years later, they wrote me a letter saying, "How did it happen that your child is so well read for her age? This is unusual." And I wrote back and said because of the posts we have had. We've had no television, no Girl Scouts, and by and large very few formal activities for children. She's been a big reader. And then she went to two schools that gave her a lot of reading, so that accounts for it. She always had a quiet room at the back of a big Embassy where she could read for nine years.

Q: I'm sure you instilled that love of reading into her, too.

HART: Oh, I think so, because reading is an indispensable part of getting along in these places, always having to catch-up ball a lot on things that are happening at home and things that are happening where you are.

Q: So, you were in Damascus then in 1958 where Pete was Consul General, is that right?

HART: Yes.

Q: And why were you there only seven months?

HART: Oh, two reasons. First, I think it was considered that our tie with Egypt would be useful since the UAR was in play, but the UAR rapidly wore itself out. And Syrian nationality asserted

itself, and they separated again, became a nation again.

Q: Were you there for the march on the Embassy in Syria?

HART: Well, no, but there was a lot of ... We were there during the Lebanese landings, the famous Lebanese landings. And in Syria, the Lebanese landings were taken as a sign that America was going to invade. Having been evacuated before, I had my husband send a telegram, a preemptive telegram, saying, "We are only seven families here and please do not ask us to be evacuated. We'll go into the cellar and we'll see it through no matter what happens." Peggy Nalle (wife of David Nalle, USIA) was expecting a baby, and I knew that she wouldn't want to go. We just decided to stay low, and that's what we did.

We had one very bad week in which the Syrians were saying that they would dismember any American they saw in the street. I don't believe they quite would have, but anyway, they were saying it. It was enough alarm that we stayed low. And at one point, they did march on the Residence, and we had been at a cocktail party not far away.

We came in the back gate and just sat in the dark Embassy. We heard the crowd massing up in front with some alarm. They had actually lobbed a bomb into the Residence before we got there, so we didn't know what would happen. We were in the back of the house, and my husband said, "Wait here, I'm going up front to see what they're saying." He heard them all, and finally, somebody ... and in English..shouted out, "There's no use doing anything boys, they're not here." Something like this. And then said it immediately in Arabic. My husband felt that it was a sign that the military had infiltrated and, sure enough, within fifteen minutes, up pulled some military trucks and they piled all these demonstrators into them and drove them off.

Q: So they did their duty by the international laws of protection, which they didn't do in Iran. (Reference to the 1979-81 takeover of the American Embassy in Tehran).

HART: That's right. They did their duty.

Q: Yes.

HART: But they made their point. They demonstrated. They yelled. They carried on. They scared us all to death. Then the military came and took them all away.

The only other scare we had was when the safety of a guard on the Embassy ... He fell asleep, and a safety went off his revolver, his automatic machine gun, and fired into the office. (Laughs) Everybody took cover, and fortunately, nobody was killed, nobody was hurt. At least, that's what they told us happened. We don't know if that also was a little protest or not, but fortunately, no one was hurt. So this was the kind of atmosphere that we were in, and we just decided to lie low.

Q: Were the Nalles with you?

HART: The Nalles were with us.

Q: You know, that's interesting. You know the story of David's first wife in Afghanistan? That she was expecting a baby and keeled over at a cocktail party from some disease. She is buried there in Afghanistan, in the little Christian cemetery.

HART: Well, he's a very fine gentleman. And Peggy.

Q: Yes. Bruce and David knew each other in Iran in 1953. David was in our wedding in 1957. We were so happy that he found such a wonderful woman as Peggy. I can imagine that with his second wife expecting a baby that he must have been quite concerned.

HART: We had our moments in Damascus. We had a dinner party when we first came, and one of the guests said, "Well, I have you to thank for a cheap rent next door, because of the bomb. I was able to get my apartment at a great reduction." That was a very consoling thought, but the fight continued on the street below and a man had a heart attack and died.

This was Syrians. And it led to a court case in which the man who had been arguing when the man died, when the other fellow died, was put in prison and kept for a long time. It was a very sad sort of thing going on there. There was so much dispute within the Syrian society as to what they were observing, what was really happening. But we left, because where we lived was right on the route where the soldiers were being taken to go fight in Lebanon. Of course, we were bound to observe that and report it. Unfortunately, our representative at the UN felt it necessary to get up and say, "We know that there is a war and that Syria is supporting it, because our man in Damascus has reported this." And that "blew" us, and we had to leave. Of course, there were other factors at work in DC.

Q: Do you remember who that was? At the United Nations? Do you want to say?

HART: I'd rather not say, but he was our representative at the United Nations.

Q: He's not prominent today?

HART: No, he's not prominent at all. He ran for Vice President and lost. He was a political appointment. He was not a Foreign Service officer. No FSO would have done such a thing, because, of course, nobody came to us at all after that. Nobody came to the Embassy.

Q: No.

HART: And so, they transferred us after that. (Laughs) I don't think these things are realized, you know. People think anything that's in the free press here is fine, but they don't realize what enormous flack it causes in the country of origin.

We've observed that over and over again, that what gets into our free press can go back and cause enormous trouble abroad.

Q: I think that is a problem for the Foreign Service as a whole, that people don't realize what

our job is and how important it is to support us in what we're doing overseas. So I couldn't agree more. Maybe we should write a book about that, Jane (laughs).

So, you didn't really have a chance to get into Syria very much and enjoy the ...

HART: No, I didn't. And it was not a time when, in fact, we could explore freely. Ella Haring and I had a conference one day. She was the Economic Counselor's wife.

Q: Ella Haring?

HART: H-a-r-i-n-g. We decided that the only way we were going to see the Syrian women was to play bridge. We both hated bridge, I'm sorry to say, but we decided that we would have to have them to bridge and tea. That was the only way we would get to see them, because the politics were so hot. And it worked. They loved to play games and are very good at them. They took to coming to the Embassy for tea and for bridge. We made some very nice friends.

I still keep up with Bouran Aziz, who was an outstanding lawyer in Syria. She was in a family, a typical Syrian family, in which there were three diametrically opposed political ideas warring within the family. One was a Communist, one was ... what we would call ... a Christian Democrat, only it would be a Muslim Democrat, a nationalist kind of thing, and one was very much into the military. She herself was one of the early Syrian lawyers, married to a businessman. It was quite fascinating.

I had also another problem. The first day I was there, a very strange woman came to call on me. She said, "You have so many children. I see this clothing on your line. You've been here. You've done this." And she said, "Anytime you want to go to the Souk (bazaar) or go anywhere, I'd be glad to take you around." I realized almost instantly that this was my official caller who was always going to be there.

I took it for two or three weeks, and then, I finally said to Bouran over coffee ... I'd finally gotten these ladies to come for bridge and so on, just social. But, of course, they were not only more fun, but much more instructive and taught me more of how Syria works than this woman. Anyway, I finally said to Bouran, "You know, Bouran, I wish there were some way you could tell the Syrian Government that I don't mind at all being watched. I'm here to be watched, really, and there is nothing that I am doing that I am ashamed of at all. But, honestly, if I'm going to have to have an escort to go everywhere, wouldn't it be wonderful if I could have someone like you? Someone I could talk to or someone that, you know, I really could ask something about Syrian culture and get an answer, because I'm interested in knowing about Syria." And, by magic, that woman disappeared. Never saw her again.

Q: Clever that you picked that up, what she was up to.

HART: I don't know for sure that anything happened, but it could be that Bouran, through one of her numerous connections said, "Get that woman off of her! She's on to it." I don't really know what happened. I never will know, but it was wonderful to be rid of her. She may have still been observing my laundry, I don't know.

Q: (Laughs) Pete was Consul General there because of the combination with Nasser of Egypt?

HART: Yes. Ultimately, there was an ambassador sent afterwards.

Q: Yes. So you were there seven months and then you all went. You flew home, did you? How did you get home?

HART: Golly, that's a complete blank to me. I can't remember. Oh, yes, we flew home with stops in the Greek Isles and in Rome, where we bought a Fiat station wagon for about \$2,000. Then we came back to DC and bought our first house in Maryland with help from the legacy of Pete's father.

Q: I can remember Peggy (Nalle) describing the perilous drive down the road from Damascus.

HART: Oh, we had ... that was one of our problems! We had to get our supplies from Lebanon, because the supplies were caught, and that meant some poor guy, who was normally a fellow named Pete Spicer, whom I saw recently, (had to go get them). He's still alive, thank goodness, because he was a bachelor debonair and daring and he was a whale of a driver. He would take one of these jeeps or something and go down and pile on supplies for everybody, just stack the whole thing high, and come back. We'd divide it according to what he'd found, you know, because there was this one supply place down the valley where we could get our supplies. That was a problem!

Of course, we were cut off also, except for telegraph traffic. We were sort of cut off from everybody there. No, I can't say that my stay in Syria was the happiest, but I had one amazing thing happen that I still can't quite believe. Right in the teeth of all this, I think through Bouran the Syrians began to realize we really were interested in Syrian culture. We went down to the Museum. We went to all the places.

One day, we were down in the Museum, and this Syrian came up and beckoned to me with his finger and said to follow him. I came through, and he opened up a door. I was in a ... I think it's the First Century synagogue which is complete in that Museum, taken from the walls of the old city of Dura Europus. Because of the situation between Israel and the Arab states, it's been closed for years, and I was allowed to see it. It was just a tremendous experience. It's a unique thing. All the paintings and everything in the Synagogue are preserved in the Damascus Museum, which is little known. I thought how eerie life can be here. We are at war with the Syrians, in effect, because of Israel, and this man is sensing that I want to understand the whole history of Syria and he's ushering me in.

Q: But you weren't afraid to follow him? You didn't know what he was ...?

