

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

HOWELL S. TEEPLE

Interviewed by: Earl W. Sherman
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INTERVIEW

Q: My name is Earl W. Sherman, and I am the interviewer for our subject of interest this morning for the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and the Foreign

Affairs Oral History Project. The date is the 27th of January, 1999, and I have the pleasure of working with Mr. Howell S. Teeple, whose age is 77, retired from the United States Department of State and the Foreign Service. Howell was born in Dallas, Texas. Good morning to you, Howell.

TEEPLE: Good Morning.

Q: And we're certainly pleased that you can join us for this interview for the Oral History Project. In discussing our objectives here today, certainly one of the points of interest is to identify you by the usual statistics, that you are age 77, and that leads me to ask the question when did you retire from the U.S. Foreign Service.

TEEPLE: I retired in 1980 after 35 and a half years of service. That included my military service, of course. I had two and a quarter years in the U.S. Army during World War II.

Q: That is a rather unusually length of time for service. I certainly feel that I should join others to commend you for that length of time in the Service. And where did you start?

TEEPLE: I started in Korea. That was my first overseas assignment. I worked there in the Information and Cultural Program of the Department of Defense. It was [during] the military occupation of Korea. We were actually Department of Army civilians, and we went to Korea with the idea of opening an embassy in a year or two. We took over the information and educational programs from the military when the embassy opened.

Q: Certainly that's a vital part of our interest in your history program about what you've accomplished in the service, but prior to that it might be pertinent to get some of the early history of your life. You were born in Dallas, Texas, I understand, and were you a member of a large family, small family?

TEEPLE: I was born in Dallas, yes, and had a brother and two sisters. My father died when I was only eight years old, unfortunately, and my mother only lived to be only 56. She died of breast cancer when I was 25. We grew up in a very nice area of Dallas called Highland Park and went to a wonderful high school there that was rated one of the 10 best high schools in the United States at that time by *Life* magazine. You had to take Latin or Greek, and you had to take three years of math - I took four - and you had to take four years of English, as well as a foreign language also. So it was a very good preparation for a university.

Q: What language did you specialize in in high school?

TEEPLE: I took Latin, like everyone else in my school. I took three years of Latin and

that was it. After Cicero, I left Latin.

Q: Did you find later on that Latin had been helpful to you?

TEEPLE: Yes, it was very helpful, especially in English composition, and then in studying French, which I studied in college.

Q: As a point of interest, did they have any type of cadet or ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] training in your school?

TEEPLE: They did have ROTC at Highland Park High School. I wasn't a member of it, though. I never did join the ROTC in high school but I had to be in the ROTC for two years at my university.

Q: Following that very interesting program that you had in what appears to have been an outstanding type of high school training, did you move directly into academia and go to the university?

TEEPLE: I went to a university after graduating from high school. I was very interested in studying journalism, and I went to Louisiana State University [LSU] in Baton Rouge starting in the fall of '39, and graduated in January of '43. I had to take a three-and-a-half-year abbreviated college career because the draft board was breathing down my neck. I went to summer school at LSU in 1942 to make up enough credits to graduate in January. It was the first midterm graduation that the university ever had. Then I went into the Army in March of 1943.

Q: Were you able to follow through with your special interest in journalism? Did you have an opportunity to work with the paper there in the university?

TEEPLE: I did work on the college paper, of course. They had a paper called *The Daily Reveille*, and it was good training. And then we had to work at the local downtown paper. I worked on *The Baton Rouge State Times* during my junior year, and then during your senior year you were sent out for a period of a month to work in a local paper, usually in the rural area of Louisiana. I went down to a place called Plaquemine, Louisiana, and worked on the local paper there for a month, to get on-hand experience in a working newspaper. LSU had a very good journalism school, and while all my family had gone to the University of Texas, it didn't have a journalism school when I was entering college. They had a journalism department, I believe, but I wanted to go to a full-fledged university journalism school, and that's why I selected LSU.

Q: When you had completed your work at the university, did you take up graduate work, or was that not possible because of conditions at the time and the war in the way?

TEEPLE: I got out of the Army in December of 1945, just before Christmas. I had a lot of points from my overseas Army combat service. They gave points for the number of active combat days you had in the Army, and I had 85 points, which enabled me to be

discharged early, although the war in Europe, for all intents and purposes, was over in April of '45. I went home after discharge at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, and went to Dallas. I remember going home on the Greyhound bus and getting home very early in the morning and just going into the house. At that time nobody locked their doors in Dallas, and I just walked in at about five o'clock in the morning and surprised my mother and sister that I was out of the Army.

Q: Do you have any special recollections about your experience there in service, having been apparently in combat units?

TEEPLE: I was in the Army field artillery battalion. When I got out of basic training, I was assigned to a field artillery battalion. They were known as school troops at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, training the OCS [Officer Candidate School] students on artillery warfare. It had been the old National Guard unit from the 28th Division in Pennsylvania, but it was redesignated as the 193rd Field Artillery Battalion. It was sort of a bastard outfit, as they called it, since it got cut out of the 28th Division when they triangularized the divisions from four battalions to three. But it was a crack outfit and mostly National Guard people with a lot of experience, and that's why they were made school troops at Fort Sill.

Q: Howell, I'm wondering if you recall from your experience there in service during the war and all of the chaos that you had seen there in Europe as a result of action in the war - did that have any special effects on you, or was it of some value? Did it give you a more mature viewpoint, do you think? Did it relate in some fashion to the profession you had selected, journalism, for insistence?

TEEPLE: Not directly at first, but of course, it did give me wonderful perspective, as we were sent to England. I was always interested in traveling, and this was my first time overseas. We trained there for several months with a British group and then just an American group. Then we went over into France some time after D-Day [the allied invasion of Europe on June 6, 1945]. Fortunately, we didn't go in on D-Day. We joined the 1st Infantry Division, known as the Big Red One. In the Army, I wanted to work on *The Stars and Stripes*, and I tried to get out of the artillery to pursue my journalistic pursuits, but I was unable to do that. I stayed with the artillery battalion my whole career in the Army, and I certainly got a great insight into Europe at war. Conditions in England were very bad at that time, with rationing and the bombing of cities by the Germans, and it wasn't the best time to be traveling abroad, but at least I got to see the people and many places in England. Then we went through France, and were the first American troops into Belgium and the first American troops into Germany. That was at Aachen, Germany. Our artillery battalion was [in] back of the 1st Infantry Division, thank goodness. We were behind them all the way through France and Belgium and into Germany as artillery support.

Q: Yes, do you recall seeing one of the publications that was such a favorite - that's from my own experience, I recall - Yank Magazine and Bill Mauldin's cartoons?

TEEPLE: Oh, yes, I was well acquainted with *Yank Magazine*. That was published, I believe, in the States, however, but *The Stars and Stripes* was published in several places in Europe, and was a daily newspaper that was delivered to the troops. And a lot of well-known journalists worked for it. But I was unable to get with it. That would have been my ideal, to work for *The Stars and Stripes*.

Q: I refer to a question of a moment ago about how your experience in the Army might have led you to select journalism even more intensely, being more interested in it as a result of your experiences in Europe, and if that interest continued to grow as you finished your Army service. Did you go to school again?

