

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Project
Foreign Service Spouse Series

DOROTHY ROBINSON KIDDER

Interviewed by: Jewell Fenzi
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INTERVIEW

Q: This is Jewell Fenzi on Wednesday, June 1, 1988. I'm interviewing Dorothy Robinson Kidder at her home in Washington, DC. Mrs. Kidder was a Foreign Service spouse from 1938 to 1968, and served with her husband at a variety of posts from Montreal, Canada, to Sydney and Canberra in Australia, Belém and Rio in Brazil, Saigon, Paris, Cambodia, with various Washington assignments in between. Mrs. Kidder is the spouse of retired ambassador Randolph Kidder.

KIDDER: Mostly I have picked out things that I thought were amusing. But I don't know whatever relevance they might have.

Q: These are the things that--when we do a manuscript--will sell the book. They'll be a part of a greater whole starting with World War I and moving forward. You came into the Foreign Service during the Depression, did you not?

KIDDER: No! It was later than that -- '38.

Q: Then the Depression was over? The Depression was over around '36, '37?

KIDDER: It was bad '31 through '33, I think it was over by '35, wasn't it?

Q: Perhaps the worst was over by '35. So that was not a factor, was it -- your husband wasn't one of those early officers who was told, "Well, yes, you have a posting but you'll have to get yourself there."

KIDDER: No, he was not. He took his written exam in September '37. My mother was a (pausing) I don't want to say "reactionary" but a principled lady. And she didn't want us to be married unless Randy had a job. The orals were going to be in December. And there

was a great deal of pressure, because if he passed the orals, he would then have to go to whatever post he was going to be assigned to in March. Consequently, since his orals were going to be December 19, the date when we might be able to be married -- if we were going to be allowed to be married -- would be February 5. And I remember I went unprotestingly and -- how it points up the change in times! -- dutifully and unprotestingly through addressing of envelopes, choosing bridesmaids, choosing bridesmaids' dresses, my own dress, et cetera, ALL in suspense; depending on what was going to happen on December 19. And I did it; I protested, but did it.

Well, he passed, and he passed well. And we were married February 5. We did have some honeymoon time. And in March we were sent to Montreal, which in a way was to me a big disappointment. I was hoping for something more esoteric, more exotic, and to hear a language that I would be using all the time -- a new language, I love languages. And the result was that in Montreal all that we saw of French life during that period was a sign written in two languages. We lived in Westmont, the English section. One did see the French, but infrequently at that time. That was before General de Gaulle had come out with "Québec pour les Québécois." (laughter) In Montreal the English were very much in evidence.

I had a child in Montreal, Michael. Then we were transferred, actually leaving Montreal on September 1, 1939 to go to school in Washington, arriving there on September 3, the day of the declaration of war and the moving into Poland. In those days, the Foreign Service school took place in the basement of Old State and the gentleman who ran it was Clare Hubbell. We had a glorious lady called Miss Bassel, who was to teach us manners and behavior and protocol and general good demeanor, and I loved Miss Bassel, she had such style; she was wonderful. And I'm always grateful to Miss Cornelia Bassel for what she did teach me.

And then I remember going to a fortune teller in Washington. We were all just spoiling to know what was going to be our next post, and the fortune teller was one who was reputed to be a fortune teller to senators and to very high-placed people. I think she was in California Street, a non-fortune-telling area of Washington. I remember going with a colleague's wife and hearing that our new post's name would begin with the letter "s."

Well, we did get a post -- Sydney, "S"; Australia. We had a perfectly wonderful time for those four months of school; I must say, those four months were marvelous. They were the days of the grandes dames, Mrs. Beale and Mrs. Bliss and Mrs. Bacon, and through friendships of my parents and Randy's we were invited to come to their houses albeit well below the salt, but we did have an awfully entertaining and exciting and amusing beginning in the Foreign Service.

And then we went to Sydney. I was really undone at the idea of going so far away. I'd been undone over Montreal, seeing I wasn't having any exciting languages, and then when the time that there were no languages but there was distance, (she laughs) I didn't like that at all. And we had one child. I'd been lucky to have a nurse, and then a nanny, and I

wasn't any too clever about taking care of a small infant. We had another Foreign Service family going out named Horner. They were going to New Zealand, we were going to Sydney. I must say we had a very tight time of it on the way out. We went out on the Mariposa, a Matson Line, ship. In those days the Foreign Service allowed you minimum first class and I must say that trip was really quite comfortable but we did hang the diapers in the cabin and it always smelled of drying diapers. (laughter) Those were the days you didn't have disposable diapers.

Q: This was before Pearl Harbor?

KIDDER: It was, oh, it was, because Pearl Harbor's going to come into the story. We set out to join the aborigines in the war canoes. Instead of which, when we got there, what did we find? We found the Colonel de Basil's Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, which was stuck in Sydney, because most of the dancers had White passports, no nationality. Well, I had always loved ballet, and done ballet. And there I was, with the three "baby ballerinas" -- remember the days of Toumanova, Riabouchinska and Baronova? And Sono Osato? And all of those. And we got to know each other terribly well, took ballet lessons with them, and my husband's great joy was to learn how to do fish-lifts with Sono Osato. We had an absolutely dizzying time with the Ballet. They were there for about three months until their passports were sufficiently well regulated so that they could leave. It was really wartime in Australia, because the Australians were at that time in Tobruk, which was under siege, and the flower of the Sydney-siders, anyway, men of the Sydney Regiment, were all away.

And then before too long, we began to receive the units that came from Johns Hopkins. The Massachusetts General Medical Unit came to New Zealand and the Johns Hopkins Medical Unit came to Sydney, always expecting to go on up into the islands but they actually remained in Sydney. Sydney was terribly gay, oh Lord, we had a good time. I hate to tell you this but we were voted "nightclub couple of the week." (hearty laughter) Not exactly right for a third secretary.

Q: Well, back to Sydney and (laughing) nightclub couple of the week.

KIDDER: Oh, dear, oh, dear. My Lord, we had a good time. Then comes '42. I was having a baby. Her name was Charlotte, which everybody in Sydney called "Apple Charlotte," after their dessert of the same name, Brown Betty to us. We had really quite a funny appellation in Sydney because my husband's nickname is Randy, and my nickname is Dotty. In English vernacular, randy means "a wild unbuckled character" and dotty means somebody who's quite mad. (laughter) And I'm not sure that our behavior didn't exactly correspond. (prolonged hearty laughter) But anyway, we did have a tremendous time.