HART: Oh, by this time I was a bit reckless. So many things had happened. I thought, "So be it." Honestly, you get to that point.

Q: Sure.

HART: You say, "So be it."

Q: Yes and no.

HART: You stop fighting it.

Q: I did in Afghanistan, because I didn't feel threatened there, but in Iran, I was afraid. As a woman, I was afraid. I had several incidents happen where being bold just did not work.

HART: You get them all the while.

Q: But I was going to ask you if in Syria the women were veiled. Certainly not the sophisticated ones that played bridge with you, who were probably French trained.

HART: The tragedy of Syria is that it has the whole gamut. The city, as you know, is still ... many of the sections are named after different groups ... the Circaz, the Circassian Section, and tribal things still exist right outside the town. But the most fertile land and the city itself are owned by Western-oriented people. There you have a confusion too ... some educated in France, some in Britain, some in America, some in Lebanon, and they don't have the same attitude toward life. They really are a very fractured country. They were held together ...

Q: Is it the same with Assad?

HART: Oh, it's even more so, because they're ruled by a minority of a minority. Only a very strong iron fist can rule in Syria. It wouldn't hold together for a minute, I don't think, without it. They were held together by trade and by self-interest, the way Lebanon was. And now that trade has moved elsewhere, notably most of it to Turkey and Saudi Arabia and other places. The trade is being picked up elsewhere. So, it was sad. We could see this happening. The trade routes were cut off by events that were taking place. The Government was not representative of the people. It was not democratic. The military were gaining more and more power. We could, in fact, hear the torturings going on in a building about two doors up from the Embassy. One of our families had to move, because they were next door to this and they could hear the torturings all night, the screams and the yells. So it was in a very unhappy state. It wasn't a good time to be there.

Q: Too bad, because you probably would have loved it otherwise.

HART: Yes, I know I would have. We went to Krak des Chevaliers and a few places, but we couldn't get out to Palmyra. We couldn't get to it. Permits were necessary and usually too late.

Q: What were the other places you did go to?

HART: We did get to Krak des Chevaliers, the most beautiful of Crusader Castles, and Ma'lula and Sednaiya, Jebel Druze, and of course, I got to know Damascus very, very well, because we were confined to Damascus pretty much. We did go up to Aleppo, Homs and Hama, and that was

fascinating. Syria is a fascinating country.

Q: Yes.

HART: And I would have liked three years there. That's what we hoped.

Q: But you never got back either to it?

HART: No, not to serve, but over the years we had many visits there.

Q: So then, you came home to the United States from 1958 to 1961, where Pete was Deputy Assistant Secretary of Near East and South Asian Affairs.

HART: Yes, replacing Lampton Berry.

Q: Is that right? And I think they changed it from Near East Affairs to South Asian Affairs. I think they had expanded it at that time?

HART: Yes, that's right.

Q: And I believe that's when we met.

HART: Yes. *(End of tape 1, side B)*

Q: You wanted to tell me several things about Cairo that we hadn't discussed?

HART: There were two things that I thought fairly significant. One day, I was emerging late in the day from a department store called Cicurel, downtown, in the most crushing part of Cairo. I knew my husband was counting on having me accompany him to an evening party. I took the first taxi that came along. I'd no sooner got into it ... the taxis in those days were extremely decrepit, it being post-war time, and all of them put together with baling wire. I got in the first cab that came by, and we'd gone no more than a block when I realized that my driver was a "hashishee." This was my first encounter in those days with somebody under the influence of drugs.

I noticed he ricocheted off the curb once, and I grabbed hold of the car. We went through two stop-lights, and I yelled, "Hasib!" which means, "Attention! Be careful." He didn't seem aware or even to hear me, and suddenly, he picked up speed going through the most crowded part of Agouza, one of the most congested areas of Cairo. I looked up and saw this figure in a white *galabyah* step off the center of the parking thing and step right in front of our car. We smashed into him and instantly killed him!

Q: Oh!

HART: I was thrown all over the cab. When I came to ... I had hit my head ... and when I came to, I was still in the cab with the contents of my bag all around, my hand and my two knees

bleeding, but otherwise intact. There was a man at the window, looking rather Nasser-like, one of these young military types that used to be on the street, and he said, "You English?"

I said, "No, American."

He said, "Better that you leave, right now! You will be called to court, it will do him no good."

And I saw that they were taking the driver out of the front seat. The crowd was all gathered around this still body below, and I waited for a minute, because in America you don't walk away from an accident. But the man repeated, he came on the other side of the car, and he said, "Go, go immediately! I know what I'm saying."

So I got out of the car and I commenced to walk as I could, collect my things, and starting to walk. I was stiffening up and, of course, the result of an accident like that is usually for a woman that she comes to a time of tears. Here I was, walking through Agouza with tears streaming down my cheek and blood down my leg, and nobody even paused to look at me. And I looked over in the middle of the street, and there was an old Egyptian. He was actually pulling a whole truck full of watermelons, a man well over fifty, and he looked at me and he could see misery in me. I could see misery in him. And we paced each other across the old Agouza Bulaq bridge until we got to the other side. I thought, I've been here all this time in Egypt and now I think I know what Egypt means. It was the first time I really felt, because I was surrounded by misery there in Agouza, and this old man ... it was a rather interesting experience. The other interesting experience ...

Q: Excuse me, but you felt he was being 'simpatico?'

HART: Oh, very 'simpatico.' Without a word, we just paced each other ...

Q: Yes.

HART: ... across the bridge. He kept his pace with mine. He seemed to be sort of ... in spite of the torture of carrying all those things ... he and I were going the same pace right across the bridge.

Q: Yes, I see.

HART: And it was a very moving experience for me. I've never quite forgotten it.

Q: You must have been in a state of shock.

HART: Well, I was. My husband was quite horrified to see me. And we waited for many days to see if there was any notice or anything taken. I could imagine how the family of this man was told. Somebody would come running, "He died, he's dead, he's dead!" I knew how it would happen. We never heard another word about it, just a sudden death of another Egyptian. There are so many. But it was a day that I'll always recollect as somewhat showing me what life in

Cairo can be like, if you live there long enough.

The other thing that happened to me in Cairo that I really ... it's impossible to stay there any length of time without getting involved in some kind of work for charity, because there's so much to be done. The British had always done it. The French did it, less. But nevertheless, we were always called on, because we were rich Uncle Sam. And I tended to get awfully involved in these things ... you know, the City of Light for tubercular children and the school and all these various things, we would have these enormous festas where we'd serve two thousand hamburgers, and people would dress up like clowns to serve them, just to attract an audience and make a lot of money for these charities.

I'm afraid the word went round in Washington that I was over obsessed with this, because when the Ambassador left and we came back and there was another ambassador there, a new ambassador, he took me aside one day and said, "Now, tell me, Mrs. Hart, what do you think about charity? Don't you think it really begins at home? That it's a private, personal thing?"

And I said, "Well, yes I do, as a matter of fact, very much so."

He said, "Don't you think perhaps you've been overdoing it a little? I think it's the Ambassador and his lady's duty and the staff's duty to possibly attend these things when they feel it's a good thing, but to throw them, to give them, don't you think that's overdoing U.S. representation a little bit?" And I was brought right down off my high horse. After that, I was always much more circumspect about being the sponsor of something that was done in the country for the country's own welfare. I thought perhaps I should take another look at it and not be quite so "noblesse oblige."

Q: But you mentioned Katie Louchheim ...

HART: Yes.

Q: There's been, while we've been doing this project, there's been this feeling from the various women that we've interviewed that Katie Louchheim pressured under the Kennedy era for this kind of volunteerism to go on, continue. My recollection of Katie Louchheim was that she was merely trying to find out what Foreign Service wives did do with their time, not to pressure us into doing it, but into saving our time, preserving our time. The end result was that the best thing we could do was to teach English, because there we would not leave a vacuum when we left post.

So many of these women set up organizations and charitable activities that once we left, they collapsed, because they didn't prepare the local host country women to take over. Do you have any recollection of what Katie Louchheim was doing?

HART: Yes, I do, because I went to the famous Cyprus Conference in which this was rather thoroughly discussed, and Katie was there. I didn't find her personally pushy at all, but I think that Katie and Steb Bowles (wife of Ambassador to India, Chester Bowles) and a number of people have been very socially sensitive. They've traveled a great deal just as we did in the

Foreign Service. They saw enormous social need, and I don't think they were opposed to our doing those things.

The person from whom I heard for the first time ... "It's just like you Americans to start something and then go off and leave us" ... was actually a well-born Egyptian woman who herself didn't know who would take over something we had started. This again was a revelation to me and a learning experience, because I think really no matter how much we do, we do have to stop and think, that like so many AID programs, they have to have a basis in the society to last and to have any meaning. Otherwise, to others, they look like "nobless oblige." They look as if we're trying to gain some kind of stature or influence by this means ...

Q: ... as if we're cramming our way of life down their throats.

HART: What they don't realize is that the needs there just scream at us, coming from here. We believe ... we say, "How can we go on and go to parties and play bridge when all this is here that needs doing?" And they don't realize how that speaks to us. And it seemed to speak in most of my posts, particularly to women from the Midwest who are very strongly community-oriented. Time and time again, I noticed these women going all out, AID groups and so on. It was very moving to me that they carried over the same moral feeling about their community as they had at home. I don't know how you can criticize that. It's Americans being Americans. But having the Ambassador speak to me about it, made me think of that a little.

Q: But I'm not so sure he was right. I mean, had you thought enough to explain it to him, what your motivation really was, he might have seen it differently. I agree with you. I could not live in Pakistan and have seen babies in the bush across the street dying of cholera and do nothing.

HART: I think our biggest American influence abroad has not been through social Foreign Service, but through universities like American University of Beirut that have taught people and through maybe even missionaries who have helped with literacy and so on ...