TEEPLE: No, after I got out of the Army, I was intent on going to work as soon as possible, and I got a very good job with a radio station in Dallas, KRLD. It was a 50,000-watt CBS [Columbia Broadcasting System] affiliate. I got a job as a continuity writer there, and was very pleased to work in radio, although the pay was quite low. It started out at \$30 a week in 1946. This was in January of '46. I got out of the Army in December of '45 and went to work immediately.

Q: What was the station again, KRL-

TEEPLE: KRLD. It's still going strong in Dallas, a very big station. You can hear it all over Texas and up into the Midwest. Now it's an all-news station. When I was there, it was before television, of course, but I wanted to work in radio or newspaper.

Q: Well, this certainly would be an interesting formative period of your early life for the work that ultimately you did for the U.S. Foreign Service.

TEEPLE: I was always interested in the news and world events, which I followed rather closely.

Q: And for what length of time were you associated with the station?

TEEPLE: I worked there for about a year and a half, and then I got an opportunity to go to New York City to work on that quiz program - we sort of laugh at it now - called *The Quiz of Two Cities*. And it was a summer replacement program on CBS, and another fellow and I wrote the program. We had done the program in Dallas, and at that time it was just between Dallas and Fort Worth, *The Quiz of Two Cities*. It was a program of questions and answers. I went up in June of '47 and it was on several cities all over the country then, select cities like Chicago-Milwaukee, Oakland and San Francisco, New York and Boston, and Washington and Baltimore - sort of [paired] cities. We got people from each city to vie against each other answering questions. There were prizes, of course, and great competition between the cities. That was a wonderful experience for me.

Q: Well, I would think so, and excellent preparation for the work that you did later, right?

TEEPLE: Well, somewhat, although I must say, the questions we wrote and asked weren't all that substantive.

Q: Not too profound at that time-

TEEPLE: No.

Q: -but nevertheless a contact with the public and the interviewing process and the search for information and getting people interested in what your projects were.

TEEPLE: Yes. We had questions on many subjects, of course, history, literature, etc. We used to go to *The World Almanac* quite often to get questions and answers.

Q: Was living in New York City at that time still the great thrill that so many found it to be?

TEEPLE: It was very interesting. I was very young then. I was only 25 years old. And it was a rather exciting experience for me. I was in the big city, and at that time New York was safe; there was no problem of any violence. I used to go to the Broadway shows, musicals and plays, and saw a lot of theater and enjoyed that part of New York.

Q: That seemed to be such a vibrant time in the history of New York City.

TEEPLE: Yes, it was right after the war, and we had a 13-week contract, as I recall, and they said if the radio program was a success, they would possibly continue it through the regular season for 26 weeks, from September through May. But unfortunately, the program didn't continue. It was just a summer replacement, and so I was out of a job in New York after that period, in August of '47.

Q: But you continued then to live in New York City?

TEEPLE: I continued, and I was doing a little freelance work in radio, writing some continuity for musical programs, but then I was looking for a job and I heard about the overseas positions in the Information and Cultural Program of the government. I went down and applied for one. As I recall, the application office was in Rockefeller Center, at the Department of Army. I was interviewed and took a written test and an oral test, too. Two weeks later, I got a telegram under my door, "You have been selected to go to Seoul, Korea, as a radio officer with the Army Information Service." I was to be an advisor to the Korean Broadcasting System.

Q: That's an interesting title.

TEEPLE: So in September of '47, I went to Seoul, Korea, which was under U.S. occupation at that time. General Hodges was the commanding general, but the military occupation was being turned over to Korean civilian control. The Department of State

was to open an embassy in Seoul and take over from the military. I remember taking the train from New York City to San Francisco on my way to Seoul, Korea, in September, '47. Then I flew in Army aircraft - this was before the separation into the Army and the Air Force - to Hawaii. I stayed there for a while waiting for the next plane to go to Japan. We flew to several small islands - Johnston Island, Kwajalein Island, and Guam - to get to Japan. So that was an extensive flying experience, flying in a DC-6, four-motored transport planes. We finally got to Japan and stayed awhile observing General MacArthur's military occupation. Eventually, I flew to Korea to take up my assignment.

Q: Were there any indications at the time you were there of the struggle that was to come in '51?

TEEPLE: Actually 1950, the war broke out, in June, June 25th, 1950. The Japanese had occupied Korea since the early 1900s and they only left at the end of World War II. Korea was a poor country, and it was divided at the 38th parallel. We were very conscious of this because the north part of Korea at that time generated all the electricity for the whole country and quite often the North Koreans would turn off the electricity in Seoul and other South Korean places, just to let us know they were in charge up there. If some ripple happened to their dislike, they would turn off the electricity for three or four hours, and we were in a fix. We were very conscious of the Russians, who were occupying North Korea, while the Americans were occupying South Korea. I never got to North Korea, but we did have a United Nations [UN] mission in Seoul, whose members went up to Pyongyang periodically. I knew those UN people and got to talk to them and heard about the northern part of the country.

Q: In your work, was the language problem severe? Did you have interpreters there?

TEEPLE: We had interpreters, and I had a Korean language tutor. I had to learn Korean on the job. Every morning, from 7:30 to 9:00, I studied Korean with my tutor and I got somewhat conversant in it, although never learned to read or write the language. I was working right at the Korean Broadcasting System advising them on how to operate a radio station, because they had little experience. The Japanese had run all radio up until World War II ended. I had four or five other Americans working for me at that young age, so it was an enviable position. We set up a program schedule, and, of course, we had certain propaganda programs that were beamed to North Korea, special commentaries every night.

Q: I see. This would resemble in some aspect a Voice of America [VOA] approach?

TEEPLE: No, it wasn't like the Voice of America at all. The Voice of America was broadcasting from New York to Korea at that time, and the signal wasn't good. VOA had a completely separate operation, which was under the State Department. Then on January 1, 1948, we opened the American embassy in Seoul, Korea, and I was asked to join the embassy group there, along with three other information and cultural types in our previously Army office. The PAO [public affairs officer] was a wonderful man, Jim Stewart. He was my mentor and taught me so much. He'd been a *Time* correspondent in

China. He was born in Japan of missionary parents, both he and his wife. The first ambassador was John Muccio, an outstanding Foreign Service officer. The DCM [deputy chief of mission] was Everett Drumright. One of the distinctions of the embassy at that time - it was mostly all male, except for some secretaries, and mostly all bachelors. The ambassador was a bachelor; the DCM was a bachelor; Jim Stewart, while he was married, his wife wasn't there - she was in California; and I was a bachelor. But after the McCarthy hearings of that period, when the Senator was commenting on homosexuals in the State Department, suddenly all of us got married. I actually got married some years later, but I remember the ambassador married a year or two after I left the post in 1950, and so did Drumright, the DCM.

Q: That's interesting you mentioned Mr. Drumright because he has been a member in the past of the retired Foreign Service group that we know here in San Diego.

TEEPLE: Yes, until he passed away a couple of years ago. I used to see him at our Foreign Service luncheons in San Diego, and I met his wife there. I had never met his wife previously.

Q: Yes, and when was it that you completed your work there in Seoul?

TEEPLE: I was scheduled for transfer in January of 1950 but was first sent down to the Philippines, to Manila. Being a bachelor, they sent me there to fill in for some chap in the information program who was on leave.

Q: This was to Manila?

