

Memoir of Mrs. Virginia Hamill Biddle , 2011

Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

VIRGINIA HAMILL BIDDLE

Interviewed by: Self

Initial interview date: November 23, 1994

Copyright 1999 ADST

Born of a Swedish mother in 1904 in Omaha, Nebraska but taken when a baby with older brother and sister to Saint Joseph, Missouri, an aristocratic little town in the mid-west where childhood was spent until sent away to an Episcopal School, Grafton Hall in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin for a year. Then to a girl's finishing school, Briarcliff at Briarcliff Manor in Westchester county, New York for two years graduating in 1924, when mother suddenly died in her garden.

Shortly after moved with father to Beverly Hills, California until sailed for Japan to be married in 1930 to Charles W. Biddle, an executive in the National City Bank of New York, now known as the Citibank.

While living in Honolulu the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941. Remained there until sailed 10 days later for the United States and did war work in Washington, D.C. After war was over sailed for Bermuda in 1946.

When making a courtesy call on the American Consul was launched into the Foreign Service and spent 20 years serving in the posts of Tangier, Paris, Bangkok, Palermo,

Library of Congress

Stockholm, Istanbul and finally in the Office of Protocol in the Department of State, retiring in 1966 to the island of Palma de Mallorca, Spain where lived for 18 years.

Returned to Washington in 1984 to be with aging sister, Mildred Trimble, accompanying her every summer to England with the Attingham group to study the historic homes, until her death in 1986.

Twilight years now spent writing memoirs which the Foreign Affairs Oral History Program of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, Foreign Service Institute and Georgetown University, requested for their archives.

Bermuda - January 1946 to July 1947

Bermuda's motto is borrowed from Virgil: "Whither the Fates Lead Us." The Fates had led me to Bermuda. The manager of the Everest, where I was to stay was at the dock to meet the Furness liner from New York that brought me to Bermuda in mid January, 1946. This modest, English type hotel had been recommended because the people were kind and the food was good. It had a home life atmosphere and was situated in spacious grounds directly across from the beautiful cathedral, a dominating gothic edifice on Church Street. There were not many guests, but the few were very congenial. Gradually I became acquainted.

The maid called me every afternoon to ask if I would like to have tea with Mr. Porter, an elderly gentleman who had been an instructor for years in Japan and translated Japanese poetry. We had many interesting chats over our cups of tea, preferring to speak of the more esthetic side of the Japanese rather than the horrible havoc they hurled on Honolulu that fatal day of December 7, 1941 when I was there. Soon I met Margaret McCollough, an attractive Canadian widow who had been living in Monte Carlo until just before the fall of France. We became friends at once and our friendship was to last for many years. Then

Library of Congress

there was Stewart Wilding, a jovial Englishman whose name appealed to me. We had fun cycling and picnicking together.

Several notes of introduction had been given to me before leaving Washington. One was to Mr. Toddings, the publisher of the "Mid Ocean News," which I presented shortly upon arrival. The very next day after calling on him I found myself in print. Little did I realize while we were chatting that my enthusiastic praise of the island was making copy for his paper. How could I have been so naive. But it was all true. Bermuda did seem to me like Tahiti and Hong Kong wrapped in one and I did believe that I had found what I had been looking for. Always a lover of islands and ever in search of the haven I felt I had found mine, especially after witnessing the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that suddenly plunged us into World War II and weary war years working in Washington.

A note to Sir Howard Trot was also given me. Trot was a name interwoven in the history of the island when a family seat was established in the 17th century at their home Walsingham. He offered me a job in the office of the Inverery that began its career as a hotel in 1910.

Fate stepped in. A courtesy call was made one day at our American consulate, a courtesy I knew was required of every traveler abroad. The consul who had a most charming manner was Clay Merrill, a tall, broad shouldered man dressed in tweeds. During the course of our conversation I just happened to mention that I thought I would like to find a job some where, not really having in mind one there. He asked me if I could type. I said that I could and then asked if he would like to see a letter I was fortunate to possess from my brother-in-law's father, the Honorable South Trimble, who had been for forty years clerk of the House. He read the letter thoughtfully and in a few minutes looked up and with a lovely economy of words said, "See my secretary, Lilly Olsen." So I went into her office where she began to iron out the logistical details of salary. Before I knew it I had been given a job in the consulate. With the innocence of the proverbial lamb I had suddenly embarked upon a career in the Foreign Service of the United States State Department of

Library of Congress

which I was only vaguely familiar. But, with characteristic optimism thought it might have a future. How little did I know. I had been employed as a local and at a local's low salary, but I was lucky for later the State Department was cutting down staffs in an economy drive and no post could employ US citizens abroad. I was to be receptionist and relieve the colored messenger boy, Arnold, who had been doing this as part time duty. Never having had previous State Department training, I had it all to learn.

Now that I had a job my living arrangements became inadequate. The Everest was comfortable for a short while, but I knew that I could not rest forever there and it didn't fit in with my now small salary, so I made a change. I moved to Ridlin, which was just around the corner on the other side of the cathedral and still in Pembroke parish. There I had a very pleasant room in the home of one of the old Bermudian families, the Sutherland Coopers. Three windows looked out upon their green spacious lawn bordered by flower beds. When all of my own things were unpacked and books arranged, it looked cozy and cheerful. Mrs. Cooper was a dear. Often flowers from her garden were on my breakfast tray the colored maid brought up to me every morning.

The English-Speaking Union, familiarly known as the ESU, was just next door and after I became a member I could go there for lunch or dinner or have tea with friends. Some days, Arnold, the messenger boy, would bring me a sandwich which I would have sitting on a bench beside the water and watch the little boats ride gracefully at anchor in the port and have a stroll to sample the sea breeze. My evening meal was usually taken at Ye Olde Copper Bowl, a sort of tea room upstairs on Front Street where they began to know me and frequently prepared my favorite dishes. On weekends I loved cycling along the calm country lanes with a picnic lunch in my little wicker basket endeavoring to catch something of the spirit of the place and people. Just to hear the tinkle of bicycle bells and clip clop of the horses' hoofs and strange music of the sea was a delight.

The consulate was on the second floor of an office building at one end of famed Front Street overlooking the harbor. It was just about a fifteen minute walk from Ridlin to the

Library of Congress

consulate, but after I bought a secondhand bicycle I could breeze down the hill to the office in five minutes. The Bermudians are born on bicycles, everyone had one. It was the most popular means of conveyance. The staff was small. The vice consul, Earl J. Richey, very good looking, just married and still on his honeymoon; the secretary, Lilly Olsen; and Helen Fuss who became my closest colleague; were the only other Americans. One local girl took care of the files, issued the passports and visas and the other local girl was the accountant. The office hours were from 9-5:15 Monday through Friday and 9-12:45 on Saturday. Thursday afternoon was always a holiday for the Bermudians when the offices and the stores closed at noon. So our shopping was done on Saturdays. But as a bonus we were given off the English, Bermudian and American holidays which added up throughout the year. Every morning I reported to work with a little bunch of violets I placed in the empty glass inkwell on my desk to add a feminine touch, brighten the office and cheer the visa applicants as they came in. Then I religiously read the big heavy black manual to have some idea of what the consular work was all about.

Mrs. Merrill would flit in and out, now and then, with a cherry greeting for everyone. She was a diminutive dynamo of a woman with a great flare for decorating. The first thing that I liked about Bermuda was its traditional tranquility. Bermuda's habits and way of life belonged to a distinctly gracious age. The pace was leisurely and civilized. Transport was by a romantic horse drawn surrey complete with fringe on top. The component part of Bermuda's charm were its pretty pastel houses and their characteristic architectural features. The early houses designed by men of nautical background were built of limestone of which the island is composed. Soft enough to be cut with a hand saw it has the accommodating property of hardening with age so that the longer a Bermuda house stands the more firm its walls become. The white tiered roofs cascade to catch the previous rain water had the refreshing appearance of being covered with eternity snow. The abundance cedar of the island was not used for shingle roofs, instead used for interior woodwork and floors the servants polished until they could see their faces in them. The tray ceiling, traditional Bermudian architecture, earns its name from the resemblance of a

Library of Congress

tray set upside down to give coolness to the room. Windows of the houses are protected from gales, hurricanes and strong sunshine by slatted shutters or blinds called by the more picturesque name, jalousies, which let the air in but kept out the storms. A charming feature of Bermuda architecture is the famous welcoming arms steps at the front door that curve outward as they reach the ground in a gesture symbolic of Bermuda hospitality. The semi-tropical climate was a paradise for foliage plants where all the color was technicolor. Crotons are a favorite, sliding up and down the color scale of yellows, coppers, scarlet, crimson and pink. Purple bougainvillea cascaded over the walls of nearly every candy colored mansion and cottage. Hibiscus and wild orchids were everywhere and freesia grew rampant through the grass. One Sunday I went cycling for the expressed purpose of taking photos of the emblems of purity and serenity, the masses of Easter lilies which were just beginning to bloom and sweetening the air with their heavenly fragrance. An early variety of the lily had been perfected and packed in bud and shipped to all parts of the United States and Canada. A box of a dozen, the minimum, was sent to my sister with a note asking her to take some to the grave of my brother-in-law, Jim Trimble, who had died on his birthday, September 8, 1945 and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Bermuda had many imports, but this was the chief export. They were introduced here from Japan in the early 18 hundreds and the first shipment of Bermuda grown bulbs was exported in 1877 to Philadelphia.

Nearing Christmas time a friend and I cycled out in the country to look for holly. We met all kinds of people laden with it in their bicycle baskets and in the backs of their cars. There was beginning to be too many of these now for comfort on the narrow winding roads. So there was precious little holly left when we arrived and we had to seek deep in the woods for it. We were rewarded by coming on to a huge field of wild narcissus permeating the air with their special fragrance. I gathered an arm full. Real mistletoe had just arrived from the States and was in the florist shops. So my little room in Ridlin looked and smelled sweet with vases for narcissus, poinsettias, which grew tall like trees in the garden, sprigs of holly here and there and mistletoe hanging from the ceiling gave a touch of Christmas spirit.

Library of Congress

But what really fascinated me was the passion flower. It was so beautifully formed and had such an interesting story. The passion flower received its name from the early Spanish missionaries in America. They saw in the flower the emblem of the crucifixion of Christ. The purple color of the flower is symbolic of mockery. It is the royal color of the robe which Christ wore when he was hailed King of the Jews. When my friend, Margaret McCollough, sailed for the States, I took three lavender ones to her. They only last a day but I was to learn later how to wax these flowers to preserve them longer.

The peach and white beaches with sand as fine as sifted flour were dazzling with beautiful hidden coves for picnicking. The stillness was broken only by the incessant murmur of the sea and cry of the sea gulls. Thanks to coral reefs that form a protective ring the waves are tame for swimmers, restful and refreshing. There are no man eating sharks about, they dare not brave the reefs. The delicious water caresses one like silk. Whether you are in it, on it or under it, it surrounds you. Water is the way of life in Bermuda. Everything conspires to make it an ideal resort.

But also Bermuda is steeped in history. Although discovered by a Spaniard, Juan de Bermudez in 1503, had no Spanish panache whatsoever and was not to be visited again until a hundred years later by an Englishman, Sir George Somers, who was shipwrecked here and promptly claimed the land in the name of England. It was colonized by the British in 1612 and 1614. Bermuda is Britain's oldest colony and the evidence is delightfully apparent.

To English visitors, Bermuda has an American flavor. Prices are quoted in dollars as well as pounds. Yet to Americans, the nine parishes had English names reflecting a strong British heritage. Warwick was given its name by the Earl of Warwick and Devonshire was given its name in honor of the Earl of Devonshire. Lord Paget was responsible of giving his name to the parish of Paget, a favorite residential district with five estates that had well kept gardens and rare plants and flowers and an unexcelled panoramic view of Hamilton. The oldest and most picturesque of all is St. Georges where Steward Wilding

Library of Congress

and I cycled one Sunday. A sleepy, semi-deserted town of 17th century mansions of Bermuda's earliest families, ancient churches and outlying forts. St. Peters Church, the oldest Anglican church in the Western Hemisphere, has wonderful carved cedar wood and priceless communion service a gift from William III. The house is built in the Georgian manner where soft limestone had mellowed into a pale, poetic, honey gray. Old Rectory was the oldest, was built about 1705 by a reformed pirate. Hamilton became Bermuda's capital in 1815 when the seat of government was moved from St. Georges.

We had our picnic lunch that day sitting by an old fort built in 1605 near the sea. Returning to Hamilton we passed Kingley Air Force Base where the planes come in and now United States property. The airport is at the extreme northeastern part of the island so that the landings and takeoffs are primarily over the ocean. When we returned we found we had cycled 24 miles. It had been a wonderful outing to that old world part of the island.

Hamilton is as important as a port as it is a resort. The city's most endearing quality is its intimacy. One finds it is just enough to sit and look at Front Street from one of the veranda bars such as the Bar 21's canopied first floor terrace where people gathered anytime from 11 in the morning onwards and enjoyed the stately spectacle of liners arriving and departing from Hamilton. Ships on one side of the street and shops on the other. Ships tied up almost to the lamp posts, freighters, liners and cruise ships, to unload their cosmopolitan cargo. Across the cobbled way are eight shops in renovated 18th century warehouses. Not only the shops, but the lagoons and sea gardens hold treasures which skin divers have rescued from Spanish galleons wrecked there in the 16th century.

The work at the consulate was becoming increasingly interesting as I was getting more into the swing of things. But I was sorry to see my colleague, Helen Fus, leaving on transfer to Lisbon. She had at one time worked with Walt Disney so she was naturally very artistic with a delightful sense of humor. Some good news that made it rather special coming as it did on the eve of my birthday, April 5, was that Mr. Merrill asked me to learn the visa work now that Helen was leaving. He said the work would increase later as most Bermudians go

Library of Congress

away in the summer. Then they would get someone to take my place as receptionist. Well, Mr. Merrill explained that he could not recommend me for a raise until I was there a year. At least he would now have, he said, a base for asking for one when the time came. So it was in a way a promotion and it pleased me very much. It was something that really made me feel worthwhile. This enthusiastic encouragement cheered me on my way. Little by little I began to take on more responsibility and the workload became inconceivably heavy. There seemed to be an endless stream of applicants. It was exhausting, but exhilarating and sometimes hilarious.

One day a buxom bosomed Negro woman, born in the West Indies, came in and every answer to the barrage of questions asked her was "No thank you." Question: Have you ever been arrested? Answer: No thank you. Question: Are you divorced? Answer: No thank you. And so on, until I could hardly suppress my amusement.

The Reverend Eustice Moredant Strong, of St. John's Church in Pembroke had an appointment one day. Before I could speak to him, he spoke to me. "Are you Mrs. Biddle?" he began in a friendly way. "Well, I have had so many people tell me about you that I must call on you. You live next door to the ESU don't you? And you are Episcopalian aren't you?" All to which I acquiesced. Then we chatted like old friends. He had been in Yokohama during the earthquake as had my husband, but they both fortunately survived. It was sad to hear, however, that his wife's first husband and child were both lost in that horrible tragedy that ruined all of Yokohama and most of Tokyo. He had preached a memorial service in the little church in Kobe where I had been married in 1930 and knew the Rev. Ford there who had performed the ceremony, and Bishop Bryce Synder in Tokyo and other dear friends in Japan. And by coincidence I had just received that morning a card from Mrs. Bryce Synder which I showed to him. It did my heart good to have this little visit with him.

One evening the Merrills gave a cocktail party for the men off the three American ships in port—Fargo, Cleveland and Houston. Their beautiful home, originally owned by Mrs.

Library of Congress

Hillbourne, was one of the show places of Bermuda. I met quite a few people and enjoyed myself very much. Among the guests were His Excellency the Governor and Lady Leatham and the mayor from Cleveland, the Governor's aide, an attractive Englishman and also Admiral Braested, his aide and the two Cooper boys who managed A & S Cooper. The presence of the Governor and Admiral in residence here added a special #clat to the social life of Bermuda.

Friends were being made here and there. Stewart Wilding and I would often call on Mrs. Jackson and her daughter Norma, Canadians who had a little place by the water where we could watch the yacht races and unique sailing dinghies, stout little boats found only on this island skim over the water. We met a most interesting Englishman there one evening, a Mr. Jefferies. He was number two in the Cable and Wireless office. He had lived on the peak when I was in Hong Kong and we found we knew some of the same people. His wife and fifteen year old daughter, a swimming champion training for the Olympics, were due out from England soon. He was raving about the old house he had just found reeking with tradition. The carriage house had originally been the first school on the island and like many old homes here had one of the quaint bicycle sheds that everyone had attached to their property. After his wife and daughter arrived I often spent the day with the Jefferies at their home, the Bonnet. We would have our gin and tonics on the sea wall, a delicious lunch in the garden and later tea on the terrace overlooking the water. It was like being in a quiet corner of a managed epic.

Mr. Jefferies had traveled in so many countries and lived in most of them that there wasn't a blank page in his passport. One visa read, "No time for inquiries." The Japanese were pounding on the door at the time it was being issued. They would always urge me to stay on for supper and have a game of bridge or mahjonn after, but I didn't like to cycle so far back to Hamilton after dark. So then the decanter sherry was brought out and they would say, "Well, then, one for the road."

Library of Congress

Everyone was speaking about the deprivation in England, so I bundled up my polo coat, added some nail polish, soap, jello and tin steak, and gave it all to an Englishman going to Bristol to take to the mother of my friend, the second officer with whom I had fenced on the Silver Laurel when going around the world in 1939 and had been tragically lost in the North Sea during the war.

May 9th was a great day. The new governor arrived and there was a huge celebration. The band played the national anthems and Mr. Merrill appeared in his frock coat with tails and top hat as he always did on State occasions. The British soldiers looked smart marching down the street. A boy cycled by with a bouquet of flowers tied with red, white and blue ribbons flying in the breeze.

The young girl who had been in the visa section for five years resigned so I fell heir to her job. Mr. Merrill had cabled for two girls to come down from the Department about a week ago, but so far no word and we were getting busier and busier. But the work was of enormous interest to me and I became so engrossed that I was leaving the office just before seven and reaching the Ye Old Copper Bowl for dinner just before they closed. This went on for about three months, but I continued to work full time and overtime. Night after night I would cycle my weary bones home and fall on my bed like an exhausted sparrow. I finally began to decline invitations over the weekends just to stay home alone and rest. My strength, I felt, should be conserved for the job. I couldn't afford to be ill. I knew if I didn't take care of myself, the doctor would take care of me. I was getting over tired, over worked and sometimes over wrought but knew that I must treat each visitor and applicant with sympathy and courtesy, and one must keep one's sanity, health and sense of humor.

In the early tenure of my teething problems I learned that the greatest rewards are in the inner satisfaction that comes with the discharge of duty. One's conscientious efforts are the highest forms of compensation.

Library of Congress

One evening in June, the 16th to be exact, the Merrills gave a reception and there I met Sir Anthony Eden who later became Lord Avon. He appeared in tennis shoes but I thought he had probably just finished a set of tennis. But what impressed me most were his magnetic eyes that seemed to be taking in everyone and everything in one flashing moment.

For several days Mr. Merrill had been absent from the office and appeared for the first time on July 24th. When I went into his office for him to sign a visa I said how nice it was to see him back, that we had missed him and hoped he was well. This seemed to be an opportunity for him to unburden himself and he replied in a cheerless voice that as a matter of fact he was not well, that he had not had leave since 1941 and just thought that he was overtired. He then added, "You must have been keeping you nose to the grindstone." I replied, "Yes sir," and admitted that I had been arriving early and leaving late every night. He then said in his fatherly way not to let it get under my skin and just not try to do anymore than I could. This gave me a wonderful opportunity to ask him if he was expecting anyone. He sighed that he had given up trying to get anyone locally, but the State Department was sending down two girls, however he didn't know when they would get here. But, he added, that will not make any difference to you position and explained that he would put them in the visa section and I could move into the office next to Mr. Richey, the vice consul, and do the citizenship work which he said was more interesting and something to really get one's teeth into. Or, he offered another suggestion, I could have a choice of the work I wanted to do.

Helen Fus had not yet been replaced nor the girl who had left on May 25, but I continued to carry the load the best I could. It was then that I began to learn the wheels of the Department grin slowly and the slogan for every Foreign Service employee should be "patience."

One day at Mrs. Lightburn's house, she was a long time resident of Bermuda, I met a most delightful Englishwoman, Mrs. Donald Smith. Another interesting link in the chain of coincidences occurred when she happened to ask me if I knew anything about a

Library of Congress

girls finishing school called Briar Cliff in the States, as she was considering sending her daughter there. Well, the sound of my former beloved boarding school in lovely Westchester County in New York suddenly stirred an emotion in my heart. It had meant much to me and I felt a deep sentiment for it. The teaching was excellent and the friendships were precious. I told her all I could about it.

One Sunday evening she invited me over to a buffet supper. Mr. and Mrs. Duncan Goslane, Bermudian residents and two ex-Waves were there with a couple who had just come down from the States by the name Bushnell. While chatting with Mr. Bushnell, he mentioned that his wife was a writer. With great surprise I immediately turned to her and exclaimed, "Why, are you Marjorie Wilson?" When she acknowledged she was, I added with a school girl's sudden enthusiasm, "You are the author of one of my favorite books, 'How To Live Beyond Your Means.'" It was actually at that moment on my bedside table where I was re-reading it trying to learn just how to live beyond my means. She really had the key to successful living and thinking and it had practically become my bible. She said that "How To Get The Most Out Of Your Wife" was the book she was now in the process of writing. I liked her titles.

The Bushnells called often at the consulate and one day she very kindly autographed her book for me...To Mrs. Biddle with every kind wish, Marjorie Wilson. They were buying a place called "Angle Steps" which the writer, Candace Wells, had told them about. Mrs. Smith's husband, a lawyer was guiding them through the legislature. It was a lot of red tape to buy property here. The name was a romantic tribute to the bride of the first Mallory who lived there.

It was quite unexpected, but very happy news to hear, that my salary had been increased from \$1080 to \$1330 per year and my cost of living from \$350 to \$420 per year. The rental allowance of \$600 per year remained the same. A five percent old age tax comes out of it, but it boiled down to the fact that I was making a \$175 per month including allowances.

Library of Congress

Not a princely sum but hoped it would help me to continue to cope with the pleasures and problems of living abroad. Money, I decided should be watched, but not worried about.

On August 22, we were all caught up in the feverish excitement of a Presidential visit. President Truman was due at the Yacht Club at 5:00pm and we all left the office promptly. I, for once, was able to leave the office while it was still daylight and joyfully scooped up my papers and never got them in the safe and locked up so quickly. It was nearly 5:30pm when the President finally drove out in the Governor's carriage, followed by Mr. Merrill in a motor car and that was all, except for a jeep that dashed by with photographers piled on top of each other. The press had a field day. The general feeling after he passed was how young he appeared. A couple remarked as they passed on their bicycles, "He is a spry old man, isn't he." He would have been given a 21 gun salute, the usual courtesy for a dignity on official call, but it was a purely informal, unofficial visit. Mr. Merrill said he had about an hour and a half with Harry this morning and that he planned to be here about a week. It was all quite a surprise. But apparently they changed their plans suddenly as New England was so cold. Mr. Merrill was going to take Miss Olsen and me out to the yacht before he sailed and had also invited several prominent Bermudian ladies including Lady Essington, the American wife of Lord Essington and others. But Washington cabled that due to the fact that there were no ladies aboard, the President could not entertain any ladies, so the invitation was rescinded. Entertainment was, of course, kept to the minimum. It was disappointing, but I was glad that he had the undisturbed rest that he so wanted and probably needed. Never had I forgotten how kind the Trumans had been when my brother-in-law had died. Mrs. Truman was the first person to call on my sister after his death and came to the funeral. I remember so well the beautiful spray of flowers they were very kind to send.

The next day it was a relief to hear that the two new girls, the Sullivan sisters, would be arriving from the Department. They had previously been posted at our embassy in Cuba. One would help me with the visas and the other would take care of the mail. I was glad and very grateful. Summer visa applicants had opened flood gates of work for our

Library of Congress

meager staff. With dogged perseverance, Mr. Merrill had been a powerful pleader, never allowing his interest in the staff to slumber and at last this was the result of his efforts and insistence.

One noon, just as I was leaving the office, he asked me where I usually went for lunch. When I answered, "The ESU, sir," he said in his pleasant way, "Would you like to have lunch with me at the New Windsor Hotel?" The invitation touched me very much and as the ring in his voice sounded genuine, I accepted with pleasure. We had delicious cornbeef hash and I thought of dear Father Trimble who was fond of it and mentioned this to Mr. Merrill. It was a pleasant hour spent chatting about sundry subjects and I had a simply lovely and totally unselfconscious time. Walking back to the office he was ready to stop and chat on the streets with anyone who accosted him and so many did. He was meeting every fresh person with a sympathetic interest. The Bermudians worshiped him.

In September it began to get cooler and fortunately the summer work began to slacken. I was now able to leave the office promptly at 5:15 every evening and retiring between 9:30 and 10:00pm.

Charlie Biddle had been in and out of our post-marital life with brief meetings at various times in various places around the world. We had lived through many happy experiences together. We had a great deal of affection and esteem for each other and there was no reason why that feeling couldn't be carried on as we went our separate ways. It seemed a rather strange coincidence that a letter from him posted from Port Said on August 1 and over two months on route should reach me on October 11, the date we were married in Kobe, Japan. He was bound for Singapore on his next assignment as manager of the National City Bank of New York. He wrote that he understood it to be a better place than Japan or China where he had lived before or even Manila where he was now, and thought he would be out there three years, probably his last post as he would be near retiring age after this assignment. Later he sent snapshots of the house he was sharing with a doctor.

Library of Congress

A few days later Mr. Merrill planned to fly on the Admiral's plane to the States. He was going to the hospital in New York, he said, to see about his heart and then to the State Department to iron out some difficulties. One Sunday in late October, a friend, Dotty Cane, who was secretary to Mr. Trimmingham at the famous Trimmingham's store, and I took our bicycles on the ferry over to Somerset, one of the prettiest parishes here. Then we cycled to Cambridge beaches for lunch where most of the honeymooners stay. I could well understand it for it was idyllic. Cambridge beaches was a wonderful getaway from it all, if one needed to get away from anything on this beautiful island. It was an informal, thoroughly charming cottage colony nestled in 25 acres of lawns and gardens surrounded on two sides by the Atlantic and on the third side by Mangrove Bay with a number of small natural beaches. The main house was built in 1675, one of the oldest on the island. The roofs were all filled with the most attractive and unusual flower arrangements. It would be difficult not to achieve something fairly spectacular in the way of flower arrangements with the profusion of lilies, hibiscus and wild orchids, so easily available here. Some door chimes over cottages trimmed in blushing pink played "Here Comes the Bride." After luncheon we had a pleasant manager who asked us to come out again when May comes to the island for when the oleanders were in bloom it was considered especially beautiful.

As we cycled on we passed Precious Place, Felicity Cottage, where the well-known author Hervey Allen, lived five years while writing his "Anthony Adverse." On an outlying section of Bailey's Bay, Frances Hodgson Burnett had her workshop with her son Vivian, prototype of Little Lord Fauntleroy, and labored six days a week writing "The Secret Garden." On Sunday she emerged from her studio to the drawing room for tea for her at home to admirers. Kipling found it difficult to work in Bermuda, he couldn't settle down to serious writing where he was too concerned about his wife who was ill in hospital. Spitland, acquired fame as the home where Eugene O'Neill wrote "Strange Interlude."

Bermuda had some luxurious and fashionable resort hotels of which the Princess, the oldest hotel there was completed in 1883, was named after Princess Louise, Queen

Library of Congress

Victoria's daughter. But the whole pleasure of the island was to live a more casual, informal type of life in a carefree atmosphere in one of these charming cottage colonies which Bermuda may have been the original exponent.

Another Sunday we cycled out into the country and lunched at Harmony Hall a quaint and quiet place with the atmosphere of a Bermudian estate home. Then cycled over to another called Horizons, a typical old Bermuda mansion overlooking the Coral Beach Club. It was so refreshing to get out like this on Sunday, a day of relaxation, after the expenditure of so much energy throughout the week and the weather was perfect. Mrs. Gary and I often cycled together. She was the assistant manager at Waterloo House, an adorable place on the water. It was originally built as a town house about a hundred years ago and now was a popular guest house with unusual atmosphere. The hotel would put up a lunch for us and one day we cycled along the south shore road to Pink Beach until we came to a place by a bed of Easter lilies. Seduced by the sweetness, we spread ourselves a lunch on the lawn and basked in the most heavenly sunlight while the waves dashed against the rocks. It was peace, perfect peace.

On November 25 I received a letter with the shocking and very sad news of the death of dear Father Trimble as he was affectionately known by the family. The nurse said he died in his sleep just like a candle going out at four o'clock in the morning at the age of 83. The memory of the last time I saw him swept over me when the dear that he was had walked all the way down the station platform to the train with me to say goodbye when I left Washington. A little blue wool scarf had been enclosed in my last letter to him because I remembered how he suffered from pneumonia last winter and hoped it had reached him. My sister wrote that she had placed a little bouquet of violets and forget-me-nots beside him. A sweet gesture I thought and just what I would have liked to have done had I been there. His many great kindnesses to me would never be forgotten. At the library I found the New York Times for November 24 giving the detailed account of his death — A wonderful man had been taken from the affection of his family and countless friends and would be sorely missed and long remembered with great admiration. I always felt that it

Library of Congress

was due to his kind letter I presented to Clay Merrill that helped to launch me on a career in the Foreign Service for which I will be forever grateful. So it was a pleasant respite to be invited by friends to go out in their motor boat to listen to a concert at the Inverery Hotel that retained its original colonial charm. The music was very soothing, echoing across the water under a full moon.