Q: ... and health clinics.

HART: So I don't think a wife who just ignores all the charities and social projects is going to be happy. She's not going to be a member of that community to the extent that I feel those of us who did get engaged in social activities. After all, we met a whole different group of people that way. We learned a lot more about how the society worked when we went into orphanages and schools.

Q: It cannot possibly be done to the same extent today. Too many of the women work and this great Me Generation philosophy ...

HART: That's right.

Q: ... though it may be denied, I think it's definitely there. We see it in many young people, that money is the goal in life now. It is not serving others.

HART: Well, I think that is correct. I would submit that there are many ways to be a successful Foreign Service wife, including plying your career abroad, but I would not deny that a great deal of my happiness at these posts came from being introduced to parts of that other society which my husband did not encounter, did not know, which I would not have known if I had not given of myself. People would not have come to me as freely as if I had not gone all afternoon in the orphanage.

Q: I could not have played bridge all day. There were plenty who did nothing else but that and saw no one but Americans. I could not have done that. I guess it was a terrible guilt. Could you?

HART: I think it's a question of fulfilling yourself in these jobs as well, because they are jobs. You are representing America. If you sit and play bridge, you're representing America. If you are taking care of your children, being a good housewife, and you have a husband who needs his slippers brought, that's being a good American too. There are many ways to do it, but I think you have to live with yourself. You're playing a role, and that role is much more sharply defined abroad than it is here. You're more conscious that you are an image to someone, to other people, and therefore you make perhaps decisions that are more meaningful and more disciplined than you would here, where you tend to let it go until tomorrow. You're among your own.

You only have 25 or 30 years of your life at the most in the Foreign Service, and you're an influence or you're not. It's pretty simple that way. How are you going to be an influence? How are you equipped to be an influence? Maybe you don't want to be an influence at all. All right. You'll be a cipher, but that's a hunk out of your life.

Q: Am I wrong that our generation ... and I include myself in that generation, maybe because my husband is older ... that we had a certain sense of responsibility to our country, that we felt we were also in the Foreign Service? I don't think I could easily have sat all afternoon and played bridge with only Americans, because there was just this kind of feeling that we ... and I include spouses ... were there to do something else.

HART: I think probably at some point I ought to just put one sentence here, that I had a good deal of religious upbringing in my youth. There was meant to be purpose in my life, so I sought purpose. Some people apparently don't seek it, but if you have that sense of purpose, you tend to meet other people who have the same sense of purpose ...

Q: A sense of service, of purpose. I guess that is it.

HART: ... It feeds on itself.

Q: Yes.

HART: But I think one thing I did learn, that as a Chief of Mission, you cannot impose your will. As Chief of Mission's wife, even less can you impose your will, because you don't want to. There are many, many ways ... just as there are many ways to salvation (Laughs), there are many ways to happiness in a foreign situation, and many ways to be useful.

Q: Well, of course, Marlen Neumann used the word “cajole.” Now, today, you don’t demand, you cajole, and my point is, since that 1972 Directive ... while we’re on the subject ... supposedly put the wife of the Chief of Mission in the same boat with everybody else. Both Marlen and I feel that’s impossible.

HART: I will say this, that no Junior officer’s wife who has announced that she doesn’t want to be bothered or even involved in anything in the mission is going to have the perpetual gratitude of the Chief of Mission’s wife, as I have for several women on my husband’s staff, who realized that there were times when I had four Cabinet officers’ wives arriving at the same time and needed help desperately, from an intelligent woman who was not otherwise employed to help those women to get around during that period. I was lucky and found several people on the staff willing to perform that service.

Now, am I not going to have a special feeling for those women who volunteered to help me at that time? It’s unreal to think that I will not have. This is just a fact of life. There are lots of jobs that are given to an Ambassador’s wife that have to be done, managing the Residence, taking care of the social program of all these visitors that come through endlessly.

Q: But according to that Directive, it is not something she has to do, and that’s where I find the Directive unrealistic. It simply is not realistic where the Chief of Mission’s wife is concerned, unless she is not at post. I think it’s a rare woman that could avoid it, don’t you?

HART: Well, yes. In the British Service, as everyone knows, they pay a certain amount if, in fact, you consent, because they figure that they would have to pay someone to manage the Residence if the wife does not, so why not pay the wife for it? That has its problems, and they even realize it. The problems are pretty overwhelming about the pay and getting them on the list and all, but I do still think that history bears out ... ambassadors have asked their nieces and their daughters and their consorts and their secretaries and everybody else you can imagine to come in and fill the breach, so it’s obvious that there’s a job that has to be done. It’s historic, it’s there. And if there’s a wife and helpmeet who does it discretely ...

Q: ... it’s better.

HART: Yes, it’s a hole in one.

Q: Very lucky fellow, I would say.

HART: Yes.

Q: So that wraps up Cairo, do you think? I want to ask you though ... you mentioned the Cyprus Conference ... now what was that?

HART: Before we went, there was a summer conference in Cyprus at the beginning of that Administration. It was sort of a pep rally, trying to get us in the Middle East interested in improving the U.S. image and trying to discuss what ways and have us all thinking the same on

policy.

Q: Was this men and women?

HART: Officers and wives. I think of all the Presidents that my husband worked for, the one who was most personally involved with embassies and with ambassadors probably was President Kennedy. He had this habit of dealing personally with ambassadors. He used to be in personal contact with my husband in Saudi Arabia, and I believe that it wasn't just my husband. I think there were many other ambassadors. This Conference was a regional round-up of chiefs of Africa and the Middle East to give ambassadors a personal tie with the Under Secretary and Assistant Secretary, so when they were talking about foreign policy problems, they would have an ear in the White House. It is, I think, the only time in the nine years that my husband was an ambassador that he had this kind of relationship with Washington brass. When we were in Jeddah, it was very helpful.

Q: And yet, on the ladies side, there was Katie Louchheim, but there was not Jackie Kennedy.

HART: That's right.

Q: And interestingly enough, when Johnson came in, I believe it was Lady Bird who had ambassadors' wives come to the White House ...

HART: Charming lady, and very interested.

Q: ... which is something I wish would be reinstated.

HART: But we had, also, President Johnson who had made a rather wretched mistake with a letter that he had written in Turkey, take my husband aside in the Rose Garden and say, "I want you and your wife to know more about Turkey than any Turk!" And, of course, this was great news, so we got on the ... we went to all the different villages and cities and everything in Turkey at his command, which was a wonderful instruction ... "Get to know the country!" But I think we have to face this fact always in the State Department that the ambassador is very much the President's man in the eyes of the country abroad. When he does not get any attention in the White House, he's not going to get very much attention abroad. This is why we have so much trouble. Some Presidents don't give ambassadors very much of a hand.

Q: Or they put in political people.

HART: Or they put in political people who are cronies. It is a situation that has not been resolved. The wife can be victimized by it, because she's caught in this, you know. She has to play her cards according to how it seems to be coming up at the time, the game that's being played at the time.

Q: You are so right. Well, I hope that we can see improvement in a new Administration.

HART: Yes, difficult to regularize.

Q: Yes. So, it was in 1959 that you mentioned the King of Nepal made a state visit? Was that to Washington?

HART: Oh, I think we had many protocols when my husband was Assistant Secretary and other times we met wonderful people. We met all kinds of interesting people, but one of the most fascinating dinners was one that Wiley Buchanan, when Chief of Protocol, put on at the Hall of American States, that gorgeous building down there just off the Mall. So magnificent and all the most interesting people you could imagine came for the King of Nepal. I sat with Lowell Thomas and John D. Rockefeller III and Shirley Temple Black. It was an absolutely wonderful group, wonderfully interesting group, and they'd all, strangely enough, been to Nepal, you see. They had this in common. They all knew the King of Nepal.

Great bouquets of lilacs and white lilies and magnificent food, and all these Nepalese dressed in marvelous native dress, and the Navy singing. It was a really gorgeous evening, and every detail had been thought of by the Buchanans. I still do think of the Wiley and Ruth Buchanan as a really remarkable protocol team. They thought of every sort of detail. I guess that dinner and a later time, when I went to dine with the Queen of England, were ... what shall we say? ... dividends ...

Q: Oh, yes. Tell me about that.

HART: ... dividends for all the years of posts. Well, this was a CENTO Conference and it was a good deal later, but we were only twenty-six at dinner at Windsor Palace. It was really another protocol production, shall we say ... greeted at door, everybody in uniform, all war heroes or royalty, and the officials from the various CENTO countries, piped into dinner with the Scottish (bagpipes) ... in the Scottish manner ... magnificent meal, each one allowed to chat with the Queen for three to five minutes, moved around with magic protocol smoothness, drinks after dinner in the Great Hall with all the portraits and armour. It was really, you know, just one of those things that you felt as if you'd been Cinderella.

Wonderful listening to the royal family talk about their personal problems. They were replacing the man who was in charge of the horses for official parades. He'd dropped dead, and they were just desperate about whom they were going to get. You just thought ... When I was three, I never thought this would ever happen. You realize that this is as much of the part of the Foreign Service, really, as it is figuring out where you are going to get apples, you know. The wonderful part about the Foreign Service is that you really do live. You live, you have the deepest sorrow, the strongest loneliness, and the greatest excitement. It's just all in there.

Q: Marvelous.

HART: If you live long enough.

Q: So, did you go through a receiving line and have to curtsy to the Queen?

HART: Oh, yes. And we all ... what should we do? So, I did that little half curtsy, you know, not the deep one, but the little half one. She sort of smiled. Apparently, generations of Americans haven't known what to do. (Laugh) And we all compromise.

Q: Do you remember what she wore?