Then along comes 1941. It does get to be rather tense. Then comes Pearl Harbor. Charlotte was born on the day after Pearl Harbor. I remember there was great anxiety in the hospital, because we thought that what would happen would be that the Japanese

would come directly down through Darwin and attack Sydney and attack the coastline on northern Sydney, Brisbane. Well, actually they didn't but the panic was enormous. I remember the hospital was on a hill and trucks went rumbling up that hill and everybody was so unnerved that the patients were put under the bed.

Instead of spending two weeks after having a baby, as one did in those days, in the hospital in the bed, which I was (laughing) hoping for because we'd had such an hysterical time, I was spending most of it under the bed. But eventually I got out of the hospital, and was just recovering, and then one day came back from having done something downtown and found Randy talking to a very distinguished looking man whom I didn't know; talking very seriously to him. It was Francis B. Sayre who had come from the Philippines. I believe he held a very high post in the Philippines -- perhaps Governor-General, I'm not sure -- for us. And he had escaped the Philippines by submarine, come to Sydney, and was very strongly recommending that all dependents leave Sydney. I think he believed also that there might be an attack in that direction.

Randy unfortunately allowed himself to be persuaded by Sayre, whose son later became Dean Sayre of the National Cathedral [in Washington, DC]. There's more about that in his diaries, which Randy has kept since 1929. He has sixty years of diaries.

Q: And they're not in any university?

KIDDER: Not yet, because he's still writing. But they're not diaries in which there would be anything Classified. I think some day they'll be interesting just from the standpoint of study, sociological study. And also they're extremely helpful to us, because as we lose our memory more and more, we can refer to the diaries. (she offers to look up the point about Dean Sayre) Dean Sayre was a very important personage in the Philippines, and when the Philippines fell he was ordered to leave as he did. And he came to Sydney incognito.

As a result of Francis B. Sayre, I was sent home with Mike, who was then two, and with Charlotte, then just three months. Then I was remarkably lucky and was able to return, leaving the children in Canada with a very, very dear friend, and I got back to Australia. By which time we'd been transferred to Canberra.

Canberra, in 1942, was a really very tiny spot. It was founded to placate or still the jealousies between Melbourne and Sydney, and there it was a completely rural town -- a bit more than a village but not much. And all the directions we ever gave each other was how many paddocks' distance one thing was from another. The parliamentarians were forced to meet in Canberra by law, and they didn't like it at all because there wasn't anything much to do. It just so happened that a cargo of Johnny Walker Black Label and other goodies which were headed for the Philippines, after they fell were deflected to the nearest legation. And our legation in Canberra was the nearest one. We were only -- I think we were the Minister, a Counselor, a Third Secretary, who was Randy, and a Commercial Attaché. That was all. Here we were with this great cargo of Johnny Walker Black Label in an area of Australia that was [affecting somber tone of voice] supposed to

be liquor-free. Anyone wishing to have hard liquor had to cross the borderline between what was known as Australian Capital Territory and the surrounding areas, which was a kind of illegal process, which people nevertheless did fairly frequently.

Then suddenly, here were the members of the American Legation having this extraordinary windfall. Randy and I knew that the popularity we enjoyed was directly related to the Johnny Walker Black Label and two other elements: I had been nominated by Mrs. Nelson Johnson, the wife of our Minister, as chairman of the Subcommittee of the Garden Army on the Distribution of Manures, which was also extremely important in those days -- actually crucial, because we all had to garden concentratedly to raise vegetables because all provender was destined for the troops -- ours and the Australians. So fare was lean, and therefore it mattered very much about the (laughing) helpful elements. And we had stored on one side of our garage crates of Johnny Walker Black Label and on the other side manure -- cow, horse, pig and chicken.

We were, as a result, extremely popular and knew why. Fortunately, didn't lose sight of the why.

Q: Whatever it takes!

KIDDER: Whatever it takes. And we also had a stockade of cockerels on which we practiced mayhem for our farewell parties. We were transferred in '43. We really had a perfectly wonderful time in Canberra, which now of course has grown into a true city, a capital. In fact, I'd like very much to go back and see what has happened. But that was a life that was very cozy and intimate. It always is so in small posts -- small in circumference. You have a better time than you do in a vast one because one is more interdependent. At our time the legation was housed in a split-level rambler on "Mugga Way." We only saw the beginnings of the Georgian house which, I understand, is a very beautiful embassy now.

So we get back. And the next place that we go to is Belém, in the Amazon. Which you know.

Q: Yes.

KIDDER: And in Belém, where we had our first experience with black magic. And that was really very difficult; very difficult.

Q: Do they call it "condomblé?"

KIDDER: Condomblé is a black magic but the word that principally means the dance, the procedure of application --

Q: What did they call it up there?

KIDDER: Oh, dear...

Q: Because they called the whole thing "condomblé" in Recife.

KIDDER: As they did in Bahia, also. Maybe they did, but I always thought that "condomblé" was the actual, as it was presented to me later, in Rio; but that was coming from Bahia. There was a man called José Pãe dos Santos, who was "imported" by a member of the French embassy. But that comes later. I was so interested in José Pãe dos Santos because of what happened to us in Belém. And that really is quite a story.

Where shall I begin it? By that time, Mike was five and Charlotte was three. We lived in the most extraordinary house which had belonged to two German ladies who had run a school in this house, which was square like a box, not very attractive, but it did have behind it a barn, which was going to be extremely useful to me because I taught Calvert there to a number of children of Brazilians, Anglo-Brazilians and Americans, all of which are one or two years behind from my teaching, I'm quite sure.

One of the German ladies became our governess. Her name was Dona Ruth Juliusberg and she was a remarkable lady with great sensitivity. We were extraordinarily fortunate to have her with us as she helped enormously in interpreting to us what Belém life was. Well, anyway, Charlotte began to be strangely ill. She got more and more so. Oh, I should preface the fact that I came to Belém with the children about nine months later than Randy, who'd already been installed, because it was very hard to determine that we were going to do this thing in that we had so many conflicting reactions and advice in Washington. "What? You're taking children to the Amazon? Why, it's infanticide." "What? You're not taking your children? Why, you're cowardly." Back and forth it went. Finally we just decided we'd go and try it out for three months, and if it was all that bad, well then I'd have to come back. But of course I never did come back.