When I was laid up in bed with a cold one day, a letter came from my sister telling me of a delightful dinner party she had attended at the White House and how much she had enjoyed seeing the film, "The Great Waltz" after. She had also enclosed sketches of the Monroe Room that Mrs. Truman had asked her to redecorate. The thought of seeing the fruits of her labor before too long, brightened the day. She had previously written that she had been given a job with the Veteran Administration and soon after created the color design section, so she was using her talents to replace color for the dull, drab buff of the veterans rooms.

We were given a half holiday on December 23 and did not have to return until December 27. Christmas in Bermuda was said not to be Christmas without casaba pie so I was curious to try it. A friend of mine happened to learn that it was on the menu at the Hearthstone, a new restaurant that had just opened. The question was, "Was it animal, vegetable or mineral?" The answer is, "All three." Different people make it different ways. It is eaten at breakfast, lunch, dinner and in between, hot or cold, fried in butter. The casaba, itself, originally came from the West Indies and grows here on the bush. But it is the root that is used for the pie. We saw it later hanging in the grocery store about three feet long. The outside bark is peeled off. Then the yellow bark and the rest is ground until most of the juice comes out. We were glad to have the opportunity of tasting it and it was delicious. After dinner we attended the midnight services at the cathedral. The music and dignity of the ceremonies were inspiring and impressive.

Christmas day I had been invited to the Greens. Sheila was a young English girl about 19, bright and interesting with whom I had become very friendly. Her younger sister,

Library of Congress

Diana, had not only a beautiful face, but was talented as a ballet dancer. Their father and mother were most charming. Dr. Green was judge of the Prize Court in Bermuda. He had been judge of the High Court in Gibraltar and had had similar positions in several other countries. Mrs. Green had gone with her husband to Algeria, then to Jerusalem, and then for nine years they were in Cyprus. Sheila said we were to play games so wear an old evening dress. With my evening dress tucked in the bicycle basket I cycled over to Villa Rosa, the Green's place in Paget, painted the yellow saffron color that is so often seen in Bermuda houses. We were passing all the way men in dinner jackets on their bicycles and ladies in long evening dresses pedaling valiantly in high heel slippers. When I arrived they greeted me with the news we had all been invited across the road for Christmas dinner with Mrs. Tompkins. It seemed the Greens' supper party had increased to 21 and this would give their maids time to prepare for it without stopping to prepare our dinner. Mrs. Tompkins was a widow living in a huge handsome house on the hill overlooking the water with a lovely view call Mangrove Villa. She was an old friend of the Merrills, interested in politics and greatly saddened over the death of Father Trimble, who she knew.

After dinner, about 3:00pm, we came back to help Mrs. Green with the elaborate preparations for the Christmas party. The maids had left and there was still lots to do. There was so much food, a huge turkey, a beautiful ham, beef mold, two kinds of salads, candied sweet potatoes, beets, olives, all kinds of sweets, fruit, nuts, dates and Christmas candies. The Christmas pudding with the tradition of brandy sauce, flaming while the lights were out was a lovely sight. Colorful favors and little caps were at each place and when champagne was served, Dr. Green rose and proposed a toast to absent friends. Other toasts followed. Then we all chorused in with "He's a jolly good fellow," after toasting Dr. Green and his family. The boys were all in the service and in uniform and most of them off the Sheffield, Flag ship of the British fleet. There were three American girls besides myself, one Bermudian and one English girl who had just come out to join her husband, Mrs. Pearson Jones. After dinner we played all sorts of games, danced and did the Lambeth Walk, reminding me of the days when everyone was doing it at the Hong Kong hotel in

Library of Congress

1939 while I was waiting for a ship to continue on around the world. Mrs. Green looked so pretty and sweet as she sat playing at the piano. I said to her how kind she was to do all these kind things for so many people. Some of the boys she did not even know. She replied, "Well, they have after all done so much for us during the war." Dr. Green had gone out to play bridge at the Bermuda Bridge Club where he tops all the lists. Then I cycled home after dark serenaded by the tree toads beginning their evening exquisitely, rarely seen but always heard.

The day after Christmas was boxing day, the most British of holidays. I was just getting dressed when each member of the Cooper family came running upstairs to tell me to hurry down, the Gombies were coming. There had been quite a commotion below and when I looked out of my window I saw a perfect parade of weirdly costumed men and boys coming down the road headed by two drummers. By the time I got down to the front door, four of the most fantastically dressed men and boys were going through some kind of dance to the wild beating of drums. The costumes were made of bright colored materials and looked like silk pajamas with fringe around them. Their black colored capes were covered with millions of different colored ribbons tied in bows with streamers hanging down and emblazoned with numerous small mirrors. One little fellow had hanging down his front one of these old fashioned souvenir pillows with God Bless Our Home embroidered on it. Hats were covered with gold paper and stuck with peacock feathers four feet high. A vestige of the Gombies African background. All wore strange and horrible looking masks and carried spears, bows and arrows. One man, not in costume carried a bag which looked like an old flour sack for the coins we were to throw. When they returned about 5 o'clock in the afternoon it was bulging. They go all over the island followed by a throng of colored young and old, on foot and on cycle and must have permission to come out and only on boxing day. This strange and colorful performance is not native to Bermuda but was introduced during the past 50 years by natives of the West Indies who settled in Bermuda. It is a mixture of Carib war dances combined with African tribal ritual. They were led by Charles Norford, otherwise known as Shaky Bean, getting his nickname

Library of Congress

from the dexterity with which he performed his parts. It was he who had brought them from St. Kitts in 1922 and was active in keeping the Gombie dances alive. To the uninformed, the dancers look like meaningless capering and chanting, but actually there are several plays, each of which tells a story. Originally the Gombie dancers were the means by which illiterate natives preserved their history and folklore. In Bermuda they are a colorful annual festival that adds an unexpected touch of the primitive to the clean and civilized aspect of the mid Atlantic resort.

After this excitement I went over to sit with Mrs. Lightfoot, the manager of ESU, on the spatial lawn of the club next door. Then cycled to Flats in South Parish, some miles along the shore to gather some narcissus to take to Mrs. Tompkins who had given us such a delightful Christmas dinner.

Back in the office, after the long holidays, Mr. Merrill said a robber tried to get into their place and he had quite a tussle with him so he had a rather unnerved holiday. The robber was later caught at the historic Mid-Ocean Golf Club where Churchill and Eisenhower met in 1942.

New Year's Day was so glorious and warm I cycled alone along the north shore road feeling the need of a quiet reverie, then lunched at Angel's Cross Road, overlooking Harrington Sound. After, I gathered some white narcissus for Mrs. Cooper. Now the time had come to put gloves in glass jars to keep them from molding just as we had done in Japan. But here it was in January and there it was in July called the Nubei season. It was not wise to keep furs in this climate long so I sold my raccoon coat to a little old lady staying at the ESU who was returning to England. Walter Spurly, nephew of Sir Stanley Spurly, was trying to help me brush up on my bridge. He was a wizard and had written on his Christmas card, "May 1947 bring more and better bridge." One evening he invited me to the overseas league for dinner and to play bridge with Hilda Evans and an amusing Canadian, Walter Stout Scott who played the piano as beautifully as he played bridge.

Library of Congress

On January 29 I had been here a year and the Sullivan sisters invited me to the 21 Club to celebrate after work. When we arrived I happened to see Walter Masters seated with his brother-in-law, Mr. Fountain, just returned from Sierra Leone and had been much in the press, and another man, Mr. Young who was in the Colonial Treasury. They all joined us, so it was a gay celebration. When I returned to the consulate I reminded Mr. Merrill that I had been here a year today and had asked him if it would be agreeable I would like to take my holiday in April, to which he was agreeable.

On George Washington's birthday, Mrs. Merrill invited the staff out to Tucker's Town to their new place the government had just bought, Doggamore. We were shown all over. It had belonged to a fabulously wealthy woman, Mrs. Wear, and had been completely furnished in the most perfect taste. Some of the furniture was handmade, complete with the needlepoint on the chairs. The lace curtains at the doors had been especially made in France. Mrs. Merrill had added her artistic touches here and there. The grounds were spacious and lovely. All kinds of little cottages for this and that were everywhere. The luncheon was delicious and champagne was served to celebrate the day.

During Lent I had given up my bridge on Fridays to attend some Lenten lectures in the evening at the cathedral. When Walter Spurdy called me for a game, I declined explaining, "Never on Fridays during Lent." Margaret Pearson Jones and Paula Wattly gave an amusing party at their flat at Spanish Point one evening. Margaret was as pretty as a picture and Paula kept me uproariously amused. She was of Latvian origin and had been on the stage in England and France for ten years since the age of ten. It was very gay and became gayer when Walter suggested that we all go to his house and he would play for us. When we lunched together a few days later, he mentioned that his father had been one of the three founders of the Canadian Pacific Railroad.

A new girl, Ruth Yarber, awfully nice, arrived on March 18. She had been at the embassy in Brussels. On the twenty seventh of March I wrote a letter home —"If all goes well will be in New York a week from today. Feel so in need of good rest and good food. Have many

Library of Congress

plans and people want to see in the State Department about various matters so we will be busy. Have a seat on the 10:00am plane leaving April 3. Getting awfully excited about holiday now I have ticket in hand and finally manage my first vacation home.”

As soon as I arrived in Washington, I went immediately to the State Department and when I walked into one of the offices to pay my respects, the girls all looked up most startled to see me and exclaimed in amazement, “Why, we thought you were in Quito.” With great surprise I said, “Quito, where is that?” “Well,” they continued ignoring my ignorance, “Your orders must have arrived after you left Bermuda, but while you are here you may as well take the test.” “Test?” I said puzzled, “Test for what?” “For high altitude.” And then came the answer, “It is in Ecuador.” I went through the test, passed it, but apparently turned blue, so they announced, “Now we are going to send you to a lovely place on the Mediterranean.” By this time I was beginning to feel slightly dizzy, not from the test, but from the sudden geographical jump. When I asked, “Where on the Mediterranean?” it was Tangier. This sounded interesting, but what made me really happy was when they added, “You have been reclassified, upgraded with an increase of salary. In other words a big promotion.” Of course I was elated but quickly explained that I had come for a month's holiday with only one suitcase and would have to return to Bermuda to pack up. This was, of course, understood and permitted. But before I left it was necessary to go through an ordeal of shots in the medical unit for my new post, Tangier. When I returned to my sister's apartment in Georgetown where I was staying and announced the news, we began to get down all the National Geographic and travel magazines to look up everything we could on Tangier and began to put away everything we had taken down the night before on Quito. All I remember about Quito was that it sits astride the equator where it is possible to stand with one foot in each hemisphere. Tangier sounds much more intriguing.

The month's holiday in Washington flew by. My sister and I had celebrated our birthdays together, April 5 and 15 with rooms filled with Easter lilies and passion flowers brought from Bermuda. We had seen many friends, gone to the theater several times and before

Library of Congress

I knew it I was on the Fort Townsend bound back to Bermuda on Saturday, May 3, just exactly a month to the day I had left the island.

The weather was cold and damp and so foggy the fog horns were constantly tooting. We passed the Fort Amherst on route to New York, the ship my friend Walter Stout Scott had just taken from Bermuda. There were lots of young girls aboard, very few men and the usual honeymoon couples. Bermuda was a magic name to them. I had been feeling very fit until after breakfast on Sunday, but from then on I had never been so miserable with seasickness on any voyage, and counting this one it was my 15th including a trip around the world. Ninety out of 105 passengers were in the same condition. It was said to be most unusual for this time of year. The weather was absolutely foul. It rained, thundered, lightnined and the ship rolled and pitched and acted up very badly. Fortunately we had a heavy cargo. It was impossible for me to stay below in my cabin so I slept on a sofa near a door on an upper deck to get as much fresh air as possible and lived on celery and ginger ale, the proper diet I remembered for those suffering mal de mer and finally chicken sandwiches when I could keep them down. After the weather cleared and the sun came out and the sea was smoother, I sat in my deck chair and became as red as a lobster. When I looked in the mirror I decided the pale wane look was more becoming and began dabbing my sunburned face with vinegar. There were no rose tinted mirrors on this ship to give a psychological boost to seasick passengers as on the great Queen Mary. But it was such a relief to be a perpendicular passenger once more and to be able to go to the dining room for a good dinner and feel quite myself again. Now I could agree with Mark Twain when he said, "Bermuda is a paradise, but you have to go through hell to get there."

We were due next day at 8:30am and I was never so anxious to survey the terra firma again. The ship arrived on time and at 10:00am and a launch took me over to the Naval dispensary where Mr. Richey, the vice consul, had arranged for me to have my third shot for typhoid and second for typhus in preparation for my new assignment, Tangier.

Library of Congress

When I reached the consulate I had a little visit with Mr. Merrill and Mr. Richey. Mr. Merrill said that he was glad the Department had told me of the good recommendation that he had given me for he couldn't. Bless his kind heart. They brought me up to date with the news of the office. One Sullivan girl resigned to defect to the altar with a chap she had known at the embassy in Cuba, and her sister left without permission. The Department had not approved her leave of absence so she went anyway. What is going to happen to her? Goodness only knows. No one had taken the place of the receptionist who had resigned April 19. The consulate had frantically called the girl who had resigned this time last year and wanted her to come back. She had declined saying she had worked too hard for too little. So the office was certainly depleted. I was also feeling deeply concerned about Mrs. Merrill because I had become very fond of her. She was quite ill in the hospital with bursitis, crazed with pain and kept doped with drugs so much she was very near a nervous breakdown. Finally it was her colored maid who cured her with a simple old West Indian remedy—rum and menthol crystals which I later used on occasion. But it is not to be taken internally.

The weather was quite nippy and I discovered there was terrific lack of precious water, a perpetual problem here. However, it poured, simply poured over the weekend, which helped. With every day that passed I hoped for news from the Department regarding my transportation to Tangier, but plan to be ready for the May 26 sailing from Bermuda so immediately plunged into preparation. On May 22 I had all my possessions packed. What a job. It was getting hot now. My friends were so kind in wanting to entertain me before leaving. The consulate became momentarily calm and tranquil so I slipped into a holiday mood. A most enjoyable evening was spent with the Jefferies. Mr. Jefferies had been a junior with the Cable and Wireless in Tangier in 1919 and gave me a lot of information and names of people to look up. His uncle was president of the French Bank there and he showed me photos of his lovely villa. He had not heard from him since before the war and was anxious for me to send news of him. He advised me not to take my bicycle, I would lose face riding it out there. Apparently it just isn't done in the land of the Moors.

Library of Congress

When I asked what I would use to get around, with tongue in cheek and smiling he said, "A donkey." So I began to try to sell it. Interesting tidbits I gleaned were there were French, English and American post offices and three different types of currency used. Certain things were paid with French francs and others paid with Spanish pesetas, Moorish currency. It was best to buy things in Gibraltar, which was only about twenty minutes by plane and four hours by ferry. When shopping I should hire a little Arab boy to carry my packages, etc., etc. It was wonderful to talk to someone who had lived there. One of the Cooper boys asked me to send him some goat skins as he did beautiful bookbinding and heard that it is the best place to get the best skins.

Paula Watley wanted me to meet her husband also attached to the Sheffield and the Captain so I had cocktails there one evening. On May 26 my travel orders finally came through but no indication of whether the Department was arranging transportation out of New York to Tangier or if this office should. So a cable was sent to ask. My baggage had gone to the dock and I was already to sail if word from the Department came through in time to go. At 2:00pm still no cable. The ship was due to sail at 3:00pm. So I sent my baggage on bill of lading for instructions to Howard Fife, US Despatch Agent in New York. Mr. Ross Cooper, the Cooper family were all over the island, in charge of baggage couldn't have been more helpful in rushing everything through for me. When time grew short and no cable had been received, I just decided not to sail as long as my baggage had gone I could fly. Then a message was received from Becky Sanford in the transportation section of the Department that she was unable to secure space on any ship to Tangier and advised that I sit tight in Hamilton until could advise definite date of departure from New York and would wire just as soon as had a date.

So I canceled my Junior League reservation at the Waldorf, where in those days the unbelievable rate was only \$3.00 per night, and relaxed relieved to know at last that they were working on it. Any action was a relief.

Library of Congress

During this period waiting, a glamorous yacht appeared on the horizon and anchored off shore. It was the Sea Cloud, the biggest yacht in the world belonging to Marjorie Merriweather Post, heiress of Palm Beach and Washington. The name Who Saw had been diplomatically changed to the more ethereal one of Sea Cloud. In 1936 it had been sent to Leningrad where Joseph E. Davies, her new husband, was then our US ambassador to the Soviet Union and who was now said to be ill aboard with intestinal trouble. The Sea Cloud's peaceful voyaging was interrupted in 1942 when she was leased by the US Navy who equipped her with deck guns and put her on convoy duty. After the war, Mrs. Post had it refinished and refurbished to operate again. It was while posted in Leningrad that Mrs. Post began to collect her fabulous Russian treasures which are said to be the finest outside the Hermitage. I remember how enchanted I was with these treasures, especially the Faberge Easter eggs that the members of the imperial family gave to each other as gifts. I saw them in her home, Hillwood, where she lived like a queen and was noted for the sheer grandeur of her lifestyle. Her jewels were as fabulous as her homes. She often wore a tiara, her favorite, that Napoleon had given his queen, Louise, when she bore him a son. Mrs. Post had been decorated by five countries—Luxembourg, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Brazil and France. We were introduced one evening at a party in the Belgrade Club in Washington and her regal bearing was deeply impressive.

David Aires, an attractive decorator friend from Palm Beach was holidaying in Bermuda at Cambridge Beaches, and invited me out for cocktails and supper one Sunday evening. We were served on the hotel's flowered terrace overlooking the water and entertained by native men singing amusing calypso songs. It was a delightful setting and a thoroughly enjoyable evening. I had taken the ferry over but had an opportunity of riding on the little train for the first time coming back in the moon light. It amused me to listen to the conversation of the native Bermudians.

Library of Congress

In the office I was doing a great deal of nothing, now that it was adequately staffed, and growing restless. The waiting around was getting very tiresome. Excerpts from my diary began to read:

May 31 - Clipped from New York Times notice of ship going Tangier from Marseilles. Sent to Becky Sanford, thought it a way of getting started.

June 2 - Had definite reservations on Pan Am June 11. Trying not to get too anxious and fret too much about the situation and enjoyed the beach. Do not quite know what to do about accepting invitations.

July 1 - Heard Betty Sutherland had been transferred to Rabat about 300 hundred miles from where I shall be. She had been transferred back to Cuba but people were needed in North Africa so she was reassigned. Beginning to think about getting my French visa extended, it will expire July 17. Someone said it takes ages to get visas.

July 9 - Going around in old faded things plan to give away becomes a bit demoralizing but reluctant to wear clothes that packed to take with me.

I had waited and waited and lived out of my suitcase for weeks and weeks. Then suddenly the long wait gave birth to a brainstorm. I decided to write a letter to Miss. Eugenia Ann Wallace, Department of State, Foreign Service Personnel, African Area, Washington, DC which read:

Dear Miss Wallace: I am still in Bermuda waiting transportation to Tangier. It has occurred to me that it may be possible for me to proceed to the United States and await transportation there. It would give me an opportunity of attending classes in the Foreign Service Institute or acquiring more experience in filing by working in the Department. Either or both would be beneficial to me at my new post. I am also interested to know

Library of Congress

when my new salary rate will become effective. Any suggestions you might have regarding my situation will be very much appreciated.

In the light of later experience I thought only a naive and new member of the Foreign Service would have the audacity to write such a letter, but it brought an immediate telegraphic reply. On July 18 I finally received word I had been trying so patiently to wait for. The Department cabled: 17th for Virginia Biddle holding berth Mauritania July 31 New York to France, French Algiers. Suggest coming time for sailing. Advise arrival, signed Marshall.

This, of course, meant I would sail in the Cunard Mauritania that by curious coincidence happened to be in port the day I sailed from New York to Bermuda in May. This majestic liner was preparing then for her maiden voyage, the flags flying and looking very festive. Never dreaming that I would be sailing on her a few months later.

I booked a seat on Pan Am leaving Bermuda Sunday, 4:00pm July 27 due in New York 7:30pm. My French visa had expired. I thought I would write the French consul for an appointment. I wired to renew my reservation for a Junior League room at the Waldorf. On July 19 I sent a cable to my sister—Flying New York July 27. Sailing Mauritania July 31. Have reservation Waldorf. Advise and can join me. Letter on route. Love Virginia.

No matter how much I had enjoyed my post, once assigned to another I was eager to be on my way and the thought of traveling towards Tangier gave me a tremendous thrill but I knew I would never forget all of my kind friends and colleagues and above all the Merrills for whom I had developed great professional respect and strong friendship and would always remember the sound of waves on coral rocks and the perfume of Easter lilies on that little dot in the middle of Atlantic wither the fates had led me. As I said goodbye Bermuda you have put sunshine into my life, health into my body and a new brave spirit into my heart.

Library of Congress

Tangier - August 1947 to October 1949

In a letter to my sister with the heading Cunard White Star RMS Mauritania, August 5, 1947: Dearest Mildred: When this majestic white Cunard liner, the Mauritania slowly slide from her moorings the last snap of the serpentine was like a tug at the heart strings as I waved goodbye to you looking so beautiful with bright light shining on your face. I stood at the railing until you vanished in the distance. Then the skyline of Manhattan gradually disappeared and a full moon came up over the horizon. Finally I turned to saunter down the deck to the little veranda at the stern of the ship when I saw somebody coming towards me in the fading light whose face looked vaguely familiar. We both recognized each other at the same time and suddenly embraced. It was Henrietta Quade whose husband was with General Motors when we both lived in Japan in the early thirties. They were later posted in Java where I had last seen them when I was on route around the world aboard the Silver Laurel in 1939. Mr. Quade had sent a telegram to me when I arrived in Batavia for the day and couldn't have been kinder. It happened that a diplomatic friend, Mr. Dickover, was now on post in Batavia and we made a call on him and his new wife and reminisced about our days in Japan where he had been posted. Mr. Quade had been interned for 3 # years in Java during the war and I remember reading how he had protected the refugees in his place during the strife there. They were now on their way to England, France, Switzerland and Egypt where he was to be regional director for General Motors in that part of the world and the Far East.

Shortly after sailing Senator Alexander Wiley, the right wing Republican from Wisconsin, to whom you had introduced me, came over to my table in the dining room to present his wife. They had been seated at the Captain's table just next to mine. I had been placed with a chit looking French woman and a couple whose names I did not yet know. After a few pleasantries, the Wileys left and I turned to the gentleman sitting next to me and apologized for not introducing them saying, "but I don't believe I know your name." He replied, "Richelieu." Before I could even say, "Oh, the Duke de Richelieu," the chit French

Library of Congress

woman, whose name I later learned was Mrs. Woolf, suddenly burst forth in an excited flow of French, "Le Duc." After dinner the Duchess drew me aside on the deck and explained that Mrs. Woolf's husband, Robert, had called on her husband just the night before he committed suicide over some bank affair two or three years ago and she had always wondered what had transpired between the two men. It was a most dramatic introduction.

The four of us became very congenial. The Duke was an extraordinarily brilliant and exceeding interesting man having lived in many countries and spoke many languages and talked to me a great deal about everything. He said he was envious of my going to Tangier because things were attainable there now not found in Paris or in London. One day while speaking of *Lady Windermere's Fan*, the Duke mentioned that Oscar Wilde had dedicated most of his important books to his mother who married Prince Albert of Monaco. He confessed he preferred now to live in a simple small apartment devoid of too many possessions and had given the Sorbonne all of his valuable family portraits and extensive library. The Duchess before her marriage was Douglas Wise, an American from Baltimore, Maryland. She was very unassuming. Neither she nor the Duke dressed for dinner, though many did. And they retired early.

A few days before we were to leave the ship, the Duchess said to her husband at the table, "Arman, you must give Mrs. Biddle a note of introduction to our old French friend, M. Jacques de Marquet in Tangier. Whereupon the Duke turned to me and gave a most vivid description of him. He was an authority on sand script, a great scholar steeped in the philosophies of the East, had written many books and given lectures. Then leaning over to me added in almost a whisper, "but, a most peculiar man!" I naturally was intrigued.

Mrs. Woolf and I had our deck chairs beside each other and became very friendly. She gave me information about Paris and suggested I go to see a collection and ask for the person who had taken care of her for 25 years. I was flattered when one day she

Library of Congress

complimented me on the way I dress. Little did she know my clothes were mostly hand-me-downs from you, my dear sister.

Some days Henrietta Quade and I would play deck tennis or swim together. She had an exotic oriental face and the Duke was interested in knowing who she was. I didn't ever know what blood ran through her veins.

An interesting Scottish woman, Mrs. Synder, shared my cabin. She lived for several years in Sarawak, Borneo and many out of the way places and was so pleasant. I shall be sorry to see her leave when she disembarks at Cobb tomorrow. She gave me a note of introduction to an American friend in Paris, Countess de Dawn, whose son was second secretary at our embassy in Rome and her brother-in-law military attach# at the legation Bern, Switzerland.

Then very early Thursday we arrived in Cherbourg. We were able to buy our tickets and make our reservations from Cherbourg to Paris aboard the ship. It takes about five or six hours and costs \$11.80. I had just obtained a receipt and discovered that I am in the same compartment with six men. Good heavens!

It was wonderful that you could have been in New York with me just before I sailed. Please write as often as possible for I am already missing you very much. Will write about Paris later but want this posted at Cherbourg. Love, Virginia.

When we reached Cherbourg I disembarked and took the boat train to Paris with Amy Porterfield who had been aboard and was being assigned at the embassy there. The last time I saw Paris was in 1934 when my sister and I stayed at the elegant hotel Bristol and did a lot of sightseeing. But Paris now, in 1947, was quite different. Although the war had been over for one and a half years, food was scarce, bread inedible and few cars, but that however was a blessing. She was struggling to find her feet politically and economically. At the same time reconstruction and renewal of tourism was gradually coming back to life.

Library of Congress

A reservation had been made for me at an old French hotel where many of the State Department stayed. It was conveniently located directly behind the embassy on a little side street and across from the more affluent Hotel Crillon which faces the Place de la Concorde. The fashionable shopping street, Faubourg Saint Honor#, was a block away so I felt in the center of things.

There was a shabby sort of charm about the building and its French staff that appealed to me. When the Duke of Richelieu came to take me to luncheon one day, he looked up at the entrance, a smile on his face and said, "I remember when I called on the Queen of Naples when she lived here twenty years ago.

I was surprised to find myself making a rather prolonged stay in Paris. The embassy was endeavoring to obtain a visa for me to travel through Spain to Tangier, but at that time Spain tended to be rather erratic about issuing visas to Americans. While waiting, though, I managed to enjoy myself. Amy Porterfield and I would browse around when she was not on duty at the embassy. We strolled along the Left Bank, stopped at the book stalls, snapped photos of each other, then went to dine some where. When I studied the long French menu, all I could remember from my rusty boarding school French was "langouste." French waiters being what they are will do little more than endure your presence with their slightly superior smiles and were no help whatsoever in translating and I was too shy to ask. So I was constantly ordering lobster.

I was also continuing to see the Richelieus who often rang and invited me out. But finally I received a telephone call from Marcel Leconte from the embassy who was arranging my onward transportation and asking if I would mine taking a ship from Marseille to Tangier as they had not been successful in obtaining a visa through Spain for me. Of course I had no objections. I had been merely waiting for somebody to do something about me.

A little French friend of mine was able to get to Paris from her country place and we had the day together before I left that evening at 8:00pm for Marseille. In the afternoon we

Library of Congress

went to see a collection. I sat on the edge of a little gilt chair fascinated by the beautiful manikins gracefully slink the length of the ornate mirrored salon showing the latest creations. It was a gala affair like the first night at the theater. To avoid ordering lobster again we had dinner at our embassy restaurant and then Magde and Amy saw me off on the train to Marseille.

When I arrived the next morning I felt hot and disheveled for the train had been terribly sooty, also I was slightly annoyed that I somehow missed the car that had been sent for me from the consulate. So I taxied to the hotel where the Paris embassy had made a reservation for me and said it was the best hotel there. But, there was no hot water, terrible service, and it was frightfully expensive. In fact, the prices were twice as high as they were in Paris. Marseille seemed most depressing to me. All the men looked like thugs so I was glad to reach the consulate where it was a pleasant surprise to discover the consul was the son of Bouiseheart, who was one of the vice presidents of our National City Bank. Charlie and I had entertained in Japan. Some of the girls in the office kindly took me to lunch and in the afternoon suggested that I take the boat ride over to the Chateau d'If where the story "Count of Monte Cristo" was laid. He was supposed to have been in prison there with the man with the iron mask.