HART: She had a perfectly gorgeous sea blue heavy silk gown and a simple crown and a beautiful pearl and diamond necklace, just impeccably and beautifully gowned. Very simple and informal. Remarkably informed no matter to whom she talked. She knew something about every subject that was brought up, and the equerries were efficient beyond belief.

Q: They introduced you to her?

HART: Rotating everything, yes. She came in, and we were all put in a line previously so that she knew where everybody was. She'd studied for five minutes before, and it was all in order. They'd put us in line almost without our knowing it, it was so gracefully done, just a minute before she came. She had time to have a drink outside if she wanted it, maybe she didn't. She came in for our second drink, and then we went straight in to dinner.

Q: And where did you sit? By whom did you sit?

HART: I don't remember, except that I was close enough to Philip to see that he picked up his asparagus and didn't eat with a fork.

Q: (Laughs) Isn't that amazing?

HART: And furthermore, I was relieved to find that there was not a lot of silver on the table, that there was somebody behind each one of us, or was it each two of us? Anyway, there were an awful lot of waiters, and when we needed silver, it magically appeared for each course. It just came. It was put on, the silver was put on for that course, so nobody could become confused. It had been beautifully worked on. There wasn't a thing about that evening that wasn't beautifully worked, including the long sunset over Windsor Park as we left. The sun was setting at ten when we left, or ten thirty, and it was incredibly beautiful, just barely summer, May or June, something like that. It was incredibly beautiful, everything bright green.

Q: What was the year of that?

HART: It was the CENTO Conference. I'd have said 1967, but I'm not sure. I think probably those two are the most beautiful dinners to which I have constantly referred in my mind, because I thought, "How will I somehow make this dinner a little special?" I'd think, "Now they did that at that, and they did this there." I would try to think of something that would make a dinner lively.

Q: What about the King of Nepal? What can you tell me about him?

HART: A quiet man, not like the Aga Khan. I expected he would be rather like the Aga Khan, not as internationally personable, not as ... he didn't have much conversation. But Lowell Thomas seemed to find him fascinating. He'd learned more than anybody about him, I think.

Q: Was the Queen along?

HART: I didn't meet her at all, and I don't recall her at the dinner, but there were all sorts of officials in rather elegant, interesting dress.

Q: And where was it held, or did you say?

HART: Yes, I said, at the American States, that beautiful, what do you call it?

Q: Oh, yes, that was the one. Yes, of course, you did. OAS, is it, Organization of American States? At Seventeenth and Constitution Streets, I believe.

HART: OAS. Gorgeous building. It has the parrots and the tropical plants, and at night it's so lovely with beautiful, fragrant bouquets.

Q: Beautiful.

HART: It was a beautiful dinner.

Q: Well now, here we are at the beginning of 1960, and AAFSW was started about then, wasn't it? 1960 or 1961, wasn't it?

HART: Yes.

Q: And I'd love to know what your contribution was to the founding of that.

HART: Well, I want it on record that the real founders of that were Dotty Kidder and June Byrne. June Byrne, Mrs. James Byrne (now June Byrne Spencer) it was who went to the lawyer to get a legal start to the organization. She and Dotty and the late Polly Jones, Mrs. Lewis Jones, were very influential in giving it a good firm start, a legal start. Among the first things that marked that was the Service Desk, which used to help people with post information and help in adjusting here, school information, housing information and so on.

Q: It's still functioning, you know, and a lot of people think that those women are paid by the State Department.

HART: It was always volunteer and it began right away. That was one of the first things. I worked there a lot. Then the Writer's Group was rather early on, and some of the Writer's Group people are still in the group that recently published a book, their first book. I think it's taken all this time really to jell to that point, but many of them were writing otherwise. Then, a number of us hung on long enough to get very interested in the Boys Club. We had felt that something we

learned in the Foreign Service about getting along with internationals might help at the time of this terrible burning of Washington. I came back at just the time of the burning of Washington from an overseas post.

Q: That would have been 1968.

HART: Everybody was slamming doors and in a panic. Polly Jones and Adele Rogers and several of us decided that we wanted to go down and see if we could apply what we'd learned abroad on the other side of town in the Boys Club.

Q: Now is this the Eastern Branch Boys Club?

HART: Eastern Branch.

Q: Eastern Branch Boys and Girls Club now.

HART: It's now a boys and girls club. It's continued active.

Q: And wasn't Ruth Bond in on that?

HART: Ruth Bond, wonderful Ruth Bond. Very much so.

Q: Yes. She was a classmate of my mother's at Northwestern.

HART: She went on to do a number of things, but Ruth Bond was very influential in that, as in so many things with African women, a very outstanding lady. If nothing else, we made some wonderful plans with our colleagues over there. And so the Foreign Service women, I think, didn't get into women's rights, but from the very first, I think we were concerned that women who were in the Foreign Service should be equally recognized for equal work. I think that from the very first was a push that all of us felt, but there was nothing in the organization of that while I was there. Then, I went out before the organization took that turn.

Q: We say it's an advocacy role now.

HART: An advocacy role, yes.

Q: Yes.

HART: They were not in an advocacy role at first.

Q: I would say that it (AAFSW) was social, too.

HART: I would agree. Of course, the Bookfair was extremely early. Bookfair started very early, and that was for scholarships, because in those days we had much more need than it seems to me that we have now. There were a number of children who kind of needed help in the Foreign

Service either because of loss of a parent, or several children born close together, or a father whose salary simply couldn't stretch. So that was an early emphasis.

Q: Now, unfortunately, they're having such trouble, because the State Department is demanding these high fees from the Bookfair ...

HART: Yes.

Q: ... for the space.

HART: Is that so?

Q: Oh, it's thousands that AAFSW is supposed to pay to rent the space for the Bookfair, so there's a great discussion of whether this should continue or just skip it for a year or look elsewhere for space. I don't know what they're going to do, but they can't go on paying that year after year. So AAFSW is in something of a bind at the moment, but whether it's in serious jeopardy, I don't know.

HART: Well, as we had always regular meetings and speakers, and as a rallying place where you could meet other Foreign Service wives not in your area and not perhaps at your post, it had a value all of its own. If it only reduced to that for a while, it would be no terrible loss I should think, but there are always new roles coming up for it to play, don't you think?

Q: Yes.

HART: It wouldn't matter long. They would be called into action sooner or later, if you reduced it to that.

Q: It's just that the Bookfair is where they make their money to keep them going, so it has been greatly hampered. They say it's problems with security, but we wonder. Anyway, I don't know what will happen to it. I think at the moment, the advocacy role has stopped a bit too. They've gotten the pension sharing for divorced spouses.

HART: Wives working in embassies, they have more opportunities than surely in my day. There were literally no opportunities for wives to work in embassies in most of the Middle East in my day.

Q: No. And the FSA (Foreign Service Associates) Proposal has been shelved for the moment. I just wrote Pamela Moffat the other day to say I thought it's the time now when we should be trying to boost the Foreign Service image and morale, because it is so low. And perhaps with Congress, paving the way, the foundation for future legislation. But at the moment, we shouldn't push any more demands, because (laugh) the money isn't there. But anyway, that was wonderful that you worked on all of that.

HART: Yes. And it took a lot of time. We were all very in it together. Naomi Mathews was a

great leader. I remember Anne Penfield, a very strong lady. Dotty Kidder was a terrific organizer on one of the early Bookfairs, I remember. There was a lot of activity here.

Q: Are most of those women still living?

HART: I know Naomi and June Byrne and Dotty Kidder are still living. She's in Paris a great deal, but she is still living. But Polly Jones is gone.

Q: Yes. And Mrs. Penfield?

HART: And Mrs. Penfield is gone, and Peggy Morgan and Louise Stookey.

Q: And you also worked at the International Student House? Now that was not part of AAFSW?

HART: No, no, not at all. No, the International Student House has long ... has operated fifty-one years in Washington. It was begun by the Quakers and has been very, very successful as an experiment in international living. At present, I am President down there.

Q: Are you? I've forgotten the location.

HART: It's at 1825 R Street.

Q: Yes.

HART: And Foreign Service officers and wives have been active on it from the first ... Peggy Brown, Peggy Beam, and Louise Armstrong. I meet them, many people who, because we all believe in it, we see it work so well from day to day. It's quite an exciting (project). It's right down in the middle of town, and it was purposely put there in a part of town which was equally black and white, where there was a mixture, because the Quakers founded it to provide a place where graduate students from black Africa could come and have a normal life in the States. This was hard in Washington fifty years ago, for them to have a normal life here, as students residing here. And it worked so well. They turned it over to a private board. It's no longer Quaker.

Q: I wanted to ask you about your dinners that you had with Lyndon Johnson. What were they?

HART: We came back home as he was finishing his Administration. And as everybody knows, he liked a good time. When he planned his parties, he wanted to have a certain number of people who would stay on and dance to "Hello, Dolly" afterward. He mixed. He took an almost sadistic joy in mixing up people who didn't mix normally. He put Mrs. Astor next to David Lillienthal of the TVA or a Beatle. He loved to mix it up. And as a result, he usually ended up holding forth.

Several times in those last days, we were invited to White House dinners. One evening in particular I remember I was at his table. He loved to entertain with the usual table of ten, lots of tables of ten. He started telling how he had bought a statue for Lady Bird, and, "I told her I'd bought it at a little antique place down at the corner of our place in Texas and that I'd picked it

up for a real song. I thought she'd like it for her birthday. She looked at it and she couldn't decide whether it was a Frederic Remington or not. She didn't know whether I was telling the truth or whether it was, in fact, a Remington. I could see her mind working, so I kept up the joke," he said, and "I called everybody I thought she'd call to find (out). I called the antique man and told him to confirm that I'd bought it there, and I called all the places that I thought she'd call to check it out and told them, 'You play the game with me. Don't tell her a thing.' And they didn't."