TEEPLE: Yes, this was in Manila, and then I went over in a similar position to Hong Kong, where we opened the first American Library in Hong Kong in 1950, in an old movie building there on Nathan Road. Then I went on home leave. I was then assigned to the Voice of America in New York, which pleased me very much. I joined VOA in April, 1950 in New York, where they were broadcasting on 57th Street and Broadway in three different buildings.

Q: And for what length of time did you stay there?

TEEPLE: I stayed at the Voice of America quite a while, because this was my field, interest and my liking. I stayed in New York from 1950 to 1954. The Voice was transferred to Washington in 1954. I was the executive producer for the Far East Division. At first, we only had only Chinese and Korean language broadcasts when I joined, and then we added Southeast Asian languages. We added Vietnamese, Malay, Indonesian, and Thai and I was the chief of production for all VOA programs in those languages.

Q: Well, it would seem to me that the wonderful experience that you had in Korea, having gone from New York City earlier, across the country, and then flying through the islands over to Seoul and then having that wonderful experience of working there with the South

Koreans and setting up in broadcasting, must have been invaluable when working for VOA.

TEEPLE: It was. And I was one of the few people at the Voice who had had any Foreign Service experience. They were mostly local people in New York who were experienced in radio. Of course, all the broadcasters, the people on the air, were native-language employees. We didn't have any Americans broadcasting in Far East languages, but Americans were in charge in the production and the writing of programs.

Q: I see. In your work, and in setting up all of this variety of programs and in the variety of Asian languages, was it difficult to obtain people? How did they screen them, for instance?

TEEPLE: When they enlarged the Far East Division to include Southeast Asian languages, they sent a recruitment team to Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia, with an FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] agent. They went to the local radio stations in the countries and hired on contract employees from the local radio stations to come work at the Voice of America on two- or four-year contracts. The FBI man cleared them on the spot. That was the way VOA hired Asian broadcasters. Later on, some people living in the U.S. would apply - Chinese and Koreans and South Vietnamese - to work at VOA, but they had to have broadcast or journalistic experience, usually, to qualify. All had to go through the usual security clearance. This was right after and during the McCarthy hearings, and the State Department was extra sensitive about security clearances.

Q: Did you feel that, from your experience in Asia and in South Korea where you were in daily contact with the language, that once you were in New York and in Washington working in the VOA programs, that you had some control of Asian languages that gave you some rapport with the people that you worked with directly?

TEEPLE: I had a limited speaking ability in Korean, but there were Americans on every language desk who were fluent in the language. They had to check the translation of all scripts and check the broadcasts as well.

Q: You were working probably more directly with programs?

TEEPLE: I was working in the studios putting on the broadcasts, yes. We had to get the news together. Every broadcast started with the news. We tried to be objective with the news. Then we would usually have a commentary and then features. And this was in the days before tape, so we recorded everything on disks.

Q: Isn't that interesting. That's a rather rudimentary time.

TEEPLE: We even put on dramas and had to record them on disk. You didn't have the beauty of being able to edit very often, or not at all, so you had to rehearse extensively.

Q: You were live, and that was it.

TEEPLE: The news was always live, but features and commentaries were usually recorded before broadcasts.

Q: I see.

TEEPLE: Later on we did get tape at VOA. First it was wire, and then the regular tape we are still using. Productions became very adaptable with tape, after when we moved to Washington, after 1954.

Q: Well, from those very early times, working with VOA, it must be interesting to look back and see what magnitude of increase in the VOA's range and magnitude of its influence worldwide.

TEEPLE: VOA has always been popular in Asia, I'm glad to say. We had good signals into China, especially, and into Korea. We had many listeners there - we know because we got a lot of mail. Even during the communist period in China, we got mail, and also from North Korea as well. VOA had a large listening audience, especially in Korea and China.

Q: Well, as a part of that, it seems to me when I had heard VOA from overseas in posts that I enjoyed, VOA would have listener letters. Was there any recognition of people sending in, by person, that is, recognizing the person's name and saying, "We have a letter from..."?

TEEPLE: Yes, there were programs like that. They had programs where they acknowledged a listener's letter and encouraged people to write in. And sometimes VOA had contests where they would give away radios or calendars. We got a lot of mail, and there was a section that dealt with the mail, did research on mail and tried to analyze the mail.

Q: From that time you spent in Washington and with VOA, you were working with programming. Can you remember any particularly incidents related to that critical time and the war in Asia?

TEEPLE: Yes, one of the most critical times was shortly after I joined VOA in New York at the outbreak of the Korean War. That happened June 25, 1950. It was a Sunday morning, I remember, when I heard the news on the radio. I rushed to the studios immediately from the Brooklyn Heights place where I was living, and arranged immediately to go on the air with a Korean language special program, mostly news, of course. That was a critical time. There were others, too, similar, during the '50s. The outbreak of the Korean War was the one crisis time I remember so distinctly.

Q: Did you have any TDY? For instance, did they send you back to Asia for any particular special-

TEEPLE: I didn't go, but we did send people from the Far East Division out to Korea as correspondents. A chap who worked with me, Bob Lasher, I remember, volunteered immediately to go to Korea as a correspondent for VOA during the war period. He had never been overseas before, but did well as a foreign correspondent.

Q: You had been in VOA in Washington, I believe, for as I recall... What length of time were you there?

TEEPLE: I stayed in Washington from '54 to '59. USIA [United States Information Agency] Personnel was continually asking me to go overseas during this period. We transferred from State to USIA when they established a separate agency in '53. At one time they had me going to Teheran as information officer, but it didn't work out. In 1959, I was selected to go to India as information officer for USIS [United States Information Service]/New Delhi, and had the designation also as press attaché.

I was married then. I met my wife, Jane, in Washington in January 1957. We got married on June 1st, 1957 and had a nine-month-old baby, James Leland Teeple, when we went to New Delhi in April of 1959.

Q: And this opens up a whole new chapter in your career, does it not?

TEEPLE: Exactly. It was the first post I'd been to overseas married, with a family, and yes, it was quite a different situation for me.

Q: What was the name of the ambassador then?

TEEPLE: At the time we arrived in '59, the ambassador was Ellsworth Bunker, a well-known ambassador, and an outstanding man. It was such a pleasure to be there and to work under Ambassador Bunker. We had three really outstanding ambassadors in India during my period there, from '59 to '63. We had John Kenneth Galbraith following Ambassador Bunker, and then we had Chester Bowles after Galbraith left.

Q: Well, those were certainly three well-known and illustrious figures in American history.

TEEPLE: Indeed. I had quite a bit of contact with the ambassadors, being in the press and press attaché.

Q: Of those three, Howell - we're talking about Ellsworth Bunker and Chester Bowles and John Kenneth Galbraith - of those three, working with them, probably more intimately than some of the others, which one of those three impressed you the most?