The next morning the consulate's car called to take me to the Koutoubia, the ship that was to take me to my final destination, Tangier. A lower berth was assigned to me, but when I saw the young girl in the upper berth above me with an injured arm in a sling and knowing how difficult it would be for her to climb up and down the ladder, I offered to exchange with her. The other bed was occupied by an English woman who arrived with numerous small bags. It was amazing to see how she managed to tuck them all neatly away in that tiny cabin. She was Miss Jessie Green returning to Tangier where she spent a lot of time. It was not until I had been in Tangier for a while that I learned that she was one of the three great Green ladies. The other two were Ada, famous for her sheep and Miss Forieda, the oldest, known for her wisdom. Jessie was the witty one. All three were individual and original. Jessie was the eighth child of a Romanian mother whose family had lost all of

Library of Congress

their money during the war. She said that she was called Jessie after a horse because her mother ran out of girl names. She had first come to Tangier at the age of seven on loan to her aunt, Lady Kirby Green, to act as a companion to her only daughter, Forieda. Jessie had the strongest personality of the three. Her energy was boundless, her eyes fearless and her wit sometimes caustic. Forieda remained unmarried and devoted her life to good works. As time went by she became more and more Muslim and completely at home in their language. Although she had not visited her native England for over 50 years, she never gave up tea at 5. When Britain was being badly beaten on all fronts during the war she received the OBE. Ada, her sister-in-law was entirely different. She was tall, thin, elegantly dressed and smoked Russian cigarettes incessantly through a long ivory holder. She had retired to Tangier after spending most of her life in various parts of Africa where her husband had been high commissioner.

Soon I discovered aboard ship Mr. Edwin A. Plitt, who was to be the new minister at the legation at Tangier, transferred from Bern, Switzerland. He was accompanied by his pretty, petite French wife and a nineteen year old son who was endowed with a sort of baronic good looks. We would often have pleasant chats together on deck. Mr. Plitt impressed me as a kindly, mild mannered man in his mid 50s.

The ship was crowded with refugees and we appeared to be the only Americans aboard and the few English speaking people. I never saw such a fight for deck chairs in so many different languages. We must have been on semi-war time rations because only one cup of coffee was allowed at breakfast and one towel per person for face, hands and bath for the entire two and a half day voyage. French cuisine, but not at its best.

One morning to my horror a rat ran into our room. It was eventually killed with a broom by the steward. That was about the last straw. However, I felt lucky to be aboard at all when Mr. Plitt told me it was sold out until 1948. He wondered how I was able to get aboard. He said he had been pulling all kinds of wires to get on. The Paris embassy could do nothing

Library of Congress

for him, nor could Tangier or Bern, he finally had to go to the ministry of affairs. So I was most grateful for anything after that.

My deck chair, when I finally got one, fortunately was next to a very friendly French woman and her crippled husband who was an architect. They were returning to Marrakech where they lived at the Hotel. Madame (Inaudible) spoke excellent English and was full of admiration for our American soldiers with whom she had worked during the war. Her husband spoke no English but we managed brief chats with my fractured French. His wife was very attractive and went into raptures about Marrakech and the fabulous Mamaouina Hotel. She also gave me sensible tips on how to keep cool in a hot country.

We arrived in Tangier on August 23, 1947 about sundown, four hours late after a smooth trip through the Mediterranean following the coast of Spain most of the way and passing very near the Rock of Gibraltar. Most of the legation's staff were at the ship to greet their new minister and I met many of the officers and their wives then. Especially do I remember Albert Sherer towering above all with his attractive blond wife beside him. Mr. and Mrs. Plitt went down the gang plank first, of course, and their son and I followed at a discreet distance. There was a slip up about my hotel reservation at the Minsa, so David Frichlin, first secretary and vice consul, and his lovely English wife, kindly drove me to the Rif. It was directly on a superb sandy beach and I was delighted to be there where some of the staff of the legation were staying. I had only been in my room for a few minutes when the telephone rang and two of the girls invited me down to their room for a chat and drink before dinner. So a warm welcome was extended to me at once. Louise Broussard, who greeted me, was a vibrant personality with radiant good looks. Never shall I forget how kind she was from the very first moment. It was she who guided me through the complicated maze of narrow twisted street for days so I wouldn't get lost. Showed me here and there the best shops to patronize. She had been the secretary to Paul Alling, who had just left Tangier to be our first ambassador to Pakistan and shortly after his arrival there he sent for her to be his private secretary. She was absolutely thrilled.

Library of Congress

After the girls briefed me a little on life in Tangier, we went into dinner together and was served by a befezed and baggy panted Arab boy. His picturesque native dress of a heavenly shade of blue with contrasting bright red cummerbund was trimmed with intricate braid and it irresistibly caught my eye. And with numerous tiny frogs down the front of the jacket, I vowed then and there to have one made exactly like it. Later I did, but it was like a three ring circus getting it made in three languages. My fatma translated the tribal tongue of the native woman who was making it into French for my Swiss friend, Jacqueline Cramer, who rendered it to me in English. There were only certain women who could do this type of work and they were rare. When I passed through Tangier several years later, this by then tattered garment to be copied, the concierge of the Minsa said, "It would be most difficult to find someone now to copy it."

That first night before retiring I stood on the balcony of my hotel and looked upon this gleaming city of Tangier jutting out into the Straits of Gibraltar. When the muezzin's call to prayer floated across the roof from the minarets I knew I was in a completely Muslim country. All of the strange sights, and sounds and smells fascinated me at once and I felt they would as long as I was there.

Ruth Emmet, who I was relieving, and who was in charge of the files started to show me the work on Saturday morning. She was naturally anxious to be off to her next post at the embassy in Ankara, Turkey and the legation had waited for me for so long. Her great forte was her linguistic virtuosity which I admired very much. The legation was the oldest in the history of our Foreign Service and probably the most unique having been a gift from the Sultan in 1821. It was in the old quarter of Tangier and divided by a tiny thoroughfare which we had to cross to get from one office to another. We all quickly learned to flatten our backs against the walls, sometimes with highly classified documents in our arms, to allow the caravans of donkeys with their burden of faggots to pass, because here the animals have the right of way. The residence for the minister was upstairs above the offices. After a few days, Mr. Plitt moved his office upstairs to one of the salons of the

Library of Congress

residence which was more fitting for him. Then he kindly offered his office previously occupied by Mr. Alling to me which I thought was a most kind gesture. Looking down upon me from the walls were photographs of all the former representatives of our government to Tangier. It was a big room with an old Moorish tile floor and I looked out upon an ancient courtyard planted with flowering vines where a fountain played and little gold fish swam. So I was very happy ensconced in my new environment with all of the files to delve through and enjoyed the change of assignment—answering questions now instead of asking them.

There was a staff of about 35. The hours were from 9-1 and 4-7. Everyone usually had their traditional siesta or went to the beach. The legation car transported us back and forth from our homes to the office, but sometimes I enjoyed walking through the old streets. All of the signs were in three languages—French, Spanish and Arabic. When I wasn't working I was always exploring. There were about eight Moors called shouse. The word is pronounced like a drunk saying house. They were dressed in brown djellabas and red fez, ran errands and brought us mint tea, that sticky sweet, aromatic oriental drink served in small rose colored glasses fitted into brass holders arranged neatly on a brass tray that would some times swing gaily. Being of the Berber tribe who sprang from the white race, they took more kindly to European ideas than the Arabs. They had light complexions, light eyes, clear cut features and a sense of humor. They made devoted friends and faithful servants and sometimes served at our parties.

Shortly after I arrived, Betty Sullivan, a former colleague at the consulate in Bermuda who had transferred to Rabat, the capital of Morocco where the Sultan lives some 600 miles away, decided to come to Tangier over the Labor Day weekend. I had not yet completely unpacked but was glad to see her. We did a lot of sightseeing and she was an excellent amateur photographer. She took some splendid photos of the narrow winding streets leading to the legation; where we banked on Sundays; the Arab market square where the Berber women dressed in their candy striped fontas half hidden under their enormous straw hats bright with pompoms sell their goat skins, baskets scrawling in circles under

Library of Congress

the trees; a cafe cluttered square at the foot of the Casbah; a fatamah was standing at the entrance of an American's house in the Casbah swathed in her white robes peering provocatively through the slit in her veiling; a view of the Bay of Spain from the terrace from the Hotel Villa de France; a view of the hotel from the Sultan's palace which is now a museum of arts and crafts; and finally the much photographed house of Barbara Hutton in the Medina which she usually occupied three months of the year beginning in June. The house was constructed from what originally had been seven private dwellings and decorated by the Honorable Maxwell, one of our government's earliest representatives in Tangier. His daughter, Mrs. Hopwood and her husband, who was with British Council in Tangier occupied it during the rest of the year.

After Betty's visit I suddenly became very ill. Louise Broussard, who had the room just across the hall, called the doctor, Dr. Harry Dunlap. He was a gentle, kind Scotsman who took excellent care of me and was most faithful calling every day of the two weeks I was in bed. It seems I had succumbed to the common complaint so many new arrivals to North Africa get from germs in certain fruits and vegetables and fish and from so much oil used in the cooking here. Apparently few escape Tangier tummy. The ailment is the same depending on which country you wish to blame it on. It goes by various names in different parts of the world. It is Pharaoh's revenge in Egypt; and in Mexico, Montezuma's revenge; Balkan Blight in southeastern Europe; and Turkey trots in Turkey. I was just about to recover from the food poisoning when unfortunately I caught summer influenza. My temperature soared to 102 degrees and I thought I would burn to a crisp. I felt terribly limp with no appetite at all. The doctor admitted I had a severe case.

To be laid so low at the very outset of my assignment to Tangier made me feel foolish and frustrated that this should have to happen to me now just when the girl I was relieving was departing and so much to do. But luckily Ruth had shown me all she could before she left and I had taken numerous notes. I was more than grateful to be surrounded by so many good and thoughtful people. Mr. Plitt sent kind notes with tins of fruit juice and his wife sent American butter and offered to have her cook send anything I needed. Mrs.

Library of Congress

Goodyear, wife of the vice consul, called, as did many others. The Demarquets who I had just managed to look up before becoming ill were most attentive. Flowers were sent from the wife of the manager of the Rif Hotel and the Spanish maids expressed their concern by pantomime. In fact, the entire staff of the hotel couldn't have been more solicitous.

Mr. Plitt and Mr. Goodyear kept assuring me about work and not to worry. After this illness I painstakingly peeled every grape. It took some time for me to regain my strength. In the meantime the work had accumulated. There was no one else who knew the files, they had to wait for me. Boxes were filled with telegrams, incoming and outgoing, classified and unclassified, action and information, and masses of mail to cope with. But everyone in the legation was very patient and I was left alone to plod along and not pressed in the slightest, so considerate and understanding were they all.

Once back in the office I gradually became absorbed in the work. The code clerk, Ruth Charles, was so security conscious and quite rightly, when she returned from lunch one day and saw a bundle thrown in the wastebasket she immediately picked it up with fright in her eyes and exclaimed, "Is this Top Secret?" I couldn't help suppress a smile as I assured her it wasn't and explained that it was a sandwich I had ordered at noon which had been made from a long hard loaf of French bread cut into lengths with a thick slab of goat's cheese inside. I couldn't get it in my mouth so I threw it in the wastebasket, failing to classify it.

Eventually my delving into the files revealed many things that interested me enormously, historically and politically. Tangier had a varied history having belonged to Spain, Portugal and England as well as Morocco. The Portuguese held Tangier for 20 years and then it came into England's hands as part of Catherine of Braganza's marriage portion when she married King Charles II in 1661. When I was there Tangier was a free port and the international zone of Morocco. The zone was run by the committee of control and legislative assembly. The committee of control consisted of representatives of each of the big powers who were the French, Spanish, and Italian ministers. The United States was

Library of Congress

not eligible as she was accredited directly to the Sultan and Rabat, not having signed the Treaty of Algeciras. Tangier had a reputation for wickedness, mystery and romance and was said to be the world headquarters for smugglers, money changers, blackmarketeers and spies. But most of this glamour was brought to an end when Tangier gained its independence in 1956.

In the process of my delving into the files, I became very interested in reading about two of Morocco's most famous men—Louis Hubert Gonzalve Lyautey, to give him his full name and Abd el-Krim. General, later Marshal Lyautey, resident general, had a record that was one of the most brilliant in history. His career had already been notable for distinguished colonial service in India, China, Madagascar, Algeria and on the frontier of Morocco. His talents were admirably suited for dealing with Muslim people. He understood them perhaps better than any other European has done and devoted himself to their interests. They in turn gave him their affection and trust. He was a diplomat as well as a soldier and sympathetic towards native life and thoughts. He found himself more at home in the souks of Fez or in Marrakech than in the Champs Elysees and the Place de Emperor. A lover of pageantry, he encouraged the renewal of the old world ceremonies with all of their splendor. His subjects loved this display of pomp and circumstance which had long been neglected by the previous rulers.

Abd-el-Krim was another colorful character. He was one of the greatest leaders the Riff had ever known.

He rendered a service of the greatest possible importance to his country. He suppressed the terrible custom of blood feud of tribe against tribe, family against family and murders in the treacherous fashion committed during sacred Muslim festivals. His scholastic knowledge and intellectual gifts marked him out for advancement in a country where it is unusual to find anyone who can read and write where risen to supreme power. Riffis referred to him as the "School Master."

Library of Congress

Carried away by success and ambition he dreamed of becoming Sultan of Morocco. But Abd-el-Krim was a menace to the French and Spanish and his presence in the Rif united these two countries as nothing else could have done.

He finally surrendered to the French with dignity and composure and was treated with kindness and exiled to the island of Reunion.

We were all sorry to say goodbye to the Goodyears who left for Washington and then to their new post at Zurich, Switzerland. A. Bolard More and his wife arrived to replace them from the same place, Zurich.

One afternoon David Fritzlan and his lovely English wife invited me to their villa in the mountains near a section for Europeans that skirts the old city, but once the hide-out for robbers. Nearby were the palace of the two former Sultans.

It was a very small select gathering. The other guests were Mrs. Anderson, who was in charge of our legation's excellent library and also took care of protocol matters. Her deceased Danish husband had been in his country's diplomatic service and she had lived in Tangier for nearly 15 years. Other guests were the young Polish Vice Consul and the French Vice Consul and his wife, who brought me home and a Mr. and Mrs. Burgess. Mr. Burgess had been a former Governor in the Sudan. It was a very pleasant afternoon and I thoroughly enjoyed myself.

Ruth Charles, my very security-conscious colleague, was due for home leave and transfer soon. As she had never been to Fez she asked Mr. Plitt if she could have a Legation car and driver to go there over the weekend and very kindly asked me to go with

her. Then we invited the newly arrived Mrs. Bolard More (Liz) to join us.

We left at 10:30 on a Saturday morning with be-fezzed Mohammed at the wheel. It was about an hour's drive through the Rif Mountains, to Fez, the center of Morocco. A

Library of Congress

mountain fringed city behind high walls and most extraordinary in all North Africa. It is said to be one of the three truly unique cities of the world along with Peking and Venice. It had been populated by Arab refugees from Cordoba, Spain, and has ever since been regarded as the spiritual heart of Islam in Morocco. It is the religious, literary and scholastic capital of Muslim North Africa with a Biblical flavor.

The wealthy aristocracy flourished here and have great pride in their culture, in their intelligence and in their manners. It was from Arabs that the Spaniards derived the expression "My house is your house," and the Arabs mean it. Muhammadism is a religion of hospitality.

Nothing in that old grey city seemed to have changed since the days of Mulai Idris II who founded it in 928 AD. We spent a day immersed in the enchantment of this 1,200 year old walled city where people lived in ways little changed for ten centuries.

Fez can be visited only on foot for its walls and watch towers enclose steep twisting streets so narrow that no vehicle can penetrate the depths of the native quarters. One enters only with a guide for it takes but a moment to get lost and he will play the note of a ciceron in a brand of French you will be lucky to understand.

On either side of the reed-roofed, narrow streets, weavers sit cross-legged in tiny cubicles weaving cloth into robes called Kaflans, embroidered wedding gowns for Moroccan brides. The woodworkers are as nimble with their toes as with their fingers. Artisans work endlessly, silently and skillfully on jewelry and brass work.

We had magical glimpses into the immense hall of the Karouiine Mosque where hundreds of students and pilgrims crouch in perpetual prayer. It is the largest in North Africa and remains one of the holiest spots in the Muslim world. There is also the university where students stay as long as 15 years to become professors and lawyers, who are the elite class who largely run the country.

Library of Congress

Near the old city is the enchanting Palais Jamai, an Arabian nights hostelry built right into the east wall of the Medina. One of the finest and certainly the most romantic in the world. The palace of a 17th century Grand Vizier, it was modernized with infinite skill, retaining a compelling ambiance of both worlds. The entrance looks almost squalid but inside terraced gardens and jasmine were at every doorway and the green and blue tile work was exquisite.

A high ridge overlooks the north walls offering a superb vantage point for viewing a serene mural of the whole city of Fez. Ancient forts line this hill and travelers of the Merinid Sultans dominate the city they enriched when at the height of their glory in the 14th century.

As we left this land frozen into the Middle Ages by geography and customs, we could hear the muezzin's call to prayer floating across the roof tops and watch the snow capped Atlas mountains fade into the distance as in a dream.

Soon after this little trip, the Plitts very kindly invited Ruth and me for luncheon. Mrs. Plitt had all of the impeccable taste of the French and their period pieces of furniture were beautiful. Mr. Plitt's dry humor made him very appealing.

In a few days Ruth was off for home leave and eventual transfer to Vienna. Then came the news that Andy Andreus was transferred to Tunis as vice consul. This meant that I could now definitely have an apartment in their building. It was a wonderful stroke of luck because many were waiting for an apartment there. I began to realize it was the choicest building in Tangier with a very obliging Belgian proprietor, Mr. Neff. It was just up the hill from the Rif Hotel at 29 rue Grotius. I was so happy to have inherited from Ruth all this and her Fatma too!

I had a salon with a fireplace, dining room, kitchen with tiny balcony, two bedrooms and a bathroom. French doors from the salon and from one of the bedrooms opened onto a

Library of Congress

balcony where I had a lovely view of the sea. From here I often watched the Arabs before sundown descend to their prayer mats, bow deeply towards Mecca and hear them say their prayers. The beach was close by and the lapping of the waves lulled me to sleep at night!

Eventually I found a French teacher and began French lessons three times a week after work. As she also taught bridge, it was not long before her husband and the American wife of the Belgian proprietor, Mr. Neff, who lived upstairs joined us for a bridge game played in French and we had great fun. Apropos of languages, also learned the Charles V had said, "German should be used to address animals, English to speak to merchants, Italian to make love, French for diplomacy, and Spanish to pray to God!"

Occasionally there were English speaking movies but not too good. One I saw was "Arabian Nights." As we were coming out of the theater, I noticed a great many Arabs leaving and wondered what they thought of the Hollywood version of themselves. The amateur dramatics directed by Albert Sherer and his talented wife, were more entertaining.

I had presented my letter of introduction from Mr. Jefferies in Bermuda to his uncle M. David Jacquier of the French Bank, and occasionally lunched with him on Sunday in his palatial villa right with mosaic tiles. He was a gracious, dignified silver-haired gentleman who always had his nice nurse, Miss Stroyan in attendance. Edward, his son, later came from England to look after his extensive property and banking interests as his father was becoming rather elderly.

One Christmas Day the Plitts invited the staff—35 in all—for luncheon. It was then that I learned about the "protocol of the sofa,"—that it was not just a piece of furniture for comfort but a symbol of rank! In veiled hints it was conveyed that only the wife of the Minister had the privilege of sitting on it! It had been a day when thoughts are certainly directed to our loved ones in America so being with the Plitts and legation family was like a home from home.

Library of Congress

After luncheon I came home to rest a bit before going for Christmas dinner to Francis Filliol's charming home on the Marson. It had been built onto an old Moorish house and had a superb view of the ocean. Francis was a very good looking Oxford educated Englishman with beautiful manners and a delightful sense of humor. He had just brought his daughter of 11 and son, Chip of 9, back from schools in England and they were little darlings. A very pleasant English woman and family friend, Alice Sinfros was also invited.

Jim Wiley, a most versatile Englishman, staying with Francis, made the delicious Christmas pudding. He joined us at the table for an early dinner because of the children to taste his pudding then had to go on to another engagement. Tucked under the Christmas tree were gifts for all. And the bright shining faces of those two adorable children lighted the heart.

It was an unforgettable evening filled with real Christmas cheer. We were wrapped in such a warm atmosphere that if you came without it, we certainly left with it.

Being in a Muslim country there had been little display of real Christmas spirit here.

Over the holidays I invited for dinner Madame Sinoir and her husband who had just arrived from Casablanca and a Frenchman to whom they introduced me, Andre Triolet, an aristocrat with old-world charm. They seemed to have enjoyed themselves very much and their Fatma did have a reputation for being a good cook. The next day I received a bottle of *cr#me-de-menthe* liquor with Mr. Triolet's card remembering that green was my favorite color. I was deeply touched.

One evening, soon after, I dined with the Sinoirs at the Minzah, where they were staying and Mr. Triolet, who also stayed there, joined us for coffee with his guest Baroness Fabvier who had recently returned from Paris. We discovered she had an apartment just above mine so she very kindly brought me home in her car and said she would introduce me to her son, Charles.

Library of Congress

The next day M. Triolet telephoned to say there was a special plane going to Marrakech the following day for the holidays and asked if I would like to go. I was thrilled, of course, because I had been longing to go there. But later the trip was canceled by the airline. I was sorry. It would have been fun to go while Churchill was there.

About a month later while dining at the Villa de France with M. Triolet, he again mentioned that plans were being made to fly to Marrakech. He once had a house there, built by his friend M. Sinoir so knew the country well and was anxious to show it all to me. But again, the flight was postponed due to high winds. However, Madame Sinoir and M. Triolet and I all planned to be together the next weekend... "Inshallah" as they say here. Never will they say, "I will do this or that," without saying "Inshallah," meaning "if Allah is willing" or "this is the will of God." Not at all an empty phrase but a deep creed. Humility depends on the will of God and the foundations of their character and behavior.

So, the next weekend I was, at last, able to write to my family from Marrakech!

Mamaouina Hotel, Marrakech, Morocco, Sunday, February 1, 1948.

....I fairly held my breath all week, hoping and praying for good weather. It had been rainy and windy up to the very day, Friday, I was to leave. But, thanks to God, Friday was a glorious day—no wind and with a phenomenal stroke of luck the plane took off in brilliant sunshine just a half hour late.

Fortunately, aboard I found friends, the Assistant Naval Attach# and Mrs. Allen, who were very helpful in seeing me through the usual French formalities. We flew over the Sultan's palace in the gleaming white capital of Rabat, then we reached Casablanca where the Allens got off. About an hour later Marrakech emerged and deserved its fame—nestled in the midst of a palm garden backed by a magnificent range of snow-covered mountains. The plane put down at 5:00pm and M. Triolet had driven out to the airport to meet me.

Library of Congress

Marrakech had a depth of charm I had never found anywhere else. If it could be compared to any place I had been it would be Peking, because of its ancient walls. The Mamaouina Hotel was luxurious, rumored to be the most luxurious in all of North Africa. It was in the old quarters but not of it. From the balcony of my room I looked down upon the orange scented garden that surrounds the hotel and in the distance the Atlas mountains rose high beyond the crenulated walls. Tall cypress and date palms were situated against the sky and one or two almond trees were just beginning to burst into bloom.

The Koutoubia Mosque, built all by hand, 800 years ago, topped by golden balls, loomed up from the native quarter. A copy is in Seville, Spain known as La Giralda. Never have I seen such glorious coloring. The reflections of the sunset on the snow covered mountains changed from a heavenly blue to a rosy pink. Little lights flashed for just a few minutes in the minarets where muezzin called his people to prayer an hour before sunset. Then flights of numerous white egrets came to roost on the roofs.

Above the old Koutoubia Mosque appeared the first evening star which twinkled a long time before the myriads of others came out to join it. Later a warning rose above the mosque and all through the night I could hear the monotonous rhythms of the tom-tom far below in the native quarters.

The next morning M. Triolet arranged for a guide to take us around. We went out to the Palais de la Babia, where Churchill had luncheon recently. I had my photo snapped in the courtyard of a one-time harem and again in front of Bab Doukkala, one of the great gates of Marrakech. Then on to see the Saadian tomb, burial place of the 16th century Sultans, who came from Arabia to conquer Morocco and stopped for a moment at Placeedu Syteebro where Marrakech surrendered to the French.

The celebrated Djemaa el F'na from earliest times had been a kind of perpetual and fun fair, bursting with all the exhibitionist life that Africa can offer. Always surrounded by a dense circle, including hundreds of solemn faced children in hypnotized silence watching

Library of Congress

this spectacle of animation and colorful turbulence. While his musicians attract the crowd a snake charmer coax a cobra around his neck. To the intoxicating beat of tambourines, tall black men descendants of Sudanese slaves, leap and twirl. The man shakes his brass bell and a beggar, another leper, with fingers and toes chewed away by the disease, reel off benedictions and moan for alms in a toneless voice. "May Allah help and look after you." During all this medieval entertainment, braying donkeys step nimbly through the mass of people.

When all other exotic sights and sounds threatened to batter my mind to a pulp, I pleasantly escaped. For just six minutes by horse drawn carriage from the active life I was back to the calm luxury of the magnificent Mamauina.

After this extraordinary day it was very refreshing, a very pleasant surprise to come to me room and find in a brass bowl, a large bouquet of violets on the table. Mr. Triolet had asked the gardener to pick them for me from the garden, place them in my room. His sweet thought touched me very much.

The next day Madame Sinoir joined us in M. Triolet's little pony cart for a drive out to the sultan's garden graves as old as the Bible. M. Triolet has a hobby of breeding these little ponies in the south of France.

Back at the Mamauina I was introduced to some of Mr. Triolet's delightful French friends. They were all speaking of Churchill's recent visit when he would appear on the steps leading down to the dining room in his "zoot suit," the extraordinary one-piece uniform he wore during the war and always with one of his enormous cigars giving his characteristic wartime guest the "V".

I very much regretted that my time was so limited because M. Triolet said he could have arranged with a very good friend of his to have dined with the Pasha of Morocco, El Glaoui, sometime referred to as the most famous Moor in the world. He is the most powerful man in Morocco, even more so than the Sultan because he controls the Berber

Library of Congress

tribe. They say his table is unequaled. It would have been an unusual experience but perhaps it can be arranged another time. The air was dry and bracing and I could well understand why Churchill from England and the storks from Holland fly here in the winter. I have written this while relaxing among the flowers in the lovely garden of this fabulous hotel and always wish for you when I am enjoying so many fascinating places. Photos will follow. Love Virginia

So at last I had been to the fabled city of Marrakech. I left there early Tuesday morning and arrived home about 2:30pm. That evening I dined at Francis Fileo's. The other guests were two interesting women and a representative of Coca Cola. As someone said, "An American culture has come to Tangier when Coca Cola arrived, a world wide symbol of American capitalism." Next morning I fell to the work that inevitably accumulates while gone, even for a few days. But I was becoming enveloped by the spell of Morocco.

A couple of months later in early March a memo from the military attach#s office announced that Captain Bedford was flying to Madrid and anyone having any reason to go was to see Bolard Moore. I decided that I needed some visiting cards engraved. How appropriate, I thought, were the last two lines of Edna St. Vincent Millay's poem, "There isn't a plane, ship or train I wouldn't take no matter where it's going." But, when one first comes to a post one must travel all the time. You have to see, to hear and to interpret it all for yourself. As usual, this flight, too, was postponed several times. We finally took off on March 8 at 9:00am with crossed fingers and a hasty prayer. So it was a beautiful flight. We hadn't been in the air long when Seville appeared below on the left and about an hour out of Tangier, Cordoba on our right.

We arrived in Madrid about noon time. The weather was marvelous. There was quite a gathering of embassy officials at the airport to meet the other passengers off our plane, who had come to go on a hunting trip. Besides the pilot, Pete Bedford and his wife, there were Captain and Mrs. Dudley and a Dr. and Mrs. Rideell from Port Lyautey, the naval base that had just been taken over by the French, Elena Rupert from the military attach#s

Library of Congress

office and I came not to hunt, but to shop. The naval attach#s pilot from the embassy in Madrid drove seven of us to the Lis Hotel where Elena and I shared a room. We paid 40 pesetas each for it. At that time the dollar was worth 36 pesetas in Tangier. The hotel was small and simple, but clean and modern. Located on a side street just off the main avenida. Many Americans and the entire personnel of TWA stayed here. The gracious manageress couldn't have been more courteous and friendly. On the way to the hotel we had stopped at a place called The California where we had a real milk shake and a sandwich made of real bread. Due to the flour shortage in Tangier we had not been able to have decent bread.

The Spaniards have a special kind sparkling conversation and appeal, rather a temporary relief from hearing the Moors shouting to each other and the donkeys braying. There were more lovely things than I saw in the shops in Paris, but then Madrid had not been through so much. I bought one white and one black real lace mantillas, beautiful tiles for a table and as they seemed so reasonable I couldn't resist two crystal chandeliers which greatly enhanced my new apartment with white candles. All were given lovely care by the personnel of the plane on the return flight to Tangier.