He said, "For two weeks, I kept her in limbo, and she kept saying, 'Lyndon, tell me about that statue,' and finally she blew it. She did enough research to find out that it really was (a Remington). She took it by hand to New York and came back and said, 'Lyndon, don't you ever do that to me again.'" And he gave this uproarious laugh, and everybody laughed with him. He loved a long, Texas story in which there were a lot of funny, little things written into it ...

Q: (Laughs) ... at someone else's expense.

HART: At someone else's expense. But it didn't matter. He was a lusty sort of fellow, and the language was very Texan. I could see Mrs. Astor was just as impressed with his vitality and his outgoingness and his ... what shall I say? ... his lustiness, as I was. We were both kind of in awe of this man. Huge, great big fellow. And one night, he caught the little ruler of Singapore with a clap on the back that nearly sent him across the whole White House! He was double the size, double-sized, and really it was very hard not to laugh, because it was so extreme. He seemed absolutely unaware that he had done it, that this clap on the back he had given him was so (hard). The poor man was almost sent across the room. He was not a joy to diplomats; I'm sorry to say, he made real trouble in Turkey.

Q: What was the story when Lyndon was followed by Nixon in the White House?

HART: No, I don't remember exactly how things went.

Q: Lyndon had put in this shower fixture, because when he wanted a shower, he wanted a SHOWER, really to come down on him full force. I think it was Nixon that said he got in the shower the first night and it practically shot him out through the door ...

(Laughs)

... It was so strong. Something like that. And was Lady Bird there at those moments?

HART: Always, full of charm and smiles and accepting Lyndon as he was, very nice to everyone. But it was sad, because we realized that the Administration was kind of playing out, and there were a lot of not his most exciting moments ahead. Always difficult in the last. We are thinking now because this is the last year of this Administration. It's very difficult for a President in that last term. People just don't pay him the deference that they normally did before.

Q: Right. Had you been overseas when he came as Vice President?

HART: No, we had not been. He didn't come to Saudi Arabia. As a matter of fact, no President did until quite recently, I think. Roosevelt came as far as Great Bitter Lake. No, we did not receive Johnson.

Q: And it probably followed your tour in Saudi Arabia, is that right?

HART: Ah, I think this was later. It followed Turkey.

Q: Yes. Well, let's go on to Saudi Arabia in 1961 when you went off to Saudi Arabia again, but this time, Pete was Ambassador.

HART: Yes.

Q: And you were in Jeddah, not in Dhahran.

HART: Yes, In Jeddah.

Q: And Jeddah's on the West Coast of the peninsula, while Dhahran is on the East Coast. And Pete explained to me why the Embassy was there in Jeddah. Can you describe the American Residence to me in Jeddah. What was that like?

HART: It's a kind of Bermuda type house with fifteen window air-conditioners in it. It had been added to a room at a time and it had a great, big stone patio on one side, which was, by and large, too hot to use since the weather for nine months of the year is over 100 degrees. During the day, we had only three bedrooms, so the children and we had to double up when we had guests. A very strange kitchen with a partition full of holes in the middle of it. I never knew exactly what it was for, but it came in very handy when we had a flood, and we brought a lot of injured birds in. They all perched in there until they came to, and then they flew around the kitchen.

We had a very outstanding experience in that house, because we could never rid it of cockroaches, because of the way it was built and its access to the outside. There was no way we could do it. We had it sprayed once a week until we just didn't know whether we were going to die first or the cockroaches, you know. It was so bad. And still, anybody who had to go into the kitchen at night, went in fear and trepidation. You'd open up a drawer and something as big as a mouse would jump out! They were enormous there. Huge, special kind of cockroach. I've only seen them in the insect zoo.

Q: They fly?

HART: Yes, they fly.

Q: Yes, I remember those in Pakistan.

HART: And they are just unbelievable! They fold up to go down a drain, so, of course, it never freezes there. They just go on and on and on. One day I was sitting at my desk, and I looked up

and the opposite wall was absolutely covered with ants. They'd come in and were going to nest in a plant which was on my husband's desk against the opposite wall. There were probably, I don't know how many thousands of them, just streaking across the wall toward this plant. We had all kinds of problems with insects. There were quite a lot of scorpions, too. But our joy was not the land, but the sea, because we'd go out to the creek every weekend and snorkel and see the most unbelievable beauties underneath the sea. That was our great joy. We all collected fish, colored fish.

Q: The water was safe?

HART: The water was relatively safe.

Q: You didn't get Bilharzia or anything?

HART: Well, there were sharks there, but there was so much for them to eat they never came after people. You just had to watch for things like moray eels.

Q: (Laughs) Little things like that.

HART: And something we used to call "fire fish." They have various names for them ... lion or scorpion fish, whatever they are, which are poisonous. But other than those two things, no, they were just beautiful. The colors were beautiful, so this was our great joy, the sea.

Q: Did you have good domestic help?

HART: Yes, I did. I imported it. And as soon as I would import a good cook and get him nicely trained, a prince would take him. But I kept doing it until we were well supplied with cooks around the eastern province.

Q: Where did you get them from? A lot of Pakistanis go there.

HART: Yes, Somali, Pakistani. They all had to be "trained American," then, he was always employable. I think Sudanese and Somalis and Pakistanis were probably the chief source. They would be on contract for a year or two and then go back home. *(End of tape 2, side B)*

Q: We were talking about being back in Saudi Arabia and the domestic help that you had, and you kept losing it. Was that where you taught your children by the Calvert method also?

HART: We had a TWA [Trans World Airlines] school, which was substandard, and the arrival of the U.S. Geological Survey in force helped us a good deal to improve the quality of that school. That was a constant effort. I substituted, taught down there, and was on the Board for a time.

Q: What did you teach? A grade or a subject?

HART: Fourth grade.

Q: Yes.

HART: But one of the difficulties was that our staff members who had college or high school age had to go home, because there was nothing available to them at all in Arabia. We were not allowed to use the ARAMCO schools. So, schooling was a problem. Health was not a problem, because we didn't really have serious health problems. The great heat, I think, kills off a great many of the (germs).

Q: (Laughs) Except the cockroaches.

HART: Except the cockroaches. But we had a problem of supply. You stay over there for a certain amount of time and you run out of everything. We did then. You just ran out of everything. Your regular medications and your clothes and your everything. You had to go somewhere. It was a long way to anywhere from Saudi Arabia, from Jeddah, but it meant living a rather simple life and enjoying it. We had very good morale, small staff. My husband and I were able to travel over a great deal of the peninsula ...

Q: Oh, yes.

HART: ... and enjoyed that very much. They had built some roads in the meantime from when we first came. You could drive up through the oil towns on hardtop at last. You could drive to Hofuf without going over the sands in a sand vehicle.

Q: Did you go to Mecca?

HART: We were not permitted to go to Mecca, and one of the most heart-rending moments came before the Great Holy Week, the Hajj Week, because we'd see all of our Saudi friends packing the trunks of their cars with live sheep to be killed and luggage and rugs and everything to go to the Hajj. We would know that we were not allowed to go, because we were not Mulsims. We could not come within viewing distance supposedly, but at one point, we all determined that we were all going to Meda'in Salih, which was the mysterious old Palmyran, Nabatean city, at the southern most point of the Nabatean civilization, the first years of our era. We went there for a camp out. At that point, we managed to see over the hills and far away the top of the Medina mosque. We felt very proud of ourselves that we were able to see that much of it.

Years later, I was able to come down to the new airport there, but there was something that we thought we knew our Saudi friends well, but we could never be part of the most serious parts of their lives, that is, the celebration of the two 'Ids, which were in private and at cities closed to non-Mulsims. It's an odd feeling that you could never join them in that at all.

But, one weekend, all of our friends of any influence, Saudi friends, disappeared. All the men were suddenly not there. Not a word was spoken. Nobody understood it. And on the Monday or Tuesday following, it was announced that King Saud had been replaced by King Faisal. They'd had an enormous conference, all the men of influence, from the Ulema and the top of the

Government had gotten together. They'd made all the necessary detailed arrangements to have Saud, who had become ill and incompetent, to be retired comfortably, and King Faisal to be made the new king.

Q: That was 1963, I believe, and then he became King the next year?

HART: I think in 1964. It was all beautifully prepared, and no foreigner had any influence on it at all, wasn't even informed. My husband was Ambassador and he was informed after the fact.

Q: But Prince Faisal, then King, did come to your house in Jeddah?

HART: Yes, he was a very good friend. He talked with my husband many times and he came to our house on one occasion, maybe twice, and even played miniature golf in our house where the staff was permitted to meet him. He told us what to have for a meal, because he had had very serious intestinal surgery and could only eat a very limited number of things. But I had my most interesting conversation about the status of women with him. He knew a great deal about the tribes. It was he who told me that every single tribe by then had asked for permanent land and settled, and that Saudi Arabia was changing as his father had dreamed and thought it would.

Q: So, he set about with some pretty basic reforms, did he not?

HART: Oh, he was a very solid ruler, a very outstanding ruler.

Q: And what did he feel about women?

HART: He personally was married to a very strong Turkish-Saudi woman, Princess Iffat, who was my friend, and had several children by her and stayed married to her and saw that those children were given every bit of education they could take. And those sons are active today. He had a lot of enlightened people around him. He hired people who were educated, increasingly hired them, and he made it possible for the middle class to be mobile with their education. It was during his regime that people like highly educated Palestinians and the Minister of Petroleum gained their roles in the Government. So he was a very enlightened monarch. More like his father than his brother, Saud, had been.

Q: If slavery was there until 1962, and he came in in 1963, then he was really not the one who did away with it. It was his father who did away with slavery ...