But a situation developed which was unfortunate to say the least. I get there. I didn't get along with Randy's cook, whose name was Ydahlia. I made the mistake of firing her. Also I made the mistake of going out right afterwards, not realizing that after I had gone, imprecations by Ydahlia were made throughout the house -- that she was going to put a "hex" on it, that we would know that Ydahlia was working against us. And, strangely enough, before long it began to happen. I knew nothing of it; nobody said anything to me about Ydahlia's imprecations. And Charlotte became sickly, but really quite sickly, and feverish. We had addressed ourselves to the medical unit at the Val de Caes, which was a wartime unit of ours which saw about planes flying down to cross over to Asuncion and then go on over to Dakar. In addition the Rubber Development Corporation had a medical unit.

We addressed ourselves to a nurse there. Nobody could diagnose this strange fever the child had. One afternoon she and I were lying on the bed, my husband having gone back to the office. And literally it was like holding a little bird's hand, a little claw; it was a terrible sensation. I remember I was in a pique dressing gown -- I'll see it all my life -- and

there was a long drive leading down to a straight path bordered with perfectly horrible zinnias. I can never see zinnias no matter what they're like -- you know they grow rusty, they're the only thing that does; rusty at the bottom. Well, the bell rang at the gate and the garden boy Pedro went down to open the gate, actually more a portal than a gate. He opened it and then struggled to shut it again. And I sort of wondered what had happened. Then the door burst open again, enfolding Pedro, and up the drive, came this woman, Indian, Negroid, with a kind of insolent evil; you could just feel it in the walk. You know that picture called "High Yaller"? That's exactly what this woman was like. She clapped her hands, which as you recall was the way to ask for entrance; she did. Then I heard the little maid downstairs calling up "Dona Ruth, Dona Ruth" quietly so as not to disturb Charlotte and me. And Dona Ruth went downstairs, then she came up in a few minutes, looking very drawn.

"That woman," she said, "was applying for the position of cook." And while I was talking to her, it was very strange. Herminia, who was the laundress, came from the laundry. She stood at the back window. And Teresa, the little maid, didn't leave the door leading into the room where I was sitting, talking to this woman. And just as she said that, we heard Pedro, the garden boy who'd opened the garden door, who never spoke, calling with great anxiety in his voice, "Dona Ruth, Dona Ruth!" Meanwhile, I had seen this woman leave. Dona Ruth came downstairs, then came back up in a minute, and she said, "You know, this is it, it's really very serious." That was Pedro asking me, "You didn't keep her, you didn't keep her, did you?" "No," said Dona Ruth, "we didn't." "Ahhh," said Pedro, "she is such bad news. She comes from the island of Marajó and she is a witch. And she is sent by Ydahlia, who fears that the imprecations are going too slowly, and she was to enter our service and accelerate them."

Dona Ruth came to me and said to me, "You know, Mrs. Kidder, you are going to have the place exorcized. Because if you don't, everything is going to wither around you. The rest of the staff will leave, and nobody will serve you in the market, and you will just be a pariah." I said, "Well, Dona Ruth, I can't do that. As you know, the authorities don't recognize Black Magic. How can we go along with it?" She said, "Well, I don't know what to do but I suggest that you call Mrs. McCray."

Mrs. McCray, a wonderful lady, Nora McCray, was the wife of a British official who was the director of a streetcar network. You remember, the British started the bondes, and they were called that because of the bond that was floated to start the streetcar network. Kim McCray had lived in Belém something like 35 years. And dear Nora McCray was such a help and counselor in every way. So I went downstairs -- I can remember trying to remove my hand from Charlotte's very hot little hand -- and going down the stairs to the telephone, which was on the wall. Telephones in Belém very rarely worked because they were activated by electricity, which was activated by wood, and as it rained all the time, there were very few sparks. That afternoon, fortunately, there was one. And I woke Norma McCray from a siesta -- a thing you never did -- and told her what had happened.

She said, "Yes, Dottie, this is very, very serious. You HAVE to have the place exorcized

or you have to have some SEMBLANCE of exorcism. Something has to happen." I thought, "Nora, I don't know what it can be, what it can be, because Randy can't lend himself to this situation." Nora said, "I don't know, but think about it." And an idea came. Our property backed up on the property of a monastery, and the monks had very much hoped to entice Mike to be one of their pupils in a sort of daycare thing they ran. And to do so would have been in competition with what I was trying to do in the barn behind the house with Calvert system. But they did not desist, and they would frequently invite Mike over the fence by putting a ladder on the monastery side and a ladder on our side and Mike would go up, and he'd see all the interesting things that they had over there like animals of one kind or another. And it suddenly occurred to me, "This is our one chance -- that Mike could invite them to come see our animals -- we did have some chickens, a turtle tank, a few rabbits, and probably enough to interest the monks anyway from the curiosity of wanting to see how we lived.

So that was planned for a certain Sunday, late Sunday morning. And I kept all the staff in. We put up the ladder and we ceremoniously invited them over. We arranged with Mike how they would walk by the pen where the rabbits were, and the pen with the chickens, and by the turtle tank and underneath the avocado tree and right through the center of the house, then back into the barn where our "schoolhouse" was. There they would be offered a collation. I had my heart in my mouth as I watched them go back up the ladder, over the wall, down the other side. At which moment Mike waving, we all waving, saying goodbye and the staff standing around looking pretty impressed. There was no holy water scattered, there were no prayers made; just this presence. And then we let the staff out. And the next day we had a very nice person present herself as cook. Charlotte's fever receded.

Well, having got that close to what it meant, then when we went to Rio and we had this possibility of studying White Magic with Joãozinho Pãe dos Santos who came from Bahia, the center of the condomblé, I did study with him and became -- well, I became a White Magic Priestess of the Second Degree. (pausing) Have you had enough of Black Magic? I could go on-

Q: No, no -- I of course got involved in it too in Recife --

KIDDER: Did it damage you?

Q: No --

KIDDER: You didn't have anything happen to you?

Q: No, but I called in a priestess at one point because I had seven little automobile accidents -- one not so little; and I called her in. We had a little session right there on my terrace with another American friend who had been ill like your Charlotte. And she told us what to do.

KIDDER: And what did you have to do?

Q: Well, I had to light candles and I had to realize that someone had indeed put an evil eye on me. I think it was also the ex-cook. I had to be aware that I was stronger than she and that I was going to win out in this little episode.

KIDDER: Were going to resist it.

Q: Yes. And truly, there were seven automobile accidents and each one got a little bit worse. And my American friend was constantly ill, constantly ill.

KIDDER: Pretty awful, isn't it.