One morning Elena and I ordered breakfast early so we could be at the Prado museum when it opened. Elena spoke Spanish so she was a wonderful person to be with. The Prado was in an elegant royal house given to the Spanish people by King Ferdinand VII in one of Madrid's loveliest area surrounded by the botanical gardens. It impressed me very much to see the number of young artists who were copying the old masters and so extremely well the paintings of Velazquez, court painter from Seville and those of El Greco from Crete, renamed for his extended figures with elongated fingers and slightly mad eyes. And also some paintings from the flying collection of Goya who used such a variety of techniques in oil, fresco, and tempura in Spain. The museum is well worthy of the devotion which its many devotees regard it and I was to return many times to this priceless little Prado, even for a few hours. Before M. Trealey flew to Paris he introduced me to a French friend who came to tea one day, Madame Sabatier. She was driving through Spain in

Library of Congress

early April to her small castle at Pau in the south of France, and invited me to go with her. M. Trealay was to meet me in Biarritz and show me the Basque country which I had heard was very interesting. Then I would fly back to Tangier from Bordeaux. I thought it a lovely idea and at the end of March she telegraphed from Paris: "Happy Easter. Marvelous weather. Do come via Biarritz." But alas I couldn't go. The inspectors from the State Department were due any day to inspect the office, so, of course, I must not leave the legation. Jesse Green, with whom I had shared a cabin on the Koutoubia coming to Tangier and Ada Green, famous for her chic would frequently come for a game of bridge. Having neither taste nor talent for a kitchen I let them brew their own tea. Being British I knew they would prefer it that way and as they lived in the hotel Minsa, they seemed to enjoy it.

In the post one day came a book from Andre Trealay, "Le Cheval Blanc" written in French and autographed by his former wife, Elsa Trealay. It had won the much sought after Gonkure Literary prize of 1944. Her other books had been illustrated by the painters, Marc Chagall and Picasso. Andre had told me he often helped her with her writing, which showed characters full of humanity and tenderness. She had been born into an intellectual Russian and Jewish family. When Andre, then a young cavalry officer met her she had grown to hate the anti-Semitic Tzarish regime. So he brought her out of Russia with him and they were married. They had a happy honeymoon in Tahiti but marriage was not for Andre so there was a divorce. In 1928, the Russian author, Vladimir Mayakovsky, introduced Elsa in a left bank cafe to Lewis Aragon. He was recovering from an unhappy affair with Nancy Cunard, daughter of the wealthy ship-owner and Lady Cunard. He at first believed Elsa to be a Russian spy because of her penetrating gaze. Later he wrote a book of poems entitled "Les Yeux d'Elsa." She eventually became the mistress of this celebrated French poet and theirs became one of the most famous love affairs in France. She died in 1970 at the age of 74. A collection of love tokens Aragon had given her each day toward the end of her life was exhibited at Bibliotheque National. Several years later when I was in Paris, I wanted to see this exhibition, but, of course, it was no longer there.

Library of Congress

On Easter I attended early communion service at St. Andrew's Episcopal church. The architecture of this church, consecrated in 1904, showed strong Moorish influence in its square white towers, green tiled roof, beautifully painted cedar wood of the chancellery ceiling, an arabesque in the recess behind the altar. The inscription over the chancellery arch in flowing Arabic script is the Lord's Prayer, and not, as many visitors think, a verse from the Koran, an example of advanced ecumenism which may astonish them. In the afternoon I was invited to tea at the Bonnets. They were a well known French family who had lived for some years in a rambling two hundred year old house on the old mountain road. There was a glittering gathering of guests of all nationalities. The Duke of Trevere was there, one of the grandees of Spain. He and his sister had brought me home one evening after a party our naval attach# had given at the Rif Hotel when two cruisers were in port. I remember how impressed I was to see how he, and his equally large sister, were both able to squeeze in their tiny car and sit together. Among the English guests were Mrs. Drumward Hay, a friend of Francis Fileo's; David Herbert, who was the second son of the Earl of Pembroke and did, in fact, write a book entitled, "The Second Son," which I read several years later; Baron and Baroness Posch Post, and others were there whose names floated away in the introductions. I think I must have been the only American. A photo was taken of an unusual Moorish flower arrangement which was to appear in the series Coca Cola published. Mr. Lakehurst was the pleasant English representative in Tangier for Coca Cola. Both Clamonce and her sister Madeleine were artistically inclined. Madeleine once brought me such a clever flower arrangement. She had used gilded roses with jasmine in an old Moorish Moroccan earthen ware bowl, which delighted me for years. Clamonce wrote poetry, but she once told me she could never be inspired unless she had one white rose on her desk.

On April 5, 1948, at 11:45pm I wrote my sister Mildred: My last dinner guests have just departed and I am hastening to write and tell you how happy I was to have your telegram today. It was interesting to hear you were in New York bringing back memories of our good times there together just a year ago. This was really a beautiful birthday. I invited

Library of Congress

to dinner, Clamonce Bonnet, her friend Jane Borden and Clamonce's sister from Brazil, Madeleine Colaco, who is perfectly fascinating. M. Durand, a Frenchman, came bearing a lovely bouquet of flowers, although he didn't know it was my birthday. These charming Frenchmen! He spoke English without a trace of an accent, writes plays and poetry and very artistic. Francis Fileo brought some rare specimens of roses from his lovely garden, as he is a gifted gardener, and a bottle of Lanvin perfume from his dear children. Andre Trealey sent me a case of champagne with a sweet message and while at dinner a telegram of greetings arrived from him from Paris. Must get to bed now. The military attach# is giving a party tomorrow evening at the Rif Hotel, Army Day being the occasion. Couldn't retire without writing this note to let you know how dear and thoughtful you had been and how touched I am by your message and check. Love Virginia.

We had a long weekend over Memorial Day so I decided to take advantage of it and go to Casablanca aboard the Koutoubia. The ship had vastly improved since I traveled in her to Tangier. Miss Afriat, one of the French Moroccan employees in the library at the legation, whose home was in Casa was my pleasant companion. Hotel rooms were at a premium there. The consulate in Casablanca had called all the hotels and finally had to contact an agent to obtain a room for me at the George Cinque, a hotel not as imposing as its name, but with the most obliging manager. Miss Afriat showed me the shops the first day and took me to tea at the Trianon where everyone goes for the delectable pastries. Estelle Kochan, who had been at the legation in Tangier and such a friendly person, and now here at the consulate invited me for lunch at the Oasis, which served delicious French cuisine. Then we had a very pleasant carriage drive along the seaside. Casablanca is wonderfully placed on the Atlantic and its long corniche is filled with restaurants overlooking the beaches. We took tea at the Anfa Hotel, the scene of the famous secret war time Casablanca Conference between Roosevelt, Churchill and de Gaulle in January 1943 when they took over the entire hotel. The American consul general had a lovely villa near Anfa in a residential suburb once a pirate's lair. On Sunday I went out to Fedala, a beach I had heard would be so attractive, but was frightfully disappointing.

Library of Congress

The manager, where I lunched at the Miremar, was very pleasant, however, and a friend of Mr. Kneff, proprietor of my apartment in Tangier. The most interesting thing to me was the marker on the beach which described the allied landings there in 1942 when Casablanca played a strategic role in the allied North African campaign.

That evening I was very kindly invited to dine with friends of Jane Borden, the Juliens, in their elegant apartment filled with exquisite French antiques. Mrs. Julien was an American who had been spending three years writing a biography on Sarah Bernhardt. Her husband, a French count, but didn't use his title, was the son of the doctor to the sultan. Mrs. Julien showed me a lovely, delicate, filigreed gold tiara the sultan had presented to her husband which she wanted to sell. I thought Mrs. Julien had chosen an intriguing person to write about, for Sarah Bernhardt's private life was as fabulous as the theatrical career, stretching from the Second Empire to the roaring twenties. What I recalled was that in 1880 she made her first trip to the United States for a 50 city tour. On her return to France, 30,000 people hailed her on the dockside at Le Havre. In 1882 until her death in 1923, she created a new play in Paris every year between tours. Her energy was limitless and even when she had her right leg amputated at the age of 71, she continued to act propped up on a chair. And even in her dying coma, it was said she recited lines from Racine's "Phedra". The night she died, the crowd cramming the streets outside her home was hushed as the doctor leaned out of the window to give the news—Madame Sarah Bernhardt is dead. Thousands attended her funeral and mourners queued for days afterwards at the cemetery for a glimpse of her grave. On her tomb stone was inscribed just one word, "Bernhardt."

When I returned home a letter was waiting for me from Andre Trealay, who was in Kenya. He wrote that the country was very green and had great charm and added a humoresque note—you are requested not to frighten the tigers. He had planned to go to Ethiopia looking for some land where he could build a place because he always said he regretted giving up his handsome home in Marrakech. The never ending water shortage reached tragic proportions. There was a murder in the Casbah. As there is no water at all in the

Library of Congress

Moorish homes, the natives had to queue up for it at their ancient fountain. One night so many people had gathered around it that a child was pushed around so much by a man, she ran home and told her family. Her father came and stabbed the man in the back. But sometimes things get so tragic they get comical. A funny thing happened when several people were sitting around chatting at one of the consul's homes. The door of the kitchen had been left open when suddenly they all heard a slight trickle. There was dead silence for a moment, and then everyone dashed out of the door and ran home to take showers. Converse Hettinger, one of our new vice consuls who always looked very impressive carrying a briefcase bulging with reports, came in one morning and said, "Well, I had to brush my teeth with scotch this morning." Water was becoming more scarce than scotch. Once there was such a waste my fatmah went away forgetting to turn off the taps and the salon was flooded. My beautiful long draperies showed the water marks ever after.

The dips in the sea were proving more pleasant than ever. One day I was invited for a swim and luncheon with Jacque d'Marquet, to whom the Duke d'Richelieu had given me a note of introduction, and his American wife, Phyllis, who had been a school teacher in California. Their remote home on the Marsan was reached by walking through a cemetery. The home had once been a harem and sat in about four acres of luxurious foliage. Flowers were growing in riotous abandon and calla lilies were everywhere. Seven wells were on the place and a charming legend was that Circe was said to have once lived there, which gave an enchanting aura to the place. The sprawling old house was like a museum filled with extraordinary collections gathered from Jacque's travels, such as a rare Buddha, and shelves lined with fascinating books. We descended for our swim to a secluded beach where the ocean pounded against the rugged coastline. The water was nippy, but delightfully invigorating. Then we lunched under a yellow fringed umbrella on the terrace overlooking the sea. I was reluctant to leave, but had invited some people in for cocktails so had to hurry home. One of my guests was an interesting British chap, Gordon Evans, who had won the champion tennis singles at Monte Carlo when he lived there several years ago.

Library of Congress

About this time a survey group arrived from the Department to investigate the job situation. The idea was to classify all of the jobs and get them on a certain salary level. The group started here and then went to Algeria and on to Cairo. I enjoyed my interviews with Mrs. Beaton very much. All kinds of questions were asked. Were you met upon arrival? Were you introduced to everyone and to people in other missions? What are your living conditions? Did you choose the Foreign Service as a career or come abroad for the glamour of it? Many girls expect to find so much glamour in the job and often are bitterly disappointed. But she said that she gathered from talking to me for a short time I had chosen it for a career. True, but I was also finding glamour in it as I jogged along, I confessed.

Mr. Armstrong, head of our personnel division, and Miss Cullins, joined her a few days later. As my fatmah made a good couscous I invited them for a Moorish luncheon. One evening the Bolard Mores gave a cocktail party and Mr. Plitt sent the official legation car, with all the flags flying, for Maggie Freed and me. Mrs. Plitt was in the south of France visiting her family. Another proof of the kind man he was.

On the 4th of July there was a reception at the legation which is usually given to celebrate our independence day. To attend is almost a sacred duty of every American. At various parties I kept meeting Dr. Dunlap, who took such good care of me when I was so ill, and his wife, everyone called Teddy. She was blond and bubbly and a vice consul at the British legation. But, what I didn't know until some years later, was that she had been a highly efficient member of their Secret Service because she never appeared to take anything seriously. The perfect spy. Dr. Dunlap was known to have worked incessantly for the poor Moroccans, particularly the children.

On the 11th there was a bull fight at the small Spanish frontier town, Le Lenia, just outside Gibraltar. I had heard that one's first bull fight may seem a bit blood curdling and thought

Library of Congress

I might find it too horrible, but felt I should try to go to one while here. Six of us, the plane could only seat six, chartered a plane to Gibraltar. We took off on a Sunday.

...and from the legation Nancy Howard, Margaret Avent, and a new arrival, Mary Williams, a sweet young girl from Vermont and George McGill from the military attach#s office. When we arrived we were taken to the Rock Hotel where rooms had been engaged for the night. It was a delightful hotel built into the side of the famous Rock. We had luncheon under a canopy in the terrace gardens and then off to the bull fights. As seats were not reserved we had to go early to get a place on the shady side. We were seated near the President's box and just opposite the gate where the bulls and all the retinue matadors and picadors come out. It was truly a magnificent spectacle for their costumes were handsome made of brilliant colors. Only the matadors can be trimmed in shiny gold, and the others who use the capes and bait the bulls were trimmed in silver. There were in all seven bulls killed and we almost saw the finish in the moonlight. It is appalling to see so much water being used to sprinkle the ring when we had suffered so long from such a terrific shortage in Tangier. I had taken the book, "Blood and Sand" with me and dipped into it at intervals which put me in the proper mood while sipping sherry, the traditional drink I learned one always takes to bull fights.

One of the matadors must have said a very good prayer that morning because he took some awful chances. He knelt on one knee and practically tickled the bull's nose, then turned his back on the bull after a few passes to show his skill and style. The first bull didn't have much fire in him, but they became bigger and better as time went on. When there was an unusually good piece of work the entire crowd cried in unison, "Ol#" One elegantly dressed Spanish woman threw a rose. Lots of hats were thrown in the ring. I had to control myself from becoming ill because it was horrifying to watch the blood stream down from the side of the bull and then from its mouth and finally, when they drive the last spear in his forehead, this is the moment of truth. This is the most difficult moment of the Corrida and the bull is killed with a sword culminating a most important factor of the grisly specter. It is killed instantly and falls over. Then the man rushes up and stabs it again. The

Library of Congress

people all shout with great glee while three decorated horses come out to drag the bull away. It is traditional to cut off the bull's ear after the matador has succeeded in killing it, holding it up to the President's box as a memento of his victory.

The bull, more than once had the horses down. They were well padded so don't believe any of them were badly gored. But it was simply sickening to see the men beating, kicking, pulling the horse's tail and do everything in the cruelest sort of way to get the horse up. After all of his trappings were off, one could see how bony he was. Of course they only use animals that are that way, but nevertheless they are still alive and torture to them and to the bulls was more than I could possibly endure again.

I appreciated, of course, the experience, of seeing one, for it is interesting, but I certainly could not truthfully say I enjoyed it. It was simultaneously impressive and repellent. The Spanish simply revel in it, but it was too savage for me. They turn from God to gore with the greatest of care filling the churches in the morning and the bull ring in the afternoon. Such are Sundays in Spain where siestas become fiestas.

After the bull fight we wandered through carnival crowds so dense we were afraid to advance and unable to retreat. All sorts of booths were selling such cheap souvenirs you would probably not know anyone you disliked enough to buy one for. It was brilliantly lit for miles and refreshing to see so many pink cheeked English boys and girls. At a rather picturesque restaurant we had ham and eggs, the safest thing to order here. I didn't get into bed until 2:00am.

Towards the end of July I gave a cocktail party for about 30 people. The entire Bonnet family came with Jane Bordon and Maxwell Blake's first wife who lived with them in their large rambling old home on the mountain. I also asked two Englishmen I had met at their home, McDonald and Grisham, who were on assignment for "Harper's Bazaar". McDonald was writing about Barbara Hutton's home and Grisham was doing the illustrations. It was to appear in the April issue. Robert Maugham, Somerset Maugham's charming nephew,

Library of Congress

also came. When Mr. Plitt arrived he rushed up to me and said, "Please do introduce me to your minister, I am writing an article about him." He then showed me some clippings from the New York Times about himself and his new book recently published. Mrs. Plitt, just back from visiting her family in the south of France, brought her sister and child. The Marquets were also there, but Jacque couldn't eat or drink, he was keeping Ramadan, the Muslim month of fast. With the start of the new moon in the ninth month of the Muslim year, the holy month of Ramadan begins for the Arabs. It is something like our Lent. For 30 days they cannot eat or drink anything from sun up to sundown, not even a drink of water is taken during the daylight hours. About a quarter to nine every evening, a boom of a canon signals the Arabs to the food and drink that during the days they cannot touch and begins the festive spirit that lasts until dawn. Beating drums, tom toms, and men singing the Koran and dancing until about 3:00am when the canon booms again to signal to cease. It was then that I realized why the Duke de Richelieu said Jacque was a "very peculiar man" when he gave me an introduction to him. He is quite interesting but does have peculiar habits. It is just because he likes to experience the customs and habits of the people in the country he is living in and the Moroccan way of life is full of ancient traditions. So when the canon boomed at sunset, he frantically asked for some water to drink. He couldn't wait for the fatmah to bring him a glass, he dashed to the kitchen and swallowed a whole pitcher of it. Phyllis, his wife, says he finds that most difficult of all, to not drink all day. I thought he looked very gaunt and thin for the experience. Fortunately, Ramadan will soon be over.

After my cocktail party, the Benjamin Harrisons and my English friend, Gordon Evans asked me to join them for dinner at the Villa de France. The food and champagne was as delightful as the setting. We then went to the Emsalla Gardens where we danced in the open air with the fragrance of orange blossoms from the surrounding trees which were perfuming the air. It was a quarter to three when I reached home. The precious water was just beginning to come on.

Library of Congress

The next day a box of delicious chocolates came with a card from Gordon saying, "Many thanks for a wonderful evening." So he too must have found the evening enjoyable.

The Harrisons were later transferred to Honolulu. When I had admired an unusual ring Gordon was wearing on his right little finger, he said he valued it very much because it had been on Aaron Burr when he fought and won the duel with Alexander Hamilton. His mother, whom he said he had buried in Philadelphia in 1929 was a Burr, descendent of this famous man. Having forgotten the details of this historic episode, I looked it all up the next day in early American history and it revealed among other things that he was said to be a man of great interest, one of the most complex in the history of the young United States and he had tremendous charm and fascination.

Every year the British consul, Mr. Emose, invited all of the legation to a bull fight party at his home in Ceuta, a little Spanish town of Moorish origin lying on the narrow neck of the small peninsula just across the Straits of Gibraltar. We filled nearly five cars and left about four in the afternoon arriving just in time for the bull fight at 6:00pm. I never thought that I could possibly endure another bull fight, but it made such a difference to sit next to some one such as Mr. Abrines, a long time local from the legation who could explain the technique as the spectacle progressed then becoming less emotional and looking at it from the scientific side. Then I began to realize it is not a sport but an ancient spectacle of art. Two of the bull fighters were the same we had seen at the Leana. One young one was most daring and brave killing two bulls. When this young chap killed his last, the whole place nearly went wild. Everyone stood up and waved white handkerchiefs, a signal for him to have two ears of the bull, a sign of merit. When he went all around the ring bowing he threw them up to various friends in the audience. It was a much more emotional performance than the one at Leana. But I still feel that it is cruel. Never would I become an aficionada.

The party afterwards was in Mr. Marce's large home beautifully situated beside the sea. The garden was decorated with pretty Japanese lanterns and an orchestra played while

Library of Congress

Spanish dancers performed. There were many uniformed officials there and best of all we had the pleasure of meeting one of the bull fighters. It had been a gay fiesta. About midnight we drove back to Tangier under the purple velvet sky of Africa lit with millions of stars. In a few days I received two photos from the bull fighter that I had met autographed "Manuel Alvarez Andaluc." I often wondered if he attained great fame. I didn't follow his career because I never became an aficionada.

One day Andre brought to my apartment a Polish countess and her attractive 15 year old daughter who had arrived here for a few weeks from Casablanca. Her name was Strembosz. She had that intangible something that made one's heart go out to her at once. We met again at Emsalla Gardens where Andre and I would often go to enjoy the Vietnamese atmosphere.

The Carsons, he was our military attach#, gave an amusing party one evening at the Balerno Beach Club. It was one of the nicest places to swim at the far end of the beach. Invitations were sent out in rhyme and we were to come dressed as we were at a certain hour of a certain day. Fortunately my invitation read, 11:00am on Sunday, when I was fairly decent in my bathing suit. But some were invited as they were at 7:00am and most were still asleep. Bob Caldwell of our legation came swathed in a sheet carrying a big fig leave from his own tree, I suppose to be prepared for a slip of the costume. Nancy Howard, in her blue pajamas, with cold cream on her face, walked in with her eyes closed. The British consul, Mr. Gardner, had apparently been in the midst of shaving and came in his dressing gown with just one side of his face lathered. There were many others of the 60 guests amusedly dressed and undressed. We matched up puzzles for dinner partners and I drew the Italian consul, Mr. Menti. He knew my friend the Italian consul, Montenari, in Honolulu whom he said is now married to an American and living in London. We sat with his wife and the others were all French. The Baroness Bouveche, wife of the minister, M. Debroi, the Consul and M. de Furst, the military attach#, who brought me home. The water

Library of Congress

was so warm many went for a swim about midnight. As I had on my suit, I dipped in too. It was a smashing party.

M. Durand called one day to say that he had an artist friend from Paris he would like to introduce. My first day free was Monday when we met at Portos where everyone goes for tea. M. Courbin was a delightful young man and began to quietly sketch my portrait under the table. Then we came to my apartment where he continued and he showed me some of his work. He then asked me to come to the Casbah. The French government had given him a studio in one of the Sultan's palaces, now a museum. When he finished it he hoped I would permit him to show it in his exhibition he was having in Paris in October. He and M. Durand went on to Rabat where he did some Moorish types. When they returned I invited an artistic gathering of friends in to see his work and my portrait he had done. A chaouch from the legation, who served at parties, made some mint juleps, although not exactly like my brother-in-law from Kentucky made them. But they looked artistic with a few sprays of jasmine on the tray. A Moorish version of a Kentucky mint julep.

The Countess Strembosz came looking enchanting in an exquisite ice blue satin gown designed to show off her superb figure and baring a box of Port's delicious chocolates. I thought a beautiful subject for a portrait at that very moment. The other day she mentioned that she was going to ask the Caid if he could arrange to have a diffa, typical Moorish feast for me. But he explained he had been ill. She was to return to Casablanca the next day and invited me to visit her. The Kneffs also knew her so came down from their apartment to join us. After she had returned to Casablanca she sent me a perfectly lovely hand embroidered blouse and a pair of gloves. Andre told me later that she would like to come to Paris to live but as she is a Polish #migr# in exile there is something difficult about it. Andre and I dined at the Minsa afterwards. They were now serving on the cool terrace with gay green clothes on their tables, little flags and lights strung along the balcony and the orchestra playing behind potted plants with a view of the harbor beyond. We were blissfully ensconced at our table for two. It was a happy evening. Andre combined artistic manners

Library of Congress

with democratic opinions and was so knowledgeable about everything, I just listened to him completely enraptured.

One day soon after he introduced me to the Russian Countess Ignatieff, who was tall, slender and highly intelligent. I invited her with Andre, Robert Gilmore, who had formerly been Naval attach# at our legation, for luncheon one day. The conversation was so scintillating they stayed on until after 8:00 in the evening. I will always remember Gilly saying he thought the greatest thing in a woman was ton dress.

On a Sunday in mid September, M. Durand drove Andre and me with a picnic lunch in his jeep to the little town Xauen (Chausen). The road curled through the Rif mountains covered in pink laurel and crossed rushing streams. This former city of mystery climbs up a side of a gorge and is like an amphitheater built into towering rocks by those Moors expelled from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella. Regarded in the Muslim world as a sacred place, it was a hidden city closed to non-Muslim where no Christian foot had ever trod until 1920 when the Spaniards marched in. The houses in this little wall town have red tiles, sloping roofs, just as in Granada. A quiet sleepy place where the Moroccan traditions, customs and ways are most perfectly preserved. Some small orphan girls sit cross-legged before high string looms, weaving rugs. Wordless women go veiled through the narrow streets. Silence is broken only by the clip clop of the donkeys jogging along.

After we left Xauen, we drove on to Tetuan, former capital of the southern area which was a distance of about 33 miles. The population is almost entirely Berber. The nail studded and artistically decorated doorways fascinated M. Durand and he drew many little sketches, took countless photographs. Later, when he built a home in the Casbah he used some of these designs. The city is white spiked with green minarets. We came in along the ancient walls surrounding by the dwells and one wonders if he is in Morocco or Andalucia, Spain. The houses with that shiny blue tiles called azulejos are occupied by many families bearing such names as Rodriguez, Torres, and Fernandes and still hold

Library of Congress

keys to their houses in Granada although it has been about 500 years since Isabella and Ferdinand reconquered the city from the Moors.

The Spanish language is the language of officialdom, banks, shops and hotels. But Arabic is the tongue in the market places and tiny shops. The monetary unit is the Spanish peseta, so you may savor Spain without actually visiting it. We strolled through the complicated maze of blind alleys, arched lanes and dark streets and picked our way gingerly over the slippery stones, jumping hastily aside when a hoarse voice shouted "balak," warning approach of a donkey with loaded panniers on its back. It was a most rewarding loop through the country, this drive through Spanish Morocco. Pierre Loti, the French writer, with 14 celebrated travelers did it in 1889 and noted it in his book "Au Maroc."

One evening Andre invited me to dinner with his friend Madame Sabatier. who had been visiting her handsome son, Count de Lessups and his wife, a ravishing English beauty. They came for a baktil shortly after when I also invited the White Russian Countess Ignatieff and her mother and father and some other friends. The young Countess de Lessups had an aura of romanticism about her which was captivating. I was later invited to Madam Sabatier's where I met the wives of the British and Belgian ministers.

October 7, I received a cable from Charlie Biddle which touched me especially after all these years — Greetings on our anniversary about this time. The date of our marriage was actually October 11, 1930 in Kobe, Japan. Even though our marriage collapsed, our affection for each other remained unaltered.

A recent addition to our legation staff was George E. Palmer, a ruddy, robust, bright eyed vice consul transferred here from Kabul, Afghanistan, where his father was ambassador. They have the unique position in the Foreign Service of being the only father and son serving together at the same post.

Library of Congress

Our electricity had been cut to such an extent that for three consecutive days and nights we had none at all in the apartment. Everyone had to make huge investments in candles. Working under feeble lights until 7:00pm at the office and trying to do urgent work by candle light began to be irksome to us all.

Over Armistice Day weekend, I had a very interesting 4 day trip. M. Chamaway, another of Andre's French friends, had a beautiful cabriolet car and asked Andre to accompany him through the south of Morocco as he had so much knowledge about the country. And I was so pleased to be invited to go along. Andre said I must see the far south of Morocco before I left. Travel is an opiate stranger than we know.

We left about 10:30 on Thursday morning and followed the long span of Rif mountains that led south to Rabat which we reached about 5:30pm. Betty Sullivan, my erstwhile colleague in Bermuda, now posted in Rabat greeted us at the hotel when we arrived. She then took me around in her jeep she had traded on an emerald she had bought at her last post, Bogota. The Arabic sign on it read, "Allah will protect us," so I felt safe in this country where the word of the prophet is strictly obeyed.

Rabat is a handsome, scrupulously clean gleaming white city blessed with a magnificent location on dramatic cliffs above open sea. It is the old administrative capital of Morocco where the resident general lives and acts as minister of affairs for the Sultan, who was then His Majesty Sidi Mohammed Ben Mouli Ussef, about 36 years old. He died on February 26, 1961. One of the sights to see every Friday was the Sultan, lover of pageantry, who had ruled the country from the 16th century, mounted on his palomino charger proceeding in state to the mosque. Pavilioned under the royal umbrella, escorted by the Black Guard and preceded by spearmen, while his subjects cry: "May God preserve the life of our Lord"

Hassam Tower, strange minaret of the 13th century mosque. It was built by the great Sultan El Mansour who subdued north Spain and built three of the finest examples of

Library of Congress

Moorish architecture in each of his three capitals—the Giraldo in Seville, the Koutoubia in Marrakech and here in Rabat the never finished Hassam Tower.

From the minaret, the grandson of the great Sultan Youssef-el Mansour preached a holy war facing a fanatical audience of 200,000 persons against an invader of Islam's sanctity. The invader was none other than St. Louis of France soon to die of the pest in Carthage. It was lovely to see all this in a glowing sunset.

We then walked through terraced courtyards of date palms and roses to a Moorish cafe overlooking the river Bouregreg where we sat and sipped sprigged mint tea as the last rays of the sun faded away. Betty then showed me through the consulate and we had a cocktail in her apartment just beneath the office.

The next morning I rejoined Andre and M. Chamaway to drive on to Marrakech. The roads were excellent and the weather was wonderful. Andre kept up an incessant stream of conversation in French explaining every little detail of the land he loved and knew so well. There is truly a mystic in Morocco. As Edith Wharton wrote in her book "In Morocco," "The present is a perpetual prolonged past." Painters were particularly susceptible, including Delacroix and Matisse. Most of Matisse's Moroccan paintings of 1912 and 1913 are in Moscow as they were bought by his friends. In 1832, Delacroix made sketches and noted in his journal, "the mountains are in the softest possible tones, the sea a dark blue green, the color of a fig." The camels plodded steadily by the roadside, also on the way to Marrakech, a clearing house for the camel caravans. Shortly, the blue shadow of the Atlas Mountains crept upon the horizon and the desert began. The first oasis, the seductive one, was Marrakech. Again, I was back in this exotic and romantic spot. This time I had a glimpse of Andre's house he always so regretted selling in a rash moment. We leaned over a mud wall and there it was in the distance on the edge of the desert set in a garden on the outskirts of Marrakech looking very much like a luxurious old English manor house. It was definitely his house, but alas, no longer his home. Owning a house somewhere always cements an interest in the place.