HART: I think that is right. No, I'm wrong. It was Faisal who did it. He was for a long time Foreign Minister before he became King. Saud himself, I don't think, is considered a strong king or very influential. But I'm really not qualified to talk about that, because in Saudi Arabia I got to know a lot of the women. One of the most influential women I met was Princess Johara who was the first wife of Faisal, the first wife. She was a cousin and the daughter of a great warrior named Saud al Kabir. Princess Johara advised him very much as any male adviser would advise him, and she said to me, "I would never really want to marry again. Faisal told me when he divorced me" ... they had one daughter only ..." he told me I am more like a man than a woman." And she

was indeed.

Q: He did divorce her?

HART: He did divorce her, but he took care of her always, royally, and she used to sit and talk on her gold telephone, very ostentatiously. She's supported many Palestinians, had all the slaves. She's the one I was telling you about.

Q: Yes, oh yes.

HART: But she knew everybody. She advised him very well. She knew the Koran by heart, and she could quote any sura. She was quite a fantastic woman and one of the great personalities that I was privileged to meet. Women in Saudi Arabia are not universally weak by a long shot. This was a very strong woman. And Princess Iffat, his second wife, was equally strong in her way, so he had two excellent female advisers. I do not think that King Saud was equally well advised, and he fell into drinking habits and had a rather sordid personal life, I fear, and that led to his removal.

Q: I see. So you went to a wedding of a Saudi Princess?

HART: As a matter of fact, one of the weddings that I attended was the very wedding ... the man who is now Ambassador here, Prince Bandar. Prince Bandar married one of Faisal's daughters, and I went to that wedding.. It was a very beautiful wedding. And weddings were a weekend affair. They're getting to be that way here, aren't they?

Q: Yes.

HART: ... where you had a great big feast. They were all night affairs.

Q: And where did they put you? In a tent? A separate tent? Or were you able to sit there in the male company and enjoy the ceremony?

HART: We were put in a palace hotel, House of Guests, I think they called it. Anyway, it was a sort of guest house, and we did have our noon meal in a tent, all of us. This was in Taif and it was really quite lovely up on the hill, because it was in the summer and it was so hot, they decided to have the wedding up in the hills where it was cooler. A great sand storm came up, and we were in this closed tent having our meal and we could hear this great sand storm going on outside. But they'd put up plastic the last minute around to save the food. We ate, and everything was all right.

And afterward, it was beautiful and clear. You could see the desert for miles and miles. It was quite a lovely event. But I had mortification, because I went up on the same plane with the wife of the British Ambassador, and her husband ... in a well-meaning, last minute ... had handed her a flask and said, "Darling, I know this is going to be a long, dry weekend." I wasn't much of a drinker, so this never bothered me, but the British, you know, do like their little bit.

Q: Yes, they do.

HART: And he said, "Here, I've put this flask," and she said, "I haven't a place to put this, Colin. Don't give it to me now." And he said, "Well, Jane will carry it for you." So he put it in my bag and, of course, the plagued thing leaked and it went all over my evening clothes.

Q: Oh, no.

HART: And there was a time when I thought maybe it was the British Empire, the Lion biting again, but I didn't ... The first thing, I got up there and unpacked, I was reeking of Irish whiskey!

Q: So, you really had to be a diplomat's wife about it. (Laugh)

HART: So I said to her, "You know, I'm afraid the inevitable has come," and the two of us stood by the bowl as I went and poured the rest down the drain, because we knew we didn't want to smell.

Q: What about your clothes?

HART: I had to rub the smell out. It was really a mess. One of the dresses was impossible to fix, and I couldn't wear it. So I had to wear one dress twice. These were big formal affairs. We ladies got all dressed up in long dresses and wilted at two o'clock in the morning as we sat out in the mist, you know.

Q: Yes.

HART: ... and exchanged pleasantries with all the important ladies in the Kingdom. There were, I believe, a thousand arm chairs lined up. They'd been flown in and lined up. The mother, Princess Iffat, greeted every single guest at least once. She had to take her shoes off. She was dressed in the most beautiful Balenciaga gown and emeralds at her throat and emeralds at her ears, gorgeous emeralds and diamonds. And even the slaves, the former slaves, the house retainers, were all in this gorgeous jewelry. It was somewhat arresting to see all these princesses in almost identical diamond bracelets, just quantities of them, that day. It was really something to see. The food had all been catered. They'd all had their hair done by Alexandre flying in from Paris. And the food had all been catered from Paris and flown in. The flowers, too, had been done, I believe, by someone in Holland and all flown in. It was just a fantastic affair.

Q: What part of the wedding did you see? Did you see the bride or was she all veiled up?

HART: Oh, yes, the bride you certainly do see.

Q: It's different.

HART: She comes in and, in this case, was put on a dais, where she sat with her eyes lowered. And then, at a given moment, there was a signal given, and all these women started *u-luh-laying*.

And this is the signal for all the ladies to veil up, guests and attendants.

Q: Guests, too?

HART: Not us Westerners, of course, but the rest. And they all veil up and in comes the groom, looking extremely handsome in his snow white abba. He throws out gold coins or he did throw out gold coins, so here were these women trying to hold their veils and scampering up on chairs trying to grab the gold coins.

Q: What kind of veil did you have?

HART: I didn't wear a veil. Sometimes I did, if I thought we were going to meet the King or a Prince at the airport, something like that, I did, because I thought for the public I should. But there were so many Western diplomats' wives. I think there might have been as many as eight of us, six, seven, eight of us, and we all agreed that on these weddings we would go dressed as we would to an elegant affair in the West. It was a closed affair. There were not going to be any men, except that man. The gates were closed when we went in.

Q: You didn't put a napkin over your head or something? (Laughs)

HART: No. It wasn't as if we were going to be suspected of anything, you know. Everything was control led.

Q: And you didn't get a gold coin?

HART: We were given all kinds of favors, the usual thing. I have it even now, a beautiful Limoges box filled with almonds and things. We were given lovely little favors each time. Then we had this magnificent meal, and how they did chocolate souffle for a thousand women, I don't know! But they had chocolate souffle for dessert. They had on the table a model of a beautiful house with lights inside, all furnished. Somebody had done that.

Q: My goodness. In what? Made out of what?

HART: It was made out of building material, but it was light and delicate as if it had been done by a Japanese or Korean. It looked like an Arab house all furnished inside and then little lights. This was on the table as if for good luck.

Q: Oh, my.

HART: It was quite a wedding that way, yes.

Q: And now he's here, you say?

HART: Prince Bandar is here as Ambassador to the United States.

Q: With the same wife?

HART: Yes indeed, a lovely poised youthful-looking lady today.

Q: He hasn't gotten rid of her? (Laughs) Also, in 1962, Saudi Arabia refused to renew the U.S. Air Force in Dhahran, do you remember that?

HART: Yes.

Q: Could you refresh my memory as to why they did that to us? They didn't want us there? Was it over Israel?

HART: Well, I think we had a lot of small differences, but basically, it was over Israel. But my husband would really have to answer to the details on that. They were, the differences ... their enemies were always telling them that the special relationship they had with us was going to lead to American Imperialism. I don't think that any of the rulers of Saudi Arabia ever believed that.

Q: They never thought that?

HART: But on the other hand, it had gone rather far with Saud that quite a few unsavory characters had gotten into his retinue and were not doing us any good.

Q: But Faisal was more ...

HART: He'd been a diplomat. He'd been a diplomat, he'd seen the world. He'd been to the Court of St. James. He knew the difference between Colonialism and what we were ... our economic interests. He could see a difference there. All of his life, all his regime, he understood the relationship quite well, I thought.

Q: What did the Yemeni ... Was it a revolution or were they overthrown?

HART: That was a very interesting and somewhat comic thing that took place. The Nasser people had thought that they had a whole group of young supporters in Saudi Arabia, particularly in the military. Even some of the businessmen had talked pro-Nasser, because he was quite lionized throughout the whole Arab world. One morning, we woke up and learned from our military attaché that during the night somebody had dropped a whole bunch of military equipment at a series of drops in the Arabian Peninsula. He'd been flying over and seen a couple of these. He wondered what they were and he said only in one case did he see anybody coming by with a truck. So, of course, my husband and the military reported this to the Saudi Defense Department. They said, "Well, where did you see them?"

All this was quietly done. All that dropped equipment was picked up and brought to the public square, and actually, as if they had expected it, they had guards there. They either dropped them ... some of them we know they dropped in the wrong place, out in the middle of nowhere, poor drops ... but other cases, the people they thought were supporters simply didn't respond. So the

Saudi Government brought a lot of this stuff to the central square in Jeddah and set it up there and said, "Look, this is what was supposed to go into the hands of the enemy, who were supposed to overthrow our Government." I think I can honestly say that, up until that time, Saudi Arabia was a bunch of tribes headed by a leader, but, as of that day, they were a country. Nasser created Saudi Arabia.

Q: I see. It was a unifying thing.

HART: Because they all suddenly realized with great calm and clarity that because of their oil and wealth, they were a target, and they've never forgotten it since.

Q: Then the Yemen ... what? ... became a part of Saudi Arabia?

HART: The Egyptians invaded Yemen ...

Q: Yes.

HART: ... and the Saudis became convinced, because of these drops and other signs, that Nasser had ideas of taking over. So they were supporting the other side. They were supporting the legal royal family. And in the end, the War became so expensive, that Egypt had to withdraw. It was too costly to them and it didn't work out, but part of the reason it didn't work out was because the Saudis were assiduously supporting the other side.

Q: And your husband had been accredited to the Yemen?

HART: My husband had earlier been accredited to the Kingdom of Yemen and to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, so these were delicate times for him.

Q: Yes.