Q: Yes. So the priestess came. And she made our patron saint, Preto Velho [Old Black, a good condomblé saint] and I lit my candles. The only thing I couldn't quite "go" was that cheap cologne (she laughs) you were supposed to scatter hither and yon. (laughing) I couldn't do that.

KIDDER: But not cachaca? Did you do any cachaca [rum]?

Q: There didn't seem to be cachaca involved. It was mostly the candles, and state of mind.

KIDDER: The state of mind is very interesting, because something that happened -- not to me personally -- but in Rio I got called into being a part of an exorcism in Rio of an absolutely beautiful Rio girl. But do you want more of that on this, or shall we move on to something else?

Q: No, please go ahead. I think this is part of Foreign Service life. And that's what we're recording! I mean, it was part of your life and it was --

KIDDER: Part of yours. Seven accidents! Well, this story had to do with -- her name was Branca Mello Franco Alvez. Actually, she was related to the then -- no, the shortly after ambassador who was a great friend of Elsie Lyons and a great friend of ours whose name was Mauricio Nabuco. Do you remember him by any chance? Those were the years '50 to '53 --

Q: We were there 26 years later.

KIDDER: Mauricio would have gone back by then; he was a very successful Brazilian ambassador. This girl was very high-born and perfectly beautiful; God, she was beautiful. I will say that she did have a husband -- he's now dead -- who was quite a coureur. I think that possibly this was the root of the problem. Anyway, the problem was that she suddenly began to develop a strange allergy. Her beautiful face was swollen, there were great plaques of itchy red things all over her body and her face. It was almost like an attack of shingles. And she went to the dermatologists, who all tried different things,

nothing for it. So she began to think, "Well, maybe something is happening." She was a Brazilian girl. So she addressed herself to her cook, or possibly it was the other way around -- the cook finally took pity on this frantic effort to see how this thing could be cured.

She came to her and said, "Madame, I think I know what's happening. And if you will afford me time off, I will go back to San Cristobon," which was a surrounding area which was known for Magic of both varieties. And she said, "I will try to ferret out what is happening." She came back a day or so later and said that she had found the way. She thought she knew the source, she also thought she knew how to combat the problem. She would send her a priestess.

Branca would require four witnesses. Branca knew what we'd been through and knew what our interest was in it, so she asked me to be one; and she had three other Brazilian friends to serve as witnesses, all pretty sophisticated girls. The meeting was to be at two o'clock in the afternoon and it was in a -- how should I say it -- I guess you'd say in a very sophisticated area of Rio, beyond Copacabana, it was in Ipanema. It was on the beach, it was Viera Soto. We lived on Avenida Mendonca about four blocks behind.

So, it was at two o'clock in the afternoon, and everything was perfectly normal. I went to meet with the others and we waited with Branca's cook. Poor Branca: completely disfigured; and the three girls and myself; quite nervous, not knowing what would happen. And eventually there was a clap at the door and it was opened by the cook. And in came Dona Dora. Now Dona Dora looked as though she might be 35. She was very trimly dressed in a short white skirt, a bahiana blouse [white ruffled blouse typical of Bahia] but not an extravagant ruffly one and very attractively pressed. And she looked very simple and attractive. If you met her on the street you wouldn't have had any idea.

With her was a somewhat older, heavier woman. The cook introduced Branca and the rest of us to them. And not the reverse, as might have been expected. And the acolyte, the heavier woman, asked if she might go off into another room -- no, Dona Dora asked if she might go and change, which she did, and left the acolyte to tell us that what was going to be needed was a glass full of cachaca [rum], on which a crucifix was then laid with a rosary that curled around the glass, and she would need an empty orange crate, which there was, for Dona Dora to sit on -- not a stool but an orange crate. And how we were to be disposed around the room, how we the witnesses had to take off all jewelry, how we had to sit on the floor with our legs extended and our arms extended something so nothing would be cross, nothing would impede the movement of the Spirit.

And now Branca, who had masses of black hair, was told to loosen it, to take out all the hairpins. She was told that she would stand barefoot, in her slip, before Dona Dora. Dona Dora came back in. She had on one of those bahiana skirts and a more ruffly blouse. Ah, but she still was extremely composed and she was 35 years old. And the Venetian blinds were pulled down, and the light was sort of slanting in this way. And Dona Dora sat on her crate and Branca stood before her. We were on the floor, two on each side.

Dona Dora began a kind of imprecation -- that mixture, you know, of the -- oh, what is the name of the language that they speak, I can't think at the moment, it's a mixture of the African conversion.

Q: The gods are called orixas, aren't they? Xango?

KIDDER: She begins the invocation, which is a mixture of the Lord's Prayer and an invitation to the gods, and so on. It becomes more and more accelerated, and as it does so -- I assure you. It was two o'clock in the afternoon and none of us had anything to drink or anything other than our own nervousness and anxiety about this. And out of that figure that was 35 came a crone. (with slow emphasis) I saw a crone.

Q: It's absolutely astonishing.

KIDDER: And you've lived the same thing?

Q: Yes.

KIDDER: It's true, isn't it.

Q: Yes, change of--

KIDDER: The knuckles, the teeth, the gums, the voice -- everything. As you know what it's like, I won't go into endless detail.

Q: And how they do it.

KIDDER: And how they do it, I don't know. The purpose is to rid the suffering subject of the evil. After further incantations and prayer, the character of Dona Dora gave way to the appearance of a man, a young, virile man dressed in a skirt, with a kind of strange [in mysterious tone of voice] sort of fury of evil. And he walked around that room and he grabbed each one of us to our feet, and I really felt that I was being held in the grip of something really frightening; and allowed to drop back down again as he moved about.

By that time the acolyte had asked for an ironing board, just the flat top of an ironing board, and told Branca to stand on the ironing board. By that time, the light was coming directly down on the ironing board, almost like stabbing it. There was Branca with her black hair, the white slip, and this capering creature who was pacing on all four sides, emptying little bags which turned out to be gunpowder, and then lighting them. And they went off with POOFM and BRRROOOM and smoke. And there -- by that time it was maybe three o'clock, and this capering, evil kind of creature --

And then he would turn to a very hysterical kind of a prayer. And out of him returned our little old woman, absolutely drained. She was exhausted. You could feel that she was

exhausted. And she then went around, almost feebly, went around to all of us. Talked to us. She told me -- and Lord, was I ever grateful -- that if the same thing ever happened again, she said, "You will never know evil." Which was just too wonderful. The next person who told me that was Martin Buber. So I feel that maybe it's true. (both laugh heartily)

Q: So far, so good!