Library of Congress

From Marrakech the glorious road led across the snow capped great Atlas range and dropped down into the Sous valley. We drove through Tuareg, the land of the wild blue men, to Taroudant,, midway from Marrakech to Agadir, and lunched here at a little hotel hidden behind high walls that had a charm all its own. It was set in a garden where we could hear the tingling of the ever present fountain in the old Moorish tiled courtyard. The blue men are still a mystery and distinct from all others in Africa. The women's faces are tattooed with blue arabesques and their eyes outlined with kohl. In the world of the blue men, the women had the upper hand. They danced a weird kind of dance. The women putting fingers to lips uttered shrilled cries that sound like "youuuuuuu youuuuuuu," a strange birdlike howling noise they always produced to celebrate great occasions.

Agadir resembled more of a California resort having the same latitude as San Diego than most of the other Moroccan cities I had seen. It had a magnificent white sandy beach and the swimming here was safe. Many Atlantic beaches are not. When we were there, it was the winter coastal resort of Morocco, a perfect place to relax and starting point for excursions into the deep south of Morocco. But on leap year day in 1960, Agadir was tragically, completely destroyed by an earthquake.

We drove on to Mogador another seaside resort where all of the buildings were painted white with a beautiful deep blue trim on shutters and doors, the symbolic color the Arabs believe keep away evil spirits. Then back to Marrakech for the night at the marvelous Mamauina. I arose with the sun the next morning to take an early flight for Tangier in order to be back at work on Monday, for I WAS working, I wasn't traveling.

When I returned to the legation I was greeted with the good news that I had received a promotion, an increase in salary, an outcome of the survey group's visit in July. I was still aglow with the news when Andre took me to luncheon at M. George Clinchant's, who had an apartment in my building. He was elderly and old worldish with a great Gaelic wit and had formerly been a French ambassador. The other guests were his very good friend Madame Fabvrer who still showed the elegance of her earlier years, and her tall

Library of Congress

handsome bachelor son who lived in the building, Charles. Mr. and Mrs. Kneff, the genial Belgian proprietor of our building was also there.

George McGill had also invited me for luncheon that day as he was entertaining the well-known newspaper man, O'Rourke. It would have been interesting to have met him and sorry not to have been able to go.

On November 20, I received a letter from my family enclosing a Christmas check with message to take a trip somewhere over the holidays. With the check in hand I think where to go. I decide to leave on a Wednesday morning by train for Meknes. From there interesting trips could be taken to Moulay Idriss, an old Moorish city built in memory of the saint where no European is allowed to stay the night. And not far from here was another walled city, Volubilis, where there were some interesting Roman ruins. The next day planned to motor to Ifrane, a picturesque mountain resort for winter sports. The following day to Fez where the best tooled leather can be had. I hoped to be back on Monday the 27th. By then I felt I would have seen most of Morocco.

In Meknes, which is almost in the center of Morocco, I stayed at the Transatlantic, a French hotel on a hill with a superb view of the Arab town. That afternoon took a "couchie" (which is horse and carriage) to see the town. Meknes is a city of Moulay Ismail for whom many streets and boulevards in Morocco are named. Like most Moorish sultans he had an absolute passion for building. A great admirer of Louis XIV, his greatest ambition was to create an African Versailles. With this object in view, Roman remains at Volubilis were dragged to the capital and thousands of Christian slaves worked incessantly to add court to court and pavilion to pavilion. But now it was reduced to massive and imposing ruins. Only the palatial remnants of this 18th century palace can be seen, once the ambition of a Moorish potentate who died in 1727. What is better preserved is Bab El Mansour, one of the most beautiful 18th century gates in Morocco. The city is proud of a large ostrich farm where these birds have been raised for centuries. Some were actually

Library of Congress

sent to Louis XIV by the sultan on the occasion of modestly demanding the hand of the French princess. But apparently the ostriches only amused the ladies of the court.

The next day I had an early start by car for the Roman city Volubilis and the Islamic city of Moulay Idriss, the greatest architectural dramas which lie side by side between Meknes and Fez. Volubilis means morning glory. In 217 AD it was a city of 15 thousand with houses of beautiful mosaic floors, columned Paris styles and had a triumphant arch built in honor of Caliph Iacalla, but today it rises from a sea of flowers and storks' nests on the broken pediments. In contrast to Volubilis, the sainted city of Moulay Idriss gleamed with green tiled mosques and is second only to Mecca in Islamic sanctity and forbidden to non-Muslims except for brief visits when an official guide leads visitors through the maze of century old streets and requires a good bit of donkey dodging. People here are, as in all Morocco, were timid, smiling and polite. It was sweet to hear the little henna haired girls and long robed Arab boys greet strangers with "Bonjour Madame."

Then Andre arrived to spend Christmas with me. We first went to have some of Meknes's famous meringues and later walked through a lovely old Moorish garden. The following day we took a car to Fez, just an hour's drive away. The leather work was exceptionally fine here so I had a large white leather frame made for a photo of my deceased brother-in-law. On the 24th we drove up to Ifrane where we expected to find snow, but though they had it the day before, it had melted by the time we got there. Instead it pelted rain. I had planned on getting an arm full of holly but was content to be given a few sprigs by the keeper of the inn where we lunched. We celebrated Christmas with a delicious dinner in that romantic hotel of exquisite blue and green tiles, the Palais Jamai. On Sunday I returned by train to Tangier so grateful for the generous check my family had been so dear and thoughtful to send me which enabled me to have such a memorable Christmas holiday.

Just about this time a very pleasant person, Virginia Robinson, came to share my desk. She had been traveling for over a year in fascinating places doing a special assignment for

Library of Congress

the Department in the way of map collecting. From here she was going to Timbuktu where there was no hotel so she stays in the hospital.

On April 1 we all had to fill in transfer cards. I didn't know at what post I would rather be assigned, so I just put down first choice Tangier, second Florence, third Istanbul. Transfers are usual made at the time of home leave and one is usually on tender hooks wondering where the next post will be. In fact, a propos of this, a clever poem written by a secretary serving at the consulate at Adana, Turkey who wished to remain anonymous:

Oh, where in the world am I going next, where?

Oh, where in the world am I going?

Oh, where in the world will I be

when the years at the middle?

Oh, answer this riddle.

Oh, where in the world will I be?

Am I going to London or Ghana?

Am I going to Ouagadougou?

Am I going to Spain where it rains on the plain?

Will my language be Czech or Urdu?

Will I bask in the sun in December,

Wear long johns in June and July?

Library of Congress

Will I swim in the Niger, play tag with a

tiger or maybe fly kites with a Thai?

And will I wear mumus or saris or fur lined parkas and boots?

Will I cook with fish and rice or curries and spice

or will I chew beetlenut roots?

Oh, where in the world am I going

When I leave fair Adana behind?

When I bid thee goodbye, Oh where will I fly?

Please, you are driving me out of my mine.

Maggie Freed is being transferred to Ankara, Turkey. Nancy Howard may be transferred to Nairobi as someone in the Department wrote to ask if she would object going there. Probably because the Stookeys had written wild letters about hyenas coming up to their front door, being eaten alive by white ants and hearing the cries of the wild animals at night.

I was perfectly delighted one day when a letter came from Clay Merrill who had launched me in the Foreign Service by giving me a job in consulate Bermuda for which I have been eternally gratefully, saying that he had been transferred to Gibraltar and expected to be there with his wife, Jane, in late June.

Andre had brought so many of his French friends to my apartment that one evening he came with Madame Yvonne St. Leger and introduced her as the only French woman he had ever known with any charm. She was not only charming, but as delicate and lovely

Library of Congress

as the pink rose bud she wore in the lapel of her chic grey suit. I just stood at the door in mute admiration. Our friendship which continued until the day of her death many years later stemmed from that very first moment.

The daily rounds of duty that by now had become routine continued at the office. Then, one day news circulated that the legation plane was going to Rome on June 10th. These occasional trips were one of the fringe benefits of being posted in Tangier and I was not one to ignore the opportunity whenever it presented itself. Who was it said, "Three things come not back to man or woman—A sped arrow, a spoken word and a lost opportunity" ?

As soon as the plane landed at Rome, I dashed up to Florence. As many do, I dearly love Florence. To those fortunate enough to have traveled in foreign countries there is an ever present lively nostalgia to revisit beloved places. In this city of Dante and Giotto I began to seek out my old haunts. I walked along the lazy Lung Arno and strolled across the Ponte Vecchio browsing in tiny jewelry shops that flanked both sides of this picturesque bridge, the oldest in Florence. Then dropped into the Grand Hotel and it looked even grander than when my sister and I stayed there several years ago. Florentines are proud that Via Tornabuoni is acknowledged to be one of the greatest shopping thoroughfares in the world. It was on that street that I found my favorite pension, Tornabuoni Beacci, an old fashion establishment where one can stay in passed grandeur very inexpensively. On this street is the Palazzo Strozzi that Byron said was the greatest sight in Florence. But for me, the greatest sight in Florence was the Duomo Campanile and Baptistery all in a group in Piazza del Duomo. The Duomo is artfully fashioned from stripes of black and white marble. At the dawn of the new architectural era, 1400, the Giotto Campanile is still a miracle of beauty after six centuries of existence. The perfect grace of its proportions and the loveliness of its graceried windows make it marvelously light and elegant. When Giotto died in 1337 he was buried in the church at a corner nearest his Campanile. His baptistery is the most conspicuous monument of any age because of its celebrated bronze doors which occupied Ghiberti for 27 years. Each represents various events from the Old Testament. It was Michelangelo who it is said stood in silence for hours regarding every

Library of Congress

detail of this marvel in bronze. Then walking away as if in a trance said, "It is worthy to be called the Gate to Paradise."

After absorbing all of this beauty I sat down at an outdoor cafe and sipped a cool drink while watching that leisurely old world go by. The next morning I was up early to take the 8:25 bus back to Rome via Siena where we stopped for several hours. Although much too much to see in that brief time, fortunately there was a very informative American woman on the bus, a Miss Pickney, from Charlestown, Virginia, who had lived there for a while and kindly took me at once to see the most important places. On the ancient gate Porta Camalin was a welcome written in Latin legend, "Siena opens her heart still wider to thee." Siena has preserved its medieval character to a greater extent than most other places in Italy. Strange to say as their fortunes fell, the arts flourished to unimaginable heights. Her famous school of painting was renowned for individuality. The Sienese demanded of their painters art that was the handmaid of religion. The first great name in Sienese art was Duccio who painted with religious ecstasy. His subjects were full of tender beauty and sentiment. It was enough just to feast my eyes on these in the short time I was there.

As we drove along the countryside seemed so green, restful and peaceful. The Italians have a sense of the picturesque and the dramatic, always perching their towns on top of a mountain which gives a beautiful silhouette to the countryside. We stopped briefly at a little hotel, the Milano, in the tiny village of Aquapied where Princess Margaret had stayed and signed her name, which they had framed—Margaret, Princess of Great Britain and Ireland—and dated just to the month we were there.

We arrived in Rome about 8:00pm and I was taken to the Hassler Hotel perched at the top of the Spanish Steps. There I had a lovely room and bath for about \$4. As the shops were beginning to close, I rushed out to make a few purchases and to look up Nancy Howard and Margaret Avent at their hotel, the Majestic where they stayed for about a \$1.75 and had excellent service. We went along to the Cafe Gleco, which I had read about in "Vogue"

Library of Congress

and where all the artists gathered. It certainly did have atmosphere. A long haired artist was writing at a nearby table and frantically picking his teeth at the same time.

We decided to go to a little bistro around the corner for pizzas and then parted at the Hassler. The hotel was to call me at 7:00 the next morning but forgot and I was still sound asleep at 8:00. So I flew around to get ready and left without breakfast as we were to take off at 9:30. I was certainly glad when coffee was served on the plane. The French say coffee should be black as night, strong as love and hot as hell. Just what I needed! Everyone compared notes on what they had done. Nancy...

The others spent their time trying out all the Italian dishes in various restaurants and dancing. I much preferred the way I spent my time, but made it more eager now to return. There is such a wealth of art and beauty there to absorb. We were delayed at Algiers with a bit of engine trouble, but arrived in Tangier about 6:00pm.

The moment I walked into my apartment I knew Andre was back in Tangier, for in a vase were red carnations he often sent with a message asking me to dine with him that evening at the Minsa. He was very enthusiastic about a place he had discovered on the coast of Spain, Marbella. It was being developed by Prince Alfonso de Hohenlohe and managed by Count Rudolph von Schoenburg. He gave them some excellent suggestions in the beginning which they very much appreciated and in turn were most kind to him when he finally spent his declining years there. Every year in May I paid him a little visit.

Mr. Seate, our administrative officer, telephoned me to ask if I could take off at 7:00 the next morning for Port Lyautey, the naval base about two hours from here where we have medical examinations. But as my Spanish visa had expired I was unable to go. However, I went with a group later. The staff is obliged to go there regularly, a rather strict examination. The commissary and PX are also there so we can make some purchases before returning.

Library of Congress

One afternoon Margaret Avent and I were invited to tea at the home of the Duke of Trevare and his sister. We sat in a conservatory type room surrounded by tall, 19th century plants, pleasantly chatting over tea in an old world ambiance. It was getting really warm now. On these summer Sundays, Andre and I with picnic lunch would be up in the hills walking or down at the beach swimming.

On July 8, 1949, an airgram from the Department arrived assigning new appointment Mary G. Kenney as advance replacement for Virginia Biddle who will be transferred via US for statutory leave shortly after obtaining eligibility. At last I could begin to make definite plans for home leave. I wrote to my sister hoping she could come for a visit before I left. A few days later the Plitts returned from their leave in the States and the moment I saw them, Mrs. Plitt exclaimed, "Your sweet sister entertained us in your lovely apartment in Georgetown and plans to come out." Then Mr. Plitt added, "I told her to get her passport ready." " Anyway," he smiled and said, "I hope they don't transfer you." A tactful diplomatic remarks, perhaps, but characteristic of his kind feelings for others.

The entire staff of the legation were again invited by Mr. Emose, the British consul, to the annual party and bull fight in Ceuta. This time it was rumored that the only woman bullfighter in the world may be there, so it should be immensely exciting. At last I was given permission to take the diplomatic pouch to Gibraltar. One of the officers had been going over with it every other week and some time ago I asked if I could take it because I was anxious to see the Merrills. But the powers to be were not certain if a female could act as a courier. I was quite excited about the little mission and looking forward to seeing my dear friends the Merrills recently transferred there. The plane would take off about 8:00 in the morning and bring me back about 7:00 in the evening. After mission completed I could poke around shops. There are practically no sidewalks there so pedestrians take to the road and stroll along main street the city's principal thoroughfare. Smiling Lebanese and Indian silk merchants lounge outside their long, narrow shops enticing you to come in. Gibraltar is like a Western world Hong Kong. The merchandise is virtually free of all duty

Library of Congress

and taxes. A pleasant British colony atmosphere is found everywhere. Spain claims Gib and wants it returned, but Britain has emphasized it will not transfer sovereignty over it without the consent of its 30,000 people.

It was August 11 that I flew over with the pouch and had a most delightful day. Both Mr. and Mrs. Merrill greeted me with open arms and hugs and kisses. We lunched at the Yacht Club and reminisced about Bermuda and brought me up to date on all the latest news. Mrs. Merrill had set her enormous energy to renovating the official residence there from top to bottom. She had ordered bamboo furniture and the drawing room was to be all in white. It sounded cool and lovely, and I knew with her taste it would be perfectly decorated. They turned their car and chauffeur over to me for the afternoon, then walked all the way out to the plane where we embraced again and looked forward to seeing each other in Tangier. Mrs. Merrill planned to come over to order some rugs.

When I returned to Tangier I received a letter from my sister telling me of the very pleasant trip she had on the Presidential yacht with the Trumans and had the honor of sitting between the President and Dean Acheson at luncheon.

Andre planed to leave end of August for the Balearic islands. He wanted to get to Majorca before the Fomentur Hotel closed and then he was going to the south of France and said he would meet my sister in Paris.

My replacement, Mary Kenney, arrived the end of August. I met her with a bouquet of flowers at her hotel, the Rif, and began to show her the files shortly after. She displayed an enormous amount of self-assurance and rode full gallop into her new assignment. One day I was invited for lunch with Baron Gresigny and his wife. She had been in a haute couture and so very kindly gave me some notes of introduction to some of the fashion houses in Paris.

I had waited so long for my travel orders I began to think they had been lost in the tangle of red tape. Then one day the long looked for official news arrived—Tangier, Pasadena,

Library of Congress

California via the Department. Not returning Tangier. Should loose pack effects. Webb. When the telegram came to me for filing, Mr. Plitt had written a note on it—sorry to see you go—which made my eyes mist with tears because I think he meant it. My sister Mildred came shortly after for a brief visit and joined me on my return to the States. The night she arrived we had dinner at the Parade. It was a garden/restaurant bar operated by two genial Americans, Jay Hazelwood and Bill Chase, and had become the popular rendezvous of the foreign colony. We chatted like magpies over the delicious seafood specialty.

Then the days became crowded with various activities. The Merrills invited us over to Gib one day and it was such fun having a picnic lunch with them in a cork forest. We were also interested in the progress Mrs. Merrill had made decorating the residence, as Mildred too had a flare in that direction. While I dismantled my apartment and Argeti came to pack up, Mildred took a trip to Fez and Marrakech bringing back treasures even long time residents had never seen before. But then she always did have an eye for the unusual and would use them in the most intriguing way in her apartment.

A hundred invitations were sent out for a cocktail party I was having which was sort of a “hail Mildred, farewell Virginia” affair. A few days before the party I heard Mildred going into peals of laughter. When I went to see why, she was leaning over the window watching a little donkey deliver all the liquor that it had carried on its back. A usual sight in Tangier, but not in Washington, DC.

There appeared this account in the Tangier Gazette, dated October 14, 1949. “The American Minister, Mr. Edwin A. Plitt and Mr. Bolard Moore, American Consul and his wife, were amongst the 100 guests that thronged the lovely apartment of Mrs. Virginia Hamill Biddle on Sunday evening last. Mrs. Biddle is shortly leaving to return to Washington, DC. Her masses of friends and American consulate colleagues will miss Virginia who has resided here for 2 and a half years and, so she says, has been very happy. Good luck to you Mrs. Biddle, and thank you for the lovely party.”

Library of Congress

The last night we spent at the Minsa Hotel. When my devoted and faithful fatmah came to bid me goodbye, we both wept. Her little veil was damp with tears when we parted. It had always been hard for me to break the threads that attached my heart to such people.

Mildred and I flew to Paris and stayed a few days at the Louiemont. It was good to see Andre again and we enjoyed lunching with him at Druonce a favorite place for the intelligentsia of Paris. Then, for some strange reason, we decided to go to Holland, an unwise choice at this time of year. It was bitterly cold and so windy we were nearly blown off the Island of Volendam into the canal. But we liked Amsterdam and the trips on the canal in those wonderfully wide sightseeing boats. In Brussels we stayed at the Metropole where I particularly enjoyed the beautiful music played during dinner. Brugge, "the bridge" in Flemish, was enchanting with the white swans floating on the canal, lined with stately 15th century patrician homes and dominated by the great belfry. Gent, so near, was the gothic city of mellowed brick towers, spires and churches and abbeys, castles and convents. In Delft I bought some lovely old blue delft tiles.

On November 7, I sailed from the British port of Southampton in the America for the States. Mildred flew home as she held a return plane ticket. When I reported to the Department for my next assignment, I was offered either London or Paris. Having the climate upper most in my thoughts, I chose Paris. But that proved ironic for it rained as much there as it did in London. But to quote Edna St. Vincent Millay, "How shall I know unless I go to Cairo or Cathay whether or not this blessed spot is blessed in every way?"

While in Washington, a long time friend, Betty Purdy, asked me to stay a few days with her. She was very social and she and her husband took me to several cocktail parties. At one I had the pleasure of meeting the Duchess of Windsor's well loved Aunt Bessie, Mrs. D. Buchanan Mellinman. She was very friendly and we chatted together most amicably for quite a while. Then Betty gave a beautiful party. The Times Herald, Washington, DC, December 8, 1949, had a nice account of it.

Library of Congress

“Mr. and Mrs. James Howard Purdy, Jr. were hosts at a cocktail/buffet supper at their home last evening. The Purdy's gay gathering was in honor of Mrs. Paul Healey and Mrs. Hamill Biddle, both Washington visitors. Among the guests was George Livingston Williams. Both honored guests are also Paris-minded for a while.

Mrs. Healey often sojourns there and Mrs. Biddle will sail for La Belle France on January 23. The latter returned last week from 2 years at the US legation in Tangier, Morocco and her next assignment is to be the American embassy in Paris. Widely traveled in the orient as well as Europe, blue-eyed Mrs. Biddle went with the State Department in 1946 and finds it fascinating. Prior to going to Tangier she was at the consulate in Hamilton, Bermuda.”

Then my sister and I went out to California to spend the holidays with my father and brother, Harold. We had such a happy reunion, and perhaps it was well that we did not all realize then that it would be the last Christmas the four of us would ever be together.

After we returned to Washington, Mrs. Truman invited Mildred and me to have tea with her at Blair House, just the three of us. At this time the White House was undergoing extensive restoration, so the Trumans moved across the street to the official residence for visitors, and stayed there until November, 1948 to March, 1952. Quite apart from its present use, it has historical significance. We had a pleasant little visit over tea with Mrs. Truman and as we were standing by the door saying goodbye she asked me how I was going to Paris. I replied that I had been booked on the Ile de France and so happy to be given passage in that elegant French liner. But she quickly said, “Oh, I just heard she is not sailing.” My heart sank with such sudden disappointment that I didn't even hear her if she did say the reason why.

When we reached my sister's apartment the telephone was ringing. It was the Department of State calling. The voice confirmed just what Mrs. Truman had said only five minutes before and asked, “Now, would you like to fly or to take the next available ship, the George

Library of Congress

Washington?" As I was already packed for steamer travel and preferred sea voyages, I immediately said, "I will take the George Washington." What a mistake that was. I, of course, could not know until I was aboard that she was still in the striped condition of a transport. No luxurious lounges or cabins and no bells in the cabin. Meals were served at long tables as in an army mess. I remember three others sharing my cabin. One woman must have been a returning war refugee for she was filling a suitcase full of oranges she brought from the dining room after every meal. There was such a gale blowing when we were to dock the ship rammed into the pier and split a hole in her side. No one I know of was injured, but I feared the publicity of the accident in the United States press would worry my family. It had been a melancholy trip and a miserable crossing. It was not an enjoyable experience. But I suppose life is not always meant to be enjoyed but sometimes endured.

It was February when I arrived in Paris, grey, damp and drizzly. My room at the Louiemont, where reservations were made for me, was cold, but I was reluctant to move because there was something about the shabby charm of the place that appealed to me. I liked the friendly staff, the cherry chambermaid, Marie Louise, and the little chubby cherub faced, beribboned war veteran who ran the lift so dexterously with his one arm, and even the sad eyed but obliging concierge. And it was so convenient to the embassy.

At first I was temporarily assigned to USIS, United States Information Service, known in State Department jargon as the long arm of the embassy, where my immediate supervisor was Anita Lauve. The offices were then in the annex. It was just a short stroll up the Champs Elysees from our embassy and only cobblestones away from the Elysees Palace and the British embassy. An American Baroness Pontalba from Louisiana, then a French colony, had it built in 1842 and it was called the Porta La Belle Hotel. Her architect, Ludwig Visconti also constructed Napoleon's Tomb. In 1876 Edmond de Rothschild bought the house and added a glass canopy which was considered the dernier cry of architectural fashion at that time. He died in 1934 when his son, Maurice, moved in, but only shortly. During the Nazi occupation it housed the Luftwaffe Club, and after the Liberation, the

Library of Congress

British Forces Club until 1948 when it was bought by our United States government. The offices retained a certain by-gone grandeur which I like. But I was not to be there long.

My assignment was to be in charge of the files under Miss Agnes Snyder in the passport division of the consular section of the embassy. Miss Snyder, who had once studied to be an opera singer, was a handsome woman with aquiline features and always beautifully coiffed grayish white, and sometimes blue, hair. She was a vibrant and vivid person no one ever forgot, and well known for being a hard taskmaster and the perfect classroom was the passport section. But she often displayed a very generous nature, especially at Christmas giving us all lovely little treasures found in the flea market she haunted on holidays.

In due time the note of introduction, South Trimble, Jr., my sister's brother-in-law, had given me was presented to his friend, David Bruce, who was then ambassador at the embassy. Within a few days an invitation was received to a reception at the embassy's residence, then at No. 2 Place Iena. As the Bruces were both collectors, the residence was beautifully furnished with choice pieces arranged with distinction. David Kirkpatrick Este Bruce was tall, silvered haired and distinguished. He greeted me graciously and asked about South. I replied that he was indeed very well. We both agreed what a highly regarded and fine man he was, especially for his fine legal matter, so much so that all who knew him, even those who did not, were stunned and shocked when he became an innocent victim of the violent crime wave in Washington on New Year's Eve in 1974. When I mentioned to the ambassador how pleased I was to be assigned to the embassy he smiled and in his soft southern accent said, "Well, just let me know if anything goes wrong." He had a reputation of always being very considerate of his staff. Many of his friends compared him to Thomas Jefferson, one of his own heroes. His wide knowledge ranged from fine wines to 18th century antiques to history and international politics. The man most young diplomats cared to resemble. He became one of the most outstanding diplomats of our country. And as everyone knows, the only one who eventually ever handled the so-called triple crown to the prestige posts of France, Germany and Great

Library of Congress

Britain. His wife, Evangeline Bruce, was tall, slender, willowy and chic. She was dressed in black that evening with a long rope of pearls tied in a knot. She had a delicate oval face, amber eyes, a cloud of luxurious chestnut hair. Everyone was struck by her beauty. When a child in China where her father was a Foreign Service officer in Peking, she could have been one of the beauties of the tale of the Ganges. She was erudite and elegant and so punctilious that her friends said they felt her thank you notes were written as she drove away from their functions in the car.

Peeking out from under the buffet table were their lovable floppy eared and sole eyed spaniels who played an enormous part in their lives. Their children, Sasha and David, appeared with their nanny, meticulously dressed in French and English clothes. Looking then at that lovely little child, Sasha, who but God would know that while still in her twenties she would chose to end her own earthly life in 1976. Tish Baldrige, the social secretary to Mrs. Bruce was here and there introducing and chatting with guests. It had been a pleasant occasion and I enjoyed myself very much.

Jacque de Marquet. a French born, naturalized American, to whom the Duke de Richelieu had given me a note when I was assigned to Tangier, had just returned to Paris from his lecture tour in Belgium and invited me to a concert one Sunday afternoon. It was held in a small, two-hundred year old concert hall where our seats were just above where Napoleon sat. Chopin and Liszt used to play here and the acoustics were said to be marvelous. Before M. de Marquet returned to Tangier, we went out to Neuilly for lunch and again for dinner. He was very fond of Neuilly.

At long last my effects arrived. They had presumably been held up by strikes. Argeti who packed them in Tangier was so concerned he wanted me to let him know at once and in what condition they were. So I spent my weekend unpacking and getting settled. Of the apartments I had seen, none seemed satisfactory. Strikes occurred frequently, especially in winter, to complicate the transportation situation. As the Louiemont was just behind the embassy, I could be at my desk in five minutes without being confronted with the

Library of Congress

problem. Not being skillful with the skillet, I was not eager for domesticity. In every corner of Paris there were tucked away numerous small restaurants which were fun to explore. Eventually I joined a club on Rue du Faubourg Saint Honor# where I frequently had meals. I found it a pleasant place to entertain friends. Or there was always the American embassy restaurant to go to when funds were low. Therefore, I decided to stay at the Louiemont. When arranged with a few pieces of my furniture, my small coca cola ice box tucked under a dressing table in the bathroom, became a boom. Antoine from the valet would bring up a hunk of ice for it about twice a week and in the hot weather and the bedroom became a little salon. I kept cool drinks and tin things in the ice box and planted some drawf ivy to grow over the old wrought iron balustrade and I was quite happy there for my entire duty in Paris, for four years.

Margaret McCollough, who I had known in Bermuda, invited me to visit her at Monte Carlo over the Easter holidays. I was to stay at her hotel, the Monte Carlo Palace and we were to take an excursion from there to Nice, Cannes and ancient Aires. I was very much looking forward to the trip and the pleasure of seeing her again. Margaret and her friend, Gladys von Hessenstein, met me upon arrival which happened to be my birthday, April 5. My room looked out over a lovely park with the famous casino beyond and had been made gay with fruit, flowers and birthday gifts. After lunch we took a bus to Nice which has the supreme advantage of being able to go anywhere from it by any route on 101 agreeable and delightful excursions. At Cannes I was interested to learn it had been discovered by an Englishman, Lord Erdman, who gave his name to a carriage. He fell in love with the place, lived there for 30 years and there he sleeps for all eternity.

We arrived back to Monte Carlo in time to quickly change for the champagne dinner I gave to celebrate my birthday. Margaret had tickets for a Monte Carlo ballet afterwards. The next day we drove to Menton, the peaceful town on the border of Italy. Here it seems the curve of the coast is gentler and the colors of the landscape softer than elsewhere. It has

Library of Congress

long been a favorite resort for the English escaping the rigors of winter and Queen Victoria pointed the way.