TEEPLE: Ambassador Galbraith was very impressive, of course, and he was interested in the press. He liked to have press conferences, and he was such a figure in his own right and had an outstanding reputation as a scholar and economist. He also was well

connected with the White House at that time, the Kennedy administration. Chester Bowles was most impressive also. I only had about six or seven months with Ambassador Bowles. We left India in 1963, about six, seven months after he had arrived. Ambassador Bunker was the great diplomat of the three. They were all quite different in their approach, completely different, in fact. Ambassador Bunker was a very smooth, suave diplomat and got great respect from the Indians. It was exciting times in India then because Nehru was alive, and his daughter Indira was his hostess, more or less, because he was a widower. We had a large USIS establishment in India. Ken Bunce was the first PAO, with John Lund as the deputy when I arrived. Then Bill Weathersby came in, and later went on to be ambassador to Sudan and then went back to India as DCM. That is unusual in the Foreign Service - to become an ambassador and then go back as a DCM. Barry Zorthian was our deputy PAO under Bill Weathersby. We had outstanding people with the embassy and with USIS in India during my tenure - 1959-1963.

Q: Yes, among those leaders who were not from the United States, Admiral Mountbatten was there at that time, wasn't he?

TEEPLE: Admiral Mountbatten was in India at the time of partition. He did come out to India, again while we were there, and we met him. Lady Mountbatten used to come out quite often, and she used the same dentist we used, so we would get all the news about Lady Mountbatten from our dentist.

Q: Well, there was some very interesting linkage, was there not, between Lady Mountbatten and Nehru?

TEEPLE: There was. She was a good friend of Nehru's, and he had her out every year as his guest. They were very friendly and there were many rumors linking them romantically.

Q: Yes.

TEEPLE: Those were exciting times in India, and also while we were there, President Eisenhower visited India. He was the first U.S. president to visit India. Unfortunately, just as he was coming, I came down with hepatitis. We had been over to the Maharaja's palace in Jaipur visiting and I apparently got hepatitis there.

Q: So India and the fact that President Eisenhower had come, as we continue:

TEEPLE: Yes, and unfortunately I came down with hepatitis during that time and was unable to work. It was one of the biggest news events of my career, and I missed it, the President of the United States coming to India. As I said, we'd been over to the Maharaja of Jaipur's palace, which he'd turned into a luxury hotel. It wasn't opened to the general public, but they would take people in who were "invited," so to speak. People from embassies could go stay there, and it was a lovely place. They assured us that the water was boiled, but it wasn't, apparently, because I got hepatitis exactly three weeks after coming back from Jaipur and was laid low for the Eisenhower visit.

Q: I ask the question, wasn't it common practice at that time to keep people confined to bed in order to handle hepatitis?

TEEPLE: Oh, yes. I was in bed for six weeks, and the doctor said, "Don't get up except to go to the bathroom." I said, "What about shaving?" He said, "Let your wife shave you." I said, "Oh, no." So I grew a beard. When I went back to the office after six weeks, no one recognized me with my full beard.

Q: Well, isn't that something of real importance for those outgoing officers from the State Department representing the U.S. overseas, that health hazards enter into the lives of virtually every single Foreign Service person in one fashion or another-

TEEPLE: Indeed.

Q: -because of the very limited health facilities people have in those overseas countries?

TEEPLE: We did have an American doctor at the embassy and an American nurse, but the doctor was assigned as the regional medical officer. He traveled throughout the area covering other posts, and we used a list of qualified Indian doctors. There were some good doctors in India, American-trained. My doctor - I remember his name - was Dr. Mehra, who had been American-trained, and he's the one that put me to bed for six weeks when he said, "You've got jaundice." Health hazards were a major problem. Our young son got very sick in India at one time, and it was critical, but he survived. India was a difficult post for maintaining one's good health because of the enormous population and different hygienic practices.

Q: Amoebic dysentery seems to have been something that was so common in so many of these locations.

TEEPLE: We used to call it "Delhi belly." Oh, yes, that was a common occurrence.

Q: On reflection, fortunately there seems to have been, since that time that you and I were overseas, many new medications now available to deal very quickly with common maladies.

TEEPLE: Yes, fortunately all the antibiotic drugs had come to the fore and many other types of medicines which have been a great help to people living in Third World countries.

Q: When you were the IO [information officer] and the press attaché there in New Delhi, did you have a staff of some size? I would expect-

TEEPLE: I had a staff of one American, an assistant information officer, and quite a large national staff. There were two press attachés in New Delhi. There was the press attaché at the embassy, who worked directly with the ambassador, and I was at USIS and handled

the local press, the vernacular press, the Hindi papers and Urdu papers and English papers. India had a very active press. It was interesting to work with those chaps. Many were well-educated. They'd been to Cambridge or Oxford, mostly British-trained, and worked on the English newspapers. And then there was a large vernacular press. I dealt with the local press and got to travel around all over the country, visiting newspaper editors to get them to use our materials. I must say, the personal approach to Indian editors paid off and I was able to place a great many USIS press articles and features in newspapers and magazines.

Q: Did you find that the rail system in India was one of really exceptional size and-

TEEPLE: It was excellent at that time. The British had put in the infrastructure during their 400 years of occupation, so to speak, and India had a fine rail system. I understand it's changed since then. We did travel by train quite often, but we flew most places because India's a large country.

Q: What part of India did you find to be of really superior interest or of intense interest? You were posted to New Delhi most of the time.

TEEPLE: I was in New Delhi, and it was a very interesting post. As I said, Nehru was alive. There was a very active press there. We had many foreign correspondents from England, the United States, Germany, France, and Japan, so it was a busy press operation. I think at that time USIS India was one of the largest Information and Cultural Programs in the world. It had a large American library and a big exchange program, the Fulbright Program. We had a lot of visitors come through the post for lectures and exhibits. It was a very active post. We participated in the World Agricultural Fair, which was held in New Delhi in 1960. We had an American pavilion there which we publicized and promoted. India was an exciting place with so many different cultural activities. We enjoyed India very much. Of course, I was in India during the height of the Cold War and we were very competitive with the Soviet Union in our information and cultural programs. The Russians had a large press and information operation in New Delhi, quite a bit of it covertly done, which made the competition complex and involved.

Q: Did you have much contact with your counterparts from other governments that were represented there?

TEEPLE: Yes, especially with the British. We had good contacts with the British Information Service. They had an active information program also. They also had the British Council, which dealt with cultural and exchange programs as well as library operations. We had limited contact with the Soviet embassy press people and on the surface were friendly with them. Some of the Russian correspondents were KGB [Soviet security service] operatives, working under a Russian news agency, Novosti, and while we were cordial with them, we remained wary of them.

Q: I wonder if you had English teaching programs such as our own binational center programs.

TEEPLE: We didn't have a big English teaching program in India because English was the *lingua franca* of all the educated people at that time. They kept saying, in 10 or 15 or 20 years, English would not be the dominant language, but it has remained so, I believe, because of the diverse sections of the country all speaking different dialects and languages. For instance, down in south India, the Telugu and Tamil languages are completely alien to Hindi and Bengali in north India, as well as different from Urdu and Gujarati. English has been the glue that's held the country together, so to speak, language-wise. Therefore, the English-language press and English education has been maintained. I don't think English is as strong as when we were there, however.

Q: Considering the great size, the magnitude of the U.S. representation in India, what impression did you have of the people that you were working with that came from the U.S. at the time that you were there? Was it a fledgling group? Was it because of the expansion of the U.S. representation there?

TEEPLE: No, we had outstanding people in the embassy and in USIS, as I mentioned, by the ambassadors who were there, Bunker, Galbraith, and Chester Bowles. The same way, down the line, the career people were very good, some really outstanding people. India was an important post. It was one of the largest American embassies. And in USIS we had equally high-level people. So from that standpoint it was a vital post and very competitive for the American officers assigned to New Delhi.