HART: Yes, because the Iraqis also had aspirations for Kuwait, and my husband's appointment as U.S. Ambassador seemed to quell that slightly. But we lost. The Government of Yemen was overthrown by the Revolution. I had been writing a chronology of the history of Yemen, which was subsequently published in The Middle East Journal.

Q: Oh? Could I have a copy of that?

HART: Wish I had an extra! It has to be in an old issue of the Journal. I don't know if I have a separate one or not, but it became the basis for the start of a history of Yemen which Bob Stookey has written and which is very advanced and carries on from where I had to leave off. We were not allowed to go back. We made two long visits there, fairly good visits there, and Bob Stookey was the Chargé. The Government was overthrown, and a Revolutionary Government came in.

I think in connection with Yemen, one of the most comical things that happened to us was

presenting credentials there to the new Imam ... this was the last real Imam, Ahmed. He was under drugs. He'd had a terrible injury as a child in his arm. There was a bullet way up his arm here that made his arm double in size. He was in constant, hideous pain, so he took drugs and was propped up in bed. He seldom left his bed. Everybody in the world had given him presents, because they thought the country was so backward, they thought he needed a fire engine, they thought he needed binoculars. He had all this stuff stored away in a warehouse and he never used any of it. My husband was to present his credentials. As we moved forward, this absolutely wild-looking band of Yemenis came around, very fierce, little tiny people, with great, huge blue turbans wound around their heads, and in their hands a primitive sort of horn. They were playing something, and so it was a minute before ... as they were starting to move forward ... before I tugged Pete's sleeve and I said, "It's our National Anthem." And sure enough, they were trying to do our National Anthem, and you cannot imagine how it sounded! (Laughs)

They had no idea how to play it. So we stopped and we saluted this rag-tag group. I just had such a case of the giggles I could hardly stand there. They were all up to my shoulder. They were dressed in a sort of toga-like skirt and had little bandy legs and these huge blue turbans. They were chewing great cuds of *Qat* and were playing those ridiculous horns. We waited until they stopped, because we had no way of knowing at what point the Anthem was. But when they stopped, we went on marching. Pete went up and presented his gift and his speech and came back. Then we just had to have a good laugh. In short, the country was due for a revolution, overdue for a major change, as so many Middle Eastern countries have been, unfortunately.

Q: Wonderful story.

HART: We were a part of it.

Q: Did you travel to Kuwait?

HART: Yes, yes, and met the wonderful old Mrs. Dickson. Colonel Dickson wrote the definitive book on the Arabs of the desert, a wonderful book, which I have a copy of. He was still alive, and she was there, and they took us around. We went to an encampment and we called on the Royal family. We came down by helicopter. Then our little Embassy, so-called Embassy, was right on the beach there at the time. I think the Hilton Hotel is there now. There were still old dhows being made there, the old pearling dhows.

Q: Boats?

HART: Yes, dhows, the old pearling dhows and things were still being made at Kuwait, right opposite where Mrs. Dickson lived in this wonderful, ramshackle Kuwaiti house. I'll never forget her. She was really something ... English woman who had lived there for years. Violet Dickson. If there was ever anyone who was not a violet, it was she. If they had called her ... what should she have been? A gladioli maybe, but she certainly was not a violet. (Laughs)

A large woman with a very large bosom and a very commanding presence. She spoke Arabic like a tribal chieftain. She went out every weekend to the tribes. She taught me a lot. She was a

fantastic woman.

Q: You listed her as one, yes, on your biographic sheet, as one of the outstanding persons you had met.

HART: Outstanding woman.

Q: Did you mention that there was a locust invasion?

HART: Oh boy!

Q: It's interesting, because we had a locust invasion in Pakistan in 1962.

HART: You've seen it, you know what it is.

Q: And you had one in Jeddah?

HART: Did you?

Q: I just saw on television the other night where it said they're coming out again in North Africa or something.

HART: I don't know which makes you feel more helpless, I really don't. I've never seen anything like the number of those locusts. It makes you feel totally powerless.

Q: Do you know where they came from?

HART: They were supposedly hoppers down on the edge of the Rub'al-Khali, and this was before the locust missions had really fanned out totally. There was apparently a huge infestation down there that nobody caught. Nobody did anything about. You have to catch it in the hopper stage. If you don't, it's too late. And they took off and they came and pared us right down to nothing. There was nothing left, but oleander. And then, immediately after ...

Q: Even that they took in Pakistan.

HART: The oleander?

Q: Yes, the oleander. They took everything. It looked like a total shipwreck ... whole trees ...

HART: Yes, whole trees.

Q: No wonder the American pioneers ...

HART: Did you have the birds coming after the locusts?

Q: Yes, I believe so.

HART: Isn't that fascinating? Two waves of birds following the locusts.

Q: No wonder the people on the prairies in America went nuts. Have you read Giants in the Earth?

HART: Oh, dear. It must have been awful, because everything you have goes. But you can ... they eat the locusts ... so they did harvest the locust. They're big there. These are like that, yes.

Q: They're like grasshoppers.

HART: Yes.

Q: Of course, the Pakistanis said our locusts came from the Rajasthan desert in India, and it was the Indians' fault that they were sending them to Pakistan to plague them. (Laughs)

HART: Well, there are huge areas of desert in Arabia where nobody goes. That's why it's called the Great Empty Quarter. There's very little population there, so it's very difficult to check on it. But now they do it by air. They do considerable monitoring. The Saudi Government is bent on it, because now they have great wheat crops and things that they've invested huge amounts of money in, so they have to watch it.

Q: What about the flood then? Was that ...?

HART: Well, this was ...

Q: In 1963?

HART: Yes, this was equally terrifying. It began to be very hushed and black all around us and extremely dead quiet and oppressive. All the animals tried to come in the house. We knew something big was coming, but we didn't quite know what. And suddenly, this wall ... first of sand ... a wall of sand, and then, after the wall of sand, this wall of water hit us. It seemed to come from all directions. We'd just never had anything like it. And lightning!

Q: Where were you?

HART: We were in Jeddah and we were all at home, My husband saw it and was alarmed and came home. Everyone saw it and thought, you know, instinctively went for home. It was mounting. It took almost an hour to mount.

Q: Was there any high ground you could have fled to? Or no, it's all low?

HART: It was a long way to high ground.

Q: Yes.

HART: Too far to go in an hour's time.

Q: Sure.

HART: And it just hit! It was so hard when it hit that it drove many, many birds to the ground. A lot of them were drowning and, of course, all the animals tried to come in. We barricaded things up and we just waited. It rained and it rained and it rained and it rained. We thought this might be like Noah. We might disappear, because the sand becomes enmired, and you wouldn't be able to drive out. You couldn't go anywhere. You'd have to do that before it hits, because it's hopeless to move once it hits.

Q: And this came from the open sea?

HART: Well, we were right on the sea. Our house was right on the sea.

Q: And what is the sea there?

HART: The Red Sea.

Q: The Red Sea.

HART: Right on the Red Sea.

Q: And that was what had come up?

HART: And it came, I suppose, from the south up the Sea. But anyway, when it finally stopped, all the roads which were really gullies had become canals, and all of our properties were just mush. So everybody was stuck wherever he was. They had built the houses on all different levels, so you might be sitting high with a swimming pool beside you or your house might be in the middle of a lake with the whole first floor underneath. The whole town was ...

Q: ... as bad as an earthquake, really.

HART: Yes. It was a total reordering of things. In the middle of all this, the Bedu tribesmen in the Village came out with pots and pans and started to celebrate. We had a nearby palm frond village. These villagers came tearing out and they started celebrating and dancing and singing, out there in the middle of the pouring rain.

Q: Why?

HART: We thought they'd lost their minds. About a month later, we found out why. It was the only time I ever saw the whole desert bloom. And it was a sight!

Q: Oh?

HART: It was just gorgeous. They say it's an average of every seven to eight years ...

Q: Yes?

HART: That they have a storm like that, anywhere, any given place. Very little rain, but when it does, it's always over the hill. It's not where you are. It rains, but it's spotty and it's small. Very little for animals to graze on.

Q: You don't have a monsoon that comes at times?

HART: Yemen and the Asir only. Well, what tells you is that a desert buttercup can go four or five years without water, The seed will still be good and then that four or five years when it rains, it will come up dutifully. It's been there, sitting there, all that time in that terrible heat. So that tells you how often they don't get it and how often they get it. But it was sensational, everything, little flowers and little things start cropping up everywhere.

Q: So, the American Residence ... was it shifted at all? Were its foundations rocked or ...?

HART: Oh, we had a lot of water damage. We had water damage. The water came down. We had flat roofs, so it all piled up on the roof and then came through the various rooms and into the kitchen. As I said, we had all these birds coming alive in the kitchen that the children rescued and tried to bring to, and the kitchen was a mess. It took us a couple of days to get back into (shape), but the problem was supply, because we couldn't use our roads and we couldn't go anywhere. It was even a week later, we got stuff.

Q: Did you have airlifts or anything?

HART: I've forgotten. There were a few guys with four-wheel drive who got to a certain point, and then there were others who could walk to that point and pick things up and bring things. You know, we worked various things out ...

Q: Sure.

HART: ... that we could manage. But it was, I guess, it was a week to ten days before it went down enough that we could (get out).

Q: Unfortunately, it didn't drown the cockroaches, I suppose. (laughs)

HART: I felt that year we had more bugs than ever.

Q: (Laughs) Well, now, let's move on a little bit. In August of 1965, your husband went as Ambassador to Turkey. And you were there until October 1968.

HART: Yes. That was our last big posting.

Q: Three years. And this, too, was another Islamic Republic, but much more secular, I would imagine, than Saudi Arabia.

HART: You're right. It is purposely secular, though the country is quite strongly Islamic.

Q: And did you really enjoy that tremendously?