KIDDER: So far, so good. So, anyway, this crone -- by the time Dona Dora returned through yet another invocation, another creative process, very feebly enunciated, Dona Dora was finished, wobbly-finished. All of this happened on a Thursday afternoon. Dona Dora, in her guise of the old crone, had told us that on Sunday next the person who had perpetrated this evil on Branca would suffer retribution. She did! She went to visit her son in boarding school and fell down a flight of stone steps, breaking her leg. We all knew her, and knew she had a yen for Branca's husband.

Soon after, Branca went back to normal, all the redness disappeared, and she went to inform, really, all the dermatologists whom she'd seen before, and they could not explain it. I will say that the crone, at the last moment, had said to all of us, "If you speak a word of this, within two weeks time, you will suffer for so doing." And of course none of us --

Q: Dared open your mouths.

KIDDER: Dared open our mouths. But you've lived it, so that you know it's true.

Q: Yes, I'm perfectly convinced.

KIDDER: Oh, oh, oh... [as though still stunned] But I think anybody hearing you and me will refuse to go to voodoo country. (They break down laughing.).

Q: Then, at the same time, did you also see people go into trances?

KIDDER: Yes, I did.

Q: We used to go down to the shore and watch the rites of Yemanja, the goddess of the sea.

KIDDER: Right. And go into those shaking trances --

Q: Yes. And then to be slapped out of them --

KIDDER: Oh, golly, yes.

Q: And then wade into the sea, and cast flowers --

KIDDER: I didn't see the wading into the sea, but I did see, up in the hills of Rio, meetings that were held -- clandestinely, of course, because they were not supposed to take place - sort of secret copses. And at one time the daughter of the Spanish ambassador went into a trance that the leader of the condomblé just had to sock her right out of it, because she was on her way; gone. Oh, it was a terrifying thing. The contrast of the buses and the lutacaos (jitneys) and everything going up and down the streets and avenues - it really is extraordinary.

Q: (laughing) Extraordinary! Was that on your little list?

KIDDER: That was on my list. Now, what else do we have? (pause) Oh, this goes way back to Canberra. This is rather funny, because it illustrates what a small town Canberra was. There was the most wonderful representative of New Zealand. Sir Carl, as he became later, and Lady Berenson. And Sir Carl Berenson was an absolutely adorable guy, I loved him and Lady Berenson, too. They lived in the Canberra Hotel, as most of the diplomats did, because there wasn't any housing, there weren't enough houses to go around.

However, the New Zealand government built a house on Mugga Way, which happened to be right next to the house that we were lucky enough to occupy. And as soon as it was built the Berensons moved into it, having given their maid time off, to spare the fatigue. (both laugh) There were so few (maids) that you didn't want to risk any difficulty of any kind. Before the move was accomplished the Berensons heard that their Prime Minister, Ian Fraser, was coming on official visit to Canberra and expected to be received in the new house, which of course meant that a dinner should be given in his honor.

Well, I was in the garden, which I was in a great deal of the time, as I told you (laughing), we had a garden that lived, and I saw Nell Berenson, who was usually the most sunny person, looking absolutely despairing. I said, "Nell, what is it, what can it be?" And she told me that Ian Fraser was coming and that she had to have this dinner, and that the maid was away, and that she wasn't in any state to give a dinner. So I said, "Don't worry." Vi (who was our cook, a marvelous lady -- she didn't very often cook, she cooked by the stars --

Q: (laughing) Sounds like the Reagan White House.

KIDDER: Yes, exactly, doesn't it though. The stars were against cooking most of the time and they usually were for gardening. But we were very lucky at that particular moment (laughing almost too hard to speak) because they were for cooking. And so I was able to tell Nell that we would do the dinner and Randy and I would serve it. Between our houses there was a fence -- unfortunately, barbed wire but we could prop it up and prop it down.

So Vi cooked, I borrowed a uniform from a maid that Randy had known well, one of the waitresses in the Canberra Hotel, where he'd lived before I came back and we could move to the house that we had -- I borrowed from her her waitress costume. Randy ran the

dinner through the barbed wire fence, and I served, and it was served to people that we all knew. Because, in Canberra, you couldn't NOT know them. I mean, there was the Secretary General, Dr. Evatts, a very difficult gentleman and the leader of the Country Party, and there was the leader of the Party in power, Mr. Curtin.

It was what you might expect, and it was a dinner for twelve. And I served the whole dinner and nobody ever looked up. Never once. Until the end, when Randy came in from running fence (laughing) and we were introduced. But that has taught me something. Never, never do I not look up at a waiter and acknowledge a presence. At least once through a meal. But it worked and I had it right, serving from the left, clearing from the right. So that was distinctly a moment illustrating Canberra.

Two more things. Then can I stop?

Q: Yes, of course.

KIDDER: Well, then comes Saigon. We had Rio for from '46 to '49/'50. Then came back to Washington --

Q: You had about nine years with the Brazilian Desk and in Rio --

KIDDER: Well, I guess so. It begins in '44 and it ends in '52, that's right; Randy went to the National War College in '53. Eight years. I must say we had an awfully good time with Brazilian culture. We could really dance and we could really talk. Oh, we had a ball. Well, then came the War College for Randy, which was great fun as you can imagine. And then came Saigon. And Saigon was not all that great fun. Not in '53-'55. Well, it was also the French war, and it was a very, very hot, steamy, difficult climate. And it again had to do with Calvert. And it just wasn't all that easy.

Q: When was Dien Bien Phu?

KIDDER: Dien Bien Phu was '54 and we were there from '53 to '55.

Q: And you were there for that.

KIDDER: Actually, when Dien Bien Phu fell, I was on my way home with Charlotte, because I couldn't go on any longer. I'd gotten through the 8th grade with Calvert but (both laughing) we made it, we made it! We made it but we were actually in Cairo on the day in May '54 that Dien Bien Phu fell, staying with dear friends, a Frenchman and an Australian, he was the Australian ambassador in Cairo -- but we had everything leading up to it. But life in Saigon I thought was -- life for Randy was extremely interesting but for my daughter and me, it was not. But we had a -- well, for me it was hard going because I taught in the morning and then worked in hospitals in the afternoon. By night, I'm ashamed to say, I probably plunged too deeply into gimlets, which we all drank (laughing heartily) quite a lot of.

Q: You needed them, by that time!