Q: Considering the experience you had before you went to India and the variety of things in information services that you enjoyed prior to going to New Delhi, did you find those who were sent out by the Department to work with you directly had ample training and that they were able to fit in quickly with your programs?

TEEPLE: Generally, yes. We didn't have too many Hindi speakers. Incidentally, I had to go to Hindi language training at FSI prior to my assignment to India. I spent a year at FSI studying Hindi, and I must say, it was pure torture. I did manage to pass the vocabulary and the conversation tests. I never got literate in the language, of course, but then on arriving in India, I found I didn't use Hindi that much, because the people we were contacting were educated people and all spoke very good English.

Q: Well, in your Hindi training at the Department for that year, how much area study did they throw in with the actual language?

TEEPLE: There was no area studies. I took a separate course in area studies for two weeks, I believe, but the Hindi language was strictly language, and it was intense. It was six hours a day.

Q: That's heavy.

TEEPLE: It was four hours with a lecturer, and there were just one or two others in the class with me; four hours of tutoring, and then two hours on the tapes every day.

Q: That's intense.

TEEPLE: Intense.

Q: Did you feel that there was some success in that degree of time involved?

TEEPLE: Well, I learned to speak Hindi on a limited basis. I wasn't fluent.

Q: Did the Indians respond to this?

TEEPLE: Very much. Yes, they loved if you spoke their language, of course.

Q: They were patient?

TEEPLE: That was a benefit. We did have some excellent Hindi speakers in the embassy and in USIS. We had Tom Pinch, who was very fluent in Hindi, and we had people in the embassy who were very fluent, but they took the two or three-year course.

Q: Yes, one of the aspects of representing the U.S. overseas that I found in my own experience, if I may take just a moment for that, was that anyone who came armed with, for instance, a talent in music, automatically had a ticket into most homes or most target audiences that he might wish to contact. I always regretted that in my own experience, that I had not learned the guitar or learned the piano or something involving music. I don't know if you share that at all.

TEEPLE: Yes, it certainly gave you an entrée into a lot of places if you had musical ability. I remember a chap we had in Korea who was a really outstanding musician. He was asked to be the conductor of the Korean Symphony Orchestra. He was an accomplished musician, Rolf Jacoby.

Q: Well, from that time that you were in India, for what length of time was it?

TEEPLE: We were there for a four year assignment. We had two two-year tours with home leave in between.

Q: I see, you went to India in '59.

TEEPLE: We left in '63.

Q: In 1963. You went where in '63?

TEEPLE: We went to Turkey. I had asked for a branch post. I wanted to be a branch PAO. I found out a branch post was just as busy or busier than an embassy press job. Originally, I was selected to go to a branch post in Iran, Isfahan. But suddenly I was reassigned to Adana, Turkey, because the BPAO [branch public affairs officer] that had

just arrived there, Jim Brophy, died tragically in a drowning accident. I was very upset about the assignment at first, because I'd never heard of Adana, and I was interested in going to Iran. But I went to Adana. It was a consular post, and we had a very large U.S. air base adjoining Adana, Incirlik Air Force Base, which is still going strong. Much of my duties was handling community affairs between the airmen and the Turkish populace in Adana. Adana was a town with almost a million population. It was in southeastern Turkey. We could drive in six hours to Beirut from there. It was a wonderful post from that point of view, and we went to Beirut several times. Or you could drive up to Ankara, which was also a six-hour drive, and onto Istanbul. We used to say we were in the armpit of the Middle East.

Q: I can't picture easily how driving from Turkey down to Beirut.

TEEPLE: You had to go through Syria and then into Lebanon and into Beirut. The roads were quite good.

Q: I see, my, you were around the Mediterranean.

TEEPLE: Yes.

Q: I understand.

TEEPLE: At first I was disappointed in the assignment, but then I got to like Turkey quite a bit. I got to like the Turkish people very much. And again, immediately, I had to try to learn the language, and the consul and I had a tutor every morning from eight o'clock to 9:30, a Turkish lady teaching us Turkish, and we became somewhat conversant in the language.

Q: I have a hard question for you to answer. In all of that spectrum of travels and the wide variety of people and ethnicities that you've contacted, from Asia clear over to Europe and all of that distance, is it reasonable to generalize that practically every place you go you can adjust to people, that people are somewhat the same, even though the languages and the cultures are so different, that they respond to you?

TEEPLE: They do respond to you if you have the right approach. And that was, of course, our job in USIS - public diplomacy. We were contacting people directly, much more than officers in the embassy. With the libraries, the cultural and exchange programs, the information programs, exhibits, and the lecturers we brought in, we had intimate daily contact with the local people to schedule and promote these operations as well as the audiences the programs were directed to - this was public diplomacy.

Q: Perhaps my question wanted to elicit, among all of these ethnics, all these different countries, was there one country where people seemed to be warmer, more forthcoming than some of the others?

TEEPLE: They're all a little different, I must say, but the Indians were very affable and

very easy to get to know. They liked Americans at that time, pretty much. They tried to emulate us. The Turkish people at the beginning of my tour were more standoffish, and were harder to get to know. I remember it was some time before we were invited into a Turkish home after arriving at the post, but once we got to know the people and associated with them, we found them very warm. We had some good close Turkish friends and enjoyed them very much.

Q: What was the language, or rather several different languages in Turkey, involved - Kurds, for instance?

TEEPLE: There is a Kurdish language, but Kurds there all spoke Turkish. There was a large Kurdish population in southwest Turkey where we were and we had Kurdish people working in our house. But they knew Turkish. Turkish was the *lingua franca* language. Not as many Turks spoke English as in India, and that was another reason to try to learn the language. They spoke actually quite a bit of French. Southeast Turkey was in the French Levant area after World War I.

Q: Did you develop any skill with Turkish, or was it really too difficult or you were too busy to work with the new language?

TEEPLE: I had a limited knowledge of Turkish, yes. I wasn't fluent at all. The Turks appreciated Americans trying to speak with them, and we had this tutor every morning, Tom Davis, the consul and myself, and we picked up the conversation somewhat. But, we relied a lot on interpreters.

Q: Did you find for the family all of the necessities, for instance, education for the children, schools there?

TEEPLE: There was a school at the air base in Turkey. Our oldest boy was in kindergarten there. We had one son, born in India, and when we got to Turkey he was only nine months old. So he wasn't of school age, but our oldest son did go to the Air Force school at Incirlik Air Base, and that was fortunate. He was in kindergarten, first, and second grade there.

We were three years in Turkey, and again we had outstanding ambassadors. We were in a consular post about 300 miles from the embassy in Ankara. We first had Ambassador Raymond Hare, who was known all over the Department as an outstanding Middle East expert. Then we got Parker Hart as ambassador, and he and his wife would come to Adana quite often and visit with us. Also, we would go up to Ankara for meetings, so I had good exposure to the ambassadors and I found them outstanding people to work with.

Q: What type of housing would you be able to find, for instance, in your location?

TEEPLE: We had a wonderful house in Adana. It was a French provincial large house, two-story, with a full basement. There were some modern large apartment buildings in Adana where a lot of the consulate staff lived. The consul and his family lived in an

apartment building there. The housing was quite good in Adana. We lived on the local economy pretty much. We did have access to the Air Force commissary, of course. We could use that and other Air Force facilities, so that helped out. We found the Turkish fruits and vegetables excellent, and the lamb, of course, was first class.