Another day we drove up into the thyme scented hills behind Monaco to see the impressive trophy of Latrube, the allegorical statues. This memorial intended to endure for all time, was a hundred years afterwards destroyed by wars that raged. Aires was an astonishing little village on a rocky pinnacle rising up to the void. It presented a picture of silent desolation amidst the chaotic mountains. The Prince of Sweden had his home here with his mistress during the war.

On Easter Sunday we went to the Principality of Monaco. A tiny kingdom enclosed by mountains in a theatrical setting. It was like a scene from a Gilbert and Sullivan opera. Moored in a little port below were palatial yachts. A whole forest of masts rose out of the quay. Sentries were like toy soldiers dressed in their colorful uniforms with white and red feathers coming out of shiny helmets glistening in the sun. Flags were flying everywhere for Prince Rainier, the 31st ruler of Monaco with 142 titles, was to have his coronation the following week. Margaret, who had lived there with her husband before the war, knew the Aide to the Prince so was invited to his reception. The event of 1956 was his marriage to Grace Kelly, one of the most glittering stars in the Hollywood firmament. The general atmosphere of Monte Carlo was one of great refinement and elegance. It is considered the neatest and cleanest city in Europe and appealed to me more than any other place on the Riviera. It was pleasant to have a lazy aperitif on the flowery terrace of the casino, listen to the music and recall the days when foreign visitors wore crown jewels instead of cameras.

The next morning I rose at 5:00 to catch an early train back to Paris. Through sleepy eyes I watched through the window the Province landscape unfolding. The countryside was a blaze with apple blossoms in full bloom and there were lovely stretches of pine forests and groves of twisted, silver gray olive trees that Renoir loved to paint. Perched on the heights in the distance were visages of old forts and crumbling ramparts. I dozed, and when I woke it was midnight and we were in Paris. It had been a glorious Easter and a very happy

Library of Congress

birthday with delightful friends who had done so much to give me an unforgettable glimpse of the French Riviera.

When I was back at my desk in the embassy, shortly after this trip, a cousin of my brother-in-law dropped in to see me, General Edgar Hume. His name had been legend in the family for a long time. One of his chief claims to fame was the fact that he had heroically rescued the famous works of art in Italy and hid them during the war. In our brief chat I mentioned how much Mildred enjoyed going to President Truman's inaugural ball with him and how much I had enjoyed reading his article on Italy in the *National Geographic*. And he informed me that he was having another article in the same magazine. That night he left for Japan and by coincidence via Monte Carlo.

Jacqueline Cramer, my Swiss friend, suddenly appeared in Paris with her daughter one day. Over a drink at the Crillon, she invited me to visit her at her home at Celigny on Lake Geneva when we have a holiday the end of May.

In early May I received a letter from Andre Trealay asking if I would like to join him at Biarritz. He was going there to attend a pony fair. But I sent word that I could not come before my next holiday, the 18th. So he telegraphed that he would wait there until then. He wanted me to see the coast along Biarritz which he said he preferred to the Riviera.

When the date arrived, he met my train at Dax and showed me where the parents of the pony he was giving me were bred. In a pretty meadow under water where some horses were grazing. He, himself, had the slim figure of a fine horseman and rode on horses whose pedigrees were as undoubted as his own. We lunched together in a quiet rustic inn on the regional dishes of the country. The pate was made on the place. He saw the goose killed. I learned a lot about the pate that comes from France and is a luxury item in America. The delicious duck, also from the same place, was a cross between a wild and tame one. This was followed by pound cake topped with strawberries and served with champagne. Voltaire called it a civilizing drink and said it reflected the brilliant soul

Library of Congress

of France. Someone once said that gastronomical dining of the past was one of the few pleasures left in modern life.

After lunch we drove to Bayonne where we entered the Basque country. It

had a wonderful 13th century cathedral. Was the city of the English and French queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine and known for its chocolates, ham and bull fights. Then a little passed Bayonne, was Biarritz. It was the fashionable spa of the 19th century made famous by Empress Eugenie, Queen Victoria and Edward VII, and still retains the baroque atmosphere of the second empire.

After a few miles down the coast, we came to St. Jean de Luz. Here was the true Basque. A fishing village, peaceful, picturesque and languorous that had retained all of its Basque characters, the strange baffling language and simple local pleasures. They had their own cuisine, paella, and their own sports, palota, played by the world's best players including priests. Louis XIV and Marie Theresa of Spain were married here.

An old friend, Robert Gillmore, we affectionately call Gilly, had a villa near and invited us to luncheon. I loved watching the waves constantly breaking over the rocks of the scenic coast line and felt fresh and exhilarated by the sea breeze. Now I could understand why Andre preferred all this to the Riviera.

In a recent edition of the New York Herald, I noticed a photo of Mrs. John Hubbard, nee Helen von Stadt, with whom I had met and became friends with on board a ship to Tahiti. She was being decorated by the French consul in New York with the highest honor of the French government. She had told me that she had been made Commodore, having already received the Legion de Merit, then the rosette. Only one other woman in America received the same honor. It was a tribute for devoting so much to the restoration of Moi Maison. My French friend, Yvonne St. Leger, drove me out there one Saturday afternoon.

Library of Congress

I so enjoyed seeing all Mrs. Hubbard had so generously contributed towards this charming and historical place.

The work at the embassy was becoming terrific. When the war in Korea first started, the newspaper bannered alarming headlines. People were coming each day to inquire what to do. One day, Mrs. Woolf, whom I had met on the Mauritania, came in quite upset. I explained that we had received no instructions from the Department and finally calmed her over lunch at Rumpelmeyer's. For about ten days during this episode I was just quickly having a coke and sandwich at noon and rushing back to the office and staying until 8:00 at night. Fortunately, it all eventually subsided.

On the Fourth of July, the ambassador gave his usual reception in the gardens of the lovely old mansion at 41 Rue du Faubourg Saint Honor#, originally bought for use by the ambassador but now used by USIS. Anyone who could present an American passport could come, so there were masses of people. We were asked not to bother to shake hands with the Bruces as they would have so many hands outside the family to shake, so we didn't. The Converse Hettingers had just been transferred to Paris from Tangier so we went together. A steady stream marched up to shake hands, warmly beam and march to a long buffet table where the food is waiting and enormous trays of alcoholic beverages. Only hats are seen on this occasion as it is too crowded to show off a dress or suit.

Although I was very much enjoying my work at the embassy, it had become exhausting during the hot summer months when so many people come to Paris. A quiet get away from it all holiday in a cool spot was all I wanted at that moment. So over Bastille Day, July 14, weekend, I went to Fontainebleau. As many officers were given training here during the First World War, I thought my brother Harold may have been here. So I wrote him from the grand hotel, the Aigle Noir, where I stayed. Here I am able to enjoy the miraculous and marvelously healing attractions of the country. Robert Lewis Stevenson has left us one of the most moving tributes to Fontainebleau in the English language—"The vigorous forest air, the silence, the wilderness, the tumbled boulders, the great age and dignity, a certain

Library of Congress

grasp the air, the light, the shapes accord in happy harmony” all is very true. He had been one of my favorite writers since childhood. I had grown up with the “Child's Garden of Verses” a dear friend had given me when I was very young. He died in Samoa and wrote his own epithet, now in every anthology of English poetry. Eloquent in his untroubled acceptance of the end of physical life and his ardent faith in the world to come.

My life was different in Paris than Tangier. I was fulfilling myself with other things. I joined the American library and began reading the history of France by Andre Morua, which became my bible. French lessons were resumed twice a week with Madame Marshorn, who also taught at the Sorbonne. We were both delighted one day to discover we had lived in Japan at the same time. As I had been wanting to know more about French art, literature and music the British embassy sent me Andre Michelle, who had taught French literature in French at Harvard. Part of my course in culture endeavor was to go on ventures in the countryside's historic sights with only French speaking people and a French guide. There was a vast difference between a tourist staying in a Ritz Hotel suite and what a young person who lives there sees of that same country. The two perspectives are totally different. To know the language, the customs, the habits, to seek out the hidden spots and to taste the simple pleasure of local life is to come to love a country. Above all it means understanding the people and true familiarity with a foreign country and its people in such a precious personal and emotional experience one carries it deep in the heart all through life. One of the advantages of the Foreign Service is that one remains long enough at each post to acquire a more thorough knowledge than a visitor can.

One of the most ingrained French habits is holiday en mass in August. They virtually close down their country for a month in a single minded effort to get away from it all. If the Parisian who stays behind locks himself out of his house on August 1, chances are he will not be able to get back in until September. And locksmiths are not the only absent tradesmen. But for me, this was the best time to enjoy Paris when one could really feel the heartbeat of the city. Nothing is dead here, least of all the past which forms an integral part of the present. On Sundays, Andre Trealay was showing me something of his Paris

Library of Congress

and the surrounding country. Being with Andre was a liberal education. He told me so much that enhanced my appreciation. One Sunday we followed the narrow streets up to Montmartre, the once artistic quarter where young Utrillo and Picasso and so many other painters and poets lived and created. From here was a breathtaking view over the whole of Paris. Another Sunday, to admire the infinite and beautiful detail of Gothic architecture of the famous religious edifice, Notre Dame. They say one should really see it first from a small point coming under the Pont De La Tournelle or from this bridge early in the morning when there is a direct light on the flying buttresses or late in the dying day when it is so illuminated against a flaming sunset. Then we wandered around the La Cite, the oldest quarter in Paris, founded before the Christians and retaining much of its old charm.

A Sunday was spent at Chantilly, famed for its chateau, forests and great stables. There was so much to admire in the museum of this chateau that it could be visited and revisited. I lingered longest over the superb illuminations of the world famous book known as the Duc de Berry. Afterwards roamed through the forest. Andre loved to walk and so did I.

The next Sunday we went to Compiègne which evoked memories of Bonaparte. Napoleon met Marie Louise here in 1810 and chose it as a residence after his second marriage. It enjoyed its most brilliant days during the second empire and its royal residence is more ancient than any other. Louis XVI, when Dauphin, came here in 1770 to meet his fiancée and bride, Marie Antoinette of Austria. The most visited part of the forest is the Armistice clearing where there is a monument commemorating the signing of the armistice on November 11, 1918.

On September 6, 1950, I wrote home: My ponies have arrived. Offspring of the ponies Andre had shown me near Dax where they had been bred. They were being kept in a small m#nagerie near the Bois by M. Gager, who at one time had been in charge of Cote's stable. It proved to be easier to find a place for ponies in Paris than myself. They were a handsome pair. Half brothers and so well matched. One had a list and one had a star on his forehead. Both had a pair of white socks and their tails were cropped which made them

Library of Congress

look very smart. I called them Fussy and Frisky, appropriate names, I thought because each one was just that. Gager was training them and giving me driving lessons in French. He spoke no English, so obviously I had language lessons as well. Although I was learning to handle the reins properly, I never could learn to roll my “r's” convincingly. The two seated trap was yellow and black. On the harness over the leather shades of the horses eyes in little brass letters were my initials, VHB. The equipage was terribly chic.

Every Saturday and Sunday morning at 11:00, I was driving along the quiet roads of the Bois. It was great fun. Eventually when I gained more confidence and became more proficient in handling the ponies, the groom, Albert, accompanied me. He was an endearing little old man, actually fitted into this small trap more comfortably than Gager who with ruddy red cheeks from his native Normandy was rather rotund and robust, but always cheery and chatty. This rare recreation was one of my greatest pleasures in Paris.

On one Saturday when I went driving, I noticed all of the buildings and buses along the Champs Elysees had the familiar Moroccan flag flying in honor of the visit of the Sultan. All the traffic was stopped to allow his grand entourage to pass as he was going out to Bagatelle to stay with his son, Mouli Hassem, his official visit over. Also from Morocco one day came Bill Chase, the tall, good looking chap who with another American, Jay Hazelwood, ran the Paradise, a rendezvous for every one in Tangier. It was like a ray of sunshine to see him and hear all the news from my former post. He said Jay would be going to Egypt with Countess LeFay, she takes him everywhere.

One evening I invited my French friend, Yvonne St. Leger, to Pruniers for dinner. It had become my favorite for seafood. Afterward I had tickets booked a week in advance, it was so popular, to hear Maurice Chevalier. I had always adored him. Now 62, but like an ageless aperitif, light and zestful with the same magnetic smile. He had a love of life and romance. “Louise” was the only song he sang in English and his mangled English became more of his charm. The day of his death—he was buried January 5, 1972—seemed a little less gay because he was gone. He was more than an addition to the theater, he was an

Library of Congress

addition to life. When I was describing his performance to Gager in French on my drive through the Bois the next morning, he said he knew him quite well. In fact Chevalier had given him his photograph.

About mid-October, Miss Synder, my supervisor in the passport section sailed for home leave on the America with her great friend, Miss Shipley, then head of the Passport Division in the State Department. She would not be back until after Christmas so she left us all her usual lovely little gifts. The news of the attempted assassination of President Truman at Blair House which reached me in early November, was a terrible shock but so great that he escaped.

Mario Sinwa, who lived in Marrakech, I met for tea one Sunday afternoon at the George Cinque, always gay with Americans. She wanted me to take her to lunch at the Marshall Plan cafeteria. It was very simple, but everything American interested her. It was just across the street from Patue and where a woman I knew there, Odette, said she couldn't find an inexpensive place in the neighborhood for lunch. I suggest that we go there and she loved it too.

Then we went to the Follies Bergeres together one evening. Always a spectacle. Exquisite sets and nudes parading around with gorgeous accessories. The real bit of the entire show was the three Peters sisters, enormous colored girls appearing in costumes which accentuated their enormity. Their performance dressed in ballet skirts on a trapeze and again in toreador pants fighting a bull and finally in the voluminous djellabas the Arabs wear, was hilarious. They did a perfect takeoff of Maurice Chevalier with his usual rakish straw hat singing, "Savoir, savoir, savoir." That was wildly applauded.

The Countess Dabars, who arranged parties and receptions at USIS, invited me to her home for cocktails one Sunday afternoon. She said she would like me to meet some of her French friends and relatives who had homes in the country. I thought it was very kind of her. She was of Japanese origin and like many women of her race gentle and refined and

Library of Congress

elegant in her simplicity, pale and fragile as a flower. In mutual admiration of her oriental country gave me an immediate rapport and we became very fond of each other.

Christmas was approaching and I had some accumulated leave to take. Yvonne St. Leger was going to her daughter in Tunis and wanted me to join her. Then Mr. Davies, the old padre in Tangier who had been on a brief holiday in Paris, invited me to spend Christmas in England where he was now living with his married daughter, whose husband was with the British government in Lagos. A telegram came followed by a note from Sheila Green who I had known in Bermuda and was also back in England and asked me to come there saying it would be just like Bermuda all over again where we had such a happy time together. I more than appreciated these kind friends thinking of me at this special time, but I really wanted just a rest somewhere in the sun. Our consul in Tenerife, the Canary Islands, wrote it had a delightful climate and one could swim at Christmas and it was very quiet, just what I wanted. But, alas, all my efforts to get there were in vain. I did manage to get as far as Madrid but the planes were all booked and though I went to the airport and waited in the pouring rain for a last minute cancellation, no luck. Then I decided to go to Malaga where my friends the George Palmers were on post. They made reservations for me at the Minermar Hotel and after an all day train ride arrived there at midnight. The next day I drove out to Torremolinos to the Santa Clara Hotel which I had heard was so charming, operated by Mr. and Mrs. Saunders. He was English and she was Danish. They were completely booked, but kindly tucked me in a room for the night. I changed to another the next day. The food was excellent and it had a cozy atmosphere, mostly English guests. Much to my surprise and delight, I found Gilly Gillmore there with his French companion, Madame Dorne. And it was heavenly to find blue skies and bright sun. When Madame Dorne heard I was unable to get to the Canaries where Andre Trealey was vacationing, she exclaimed, "Why you can't leave Andre there alone over Christmas, you must telephone." So I got a telephone call through to him on the 23rd and we finally spoke together on Christmas morning. He said he would join me as soon as he could get reservations, but it was a week before we heard on New Year's Day that he would be

Library of Congress

arriving January 3. Such was the communication and transportation service in Spain in those days.

On Christmas Day the Palmers gave an eggnog party. A lot of the guests at the Santa Clara were invited as they had lived there before finding a house and knew the Saunders well. They asked me to stay on for lunch with their house guests, the Morrisons I had known in Tangier, and the consulate staff, including a courier in for the day who made a priceless remark a propos to making his plane that "the mail must go through, come rain, hail or olive oil." It was a cherry party as we gathered around the Christmas tree with the Palmers' two young children. Then we all drove back to the Santa Clara for the party the Saunders have every Christmas night. The British Consul gave the traditional toast. The New Year's Eve party was equally gay. I was doing the Lambeth walk way into the wee small hours of the morning. After that I slept until noon every day until Andre came on January 3, his birthday. That evening I gave a birthday party for him. There were nine of us, including the Palmers. Champagne and a beautiful birthday cake and all sang happy birthday to him. We were able to have a few walks along the beach together and a drive with Gilly up the Costa del Sol before I had to leave two days later. This time the little Santa Clara Hotel was the only one there and Torremolinos was just a tiny village asleep in the sun on the main road between Malaga and Marbella and La Linsa. But now, like others caught in the touristic boom, it has swept head long to the present and one of the fastest growing resorts in Spain and the charming little Santa Clara is no longer there. And dear George Palmer died in the summer of 1976.

When I returned to the embassy, my desk, of course, was covered with work. Also Christmas cards had accumulated. One from the Duke of Trevare from Tangier asking me to let him know if I ever went to Seville. He would give me a note of introduction to his friends the two DeCasso sisters. I was sorry to hear from the Duchess of Richelieu that her husband had been desperately ill while in Paris last May and had taken him to Geneva where he had been in hospital twice and now home in New York with double pneumonia. A friend of Andre's to whom he had introduced me, Count Robert Dillon was in Paris for a

Library of Congress

few days from his chateau near Toulouse. He was interested in the breeding of my ponies. I took him for a long drive one Sunday. It was getting nippy now so I wore a newspaper around my chest under my heaviest sweater and coat to cut the wind. But regardless of the weather I was always in the Bois with my ponies at 11:00 every Saturday and Sunday morning. They say the Bois is one of the places in the world “en souffler esprit,” where the spirit breathes. It warmed my heart to hear the little children clap their hands with joy when they heard the clip-clop of my ponies coming.

I was very distressed to receive news that my dear brother, Harold, was in hospital with TB. I wrote him that every time I went to the Madeleine for flowers, which was often for no matter how deep the winter it was always spring among those scented stalls, I wished I could be placing them by his bedside and hoped he was faithful to his communions as there was so much power in prayer. Besides my regular communions at 8:30 on Sunday, I tripped around the corner to the little British embassy church on Wednesdays at the same time. These brief devotions helped sustain me all day long at my desk.

Count Dillon invited me to dinner one evening and was very anxious that I see the film, “Gone With The Wind,” with him. Even though I had seen it over ten years ago in Honolulu, I shared his enthusiasm in watching again this romantic epic, probably the most legendary production in Hollywood history. It has remained one of the most popular and successful pictures ever made.

Whenever Dillon came to Paris we often lunched and dined together. I found him quite delightful. Although his English was limited and so was my French, it was no bar to a fluent conversation. He had a good looking serious face and was very courteous and conservative. A country loving man who walked with the erect grace of the aristocracy he represented. He was of Irish origin and came from one of the oldest families of France. He always appeared deeply concerned about something and one evening spoke to me with great earnestness and enthusiasm of his desire to go to South America on a mission for the French government. And he did eventually, to Quito, Ecuador. One of his reasons

Library of Congress

was that he felt that the Russians would be here within a year and he wanted to close his enormous chateau because he said he would never sell it. If the Russians came, he advised me to escape with my ponies to his chateau and said I could be there in ten days. I thanked him for wishing to rescue a damsel in distress, but laughingly said, "I could just see myself with my possessions on the back seat of my pony trap flying over the border like Scarlet O'Hara in "Gone With The Wind."

Mildred had been in Seville then came to Paris for a brief visit before we went to Luxembourg for Easter weekend. Mrs. Truman had given her a note of introduction to Perle Mesta, who was then our minister. Madame Mesta was not there at that time, she was spending her Easter holiday in another part of Europe. However, her colored butler with true southern hospitality had invited us into the residence for a cup of tea. It was then that I saw her fabulous collection of Mason porcelain birds which were perfectly exquisite. She very kindly sent an invitation for my sister to return the following week again. Luxembourg had a fairy-like charm with its cobblestone streets, medieval castles, ruins of fortress walls, watch towers and turrets. During the war the Grand Duchess Charlotte, by will of her people, went to the United States for the duration. When she met President Roosevelt he said to her, "Don't worry my child, I will take you home again." Those words appeared across the face of a special commemorative stamp of Luxembourg printed below the likeness of the Grand Duchess and her benefactor, the late President. For many Americans, Luxembourg is a place of pilgrimage. About three miles from the city is Hamm. There on a gently sloping valley is a field which is forever America. Below the serene town lies over 5,000 servicemen, each with a marker. One cross by itself is inscribed: "General S. Patton, Jr., General Third Army, California, December 21, 1945." This is where he was laid at the head of his men following his death in a car accident after the war was over.

It was a great shock to receive the very sad news of the death of Mr. Clay Merrill after a short illness in Bermuda on May 8 and saddened me deeply. I felt I had lost my best friend

Library of Congress

in the Foreign Service. I immediately wrote to dear Mrs. Merrill because I knew what this great loss would mean for her.

One evening a French friend, Robert Jevey, and I went to see the “Consul” a play I could very well appreciate.

As Paris was celebrating its 2000 years celebration at this time, 1951, there were a lot of interesting events going on. Alice Poole, a long time friend with whom I had lived in a little Japanese house in Honolulu and former keeper of the prints at the Art Academy there, paid a visit. We went to the Louvre together to hear a concert of early French music.

In June I was promoted to receptionist in the passport section and was so happy. No more lifting of dossiers, pushing and pulling of drawers, looking at a desk piled high with files. I was still kept busy, but now there was an occasional lull where there never was before. Now my job was to answer inquiries and pull the cards and files on people who needed passports or renewals or any other service our section gave; type letters to be given to other embassies for visas; and I was also beginning to take a few applications. So I was learning bit by bit more citizenship work.

The Consul General, Mr. Grey, called all those who had been promoted to his office to congratulate them as soon as he had returned from his holiday. The inspector had arrived and asked the usual questions—how we lived, who are our friends, how we get our exercise, etc. To one question, “What is your goal in the Foreign Service?” I answered, “To become a vice consul,” which he duly noted. I also mentioned I should like to be considered for a post where I could save some money. I thought Paris very expensive. I spoke of Bangkok. He said that Colombo, Ceylon was also a delightful post and a differential, meaning more money was allowed for living there.

Edgar Hume paid me another surprise visit at the embassy, this time in uniform emblazoned with ribbons and medals and looked so handsome and young. He said he was spending most of his time now in Korea, but was in Paris for a medical conference.

Library of Congress

He needed letters to obtain visas for Syria and Lebanon. I was glad I could be of this small service to him.

Count Dillon was also back in Paris, too. We dined one evening around the corner from my hotel at la Truite in the picturesque Cite de Retourro entered by a grilled gateway. It became one of our favorite restaurants where we often went with Andre who was now having the cure at Vichy. He wanted Andre to bring me to his chateau and show me his country in September.

On the Fourth of July the Bruces gave the usual reception for the Americans. Princess Pignatelli, whom I had met, asked to go with me. She was a Biddle from Philadelphia. Her first husband was a Spanish grandee and her early life with the court in Madrid sounded glamorous. She divorced him and married a Frenchman who she also divorced. Then she retrieved the title of the first husband.

Mrs. Merrill was leaving Bermuda on July 18 as she had been appointed assistant conference officer at our embassy in Geneva. In early August I made reservations at the Louiemont for her and her two colored servants who were accompanying her. She was to arrive on the America due just as I had planned to take my holiday to Dillon's place, but I realized I could not leave while she was here, nor, of course, wanted to for I was anxious to see her and more especially as she was bereaved. I met her at the boat train in an embassy car and we were together the entire time she was in Paris. We both shed tears when we spoke of Mr. Merrill. She wanted to revisit all the little places where they had been together here in 1949. For diversion I took her up Faubourg Saint Honor# to enjoy the shop windows created by Madame Baumel for Hermes. They always had an incomparable charm and fantasy of their own. Parisians go to see a new Baumel window as they go to see a new play.

I introduced her to Miss Synder and they had a very long conversation. She told her what a good job I had done under Clay in Bermuda. I hoped it bore some weight. When

Library of Congress

I mentioned that they both had astrology in common, Mrs. Merrill immediately drew Miss Synder's horoscope and that was a bond at once.

For years I had wanted to go to the Balearic Islands and at last I was to have my dream holiday to Majorca. At Brentano's I was delighted to find a book, "Polonaise" on the life of Chopin which I read on the four hour Air France flight to Palma. An attractive American woman, Mrs. Chamberlain, had a car and chauffeur waiting for her when we arrived at the airport in Palma and kindly offered to drive me to my hotel, the Victoria. There I had a room and full pension for 150 pesetas plus 17 percent tax, about \$3.75 in those days and considered an extremely modest price even then.

Mrs. Chamberlain had mentioned that she had rented this furnished villa with five bedrooms and two baths for ten dollars a month and also had the services of a maid and a gardener.

The hotel was perfectly situated where one could watch the life on the Mediterranean from spacious terraces bordered by flowers and shaded by pine trees. During the day it was a gorgeous sight to see the colors change on the cathedral which loomed up in the distant. One of the four famous gothic ones in the world. And at night enchanting while dining on the terrace to watch the boats going to Barcelona brilliantly lighted. Palma reminded me a little of Tangier with its Spanish influence and slightly Moorish flavor.

The day after my arrival, I took an all day excursion to Valldemosa and Soller. Valldemosa had been immortalized by George Sand, the romantic French authoress and Frederick Chopin, the great Polish pianist and composer ever since their historic winter there in 1838-39. Majorca had made a virtual shrine of their quarters which they occupied in a deserted monastery in which the monks had been evicted in 1935. Their three cells opened on to charming little garden patios where they contemplated the rustic panorama and drew inspiration for their greatest works. Here George Sand wrote "Spiridon" and later published "Un Hiver a Majorque" in which were the finest descriptive writing of her whole

Library of Congress

career. She was the first writer to adequately succeed in conveying the charms of the Majorca countryside most vividly.

Another who came many years later, also enamored of the beauties of the island, was His Imperial Highness the Archduke of Austria, Louie Salvador, but known in all of Majorca simply as S. Arduc. His exhaustive knowledge was revealed in the wealth of impressions since he did not sell his publications but gave them away as presents to his family and other chosen people, they have a special value in their rareness.

Chopin, although in fading health, with the aid of a pitiful Majorcan piano was composing his most dramatic and exquisite inspired by the wonderful atmosphere of the monastery. There was still a trace of the monastic life within the walls. The smell of incense and solitary silence. Among the compositions created there were his famous preludes.

After leaving Valldemosa the stretch of coast line to Dael was magnificent. Beautiful vistas of the sea on one side and hills covered with pine and ancient olive trees on the other. It was no wonder that Gustave Durer was inspired by the Majorcan olive trees to illustrate one of the best traditions Dante's Divine Comedy. For him Majorca was a corner blessed by heaven. Dael attracted many writers and artists including the well known writer Robert Graves who for 47 years has been voluntarily exiled in his home Canelluno, the house far away, and has done so much to help preserve the place from becoming spoiled.

We drove on over the craggy mountainside to Soller, a picturesque little village in a rich valley of fragrant orange and lemon trees surrounded by high mountains. An amusing Toonerville type of tram clanks its way to the nearby puerto. On the return to Palma we stopped to visit one of the old historic Majorcan country mansions.

The next day I climbed up through the pine woods to the famous 14th century castle of Bellvere that overlooks Palma. It is a rare type of construction in Spain, a circular design with simple lines descended from the gothic. As there were still many Arabs here at the time, Moorish slaves who were skilled artisans were employed in the construction of the

Library of Congress

castle giving it a Moorish influence. The archaeological museum in side was of great interest.

One day I took a bus trip to Formentor. The zigzag road was perilous in places, but with fantastic views of majestic beauty and absolutely unforgettable. There was a luxurious hotel on the white sandy beach with extensive gardens and circled by mountains with the great panorama of the Bay of Pollensa. It was a perfect setting for a vacation retreat where one could enjoy the peace and tranquility for which the island has always been renown.

Sitting beside me on the bus was a most interesting English girl, Machin Goodall, who breeds, trains, sells and shows her own jumpers. She had won a thousand prizes since the age of eight and her grandfather had been huntsman to the Queen. Of course, I spoke of my precious pair of ponies in Paris. So we found much to talk about.

The only sign of Americanization that I saw were two little sweat shirts on two little Spanish boys which had blazed across the front, "New York Giants." The island then was relatively unspoiled. I had never enjoyed a holiday so much for so little money. After a smooth flight with champagne and lunch, I arrived back in Paris to find the sun shining. It was the first time I had returned to Paris from a holiday when it wasn't pouring with rain.

The Richelieus were back in Paris and in early October they invited me to lunch at the Cert Enter Ala. I enjoyed seeing them very much, but was distressed to hear that the Duke has had leukemia since 1948. The Duchess came up to my hotel room to look through my "Vogues" to find some models for having some clothes made here. She said she was getting too fat to order from Bloomingdale any more. They will be returning to the States in the ship they always sailed in, the Mauritania and asked me to look them up when I came to New York in the spring. My home leave was due March 15.