HART: Wonderful experience. The Turks are very strong people It's a pleasure to get to know them, particularly the women who had been given their freedom under Ataturk. Many were educated and doing interesting things, and it was a pleasure to meet them ...

Q: Yes.

HART: ... judges and doctors and lawyers and congresswomen.

Q: Yes. Since time is running out, I want to ask you about the Cyprus issue which was raging at the time.

HART: Yes.

Q: Did you feel that we took sides with Turkey or did you want to or did you at that time feel either side, Turkey or Greece, should win out? Or did you want Cyprus to be totally itself?

HART: I think we were so busy trying to report what actually was going on and what it was our duty to say had happened. We came very close to a war and avoided it when we were there. This was thanks to teamwork everywhere, teamwork within Turkey and teamwork outside of Turkey. It happened that all of us were friends. We knew the Ambassador in Cyprus, the Ambassador in Greece. We'd all known each other, so we knew we could depend, we understood each other, shall I say.

Q: That was Rodger Davies in Cyprus?

HART: It was Toby Belcher. Rodger was killed over this question seven years later.

Q: Oh, yes, Belcher.

HART: And Phil Talbott and Pete. Then we had Cy Vance come out, if you remember.

Q: Yes. Now, why did he come?

HART: He came because it got to the point of war and it was felt that each side would say that one of these three ambassadors might be prejudiced, so they needed another voice. He was to come out and mediate. The very first thing he said was indicative. He said, "Mr. Prime Minister,

is there no way we can find to give you what you require by peaceful means?" And I think this did slow up things, because they started talking about peaceful means. They delayed the war. In the end, the timing ... they couldn't surprise anymore, and so it stopped. Four years later, it was to come, so I think it was in the cards.

Q: Yes.

HART: *Enosis* had been offensive to the Turks, because, in fact, there were many, many Turks on Cyprus. This idea that it was a Greek island was simply untenable for all those Turks. There'd been many Greek incursions into Turkish enclaves. I think both sides have arguments. There's no doubt about that, so I won't pretend to say which is right. But I will say that it reached the point where the Turks had just had enough from Makarios and Grivas and were not going to put up with any more. We told our people, "You have to prepare for a conflict within NATO, because Turkey's Army is simply not going to take any more, and that's that." We visited towns over there where the Greeks had just come in and shot people in their beds ... Turkish towns ...

Q: Right.

HART: ... terrorists.

Q: The majority (on Cyprus) are Turks?

HART: A lot of them are Turks, but no, I think there's not a majority or minority situation, because they keep importing and exporting people. Both sides were intransigent. Now at the present time, the number of Turks is larger than when we were there, because they won that northern part of the Island and they've moved some people in. I'm sure you know.

Q: Yes.

HART: Before, the Greeks had said this is all ours, including the Turkish enclaves, but that was equally wrong. They both ... neither one can really rule that Island alone. It's got to be ... and yet, the idea of a new independent government in Cyprus has never taken hold.

Q: But isn't it working now? Separated as it is?

HART: It's sort of working.

Q: At least there's peace.

HART: But I think the Greeks, if there's the slightest excuse, would take it back if they could. It's why there's a pro-Communist government in Greece today, because they lost that war. They played it wrong and they lost it. They're not going to stay lost if they had the slightest chance there. It's a very attractive Island, you know ...

Q: Sure, I know.

HART: ... and both groups have their hangups and both groups want that Island alone. If they would get together and have a republic, there might be some hope, but it's just as bad as Ireland ... just as bad as Arab/Israel. It will come up again.

Q: What was that book ... Bitter Lemon ... that was about that (conflict)?

HART: Lemons.

Q: Bitter Lemons. Wonderful book.

Now, was Rodger Davies (the Honorable Rodger Paul Davies, 1921-1974, AE/P Cyprus, assassinated at post, August 19, 1974) assassinated then or later?

HART: Later.

Q: Later. He was a good friend.

HART: Ah, we were back here ... a very good friend, in fact, he and Sally had dated ... we'd known each other for many, many, many years. And it was a purposeful assassination.

Q: It was?

HART: Oh, yes. It was not an accident.

Q: Oh, I thought a bullet had gone through the wall or something.

HART: Yes, a penetrating bullet right to him.

Q: It surely was!

HART: It was purposeful, we know that.

Q: And she (Mrs. Davies) had died just ...?

HART: She had just died of cancer, just before he went.

Q: Yes.

HART: And he had the two children to take care of. So, of course, we had to attend all the memorials in California and here. We've kept track of the children until now. They went with her mother ...

Q: Yes.

HART: ... when their father died also. So that was a universal tragedy. And they lost ... everybody lost a friend, because Rodger was really a very dispassionate Foreign Service officer. I don't think he was in anybody's pocket that I know of.

Q: It's sad. And Vance came in ... Cyrus Vance came ...?

HART: Yes, he came. Oh, that was very moving. He stayed with us. He came to try to stop the crisis, in 1967, and he stayed with us. He succeeded admirably. He and Foreign Minister Calayangil, and the President of the Turkish Republic really negotiated. He did a good deal of winging back and forth among them.

Q: Who was the President (of Turkey) then?

HART: I believe it was Cavdet Sunay. Earlier General [Cemal] Gursel was President, but I believe this was President Sunay.

I will never forget. He (Cyrus Vance) was eating breakfast at lunch and dinner ... I mean, he didn't know what he was doing as far as meals and sleep were concerned. He came to stay with us and we said, "What do you want? Breakfast, lunch or dinner? We'll bring you whatever you want." And we brought him what he asked for. There it sat on a tray on a table like this, because it wasn't a meal hour or anything. Here he was, sound asleep in a wing chair with a Bible on his lap and an uneaten meal in front of him, absolutely dead out. It's a picture I remember so well, because it was rather typical of him. He's quite a religious man, very quiet and intense person. He had just given it his all. There was nothing more to give, and there he sat. I wanted a picture of that. I thought, "if this is negotiating, don't think it's glamorous, kids."

Q: That's right.

HART: He was really ... but he succeeded. He didn't have a war. [In] the middle of it all, I was asked to a Zaccharia Sofrasi (Zaccharia's meal).

Q: What is that?

HART: A lady I had been seeing socially said, "You have to come. I know how busy you are, but it will only be for five minutes. I went by, and there was a room lit only by candles and all kinds of foods on the table ... raisins, nuts, little bits of this and that, many kinds. And she whispered to me, "You light this candle and you put it here and you go and you take one of each of these kinds of food. You eat just one bite of each and then you come back and make your prayer again. And you leave." And after, she was coming into the door and she said, "I hope your prayer was for peace."

Q: Ah.

HART: And I said, "It was. How did you guess?" And the next morning it was peace. I realized that many of the people I was seeing were, in fact, somehow Armenian or Greek as well as

Turks, and if this thing had gone off, they would have paid, you know. They were so hopeful there wouldn't be a war. There were many people, many parts of that population that were just ...
Q: ... hanging on.

HART: ... hanging on.

Q: You mentioned the Fourth of July party in Ankara. Was that a big, special thing?

HART: Oh, huge, huge, and everybody came, though not as great as the Fourth of July celebration in Jeddah, which was enormous.

If you can imagine celebrating the Fourth of July at 125 degrees [in] the sand, these kids would get layered with mustard and sand and Coca Cola ... (laughs) ... and we put on the record (of the National Anthem), but it would be so hot that the record would start melting as it went around. It would start: "Oh, say can you Seeeeeeee ..." (Laughs) ... and you couldn't see and you couldn't play it, and everybody would be standing there like this, and the record would be (running down).

Q: Oh, that's cute.

HART: We gave that up the second time. (Laughs)

Q: I love that. (Laughs)

HART: Three lonely Marines on the desert in the sun. (Laughs)

Q: What did you mean by "tawcs" in Ankara?

HART: Oh, "TAWCS" is the Turkish American Women's Cultural Society. I could tell how good Turkish/American relations were by how many attended the meetings, because the Turks are very patriotic, and if relations are good, you'd get these enormous meetings with everybody turning out and wanting to exchange Turkish lessons ... Turkish/American English lessons ... with you, and everybody attentive. When relations are bad, things disappear from the Treasury, and the ladies don't come and, you know, it sloughs off.

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Spouse: Parker Hart

Spouse Entered Service: 7/6/38 Left Service: 9/30/69

You Entered Service: 6/8/49 Left Service: 9/30/69

Status: Spouse of retired ambassador

Posts:

1949 Dhahran (Consul General)
1951 Washington, DC (National War College)
1952 Washington, DC (Director, Office of NEA)
1955 Cairo, Egypt (Counselor of Embassy)
1958 Amman, Jordan (Ambassador)
1961-65 Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (Ambassador)
1961-62 Yemen (Minister)
1962-63 Kuwait (First Ambassador)
1965-68 Ankara, Turkey (Ambassador)
1968-69 Washington, DC (Assistant Secretary of State; Near East and South Asian Affairs)
1969 Director, Foreign Service Institute

Spouse's Position: Ambassador

Place/Date of birth: New York City; August 26, 1920

Maiden Name: Jane Constance Smiley

Parents (Name, Profession)

Dr. and Mrs. Dean F. Smiley, Physician and Medical Administrator, Public Health

Schools (Prep, University)

Ithaca, New York, high school

Cornell University, B.A.

School for Advanced International Studies

Date of Marriage: April 23, 1949

Children: Two daughters

Profession: Editor and Teacher

Volunteer and Paid Positions held:

A. At Post: Substitute teacher in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Editor for old OSS in Cairo, Egypt, prior to marriage.

B. In Washington DC: Teacher of English, Editor for OSS and Middle East Institute Journal, Book Review Editor, and briefly in Executive Secretariat Office during Dean Acheson's time, 1947-48; all occupations prior to marriage.

End of interview