Q: Yes, in those earlier times, smoking, I suppose, by Americans in these foreign areas was totally accepted and just the pattern of living? I suppose Turkish tobacco had its place there in the local economy and was an export item to the United States?

TEEPLE: It was. We weren't in a tobacco growing area in Adana. We were in what they called the Cuborova area of Turkey, where they grew wonderful fruits and vegetables. All the Turks smoked, pretty much, the men especially.

They had one interesting custom, the Turks, as we learned. The eldest son usually went into the army. The army was all-important in Turkey. The second son usually - those from affluent families - would go into the government or politics. And the third son would go into business. They didn't put that much emphasis on business in those days. Now I think that's changed. And another nice custom was this: when a son was born in Turkey, the father would buy a piece of land, one hectare of land, and plant it full of trees. When the son became 20 years old, they would harvest the trees, sell the lumber, and that would be the son's inheritance.

Q: His legacy, his inheritance.

TEEPLE: Yes. I thought that was a wonderful custom. We were in Turkey at some exciting times, too. It was a time of tension between Turkey and Greece, and especially on Cyprus. We heard the Turkish airplanes from Incirlik Air Base fly right over our house one Sunday on their way to bomb Cyprus. Again, it seems like every crisis happens on a Sunday. The Incirlik Air Force Base was a Turkish base with an American presence. There was a Turkish commanding officer and an American colonel, but it was a Turkish base. The Turkish flag and the American flag flew over the base.

But that Cyprus crisis happened during my tour in Turkey. That Sunday afternoon, when the Turks first bombed Cyprus, the consul and I went immediately to the base to see what was happening. We found the Turkish pilots with big smiles on their faces when they returned from their bombing run. It was the first time they'd been in combat, I think. But it was a problem for us, because we controlled all the petrol for the aircraft, and we threatened to cut off their petrol if they bombed Cyprus again, which didn't make the Turks happy at all.

Q: Yes, the Cyprus... can we call it a "conflict," I expect, or was it termed a war?

TEEPLE: It turned out to be a conflict.

Q: This is between Greeks and Cypriots.

TEEPLE: As I remember it, Cyprus was two-thirds Greek and one-third Turkish, but the Turks felt discriminated against in getting government jobs and being represented in the government. So the Turks attacked to try to get their full recognition. At first they attacked with the aircraft, and then later with land forces and occupied the northern part of Cyprus, which they still do.

Q: It's interesting to speculate that there hasn't been a recurrence of this, that somehow they've been able to resolve the issue.

TEEPLE: I believe there's a United Nations group there observing the line between the Turkish Cypriots and the Greek Cypriots. There have been some skirmishes now and then but no major conflicts that I recall. But it's still unresolved, and I don't see how it's reconcilable, frankly.

Q: Yes. You had distinguished visitors come into Adana, I would expect, from time to time, even though it was distant from the main post.

TEEPLE: We got some visitors there, yes, through the cultural programs. We had the Robert Shaw Chorale come to Adana, and we had some celebrities come through to lecture. We had the distinguished actor Frederic March and his wife, Florence Eldridge. We had a well-known pianist and others, but not as many as the embassy in Ankara got, or even Istanbul. We did get a number of speakers and lecturers. Incidentally, Incirlik Air Base was the place where the late Francis Gary Powers took off on his ill-fated flight over the Soviet Union. He was based at Incirlik Air Base.

Q: The famous U-2.

TEEPLE: Yes, that famous U-2 flew over Turkey to Pakistan to refuel, and then flew over Russia and was shot down. This became a problem for us, one of the biggest public relations problems in my whole career. President Eisenhower went on the air and denied that we had any spy plane over Russia, but then a couple of days later he had to admit it when Gary Powers was actually captured. And while we in USIS had put out the President's denial, then we were faced with the embarrassing and somewhat humiliating admission later. Turkish press people, I remember, came running up and saying, "Oh, you said this wasn't true and it was true. How do you answer to that?" It was embarrassing, very embarrassing. The embassy, the consulate, and USIS were only as good as the White House, so to speak.

Q: What did you look forward to after you had completed your tour there as your next post?

TEEPLE: After Turkey, I got an assignment to Vietnam, which I really wasn't looking forward to. But while I on home leave, I had to maintain contact with Personnel in Washington, and I called, and they said, "Well, we've got good news and bad news. The good news is you're not going to Vietnam. The bad news is you're going to North Africa." I said, "Well, that's not too bad." Then they said, "Well, you're going to Tripoli,

Libya.” And I didn’t know anything about Tripoli, Libya. It was an Arab country, but I was to go there as the information officer. After home leave, we went to Tripoli, Libya.

Q: This was 1965?

TEEPLE: 1966 to 1969. We spent three years in Libya. It was before Qadhafi, I’m glad to say. They had a king on the throne, King Idriss. The British always put a king in charge after they leave a country. It turned out to be an interesting post. We had a lovely bungalow, as they called them, right on the Mediterranean Sea. It was nice living. Here again there was a large Air Force base outside of Tripoli, Wheelus Air Base, which at that time, I think, was the largest overseas American Air Force base in the world. There were 15,000 U.S. Air Force personnel at Wheelus and we had a large oil company community there. They discovered oil in Libya in the early ‘60s - I think it was ESSO, or Exxon, as it’s now called - and the American oil companies came into Libya in droves. We had a community of 18,000 American oil company families in Libya. Almost every major American oil company was represented there drilling oil or doing some kind of oil business. Again we had an outstanding American ambassador. I really got some of the best. We had David Newsom my whole tour, David Dunlap Newsom, from 1966 to ‘69. He went on to be ambassador to Indonesia and to the Philippines and then to the University of Virginia as a diplomat in residence after retirement. Our DCM was Jim Blake, who later became ambassador to Iceland. The first PAO was Bill Hutchinson, an outstanding USIA officer who later went to the highest heights of the agency as area director for Africa. John Hogan came next as PAO, a humorous man with a lot of charm.

This very large American community was in a large country, geographically, with a small population. There were less than two million Libyans in the country at the time. I worked with Wheelus Air Base closely. In fact, I had a desk at the base Public Information Office to work on community relations. Our big crisis in Libya was during the Six Day War when the Egyptians marched into the Sinai and then supposedly into Israel, according to their own propaganda. There was a community of Sephardic Jews living in Tripoli, as they did all over North Africa, running most of the commerce. The Libyans, listening to Nasser’s emotional propaganda on the radio, which came into Libya like a ton of bricks, took to the streets demonstrating and tearing into the Jewish shops and businesses. Also, it was a problem for us in the USIS library building and at the embassy. We closed up the USIS library and the USIS offices and put the metal shutters down, and went over to the embassy, where they had the Marines, of course. Then the American women and children were ordered out to Wheelus Air Base to be evacuated, because there was a breakdown of law and order. My wife and children were at the base overnight and were evacuated, as were most of the embassy dependents. I stayed with a core of other officers.

Q: What was it that precipitated that?