George and Ruth Palmer were also in Paris about this time and we had a good get together over cocktails at the Crillon. George invited me to come to Malaga and said he would send me to Granada where the Good Friday celebrations were really worth

Library of Congress

seeing. George's parents gave a delightful party on Avenue Foch to which I was invited. Ambassador Palmer and George both served at our embassy in Afghanistan together. The only time father and son have ever served at the same post at the same time.

One of the French employees at the embassy and her husband drove me to Bourg St. Leonard one Saturday where there was a chateau that Count Dillon very much admired and wanted me to see. Madame de Forcefeel received us for about an hour and said she had seen me driving my ponies in the Bois.

One day in early December I happened to see Mr. Plitt, who had been our minister at the legation in Tangier, as I was going to lunch with a friend and went up to speak to him. "How do you do, Mr. Plitt? Do you remember me?" I said. When he replied, "Yes, sure. Virginia Biddle," my friend remarked, "You have a good memory." Then with a smile he said to her, "Yes, I always remember the outstanding members of my staff." The sudden unexpected compliment slightly embarrassed me and I blushed a little as I walked away. I never thought that I had been particularly outstanding, but it was evident that he was still in the diplomatic service, though he was then in Paris with NATO and staying at the Crillon.

My English friends, Muriel and Reg Cope I had met at a coffee at Bishop Chambers invited me to a cocktail party that the St. George's Society gave at the Cert Enter Ala. Among the guests was Lady Diana Cooper. I had seen her as the Madonna in "The Miracle" when I was in boarding school, and she hadn't changed a bit since then. The same beautiful blue eyes, exquisite skin, tall and graceful and very feminine with every movement so effortless. She was simply dressed and wrapped in a gorgeous sable coat. I could hardly take my admiring eyes off of her.

Christmas 1951 in Paris was quite active. Ambassador and Mrs. Bruce gave a huge cocktail party for 1500 Americans. Mr. Grey, the consul general, gave a beautiful party at his home for all the consular sections. Young 14 year old Hugh Cope was home from school, Tonbridge in England, for the holidays, and we often went clopping through the

Library of Congress

leafy Bois in my trap. He adored my ponies. On Christmas Eve, Muriel, Reg and Hugh and I attended midnight services at the British embassy church. Then they all came up to my room at the Louismont for fruitcake and eggnog and helped to light the teeny weenie candles I had tied with ribbons to my teeny weenie Christmas tree. The next day they invited me to tea and to hear King George give his first speech over the wireless since his illness, and I stayed on for dinner.

My brother's failing health in California was giving me increasing anxiety and I wanted to reach him as soon as possible. My home leave was due February 4, but knew I couldn't budge before travel orders. It could take some time for them to appear and they could very well be enmeshed in a tangle of bureaucratic red tape, so I was most grateful when Miss Synder suggested that Emily Cox in the personnel section wire the Department for them. The reservation was requested on a flight to California for February 8, which would arrive the next day in Los Angeles. Everyone was most helpful and understanding. I felt Harold's condition was too critical not to make every effort possible to reach him as soon as I could. I sent a note to him to say he was to receive a happy surprise soon, just a hint of something pleasant to cheer him and to keep up his morale.

Just before I left I went to the Madeleine and bought a bouquet of yellow tulips and lavender hyacinths to take to him in the hospital. At Los Angeles my father met me at the Biltmore beaming. I flung myself into his arms and fondly clung to him. We were so happy to see each other and was so relieved to hear that Harold had improved. When I reached the hospital he seemed so much better than I expected to find him. He was sleeping well, appetite was good and seemed cheerful and talkative. He coughed some and took oxygen occasionally, but on the whole appeared to be improving. The flowers from Paris had kept beautifully and pleased him. The last blooming tulip was poked into a bouquet of peach blossoms I brought him on St. Valentine's Day, February 14.

Dad and I stayed in the comfortable visitors quarters at the veterans hospital in San Fernando and visited Harold as often as possible. It was a joy to see what a great

Library of Congress

favorite Dad was with all the nurses and doctors and everyone there. Harold, too, who had inherited our deceased Swedish mother's sweet and gentle nature. He was so good looking. The reports from the doctors were that Harold would always have TB. Unfortunately at that time the remedy for TB did not exist as they do now and due to a deteriorating heart condition, he could go very suddenly or be with us for several years. It was just a day to day case. When I left in early March, General Rolland sent me to the airport in his car, he seemed stronger and was taking less oxygen, but I was never to see him again.

My dear friend, Barbara Bowen Nicholas invited me to spend a few days with her in her charming home, The Carolines, in Hillsborough just outside of San Francisco. It was pleasant to be with her again. We had always been very fond of each other in Honolulu. When I returned to Washington I returned to the Department for consultation and reassignment to Paris. The rest of my home leave was spent with my sister in her Georgetown apartment. We had tea with Mrs. Truman one afternoon when she showed us through the White House which had been beautifully renovated since we had had tea with her at Blair House just before I left for Paris about two years ago.

One day I lunched at the University Club quite amicably with my former husband, Charles, and his second wife, Yetti, a Dutch girl he had met in Singapore. Afterwards I went to the Society of Cincinnati because Count Dillon had asked me to bring information about a relative of his who was a member of the Order of Cincinnati, an elite organization made up of descendants of those French who helped in the fight for American independence. There I found hanging on the wall a portrait of his ancestor.

While I was in New York, Mrs. John Hubbard invited me to lunch with her at the Ritz. On another day I lunched at Cheri's with an old Briar Cliff chum, Marjorie Heather Rolston. The Duchess of Richelieu had written from Florida to her sister, Miss Wise, to invite Mildred and me to luncheon at their apartment in Gracey Square, which I thought was most kind. We enjoyed ourselves very much. Every time I returned to the States on home

Library of Congress

leave a childhood friend, Sheradon Logen took me to the Harvard Club for dinner and said, "You know Virginia, it is always a standing invitation," and so it was.

I returned to Paris by way of Spain. In Seville I stayed with the DeCasso sisters, friends of the Duke of Trevare I had known in Tangier. They were both perfectly lovely and their home had a completely Spanish ambiance. On nearly every table were autographed photographs in silver frames of some member of the Spanish royal family. They were my confidants. They were very confident that Spain would one day return to a monarchy, and so it has. They took me around to their sister-in-law who was unfortunately laid up with a sprained ankle having fallen off a donkey. Such were the perils of the transportation here at that time. But her charming husband drove me with the DeCassos to see the house of Countess Boustello, which had a famous collection of old Roman tiles. We also visited the interesting home of Count Sanchui Dolf. I was introduced to another brother who lives in Madrid. An engineer who had something to do with building the hotel Alfonso. Then they were my guests at the Christine Hotel to see the Flamingo dancers.

At 6:30 the next morning I left in the pouring rain on the train for Granada where Mr. Louis A. Bolline, Director General of the Spanish State Tourist Department had arranged for me see everything Spanish. Mr. Goredon met me and showed me all around the Palaco del Generalife and the Alhambra, and took me to the gypsy dances in the cafes in the evening. He kept lamenting that I was seeing his Alhambra in this awful weather. I was grateful for my winter coat, galoshes, and furs, which I even wore in bed for breakfast, the fur that is. The Alhambra Palace where I stayed offered the breathtaking view, both of the city and the flood lit Alhambra. I was so disappointed not to have a room at the famous Parador, but it was fully booked as it usually is as it has only about a dozen rooms. However, I had luncheon there and discovered sitting at the table next to me was the Marquis de Amodio and his wife, the niece of the Duke de Richelieu. I had been twice to their home in Paris and they were both brown as berries having been motoring in Morocco. I said how much I had enjoyed lunching with the Duchess de Richelieu's sister, Miss Wise,

Library of Congress

when I was in New York. It was good news to hear that the Duke was much better and that they would be in Paris in May and asked me to call them when I got back there.

While I was in Granada, the Duchess De La Thera, to whom I had a note of introduction invited me twice to luncheon at her home where Manuel de Falla had once lived. He was one of Spain's greatest composers of Andalusian and Gypsy music. One of de Falla's master works is his memorable "Nights In the Garden of Spain," in which he captured all of the mystery, exoticism and elusive quality of the romantic gardens of southern Spain. He bust stood at the end of the pathway in her garden. One day when I was there, "Town and Country" was taking a picture of her and her house to be published probably in November. She was a tiny person and much decorated for all she had done during the war. Living with her was a charming French woman, Madame Yvonne. Before I left Granada, she sent to me at my hotel two adorable silver spoons with bullfighters on each end. And at Christmas I received a lovely card with the message: "Wishing you a very happy Christmas and New Year and hoping to see you again in Granada, Affectionately, Rosario."

Escerile was very much enjoyed. When I arrived at the little Lis Hotel I liked so much in Madrid, Madame Faragi met me with open arms and said I could have the room with the terrace which was brighter and cozier. I went back to the Prado for the third time and had a wonderful English-speaking guide. I just adored the place. The King of Iraq was there causing great excitement. I had my hair done at the Ritz and then boarded a 9:00pm Air France plane for Paris and arrived at midnight. My home leave was over for another two years.

I reached Paris in time to greet the horse chestnuts in the Champs Elysees and reported back to the embassy on Monday, May 12. Just one week later, on May 19, I was speaking on the telephone with my French friend, Yvonne St. Leger about an apartment for Marcel Leconte when the radio operator from upstairs in the embassy brought me a telegram. While I was still talking he showed me the message with the very sad news that my brother had died and I immediately burst into tears and although we had been speaking

Library of Congress

in English, Yvonne quickly lapsed into her native French to express her deep feeling and sympathy. They were loving words of comfort to me as I hung up. Then I bowed my head on the table, buried my face in my arms and sobbed. My heart ached and also for my father because the affection flowed strongly between father and son and I knew the sense of loneliness he must be feeling. I was grateful that my sister could fly out to him and they could comfort each other in our great sorrow.

I continued to work to seek distraction and my friends comforted me. Miss Synder took my hand in hers and said, "You are being very brave and I want you to know how deeply I sympathize. If there is anything I can do, let me know. I lost my mother, my father and a sister I adored while in the Foreign Service and I could not go home because I could not be spared." So I felt she did understand and there would be difficult days ahead for me. When Marcel Leconte heard the news he dropped all the telegrams to do with Dean Acheson's arrival and took me for a coffee and short walk in the sunshine and said, "It is written that you should have the visit with him when he was not too ill, and for Mildred to be there when most needed as she is so strong." I agreed that it was all true. What a blessing her friendship was to me.

Miss Dilkes, the charming receptionist of the embassy, took me to Rumplemeyer's to lunch and was very sympathetic. I was grateful Muriel Cope had told Bishop Chambers of my loss so he must have understood my tears at the altar when I took communion. It helped to have Dottie Cain near me in the hotel, who was now transferred to Paris from Geneva.

May 22 was Ascension Day and a holiday. After early communion I went around to the nice Madame who had packed the flowers for Harold and then I told her she was gone. I then bought some tiny white carnations and some deep pink ones and red roses, the same kind that I hoped had been placed in Harold's buttonhole at the funeral, which could have been taking place that very day, the date we had lost our dear mother in 1924.

Library of Congress

May 24 was bright but nippy. I took my ponies for a promenade in the Bois and went by to see my French friend, Nicole de Fressiniat who came with me in the back seat of the trap in the afternoon for tea at the Copes and then to see friends they had introduced me to, Prince and Princess Kandaouroff. Dimitri was a White Russian with a bright round face, always smiling. Beris was English but with all the joie de vivre of the French. They lived in a small house on the street leading up to Montmartre and one entered through a butcher shop. But their salon was always filled with interesting people and the vodka that she made herself provided instant warmth to any occasion. Theirs was gay, amusing and entertaining.

Paris remains a favorite goal for #migr#s where a Russian community existed even before the revolution. The day we were there she had gathered a few friends to celebrate her 40th birthday, and much to her surprise had recently given birth to a baby, Maria who had her mother's lovely big eyes. I especially enjoyed talking about Corsica with Jacque Olivetti, the husband of Princess Augusta of Hess, soon to be called Fifi because it was not long before we were friends and calling each other by first names. She had a little girl appeal and wanted to be a ballerina and was always doing the pas de deux. Her sister, Princess Olga of Hess, I saw less of because she was often in Istanbul, Turkey where she lived part of the time with her Yugoslav husband, Dr. Savich. Their mother was an American born Elizabeth Reed Rogers from Sterling, Kentucky and knew the Trimble name well. She had a house in Cannes where she often entertained the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. Through their father they were related to the King of Denmark. Two sons became American citizens, one was in Houston, Texas and the other in Mexico.

On other occasions I met there Nicholas Koustadrus, whose mother was the lady in waiting to the Duchess of Kent. Also among Beris's circle of friends was Prince Comene, the Don Carlo branch of the Spanish family, Pretender to the throne and he also painted. He showed me a painting he had done of Queen Elizabeth, which was very regal looking, and some of his other works. He told me that he was the natural son of the Duke of Madrid

Library of Congress

who was exiled from Spain and later from France and went to Egypt where he, Prince Comene was born. He was educated in Italy and spoke better Italian than Spanish. Beris whispered to me that he had aspirations to marry Princess Margaret, but they tell him that he is too old for her.

Once I met a pretty Swedish girl who in fact had been Miss Sweden of 1952. She said she was returning to Sweden in order to be at the presentation of the Nobel Prize affair for Winston Churchill. Several times came the Count and Countess Romanet. The Countess was from Australia and always looked so fresh. The Count was one of the few godsons of the Count of Paris.

One evening I was invited to dine with Mr. Lane, Miss Synder's chief, and his vivacious Scottish wife. Mrs. Grey, the wife of the consul general was there. He was out of town. And a very nice couple, Mr. and Mrs. Adams. He was vice consul in the visa section. The Lanes took me with them the next Sunday afternoon and the Adams to the country. Mrs. Lane was very kindly sending me copies of The New Yorker with the fabulous story of Lord Devine, the art collector.

Over Labor Day weekend I took a Cook's tour to Mont Saint Michel. We left Paris in a drizzle but it only enhanced the fairylike beauty of this abbey on a rock looming out of the sea in a mist about a mile off the southern coast of Normandy. After 700 years it still has a strange magnetism. At Rouen, saw where Joan of Arc was burned at the stake. It is now a flower market with only a plaque in the pavement and a statue to mark the tragic spot. We passed through fashionable Deauville, Trouville, Pulgache. I made a mental note to read Eisenhower's "European Crusade" when we reached Arromanches because I was told the Normandy landings were very well described in it. We stopped briefly at Bayeux to see the famous tapestries made by Queen Matilda when her husband, William the Conqueror, was off warring in England. The next day we motored through Brittany. We lunched at Alençon where the lovely lace is made, but as it was a holiday all of the shops were closed. I was delighted to find just up the street the house where Teresa, the little

Library of Congress

flower of Jesus, was born and chapel next to it. Her christening robe was behind glass. A film had been made of her life. Hope to see it—and I did later in Paris, it was very moving. I had remembered reading her charming story of her life about twenty years ago. Our last stop was at Chartres Cathedral, the third time I had seen it. I never cease to marvel at its exquisite blue windows and fine sculpture.

When I returned to Paris I was saddened to read in the New York Herald Tribune that the Duke of Richelieu had died on May 30 in a hospital in New York. Towards the end of June I received the following invitation which meant that I was invited by the Society of the Steeplechase of France to drive my ponies in the Prix de Drab and to lunch at the restaurant Lulon with about 25 other invited guests. I was seated with the gentleman in charge and Princess Pignatelli of the Italian branch of the family. The young English beauty, Countess De Lessups, who I had known in Tangier was there. There was one of Count Dillon's sisters. And the daughters of Countess Chaunegnac and Mrs. Stromberg, wife of the Swedish consul in Paris, were there. The Marquis Sedoly, who later asked me to take her for a drive in my trap one day. And many other entitled French and Spanish. The men all wore cutaways and top hats. The women, the most aristocratic in Paris, were dressed exquisitely in garden frocks, big hats and wore lovely jewels. I wore a yellow and blue print dress with a big blue velvet hat with yellow bird of paradise. My ponies wore blue bachelor buttons to match, behind each ear.

After lunch, Albert, my groom, came with the trap in a grey coachman's coat and top hat. There was a carriage in front of mine and another behind and two mail coaches filled with beautiful women. I was the only woman driving my own equipage and American without a title. We drove up the wide bustling Champs Elysees to the Auteuil race track in front of a battery of cameras and television which excited the ponies so they pulled considerably, but fortunately didn't run away. After witnessing the races at Auteuil we had tea and then drove to the Polo Club where we drove around the race track and had tea again. It had been the day that Paris becomes the acknowledged center of the horse racing world for

Library of Congress

what is also a major event in the social world. A few days later I received the a charming note enclosing some photos of the occasion.

The Copes were flying to London for the wedding of one of Muriel's best friends who was marrying the younger son of the Prince Royal and the reception was to be in St. James Palace.

Mrs. Truman wrote hoping I would see her daughter, Margaret, when she came to Paris and also that she was returning to Independence as her mother had gone completely blind in the last three weeks and was quite upset. She died in December, 1952.

One weekend I joined an artist friend, Carolyn Van Evera, at the home of Countess Keragariou at St. Servan Sur near St. Malo. Carolyn had been painting in Morocco with my French friend, Marielle Chienwa, who was very helpful in finding models for her. Some of her paintings were to appear in the magazine *Le Official*. We had pleasant walks in the little forest nearby and took the boat over to Dinard and I had a lemonade on the terrace of the Royal Hotel where the atmosphere was more English than French.

My French teacher, Madame Nuet, invited me one evening to a Japanese sukiyaki dinner at her home. It was truly a Japanese affair. Among the Japanese men were two correspondences for their papers in Paris. And an artist who told me all of his beautiful things illustrated in a French magazine had been stolen from an apartment during the war. One of the four Japanese girls was Miss Sudahara, who later I heard sing in Japanese in the opera "Madame Butterfly." The rest of the cast sang in French. The opera house was packed and everyone applauded again and again. She was a tremendous success. I always weep at this opera, although I have heard it several times. It is so sad.

Madame Marchand, the French teacher at the embassy and her daughter were also at the party as they too had lived in Japan. It was a nostalgic evening reminiscing about Japan and trying to remember what little of the Japanese language I once knew.

Library of Congress

One Sunday while Margaret Truman was in Paris, she presented a flag from Missouri at the Cathedral. When I arrived at the church, one of the ushers that I knew seated me up front and just across the aisle from Ambassador and Mrs. Dunn and Margaret and her friend, Miss Synder. When she presented the flag, she looked up into the face of the pastor with a charming smile and the frankest look out of her eyes. She was very gracious and had become very popular in Paris.

I was so glad when Jay Owens came to my desk one day. A chap I had not seen or heard of since we were both bombed in Honolulu. He wanted to resume his antique business and was looking for an apartment. A few days later he brought around his friend, Blevins Davis, who invited me to go on a cruise with them through the Mediterranean on his yacht. Unfortunately I couldn't at that time. Jay said Blevins almost married Margaret Truman.

Mrs. John Hubbard was back in Paris with her lawyer, Mr. McGuinness and his wife, and we all went to Rumplemeyer's not for tea but their delicious chocolate sodas. She had come to get some of the things she had given Moi Maison at the Saint Rugn. She had given the only priceless Napoleonic things out of storage. She lent me a book by Nordhoff-Hall, whom she knew when we were both in Tahiti and in which he described a pension where I had stayed.

Count Dillon had at last received an assignment to Guatemala with the organization WHO and was in Paris for a few days, as was Andre. The three of us dined together at La Truite, our favorite restaurant, and had our favorite dish, turbot, which they did so well. The next day Dillon and I lunched together and Andre joined us for tea, then came to my room for champagne...

Biskra, Algeria, December 27, 1953.

We visited some old Roman ruins at Timgad on route here and now I must read "Salambo" by the French writer Gustave Flaubert. He describes the life of this period so well. We

Library of Congress

lunched at Batna, then immediately began the desert. I was interested to read the Sahara is as big or bigger than our entire United States. Vegetation became scarcer and goat herds were replaced by small camel caravans. After driving for miles through this steppe land we came to a huge gorge called El Kantaoui. After passing through it a lovely little oasis appeared. A stream with tall palms growing on other side. Then we came upon three typical little Arab villages, White Village, Black Village and Red Village, so called because of the color when the sun shines on them. Just as the sun was setting we could see in the distance a larger oasis which was Biskra, a winter resort made famous by Robert Hichens' book, "The Garden of Allah," which I had tucked under my arm during the trip. This hotel is something like the Mamaouina at Marrakech on a smaller scale. The guide took us to see the Dervishes last night. They were of a certain tribe who live in the mountains and stick knives through themselves. We went into sort of a dugout where some Arabs were squatting on the floor playing a flute, and big tambourines. The black man performing was dressed in a woman's dress with colored shawls wound around his head, and worked himself up to a trance reminding me of the shimmy of the twenties in my boarding school days. Then a lone man brought out several very slender knives. The Dervish stood directly in front of me while he pierced one straight through his cheeks, another through his tongue and another through his chin. I really couldn't look at him for long, it was too horrible and turned my head. Then he lit a torch and passed it up and down over his body between his skirt and stomach, all the time jumping up and down chanting. Then he pulled out two large scorpions and began to play with them. This was the last and final act for which I was most grateful. We all paid 250 francs to see this horror and tipped the Dervish 20 francs. They say it really is not a fake, it is considered a penitence to Allah. Needless to say I was relieved to have it all over.

The guide then took us around the town a bit. Very shabby. Down the street were the Ouled Na#ls, compared to the geisha girls of Japan. The next day we drove over a very rocky road to a most beautiful oasis called M'Chou Neche. When we arrived we were surrounded by little Arab boys. We soon learned why. Going up the gorge was a bit

Library of Congress

precarious climbing over slippery stones crossing the little stream so we needed them to take our hand to help us. It was like a dream being in that exquisite ravine with green palm trees on either side. I could now understand what an oasis in a desert really means. We passed the nomads in their tents on the way to some sand dunes. We were told that the Arabs sometimes in very hot weather bury themselves in the sand leaving only their heads exposed for several hours for 21 days to cure their rheumatism.

We passed a curious Arab cemetery. Each little mound was just a heap of stones, nothing more. Of course not a single flower in sight. Just what you would expect a cemetery to be in the Sahara. Then we visited the famous garden of Allah. Still with the book tucked under my arm it seemed more romantic than the book. But it was natural that it had changed since the book was published in 1909. The charming house, the Landau, still stands but very deserted. There are dates in abundance and sold in an artistic way on the branch and also oranges. The flies are rather numerous and I had forgotten how the Arab dogs bark at night.

Hotel Du Caid, Bou Saada, Algeria, December 29, 1953.

This is a tiny Arab village on the edge of the Sahara. It is cooler than Biskra and more appealing perhaps because of the hotel which is utterly charming and popular with Europeans because it is just three hours from Alger. It is furnished with the same type of taste found in small select hotel like Whispering Sands in Florida and the Halekulani in Honolulu. Of course with a completely Moorish atmosphere. At night it is dimly lit by brass Moorish lamps of different colored glass. There is a small garden with chairs where palms, cactus, pepper trees and geraniums are trying their best to grow in the little oasis. And now a swimming pool is being installed. It must have been gay at Christmas because there was a Christmas tree still standing.

We arrived for lunch and afterwards had my first camel ride in the desert each one with an Arab boy directing the camel and at the same time trying to sell his colorful knives. But a

Library of Congress

camel is agonizing to ride. It is a lyrical beast with a stride like an ostrich and its peculiar gait with its unconventional rocking movement can be torment for a novice, such as I was. But at least I learned to sing "giddyap" in Arabic before I got off.

After dinner we went to see the famous Ouled Na#ls dance. They are Arab prostitutes and wear gay colored costumes as simple as an inverted sack with lots of gold bracelets and gold coins around their necks. The tiny room was filled with Europeans. They sang and danced to instruments that have not changed in 500 years. The girls seemed to be about 15 or 16 and made the most extraordinary movements with their stomachs, jerking it up and down to the rhythm of the Arabic music, then moved their necks and heads like Polynesian dancers. By paying 150 francs more we could see the same dance done in the nude. They then appeared only in their earrings and necklaces. The orchestra turned their backs on this performance which seemed ironical as the flutist was blind anyway.

Hotel Saint George, Alger, Algeria, December 30, 1953:

This hotel is perfectly lovely and it looks as if it might have been an old palace at one time with exquisite colored tiles everywhere and beautiful Moorish wood carvings. My delightful room overlooked the garden and sea. I am sailing tomorrow at noon and will be reluctant to return to civilization. I have so loved the Sahara. The vast impenetrable desert has cosmic beauty which cannot even be imagined by those who have never visited it. The Arab is very much in tune with nature and the desert. He likes to call the Garden of Allah...and his religion is like rich oriental tapestry unfathomable.

Back in Paris, on the 5th of April I celebrated my 50th birthday. Andre sent a telegram. Pauline (Inaudible) invited me to the Crillon for lunch and gave me a bottle of Carven's "MaGriff" and a pair of gloves. When I returned to the hotel I found a box of Rumplemeyer's chocolates from Princess Fifi and her husband, Jacque Olivetti. Then I went to a cocktail party at Yvonne St. Leger's. She was now living in a penthouse with a wide terrace. And my young friend, Hugh Cope, presented me his photograph taken

Library of Congress

with the Queen Mother, who visited his school at Tonbridge. It was taken while he was sculpturing a horse. The day ended happily by dining with Beris and Dimitri.

It was exciting to receive news the next day that I was to have home leave and transfer to Bangkok. I hastily read the post report and it sounded fascinating. Three seasons—hot, cool, rainy—and only cottons worn because it is a hot country. Just what I had been longing for. The process of getting cool when one is hot is much more pleasant than the effort of trying to get warm when it is cold. So I was delighted with my next assignment. When Carolyn Evera, my artist friend, heard the news, she too was excited and said, “I will come and visit you. Where is it?” I laughed and said, “In Siam.” I thought it more romantic sounding than Thailand.

Then I began to wonder what would happen to my precious pony. He would never support the long voyage and the hot climate and I couldn't support his transportation. Unfortunately he could not go at government expense or be claimed as a dependent. Nor could I ship him as personal effects. It broke my heart to do it, but I sold him to Gager, and heard later he became a circus pony in Italy. Gager had already begun to train him to stand on his hind legs for sugar before I left Paris.

I hoped I could leave Paris as soon as possible to reach my father in Pasadena, California in time to celebrate his 85th birthday and to reach Bangkok before the rainy season came. In the midst of all my happiness I was sorry to read of the death of the Crown Princess Martha of Norway, remembering so well the day I met her in Washington, DC. It was during the war and when the Norwegian national anthem was played I was so moved tears fell into my champagne glass so my toast to her was very salty.

Over the Easter holidays I went to England to say goodbye to some friends and see some good shows. London was not expensive in those days and fortunately I could squeeze in three shows in one afternoon and evening. The seats were not over two and a half each. As I was now assigned to Bangkok, I felt I must get a ticket to see “The King and

Library of Congress

I," and I did. The thought that I would soon be in Siam thrilled me. I went to a matinee. At 5:30pm I went to see "The Boy Friend" that had been receiving raves in reviews. A musical of the twenties which took me back to my boarding school days when we wore cloche hats and long waisted dresses and did the Charleston. It was so much fun sitting there alone giggling to myself. Then I had time for a bowl of soup before going on to the 8:30 performance of "The Confidential Clerk," a most subtle play. My English friends were highly amused and said, "That sets some sort of a record and I probably would be mixing up the 'King' with the 'Boy Friend' and the 'Boy Friend' with the 'Confidential Clerk.'" I didn't.

My Bermudian friend, Sheila Green, was now living with her father in Tunbridge Wells where I had luncheon with them. While there a huge bouquet of Easter lilies were flown in from Bermuda bringing back happy memories of our friendship there. Sheila had shown me Knole House, the famous Sackville home, when she met me at Sevenoaks earlier in the day.

Then I went on a tour. The first night was spent at Bath, an ancient spa. The bathes used in the Roman times were still there and had been popular in the Edwardian era. It had a wealth of distinguished Georgian houses arranged on terraces, squares and crescents. We passed through magnificent Cheddar Gorge. They do not make the cheese there anymore since the war. Wells Cathedral had a lovely moot around the Bishop's Palace where the swans rang a little bell when hungry and someone fed them crumbs from a window. Glastonbury Abbey, not in complete ruins was a legendary burial place of King Arthur and where Joseph Arimathaea brought a chalice and Christianity was first started and where the Glastonbury Thorn grows.