KIDDER: Oh, my yes. And we lived in a house which was a reclaimed brothel. I was so grateful that it was, because at least it had something, some kind of a something --

Q: A charm.

KIDDER: Some kind of a suggestion of excitement to it. But otherwise it was not very much house. However, we had one terribly funny time. (This is the one that I wrote down.) In the larder when we got to this house, which had been used as an embassy house, there was -- and you see it to this day -- there was a packet of McCormick's food dye -- remember? blue, green, red and yellow. And I've always thought that McCormick's food dye was very "non-U," something one didn't do except for children's parties and Christmas cookies.

Well, this thing I had no intention of ever having to use. Only that I did have a recipe for a lime ice. And a few drops of the green coloring just made it look that much cooler. But getting anything done in Saigon was always terribly difficult. We had a very dear number one boy, his name was Hai, he was a sweet guy, an older man. And we had an absolutely reprobate cook, a fascinating character. His bicycle was nothing but a skeleton -- it really had two wheels and a thing along there and handlebars, and he used to come back from market -- I was teaching upstairs and I'd see him -- with chickens hanging from the handlebars and bananas festooned around the shaft -- he was sort of an ambulant food purveyor (laughing) as he would go by.

Well, this was a moment of tremendous excitement, I can't remember what it was, and I knew I wasn't going to be able to oversee every detail of a dinner that we were giving the next night, one night following. Therefore I said to Bep, "We will end with the lime ice cream." And instead of giving him just the green thing, I handed him that whole four-bottle business. Really, we "did" the dinner party way ahead, and we set the table the day before -- fortunately, turning the glasses upside down because all kinds of little things used to be running around the ceiling -- and never had a chance to check it.

Dinner came, and it went pretty well, the first part. And then to my absolute horror, in came a bright blue dessert. Brilliant blue. Gentian blue. Well, you think about it and there is just nothing edible that turns out blue. There isn't, there just isn't, it may turn out violet but it does not turn out brilliant blue. And there was a Minister of some kind sitting at my right and he saw that I looked agitated, and I said to him, "I'm so sorry about what's happened. My cook didn't understand." And he turned to me and he said, "But the fault is yours." And I said --

Q: Was he a Frenchman?

KIDDER: No, Vietnamese. I said, "Oh. Well, will you explain to me why?" And he said,

"Yes. You did not make it clear to your cook that the blue that you desired was the green of the grass and not the green of the sky. In our language, it is both; you have to qualify. And he had had enough of the green of the grass and thought he would try the green of the sky. And you did not insist that it should be grass." And there was this bright blue --

Q: Did you eat it?

KIDDER: Yes, why not? (gales of laughter) It was perfectly all right, why not?

Q: It's just that we're not conditioned to blue food.

KIDDER: Oh, Lord, that was an incredible moment. (more laughter) Oh, there were many funny things that happened in Saigon. But Saigon was rather hard going. It really was. (pause) What else have we got left? I can be let off after this?

Q: Yes, of course.

KIDDER: You know, I don't think any of it is world-shaking, except this is a rather astounding situation. We had the most wonderful ambassador in Paris, whom we adored -- Amory Houghton and Laura Houghton. Oh, they were "political ambassadors," if you will, but they were just something so wonderful. They had such sensitivity and they had such charm.

Q: I think they were Corning Glass?

KIDDER: Yes, that's right.

And when we got there -- we got to Paris in '58 -- that was rather funny, too. On the way over -- in those days, you still could travel minimum first class. I remember we practically never went above deck, because we were trying hard to learn the French hemicycle. At that time, De Gaulle had not yet come into power and it was a time when the French Premiers were all falling one after another like ninepins, and the party representations in Parliament were just sliver-wide. And as you struggled to master the shape of the parliamentary hemicycle, you felt as though you had traveled from far right to far left in shavings of ideologies, which by the time we landed, General De Gaulle had molded into a single amalgam.

Q: You were at sea. What ship were you on?

KIDDER: On the America Line. This would have been 1958.

Q: Do you know what we were on? We were on the New Amsterdam, because we were posted to Rotterdam and Rotterdam had no American ships come in, so we could take the Holland-America Line. But we were at sea, and I remember that being around.

KIDDER: And so were we. But we were on an American ship, and it must have been announced on the very last day when we had it all. And I remember reading a book by David Schoenbrun -- he died a few days ago, did you see? -- it was our bible on the way over. And we were met at the station by Cecil and Elsie, because Cecil at that time was Minister-Counselor, because he had wanted so much to be. And this is just a little aside for you and me, because you can put it into Elsie's account. We went that night to dinner with Cecil and Elsie and they were having the ambassador there and just ourselves. The part to put in would be this: we got to dinner before Cecil and as we were getting out of the taxi or car to go into the -- and Cecil loved Paris, you know, and he was just, well, he was bounding, bounding. And there was a barrel of artichokes and different kinds of fruits and vegetables that Cecil stopped at, and he was on a pogo stick, he was having such a beautiful time. Oh, that was a marvelous evening, there were just the five of us.

Anyway, the Houghtons we just adored. And they decided at one time that they would like a dance. People didn't dance in Paris very much -- people that were older than girls "coming out" or the very young set. And Laura loved to dance and I loved to dance. And I remember Susan Mary Alsop and I were going off on a trip together, and Laura said to us, "I want you to make up a list of people to come to a dance. I want it to be a fun dance. Now, you go and do that on your trip, when you have leisure to do it in."

So we worked up a list. Susan Mary had lived many years in Paris and knew a lot of people and we worked up this list together, which we submitted to Laura. The invitations went out and I think they imported a very good dance band from London. And for about three weeks before the party, we were always being asked, "What is this -- a dance at the embassy? What young lady is coming out?" And we would answer, "No one, we just want to dance and the Houghtons want to dance. We like dancing and we hope you will enjoy dancing." "Oh, haven't danced in years." "Well, maybe you'll enjoy it."

I remember, the day before the dance the embassy wives were setting out tables and overseeing the provisioning of chairs and tables and so on. And the ambassador was coming down the stairs in the morning -- it was probably about 11 o'clock. And I remember he called me over. He was part teasing and part not teasing. And he said, "Dotty, this dance was pretty much your idea. If it works, fine. But," he said, "I'm not so sure. I've been hearing so many things about how peculiar it is that we should be having a dance. If it doesn't work, it's your fault." "Yes, Sir."