TEEPLE: This was the Six Day War, which broke out between the Arabs and the Israelis in June 1967. All embassy officers, staff, and dependents did move out to Wheelus Air Base for security measures. As events settled down after a couple of days, I went back to our house. We had a wonderful houseboy there, Omar. I remember he put a sign on our

house saying “No Americans here” in Arabic, and he fed our dog. I went back and stayed in the house, and the women and children, my wife and two children, were sent to Rome. I got up there once for a visit with them, and then we decided to move my wife and children to Malta, which had good English schools. So they went to Malta and rented an apartment, and we were ready to send the boys to Malta schools (which were based on English public schools), but things calmed down in Tripoli and my wife and children were the first to come back to Libya. They got on the first plane that was available when women and children were allowed to return. Several dependents stayed on in Rome, and some even went to the States.

Q: The children got back into school there at Wheelus?

TEEPLE: Yes.

Q: And you moved from Tripoli then to?

TEEPLE: Being 10 years continuously overseas, I was transferred to Washington in 1969. I had a wonderful job as the North Africa Desk officer for USIA, covering Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Sudan.

Q: This was called the North African Desk?

TEEPLE: Yes, I was the North African Desk officer for USIA, working in the African Area. Later in 1971, we were put in with the Near East and South Asia Area office.

Q: This was 1970?

TEEPLE: This was 1969 when I was transferred to Washington.

Q: '69 to?

TEEPLE: It was in September, 1969, to '72, and I worked as desk officer, traveled to all the posts every year. It was a very interesting job and I enjoyed it very much. In '72, I was ready to go overseas again, and I was sent to Monrovia, Liberia, as the public affairs officer for the embassy and director of USIS/Liberia.

Liberia had this unique American connection, so to speak. We'd sent back the first American slaves to Liberia during President Monroe's time, and Monrovia is named after him. The U.S. had an intimate connection with Liberia up until the recent difficulties, which I missed, thank goodness. I was in Liberia from 1972 to '76 as the public affairs officer. Again, we had a very large American presence there because of Liberia's unique position with our country. It was a regional embassy post. We had the regional doctor there. We had a big AID [Agency for International Development] mission. We had a large Voice of America transmitter site there. VOA had built 12 100,000 watt transmitters outside of Monrovia. There was a staff of engineers and technicians with families living in their compound.

Q: What has happened to those now?

TEEPLE: They've all been destroyed, I understand, during the terrible conflict there.

Also, we had a big communications installation in Monrovia that electronically connected with posts around the world. It was run by another agency. So we had a large American community in Monrovia.

Q: What would you estimate by size?

TEEPLE: Oh, by size... There was a good-sized American business community there, too, working in banks, insurance companies, etc. Many major American companies had branches in Liberia, including Citibank and Chase Bank. There was also a Firestone rubber plantation 30 miles outside of Monrovia, which was the largest rubber plantation in the world - a huge place - I think half the size of the State of Rhode Island. Firestone had its own American community running the plantation.

Q: By numbers?

TEEPLE: By numbers, I think there were estimated to be 5,000 or 6,000 Americans in the country. We had many American missionaries there also. There was a large American missionary broadcasting facility called ELWA there. And then Liberia had a lot of iron ore, which was being mined by American, Swedish, and British companies. One large American-Swedish company called LAMCO was way up-country. It wasn't near Monrovia, but they had quite a few Americans there. In my last two posts, Libya and Liberia, we had too many Americans for the size of the local population. I was fortunate to leave Libya before Qadhafi, and I left Liberia before the terrible civil war broke out in 1980.

But I enjoyed Liberia. It was there I had the highest ranking I achieved in the Foreign Service. I was counselor of embassy and had a three-American-man USIS post, with about 35 national employees. I got to know West Africa and traveled to the neighboring posts, Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, and went on leave to South Africa and to Tanzania and Kenya.

Q: We're going to be here this morning for a second interview regarding the Oral History Program. The date is Monday, the 5th of April, 1999. You'll recall that we had completed the first set of the tape conversations beginning in January on the 29th, and we completed two hours, approximately, and we're now beginning the second set of tapes. And to recall, you had completed your description of your work in Monrovia, Liberia, and at that point, I believe, you were ready for transfer to the United States, and perhaps you would like to pick it up at that point, where you have returned to Washington.

TEEPLE: Yes, we stayed in Liberia from 1972 to '76. I'd finished my tour there of four years, and I went to Washington on home leave without orders to another post. Things were tight in the agency then on assignments. A lot of people had come back from Vietnam awaiting assignment, and I came back to Washington on home leave and wanted another overseas assignment. I didn't want an assignment in Washington. We stayed around Washington during the summer of '76. I had to enroll my young son in junior high school there as we awaited an assignment. Finally, they offered me the position of a branch public affairs officer in Cebu, the Philippines. Wanting to go overseas again, I took it. It was a less important post than I had just previously served, but I went to Cebu as branch PAO and stayed three years. We flew out to Manila and I had orientation in the embassy for about a week. Bill Sullivan was the ambassador at the time, another outstanding ambassador who is well known for his Iran ambassadorship. We flew down to Cebu in October 1976 to take up the post. Cebu was a two man consular post. John Ellson was the first consul. He was followed by Terry Tull, a Foreign Service female officer, who later went on to be ambassador to a couple of countries. I had the best national staff in Cebu of all my posts. They were very competent people, well versed in English, and hard-working. Our PAO in Manila the first year or two was Maury Lee. He was followed by Horace Greeley Dawson. I served under them. After Bill Sullivan left, he was replaced by David Newsom, whom we'd served with in Libya, so he was an old friend and very welcomed ambassador for us. After David Newsom left, he was replaced by Richard Murphy, who had been mostly in the Middle East and was an Arab expert.

Q: At that point I believe I had wanted to ask you about the political situation in the Philippines and how it might have affected your work there in the consulate and as branch PAO. The president of the Philippines at that time was-

TEEPLE: -was Marcos, yes. Marcos was the president the entire period we were in the Philippines. When we arrived in October 1976, there was martial law and there was a curfew of midnight. That didn't last too long, less than a year. Then things were relatively calm. There was some insurrection up in the northern part of the country, up in northern Luzon, and there was insurrection down in the south in Mindanao, especially in the city of Zamboanga, but it didn't affect us very much. We had the usual USIS operations of an American library - very good American library, well attended - and we had exhibits, of course, that would come in. We had a regular motion picture schedule of classic American films once a month. We had a press operation, because there were four or five English daily newspapers in Cebu, and we supplied them with wireless file material and other items. We had a speakers' program. We had speakers come in quite often. They were programmed out of Tokyo - American speakers. And we had some performing artists. We had concert pianists. We had a chorale group. It was an all-around operation with just one American in USIS, myself, and a staff of about 15 national employees, who, I have said, were most competent.

Q: I wanted to ask you, Howell, about the size of a city like you were working in there. What was the population of that area?

TEEPLE: Cebu was a relatively large city. It was close to a million people, and it became

over a million by the time we left, in the three and a half years we were there. It was the second largest city in the Philippines, after Manila, situated about 300 miles south of Manila. It was on the island of Cebu and was called Cebu City. You could only get there by flying or by ship. Cebu had a port. They had an active port. We had visits of U.S. Navy ships every year.

Q: In recounting other posts where you had served before, and as your interview indicates, you had in your background five or six different places where you had lived, served in PAO activity, and by comparison was Cebu one of your favorite places?