Well, the dance was a wow. It was a tremendous success. Everybody had a perfectly marvelous time... until about one o'clock in the morning. Suddenly there wasn't anybody around any more; or maybe it was even twelve. But they'd had a tremendous evening up until then. And that was the time of the rebellion of the Generals in Algeria. It was that very same night. And all the Ministers melted away and all the French politicians disappeared, and it was that very same night. But up until twelve o'clock, maybe twelve-thirty, it had been a wow.

Q: So it really was a night to remember, on all counts.

KIDDER: On all counts. Now can I stop? I don't believe there is any more in my life --

Q: But what a fascinating tape this is going to be. It's unique, it's absolutely unique.

KIDDER: Well, I think it's probably the wrong emphasis.

Q: No, it's not at all, not at all. It happens time and time- (end of tape)

KIDDER: All these others were really rather wonderful. The SEATO conference: it took place in early 1955. And it takes place in Bangkok. The arrangements in Bangkok are absolutely fabulous. It's tremendous elegance. And we're way down the line. Randy by that time was representing the State Department because General J. Lawton Collins was Special Representative of the President. Coming out to that conference were [Secretary of State] Dulles, Walter Roberts, Vernon Walters even then -- we'd known him in Rio years and years ago.

Anyway, we'd thought we would be so far down the line that we could never accede to any glory, but not at all. We were domiciled in Mangasila Palace. I'll never forget it. On my dressing table there was every perfume that you could think of. There was a bar of infinite refinement for Randy. Our mosquito netting had trumpeting elephants embroidered all around it (Fenzi laughs heartily). We had slippers embroidered "His" and "Hers." Oh, it was just of an elegance un-be-liev-able. And we had assigned to us a princess. And she wore (I've always loved jewelry) a great pin of jade representing grapes. Oh, gosh, it was beautiful.

Well, the whole style of that was perfectly fascinating. And there was a wonderful guy, Walter Robertson, who was Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs. We'd known each other in Sydney way long ago. Well, anyhow, (laughing) I was trembling because from this contrast of Mangasila Palace with all Bangkok's elegance and its beautiful ladies running around in their lovely costumes, and the style and riches of it all, our mission was coming to Saigon, which was pretty dismal by then. The sort of kaka-colored paint which the French use, which is mold-resistant, was getting to look very -- this was '55, you see, just after Dien Bien Phu, after partition. And the refugees were streaming down from the north.

So, there was everything that was anything but attractive, and I was terrified. Because then there wasn't very much to do for those who were not involved in the actual discussions and negotiations; whereas in Bangkok there was lots to see, there were jewels to buy, etc. But I hadn't counted on a glorious reprieve! The reprieve was that they went, first, to Laos. Laos at that time, Vientiane, was in Walter Robertson's terminology, the Augean stables. He found Laos just the end. Poetical, possibly, but uncomfortable in the extreme. And arrangements were not smooth. And the comedown between what had been so glorious and what was inglorious was bruising. And that's what they remembered.

By the time they got to Saigon, they were more indulgent about us, which helped a great deal. Well, the story I wanted to tell you about was the banquet that was given by Ngo Dinh Diem and Dulles. Dulles sat on the right hand of Ngo Dinh Diem, and then came me. And I was privileged to live a moment of absolute horror. Ultimate horror! Vietnamese food, like Chinese food as you know, is very slippery. The Secretary was not one to let anything defeat him. It was the first year of independence, and we were using chopsticks. So there comes a moment when there is a last, slippery mushroom on Secretary Dulles's plate.

The animosity of Secretary Dulles for that piece of mushroom was just something you cannot imagine. And around and around and AROUND the plate it went and (laughing so much she can barely speak) and I was silently registering whether it would be gotten or whether it wouldn't be gotten. And it wasn't funny to him at all, oh no, he was determined to get it. Finally he did get it -- I was dying to put my finger out to stop the process (laughing) as it went round and round but I don't think I'd dare invade His Nibs's plate. Oh, it really was an incredible moment.

Q: (gravely) Did he get it?

KIDDER: He finally got it. I think he wanted it Top Secret; I can't remember, I can only remember the horror of it, the determination, his total inability to give up. Which was the trait he had all the way down the line. It was very significant.

So, that's it, I think.

Q: What a lovely interview! I think I just have one question. This gets into the role of the spouse angle. When you came in, were you looked over, were you evaluated by the --

KIDDER: Oh, certainly. You mean, did I get evaluated that I know of?

Q: Yes. Elizabeth Cabot said that she was evaluated by the chief of personnel.

KIDDER: Oh, I'm sure I was. I don't think I was evaluated in the sense that I had to stand before them, but I'm pretty darn sure that between Miss Basil and Claire Hubbell there was evaluation done, because I think there was a number of our group who did not pass muster. And I think a certain amount of pressure was put, so that -- I don't know what was the result of it, but I remember there was a rather heavy foreign-born person who perhaps was not "well suited" or they thought she might not be. But I know we were -- I know that's what Cornelia Basil was all about; I'm sure of it.

But I also am so grateful, and I'm sure you are too, that we had the work to do that we did. I know we've been married 50 years and I know that the Foreign Service has a lot to do with it -- the fact that we had a joint career.

Q: And we had such a good time.

KIDDER: And we had such a good time! We had hard times --

Q: Yes.

KIDDER: -- but we had good times.

Q: Then when were you president of AAFSW?

KIDDER: (after reflection) I think it was 1966 or '67 (some further discussion)

Q: Then it would be when your husband was at Foreign Service Institute, between 1965 and '68.

KIDDER: That's when it was.

Q: So, you really were at the very end before the 1972 directive. Were there any rumblings about the directive -- I can't say "rumblings" about the directive but were there any stirrings in the Foreign Service that you remember --

KIDDER: I hope this is being said in a spirit of modesty: I took the Foreign Service Women's Association into the city. I mean this in the sense that I was, I think, among the first ones who got involved with, when we began to teach in public schools, we had a program of going into public schools. My Education young woman was perfectly wonderful, I don't remember her name; I don't know where we could find a masthead of our newsletter --

Q: Over in the housing office.

KIDDER: We had that glorious girl who ran the book fair this year. She did the newsletter for me. We had a most marvelous panel of girls and we really did get involved in the city-

Q: Community outreach.

KIDDER: Yes. In a way, I think it was the beginning of community outreach. We also belonged to some kind of a thing called the National Educational, or national something of Women -- I can't remember all these things, unfortunately -- which we were represented in for the first time that year.

Q: I remember reading about that. I'd have to look it up, too. It was an organization of women's groups --

KIDDER: Exactly. It isn't NOW [National Organization for Women] but it's something like that. And we were represented in it, for the first time. Principally the public school

liaison, the community outreach thing was in its first year. But no, (with heavy emphasis) there wasn't, as yet any of the agitation for doing one's own thing. I don't remember it, anyway; or I wasn't maybe hearing it. (pause) No, no... I don't think so. We resigned and went back to France in 1968, so I think this was '66 or '67. I think it was '67.

Q: You did it just one year?

KIDDER: Yes. I would have done it longer but it was the fact that Randy resigned and had a chance to do the Institute of International Education in Paris and open that office. And he went to that. After Cambodia we weren't getting any firm posting. And we got off the track with Cambodia and the ongoing momentum seemed to be over. This other thing was offered and he went to it.

Q: Yes. Why not do it? You'd had almost 30 years --

KIDDER: We'd had 30 years. Well, it was very much too bad that it happened that way, but it did. So what's what?

Q: Well, I think there are more inglorious endings to the Foreign Service careers than glorious ones, to express my own opinion.

KIDDER: I think that's probably true. Let's say "unfortunate," not inglorious.

Q: All right. Unfortunate.

KIDDER: "Inglorious" sounds as if a person had made a mistake, which was not true-- (Fenzi agrees) Most of the time, it's "the inglorious of it."

Q: Yes. Which I was referring to.

KIDDER: I know it was. But I'm so grateful -- my Lord, if we hadn't been in the Foreign Service I wouldn't -- we have a place in France which we bought 25 years ago -- and I wouldn't know the French people that we know, have had the passion for travel that we have -- but then of course, I never had a career that I had to defend. So that might be different. What about you -- how did you feel about it?

Q: I was going to ask you if you ever consciously felt that your career was being your husband's support system?

KIDDER: Darn right I did.

Q: You were doing it for him --

KIDDER: (laughing) I was also doing it for me -- it happened to fit me perfectly.

Q: Right. And you were also doing it for the Department because that's just the way we did it.

KIDDER: Yes. That's the way it was. And you had a sense of pride, and you had a sense of tremendous involvement. When, if you were going through a phase of privation, which seems to (laughing) happen in a cyclical fashion, we all did it together.

Q: There was an esprit that seems to be lacking --

KIDDER: There was an esprit, yes.

Q: Now, how much of that can be attributed to the very "Me" generation of the sixties and seventies? I don't know -- people are still too young, they're not in the upper echelons of the Service- (after a pause) I wonder how much the fact that 50% of the people are divorced these days, and these women feel that they may be out on their own in two years or five years and they'd jolly well better have a career or a résumé to back them up when they -- I don't know, I really don't --

KIDDER: They may not realize this: the Foreign Service working together is one of the things that helps against divorce. I'm convinced of the fact that one is involved in doing something jointly keeps you going, makes a great deal of difference. I mean, there are times you just think, "Oh my Lord, I just can't, I won't go to Saigon." But then you go.

Q: And then you go! (they both laugh heartily) And then there are days when "I knew I shouldn't have come to Saigon." (they laugh again)

KIDDER: Well, so it goes, so it goes. Where were your posts?

Q: We were in Rotterdam twice; those were our only times in Europe, five years. Then we were in Sierra Leone, and Morocco --

KIDDER: With whom in Morocco?

Q: We were there with Henry Tasca, just before he went to Greece. Our DCM was Dwight Dickinson; Dwight and Eleanor Dickinson. He went on to be ambassador to Togo. My husband was a young officer in the Economic section with a marvelous man, Ed Dow. He married Mary Virginia Burke, an old Washington family.

KIDDER: Unfortunately, I don't know any of those. I knew Stuart Rockwell, who was a previous ambassador, very well --

Q: I met him at a dinner here one evening. I believe he'd been there been there before or after 1965 -- he may have followed Tasca. (They agree he might have followed.)

KIDDER: When is the time when that splendid -- the General turned on Hassan?

Remember, the great General, who'd been Hassan's closest adviser turned against him -- Abukir?

Q: That did happen while we were there --

KIDDER: Remember -- there was a sort of a -- at a party, they all dove --

Q: Down at the beach. They all dove under the table.

KIDDER: Stuart was there.

Q: Then that was another incident -- because there was one while we were there, too.

KIDDER: There may have been more than one. And the man's name was Abukir. And he was magnificent; but that doesn't ring a bell with you. Perhaps it was later.

Q: Ben Abu something-or-other was the military defense minister when we were there. I'll have to look up his name, too.

KIDDER: What were your dates?

Q: 1965 to 1969. Earl Russell was there and then died on his way down to Dakar.

KIDDER: I just went to Morocco for the first time two years ago and I thought it was absolutely fabulous!

Q: I think it was my favorite post. We were at the embassy here just a few nights ago, and oh the nostalgia that came flooding back -- the food, and the very flowery speech -- (Mrs. Kidder introduces Fenzi to her Moroccan cook.)

BIOGRAPHIC DATA

Spouse: Randolph A. Kidder

Date entered Service: January 1938

Left Service: May 1968

Posts:

1938-39	Montreal, Canada
1940-42	Sydney, Australia
1942-44	Canberra, Australia
1944-46	Belèm, Brazil
1946-49	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
1953	Department, War College 53

1950-52 Department, Brazilian Desk
1953-55 Saigon, Vietnam (French Indochina)
1955-58 Department, Secretary Henderson's Office
1958-52 Paris, France
1963-64 Department, Inspection Corps
1964 Phnom Penh, Cambodia
1964 Department, AEP
1965-68 Foreign Service Institute
1968 Resigned

Status: Spouse of retired ambassador

Date/place of birth: Manchester, Massachusetts, June 30, 1917

Maiden Name: Dorothy Douglas Robinson

Parents:

Monroe Douglas Robinson, dilettante
Dorothy Jordon Chadwick, divorced and remarried

Schools:

Miss Chapin's School, New York, New York
Foxcroft School, Middleburg, Virginia
Studied for the stage with Ouspenskaya

Date/place of marriage: February 5, 1938, New York, New York

Profession: Foreign Service spouse

Positions held:

At post:

Saigon, refugee work
Paris, social work
Canberra, USO Canteen, Garden Army
Belèm, teacher, school and Sunday school

In Washington:

President, AAFSW
Family and Child Services

Children:

Michael Randolph Kidder 1939
Charlotte Appleton 1941

End of interview