TEEPLE: I didn't have the responsibilities I'd had in Monrovia, where I was the country PAO and had a larger staff. Cebu was a branch public affairs post. Because I had such a good Philippine staff, it made my life relatively easy there, frankly. So it was a lesser post, so to speak, less responsibilities there, but still an important one. The Philippines had been our only colonial experience. When we arrived in '76, we found the Filipinos quite pro-American. It has changed since then, but we enjoyed it there and got to travel through the Far East, including a trip to China with a group of Filipinos. We went to China in 1979, on our own, as tourists, but we might not have been able to have gone to China if we hadn't been stationed there. And then we visited Hong Kong and Taiwan and all the ASEAN [Association of South East Asian Nations] countries out of Cebu when we got leave. We went to Thailand and Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and back, taking advantage of a special airline fare where you could visit all ASEAN countries that I just mentioned for a reasonable cost. We took advantage of that when we got leave, got to see quite a bit of East Asia.

Q: When did you complete your work there at Cebu?

TEEPLE: I finished the tour in the summer of 1979, and I had an onward assignment to Washington, DC. I had put in for this job and fortunately got it. It was director of USIA National Employees. I was the personnel director for all of our national employees worldwide, and that was a job I had sought out because I had often thought our national employees did not get all the credit and recognition that they deserved. I was going to try to improve that situation and help them. I worked closely with the State Department national employee personnel officer. I took that job in 1979, and at the time all national employees were all being reclassified under the Civil Service. As you know, they're under Civil Service regulations, and all jobs worldwide were being reclassified. This was a real upheaval. I made several trips to posts with classifiers that were reviewing these jobs. We would interview every national employee and decide what Civil Service grade he or she should be in due to their responsibilities. It was the first time we had a worldwide standard system of personnel classification for national employees. While many national employees got demoted because they were way overgraded, others got promoted. The worldwide standard of personnel classification for national employees is still in existence till this day, I believe.

Q: Well, that certainly is an interesting fact, so you must have felt a great sense of accomplishment and achievement with obviously some great loyalties that you developed

with Foreign Service national in your posts, and recalling your very warm experience with the Philippine foreign nationals who were so competent with your staff, and returning to Washington and getting into the details on a worldwide basis must have been a fascinating challenge for you.

TEEPLE: It was, and I had a relatively big staff in Washington. I had six American officers working with me in the national personnel office, and we would travel to posts with State Department people and professional personnel classification specialists. I went on several trips. I went to Venezuela and Peru. Then I went out to Thailand, Burma, and India. India had the largest national employee staff in the world. I also traveled to New Zealand and Australia in this job.

Q: What was the total population of that local Indian Foreign Service national program?

TEEPLE: It was about three hundred. We had posts in Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, Madras, and branch posts in Bangalore, Hyderabad, and Lucknow. It was a big operation.

Q: Was this work that you were doing in Washington in the revision of the Foreign Service National Civil Service review program - was that the final contact you had with the agency? Did you retire shortly after that?

TEEPLE: Yes. That was my last job. I worked there in '79 and '80, and with my military service, I had 35 years' service, so when the agency offered an incentive to retire - I think it was a 13 percent bonus - I couldn't resist that. My wife wasn't too happy when I retired, because I was only 58, and she didn't want to be known as a wife of a retiree. It worked out because soon after I retired I went to work at the State Department on the Freedom of Information Program. We were clearing documents under the Freedom of Information Act [FOIA], and I enjoyed that work very much. While it wasn't full-time, it was two or three times a week. There was a formula on how much you could make - I can't remember what it was - in salary. They paid us at a GS-15 level, and we worked in the areas where we had served overseas, clearing documents under the Freedom of Information Act. I did that from 1980 to 1989, so had almost a second career. Also, I was called upon on several occasions to escort international visitors around the country. I took more than 30 trips with international visitors brought here under the Fulbright Program and other programs. I got to see a lot of the United States from these trips.

Q: What was the official date of your retirement? Do you recall?

TEEPLE: My official date of retirement was August 31st, 1980. But I stayed on as director of Foreign National Personnel under a reserve officer appointment until the end of the year at the request of the USIA Personnel director, Angie Garcia.

Q: Were you living in Arlington, Virginia, at that time?

TEEPLE: We were living in Falls Church.

Q: Falls Church.

TEEPLE: Falls Church, yes. In the Lake Barcroft area.

Q: And following [the retirement] date in August 31, 1980, you continued in your work as you described, and then in 1981 you began your escort service work?

TEEPLE: Yes, in 1981 I began the work in the Freedom of Information Office at the State Department. There was a big staff, several former ambassadors, working there, and it was a fun job really because of the camaraderie with the other officers. In '81, I did the first escort work.

Q: I'm curious about your escort work. Would this involve the visits of foreign nationals?

TEEPLE: No, it wasn't foreign nationals at all. These were foreign visitors selected by embassies and USIS posts around the world to participate in the International Visitor Program. I took the minister of the interior from Jordan around the country. I took the minister of Education from India. I took another minister of education from Egypt and the deputy foreign minister of Pakistan. We had quite a few VIP types, and then there were groups. When we were having elections in the United States, journalists would come over to observe American elections, and that would be a group of anywhere from five to 15 people. Sometimes there would be two escorts on those trips. But this wasn't part of my official career; this was after I had retired.

Q: Well, this certainly must have been one of the most entertaining parts of your experience in working in foreign affairs.

TEEPLE: I enjoyed it very much. The Freedom of Information work, declassifying documents, and also the escort work, and I got to see my own country quite a bit. I went to places I probably never would have gone to otherwise, including a wheat farm in North Dakota, an Indian reservation in Arizona, and other places.

Q: It was so impressive for me to hear you say that you had completed 35 years of service work for your government, for our country. That has great meaning to me personally, and I'm sure it would for most Americans, to all who have some appreciation of what our country tries to do overseas. And this prompts a question that may be difficult for you to answer, but in reflecting on those great numbers of experiences and these great varieties of countries and also for the purposes of the Oral History Program, others who will be listening to what you have to say, can you think of some valuable or some lessons that young people coming into service might consider, that will be helpful to them from your experience?

TEEPLE: I think the best advice is to get a well-rounded education in liberal arts, especially if you want to go into information and cultural work. And of course now with all employees taking the Foreign Service Exam, it's almost mandatory. American studies programs are very useful for an information/cultural officer also.

Of course, the Service has changed considerably since we left in '80. And it's gotten more difficult, with terrorist activities all over. It's completely different now, so I hesitate to make recommendations because I'm not that familiar today with what's happening now in the Foreign Service. Being in California, we're somewhat distant from it.

Q: Yes, understood.

TEEPLE: But I certainly enjoyed my career very much and would repeat it again, maybe with a few different post assignments. I had wonderful experiences, and I believe it was a real asset for our children, our two boys, growing up abroad and getting appreciation of world affairs and other people and cultures.

Q: We've been talking with Mr. Howell Teeple about his experiences in his 35 years of service in foreign affairs, and from his descriptions of the various places where he has served, anyone can appreciate the vast amount of work that he's enjoyed in foreign service, and we trust that this will be useful for all who follow on who are able to enjoy the Oral History Program. This terminates, then, our second interview with Mr. Howell Teeple, concluding information about his 35 years of service. My name is Earl Sherman, San Diego, California, terminating this interview on Monday, April the 5th, 1999.

End of Interview