We spend the next night at Bude on a fine stretch of sands and wonderful coastal scenery. Then the next day drove through Cornwall where I had a brief chat at the Cathedral with Sister Emily, a nun I had visited weekly when we both lived in Japan and it was refreshing to see her again. We lunched at Penzance, then on to Land's End, the furthestmost part of England where all the signs read, "This is the first, last hotel in England" or "This is the first

Library of Congress

and last post office in England.” It became amusing when a father was overheard saying to his young son, “Now that is the first and last ice cream you are going to have.” We could see St. Michael's Mount from Penzance resembling so much Mont Saint Michel in France. It was the most picturesque place. At Newquay, we had delicious Cornwall cream on our scones for tea, but we could not get any of the famous Devonshire cream, that too had not been made since the war. The next day came to Clovelly, an adorable place on a steep hill overlooking the sea. Then through the Lorna Doone country to Lynmouth and Lynton where an awful flood occurred years ago. They were changing the course of the river now to prevent another. At Porlock we saw where the prize winning horse people, Captain Llewellyn and Pat Smith, lived. I remember seeing them at the horse show in Paris. The towns were quaint with thatched roof houses and wild ponies roamed the moors. We spent two nights at Exeter. The Cathedral was beautiful. Torquay was considered a fashionable spa but I preferred Bournemouth. Devon was charming country. Plymouth interested me because of the plaques that marked the place where the Pilgrims started on their voyage to America. The flowers, especially daffodils, were everywhere, so beautifully arranged in the lounge of the hotels where we stayed. We passed so many places evoking memories of Sir Walter Raleigh, Turner the writer and the poets Keats and Byron, and, of course, King Arthur, William the Conqueror and King George III. I fell in love with Christ Church. Then we came to the New Forest where we fed the ponies. We spent our last night at Burley Manor, an old Tudor mansion in the heart of the New Forest. It was so quiet, restful and lovely, I could have stayed forever. On the return to London visited the cathedral town of Winchester and saw King Arthur's famous round table.

It was about 5:30pm when I reached the Cumberland, a new modern hotel run with American efficiency at Marble Arch in London. I quickly changed to have dinner with a friend I had not seen since we were children, Virginia Fairly, who was now on British “Vogue” and married to a distinguished Englishman champion. She had also kindly invited another childhood friend, Blan Tucker, also married to an Englishman, very attractive and amusing. A letter I found was describing him. She said, Selby was awarded the George

Library of Congress

Cross in 1941 and in 1942 the George Medal in his work in connection with the German magnetic mines. So secret was the work at this time that when he received his decoration from the King at Buckingham Palace, he was obliged to answer the King's inquiries as to the nature of his job with "Sorry, Sire, I am afraid I can't tell you." I have some photographs taken on that day with Selby's sister and myself present in our quite ridiculous dolly hats that were then the fashion, clutching our gas masks. It all seems a very long time ago.

Elizabeth Keith, a well known English artist, invited me for a delicious luncheon at the Washington Hotel. We had met in Honolulu where she asked if I would like to exhibit her woodblock prints she did while living in Japan and Korea. I did with pleasure and took them to the other islands when on holiday and was very successful. The Queen Mother had bought 20 when they were exhibited in London. After luncheon we went to her apartment for coffee which was filled with English antiques. Before I left she presented me with a 200 year old English cup of bone china, which I treasure to this day, as well as three of her books she autographed while living in Honolulu.

I have always found great rapport with the English. I find them so sincere and spiritual and so well read and well bred which is reflected even in the tones of their voices. But the moment I stepped off the plane in Paris, I felt the joie de vivre of France. The appreciation of the varying atmosphere in foreign countries leaves a deep impression.

Then the days became crowded with preparations for home leave. At last the clouds of packing paper and excelsior disappeared and I was ready to depart with ten pieces of luggage and five bottles of champagne and a wicker hamper, which I was obliged by regulations to hand carry up the gang plank. Marcel, Beris and Fifi saw me off at the boat train. I felt sad to leave my friends in France. After four years I had developed a pontshon for that country.

Upon the tenure of my duties at the embassy I was pleased to have added to my file two nice letters of commendation.

Library of Congress

I crossed in the United States which remained the pride of the United States Merchant fleet for 17 years having received the blue ribbon for the fastest liner in the world. Only a few days were spent in New York. I wanted to get over to the UN to find out what the representative from Siam was talking about. Most of my friends were out of town. In Washington, I reported for consultation and for arrangements for onward transportation with Becky Sanford, who was my friendly liaison with the Department. I did reach Pasadena, as I so hoped I would, to celebrate my dear father's 85th birthday with him and with the Moul Chando French champagne I had so carefully carried all the way with such loving care. Our partings were becoming more poignant, perhaps because his life span was growing shorter and shorter, and we took our leave of each other with considerable signs of affection. I telephoned him twice before I sailed.

After a pleasant weekend in Burlingame with my Honolulu friend, Barbara Bowen Nicholas, George, her publisher husband, kindly drove me up to San Francisco to take my ship. I was invited to the Press Club for luncheon and I had dinner with an old friend, Mary Campbell. We talked until after midnight. She had read in the paper that Bob Six, who had married my dear Briar Cliffs school chum, Anriet Earhart, and divorced her and married the actress, Ethel Merman, were divorced. Some years later Anriet confided in me, she just couldn't keep up with Merman. Some other friends took me to the Top of the Mark for luncheon from where I could see my ship, the President Cleveland, laying along side the quay which I later boarded bedecked with orchids Barbara and George sent. The photograph appeared in the Pasadena paper of me beaming because I was going out to my next post with great joy and excitement and determination to do my job as well as could possibly be done.

On August 5, 1953, it was a gay sailing. Music and serpentine. There appeared to be quite a few orientals aboard and it seemed to me half were Foreign Service and half missionaries, ninety children but few men. Not that I minded, but some women do. My roommate was a civilian employee of the Department of Army going to Japan. A very

Library of Congress

agreeable girl and I was pleased she didn't smoke. Sitting next to me at the table in the dining room was Pauline Law going to.....

Across from me were the Corcorans. He was going as a vice consul to the Japanese island of Kyushu. Then there was a White Russian and two elderly ladies on the orient cruise. Mr. Taylor, who is consul general in Tokyo, was also aboard with his wife and daughter. The Captain was the friendliness I have ever encountered on any ship. Life aboard seemed much less formal than on the transatlantic crossings. Perhaps because we were in warmer waters.

I was up early to see dear old Diamond Head as we approached. Standing at the end of the dock with leis to greet me was Alice Poole of the Art Academy with whom I once lived in her Japanese house, Seiko-So, in Manoa Valley. We embraced with affection. Honolulu was just as everyone said. I would never recognize it since the bombing which I witnessed on that fatal day on December 7, 1941. Tall buildings, hotels, apartments, shops everywhere and much more traffic. I felt like Rip Van Winkle. The day was spent shopping for cottons, cocktailing with Louie and George of Vickers and then dining at the Willows, Polynesian type place where we had mahi mahi fish native to the island beside a lovely pool where we could see the reflection of the plumeria, ginger and willows as they hung gracefully over it. Had a long conversation with Alice Spaulding Bowen and remarked about the lovely Japanese heirlooms she had given to Barbara's home. She was doing so much for the island to beautify it. Afterwards they drove me down to the ship. It had been a heavenly day to see dear friends again and to be on that lovely island once more. There were hundreds to see the ship sail. Again music played while the hula girls danced and passengers and friends held tight to the serpentine. Sailings from Honolulu are never without emotions.

We lost Friday the 13th by crossing the international date line. A good day to lose. At the costume ball I went as the Statue of Liberty swathed in a sheet with cigarettes adorning my crown, with red paper tucked in a champagne carton turned upside down. Some of

Library of Congress

the costumes were screamingly funny. The ex-Prince of Japan, Hiroshi Fushi, Hirohito's nephew, who boarded at Honolulu came to sit at our table. He was a very charming young man returning to Japan after four years in the United States. He had been studying at a college in Danville, Kentucky, for the diplomatic service and told me he hoped to be sent to London. When I asked him if he knew my Japanese friends, the Hirookas, his friend spoke up and said Mrs. Hirooka was his aunt and that they were now living in Shukugawa the suburb between Kobe and Osaka where I once lived on the compound with my husband who was an executive at the National City Bank there. They also told me Tom Davis, who was in our wedding party, was now manager of the Bank in Yokohama. So many memories were now sweeping over me as we were approaching the country where I was married 24 years ago.

We were in a slight typhoon for two or three days and finally an announcement came over the loud speaker, "Due to weather conditions, the port of Yokohama is closed to shipping. Therefore docking time will depend on the improvement of the weather." We had been up since six to go ashore and it became very tiresome waiting for the storm to subside and tantalizing to see the shoreline with the tall buildings over the white caps through the heavy fog and mist. But it was a beautiful bright warm day after the typhoon which held us up a day and I drove especially to Kamakura to see the centuries old Daibutsu which is so revered by the Japanese and where I first fell in love with Japan nearly a quarter of a century ago. At that time one drove through typical little Japanese villages to get to Kamakura which is beautifully situated on the beach. Since the war it has become more of a suburb than a summer resort for people couldn't find enough houses at Yokohama and Tokyo to live in.

Due to the typhoon my stay was shortened by a day in Hong Kong but I was still able to make the scheduled flight to Bangkok on August 28. The consulate, which is just across from the Helena Mai where I stayed in 1930 for six months, sent a Mr. and Mrs. McIlroy to meet me and take me to my hotel. Again, it was like old times to be back at the Peninsula Hotel on Kowloon and have flowers in the room from the management. It

Library of Congress

was from my bedroom window in this very hotel in February, 1939 I had watched Richard Halliburton the adventurer, set sail in his colorful Chinese junk, The Sea Dragon and when he later returned for repairs I met him. Then when he set sail again on that ill-fated boat he perished in a storm and was never found. He had died as he always said he wanted to with his seven league boots on. I went around to see if there would be anyone in the National City Bank I might know and found the manager, Mr. Griffith, who had lived with Charlie in Peking in 1928. My last evening in Hong Kong was delightfully spent with Helen Burton who invited me for dinner to her apartment high on the peak with a gorgeous view. It belonged to Mr. McBain, who I remember having my deck chair next to on one of my crossings to Europe. Helen Burton lived for years in Peking and had a shop, the Camel Bell.....

[voice interruption]

...when there in 1933 and where she was interned by the Communists and her four adopted Chinese daughters are still here. This had been a nostalgic journey and now I was flying off into another part of the world to my next assignment Bangkok.

August 28, 1954.

It was a wonderful flight from Hong Kong to Bangkok. We took off at 11:30am and soon saw submerged below some of the most exquisite, emerald colored islands looking like distinct volcanoes. Then we flew over Indo-China. Maxim's luncheon was served, but not the champagne, red wine. Sitting next to me was an attractive young man who said his name was Bob Doherty going to Bangkok for the first time to be with Caltech. He mentioned during the course of conversation that his grandfather had been our ambassador to the Balkans during the Second World War. As we approached Bangkok we looked down upon flat, green, flooded rice paddies with borders of trees along the sides of the small box-like plantations. It was raining but just before we landed it cleared as we

Library of Congress

disembarked. I had traveled almost half way around the world to arrive at the very heart of the East, Siam.

John Lloyd, III, a scholarly looking young man with glasses, met me at the airport with his wife and little baby and had no trouble going through customs with my special passport. Mr. Lloyd said he was the vice consul and "we" were the consular section and began briefing me as we drove the 16 miles into Bangkok. He said they use the embassy, which actually was raised to an embassy in March, 1947, as a training ground for vice consuls because there are such a varieties of duties. A Thai young man does all the visa work of the office. I will be known as the secretary and citizenship clerk. So on me devolves the task of issuing passports and was grateful I had received that experience for there would be other duties I would need to learn such as clearing with the foreign office for the arrival and departures of the American ships and planes and taking registration of births and some correspondence. The hours were from 7:30am to 12:00 noon and from 1:00pm to 4:30pm with Saturday and Sunday free. The Lloyds drove me to the American Club where Jonan Malik, my Persian friend, had suggested staying. And I was so glad he did because a great many of the embassy personnel were staying there and to whom I was introduced at once. It was managed by an American with the name of Herman Siler, who was a former attach# at the embassy. It had originally been the home of a Thai princess built in tropical style with a wide screened in veranda where there were big comfortable cretonne covered wicker chairs and a little bar which looked out upon a long sweeping lawn to lotus filled ponds. About six people sit at one table and are served by Chinese boys as the servants are generally called in the East even if decrepit old men.

We actually live in small connecting quarters. It does have hot water but not much privacy because there are only screens at the windows. The rooms were furnished with fans, flit guns filled daily to ward off the mosquitoes. There were no telephones in the rooms, only one in the main building. For this and with three meals a day, I paid \$6.42. The rate of exchange fluctuates daily, but on arrival the rate was 21.50 baht to the dollar. The only

Library of Congress

riverside hotel and a favorite established in 1885 was the Oriental which charged \$14 per day just for the room and bath.

The room I was taken to rather stunned me by its moldy spots on the walls. Mrs. Lloyd made a point of seeing that I would be removed to a better room the next day, which I very much appreciated. About four little frogs were about to leap into my room when I returned to it after dinner on Saturday evening making me a bit squeamish. I was really glad to see the light of Sunday morning and was awakened by the shrill shrieks of the priest birds. They say they summon the priest to matins promptly at daylight when the early coolness is an enchanted part of the day, when there is a particular freshness in contrast to the heat and humidity. So I decided to go to my Episcopal church about three miles from here on Convent Road and called a taxi. The church was open on all sides and I enjoyed our service very much and met the padre, The Rev. Folk, afterwards. When I asked someone how to get a taxi, this charming man appeared and said, "I'll take you home. I am Mr. Kent with the British embassy," and introduced his wife. We both sat in the back seat of his attractive car and he immediately apologized for the appearance of the men in the church for not wearing neckties. "No one does here," he explained, "It is just too hot." I did find it hot and sticky. As this was the rainy season the grounds around the Club were like little swamps and the water dripped languidly from the trees. The congs are awfully smelly, muddy, stagnant and unhealthy looking at this time of year. Snakes crawl out of them onto the grounds. But in the morning they are bright with beautiful colored water lilies which give a charming appearance from a distance.

It is quiet and peaceful around the Club grounds and I am sure more pleasant than staying in a hotel. The only riverside hotel and a favorite established in 1885 is the Oriental but just for a room and bath charge \$14. They are trying to arrange it so that the congs will be diverted through pipes and in this way widen the road so there is much construction going on. We passed several small elephants on the road and lots of water buffalos helping in the cultivation of the land. One rides in three-wheeled motorized cabs called "samlars." When passing the city's main Buddhist monastery, the taxi drivers lift their hands off the

Library of Congress

wheel to make a prayer like gesture of respect known as the wai with palms flattened against each other before their chin and with deep genuflection it is executed with much grace.

I decided faced with traffic jams of elephants and samlars and inadequate roads, it was no place for my ponies from Paris. The people, themselves, are their own beast of burden carrying everything on their heads, but so gentle and sweet.

Sunday afternoon I was delighted when one of the men at the Club associated with STEM, military assistance program, asked if I would like to go on a little sightseeing tour. He had his company car and chauffeur, so we drove to the Temple of Dawn, or more properly called Wat Arun. It was of the most amazing type of exquisite decorations and one had to look carefully to fully appreciate the detail. The flowers were all made of colorful broken pieces of china. We climbed as high as we could in the hot sun. A Buddhist priest in his bright yellow saffron robe from India joined us and could speak a little English as well as Burmese, Laotian, Cambodian and Thai. Some other people came along and said that when Douglas Fairbanks was here he climbed all the way to the top which was quite a feat, even for him considering the height and steepness of the temple, but found a fantastic view for across the river was the royal palace. It was a panorama of color like a theatrical extravaganza. The dazzling domed temples and the upsweep of the roofs give a sense of joyousness, a reflection of the country itself, for the Thai are a joyous, smiling people.

Every Sunday evening there is a buffet supper served on the veranda followed by a film. This Sunday, "Titanic" was shown. It was griping but the reels kept breaking intermittently. Every American with children connected with the embassy and some of the other government agencies are staying at the Club until they find more permanent quarters.

Library of Congress

The breakfast table is always adorned with a bowl of exotic fruits—fresh pineapples, bananas, papayas, mangosteens and mangoes and some I don't yet know the name of.

Mr. Howard Parsons is charg# d'affaires until the new ambassador, Mr. Puerifoy arrives, who is in Guatemala. I was taken around to meet everyone and so pleased to have the opportunity of working so close with the head of the consular section. The vice consul is only about 24 but I will get a good grounding in all of the work here. I was pleased to receive the periodic increase effective July 4. Several Americans have come in from the Services including the Caltech chap who sat next to me on the plane from Hong Kong to here.

Then, one day a delightful person, Mrs. Berrington came in when she learned Charlie Biddle was with the National City Bank as was her son who had been in Osaka with Tom Davis, now manager there, and who had been in our wedding party, and immediately and most enthusiastically said, "We must get together." And so we did and became dear friends.

Mr. Griffith in the Hong Kong branch of the National City Bank of New York had given me a note to Mr. Lewis T. E. Davis, who was the manager of the Bank of America here and who had known Charlie in London on his first assignment with the Bank then known as the International Banking Corporation. The world seem to be getting smaller and smaller.

I heard my effects had arrived from Paris and were in storage. I particularly wanted my cottons. I had already shed my hose and shoes for sandals.

Carolyn Strong was telling me about a trip to Angkor Wat that was being organized by a group of National Geographic people off the brigantine Yankee that was in port and it aroused my interest. It seemed like a very good opportunity to go for it would it would be less expensive than one of the package tours that go only once a month and cost \$80.

Library of Congress

They planned to go on a Tuesday and return on a Thursday. Mr. Lloyd was very willing for me to take it so I did and wrote my family as follows:

“Grand Hotel, Angkor, Siem Reap, Cambodia, September 7, 1954.

I have been up since twenty to four this morning. The embassy car called at 4:30am having picked up another girl, Dorothy Moffat, in charge of the files. We were nearly to the airport when the car ran out of gas. There we sat in pitch black darkness. A truck finally came along and the driver suggested we go with him. I said, “No,” not knowing who the driver might be at that hour. So he was sent for gas. When he returned our driver discovered he didn't have the key to the gas tank due probably to the fact that the Thai drivers had been stealing gas from the cars' tanks. So the truck drove on and I locked the doors of the back seat where we were and waved my hand out of the front door window at the next car that came along. Luckily it was a car with two American officers with MAAG who took us safely to the airport.

The flight over was perfect and we have had beautiful weather. These ruins are too marvelous for words. Dorothy and I had brought sandwiches for lunch so that we all of the others who came along returned to the hotel we stayed out to eat them rather than have to go back to the hotel for the long tiresome French lunch and siesta that lasted until 4:00pm.

Tonight at dinner we ordered champagne thinking it would be so cheap here, but not so. Twice cats came to my table. A big black one suddenly jumped into my lap and frightened me so I upset my champagne glass and spilled all the precious contents. The smart French put coasters over their wine glasses to keep out the bugs. And the food was not too good. In spite of all this, I was enjoying the trip immensely finding my knowledge of French very useful as I seemed to be the only one speaking French among the Americans. We will spend tomorrow here and leave early Thursday for Phnom Penh and fly back to Bangkok from there. More about the trip when I return.”

Library of Congress

“American Embassy, Bangkok, September 13, 1954

“I sent you a very brief letter from Angkor so you would know I had reached there safely. Do save the stamps for they will be welcomed by some collector. I feel so fortunate to have this opportunity to go over there and for less than the usual trip would cost and saw a lot more. For several years Captain and Mrs. Irving Johnson had been taking the brigantine Yankee, a year and a half to go, around the world. Lecturing and showing pictures like Burton Homes. Also have written three books. Mrs. Johnson will have one ready for the press when they return. Anyone can go by paying \$4,680 and they go to all of these fascinating out of the way places. Everyone does something on the ship. One girl said, “I’m the barber.” All of their many interesting experiences.....

...Mrs. Donovan, sailed today with them as far as Bali. The other passengers were two Frenchmen, one from South America, one English chap and a Mrs. Anderson, friend of Mrs. Donovan, who had taken a similar trip twenty years ago. The round trip from Bangkok to Angkor Wat and to Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia and back to Bangkok was \$60. The room at the Grand Hotel was about \$20 and our dinner \$1. We flew Thai Airways and had the prettiest little Thai hostess. When I asked her if we would see Angkor Wat from the air before landing she said she would speak to the pilot. So we circled it twice, what a thrill. It was cooler there than Bangkok, that is to say, less hot. It took us one hour and a half from Bangkok and found more vegetation there. In fact, a mild jungle. We checked into the hotel upon arrival and then took a bus to see these fabulous temples. We went to Bayon first which is the one with the face on it. Then to Angkor Thom. We had a samlar ride which are like little Victorian carriages drawn by a man pedaling a bicycle and are just large enough for two. We were joined by the others at Angkor Wat and the bas-relief on the walls was the highlight here. But I really preferred some of the other temples showing the enormous trees growing from them, just like it all must have been before the French started restoring them in 1907. I had no idea they would be so extensive. We took

Library of Congress

several tours to many more than the regular tour go. The guide's French was better than his English so I could follow and use my knowledge of French to good advantage.

Dad, dear, these amazing temples built by the Khmer people from the 9th, 10th and 11th centuries are truly one of the wonders of the world. Nearly everyone had elaborate movie cameras. I felt like such an amateur coming along snapping with my little Brownie.

We flew to Phnom Penh the early morning of Thursday which took about an hour. There we had a tour through the King's palace and saw some of his priceless possessions in the museum. He is about 36 and a bachelor, but the guide tells me they all want their independence. He is due to come to Bangkok soon. I also heard that it is very easy to have an audience with him, but one would have to stay about a week there to make the necessary arrangements. But as the planes don't usually go there, one probably has to go from Saigon. As I have seven more days I have to take before the end of the year, I must plan another holiday soon. I hear Burma is the place to get rubies so I shall like to go there. I found in Cambodia a pair of bookends, sitting statues of Vishnu in black bronze, and a white silk stole threaded with gold. We arrived in Bangkok about 7:00pm Thursday and was so tired went to bed without dinner.

The next day Dorothy and I thought we would like to see Irving Johnson's brigantine Yankee sail, but the embassy chauffeur couldn't find the East Asiatic wharf where they were tied up. Traffic, which is terrific here, delayed us. Well, we arrived finally at the dock but the yacht had sailed. I thought I saw in the distance the mast head looming up over the horizon, but that was all. We came tearing back to the embassy in a samlar. This time he rode a motorcycle and I was so relieved when the embassy appeared in sight. We only have an hour at noon for lunch and I had eaten a sandwich at my desk and drank a coke in order to go.

I had the most delightful day Sunday. Mrs. Barrington called for me and we went to the church service together. Then she took me to the Sports Club. There were a lot of people

Library of Congress

sitting around the pool to whom she introduced us. Colonel Phelps joined our table and when I was introduced to him he said, "Oh, you are the sparkplug the padre was telling us about." Not knowing what he could be possibly talking about, I said, "What?" Then he explained how impressed he was that I had been only a day in Bangkok when I searched out the church and came to the 8:00 service. I laughed and thought nothing of it.

Colonel Phelps is with the Military Assistance program here and very attractive.

Mrs. Barrington and I swam the full length of the 300 foot pool and back again, then had beer and sandwiches under an umbrella at the side of the pool. It was lovely and I am going to join. There is also a race track there with a golf course on the inside, but the races are not on now due to the rainy season.

American Embassy, Bangkok, September 20, 1954

Since I last wrote to you I have been working very hard. I wonder Dad, if there was much in your California papers about a young 19 year old boy from Los Angeles who came out here to Bangkok to be a Buddhist priest. His family wrote us to try to find him as he was about to marry a Thai girl and have him come home as his mother was very ill. So Mr. Lloyd was in charge of locating him. He was out of the office quite a bit. One day he was gone nearly all day for the boy had committed suicide and the girl tried to but did not die. The Bangkok papers were full of it and we are all wondering how the California press played it up. Mr. Lloyd took the Thai clerk from the office with him to interpret which left me there along. Then came ten Thai officers who needed visas immediately. It was not my job, so two vice consuls and two other girls came in to help me out. It was all very hectic.

Last Saturday I went down town and had my hair done at the Trocadero Hotel. The staff were all Chinese and did very well. A shampoo and set was only 12 baht, a manicure 11 baht, which at the present rate of 22 to the dollar you will see is very cheap. The price to

Library of Congress

make a dress is about \$5.00. Cotton dresses can be made up from the colorful sarong materials and the exquisite Thai silk is beautiful made into dressy dresses.

After the 8:00 communion service, Sunday, Mrs. Barrington invited me to her home for breakfast, where I met her husband who was a dear. They have a most attractive house where they have been living for four years and have lived a lot in the Orient. The table was set with the typical Thai bronze ware which gives an exotic touch. Next Saturday afternoon she is going to take me to China town and the thieves market. Sunday I have invited them to come to the Club for the buffet supper and film.

One of the girls at the embassy, Beulah Buck, kindly invited me to the Oriental for luncheon and to introduce me to the housekeeper who is Polish, married to a Thai, and knows a Thai woman who speaks French who may be able to do my alterations and mending. It was lovely sitting there watching the boats go by on the river, muddy though it was.

I had Dr. Wells and his wife to tea at the Club Saturday. Earl Wilson, connected with the Cultural Attach#s office is painting some charming Christmas cards for me. The French vice consul at the embassy invited me for dinner the other evening to a little house he had just moved into, which was very nice. I loved the opportunity of keeping up with my French.

One Sunday after church, Mrs. Barrington and I had a cup of coffee on the Oriental Hotel veranda. There was a boat just taking off for the summer palace where she said the "King and I" was laid. I was longing to go, but promised myself to get my Christmas cards off. And we wouldn't leave until nearly midnight and it was four hours up the river with lunch and Siam dancing aboard.

Mr. Clyde Clark who has just arrived to be in the economic section, and was posted in Madrid knows the Duchess Delasara and my friend Gilly there. Such fun talking to him about these people. I have just heard I have an opportunity to fly to Saigon on Wednesday

Library of Congress

at 7:00am. I am so excited. The Civil Aeronautics plane goes occasionally and can take passengers, but I never dreamt I would have this chance so soon. It seems it will not be coming back for three weeks, but I don't mind paying my way back for I am too old and may not again have this chance. Must get visa and piastres which are cheaper to get here and then pack, give away my ticket to the benefit performance the Bangkok St. Andrews Society was giving under the royal patronage of Her Majesty, the Queen Grandmother, President of the Thai Red Cross Society, of "Rob Roy", the premier of the Walt Disney film. The plane takes about four hours and I shall be staying at the Majestic Hotel. I have requested Air France to obtain a reservation back to Bangkok on the plane Sunday morning. We fly over Phnom Penh, but do not stop. I heard Saigon is like a little Paris.

There were three girls transferred from the Paris embassy there I knew. Mr. Lloyd, my nice young vice consul is such a dear about letting me go on these trips and encourages me to take all the opportunities I have, which I appreciate so much.

Later, October 4

Since last week, quite a lot has happened. I didn't get to Saigon after all. The headlines in the newspaper put me off. They read "French Troops Seal Saigon," so I had a talk with the pilot and decided I had better not go, especially as I was the only passenger and had to get back alone, I might have been stranded. I was disappointed, of course, but it gave me a chance to use the tickets to the benefit performance and took Rosemary Smeltzer, Personnel Assistant at the embassy who lives at the American Club. It proved a very thrilling evening for I saw the King and Queen. We were seated upstairs and not far behind where their blue satin chairs were placed. Everyone rose, of course, when they came in, as the Thai national anthem was played. The Queen is perfectly precious. She is tiny, chic, exquisite, dainty, gracious and very charming. She came in carrying a bouquet of orchids and wore sort of a hyacinth blue dress with a little peplum bordered with a light thread of gold and tiny buttons from the neck down to the peplum. Her hair

Library of Congress

was fastened with a diamond pin in the back. A charming touch of glamour for those who couldn't see her pretty face. The King looked quite serious and everyone says he wears a mask all the time, no expression at all. Both are quite young. They had several men and women in attendance. The balcony was decorated with orchids and garlands of sweet smelling flowers. When they left some of the attendants carried sort of a gold casket. When I inquired what that might be, it seemed it contained cigarettes. Then another attendant carried in four glasses of an orange drink in glasses with gold tops. It was all very impressive. The audience was made up, of course, of a great many Britishers. Some of the men were in kilts as the St. Andrews Society presented the film. Then there were Thais and several officers from the embassy. I saw Colonel Phelps and his pretty, newly arrived wife, Dinny. It was a real Thai gala and my first evening out in Bangkok. I went up to thank Mr. Parsons the next morning for being so kind to offer me the tickets for it all.

Florence Barrington came by to take me to communion on Sunday and to their home for breakfast. She was very disappointed to learn via the servants' grapevine that their lovely house is to be taken over after the first of the year for the Cambodian Minister, who now lives next door to them.

As I have been asked to translate French at the embassy on several occasions to speak to the Cambodian and Vietnam legations, I think it would be more sensible to carry on with French lessons rather than learning the Thai language and may join the Alliance Française which is near the Club. I may join the Siamese Society too. They have interesting lectures and go on fascinating trips now and then.

A chap arrived from the Foreign Office in London to be posted at the British embassy in Laos. When he went to the airport, no one knew where the plane was and calmly said, "Oh, well, you can take it next Wednesday." We are all laughing over the casualness of these people.

Library of Congress

The Wells asked me for dinner last Sunday and they had also asked the Rev. Folk of my Episcopal church. But he and his wife had people coming from Singapore and were unable to come. So they had another couple from their mission. After dinner Dr. Wells showed me all around their hospital. They lived just next to it.

The other day when I went to the ladies' room at the embassy, I had a frightening experience. There coiled around the handle that rolls up the windows was a snake staring at me. A girl ran for the Thai receptionist and when she came she exclaimed, "Oh, it is poisonous, it is not the green kind," and sent for someone to kill it. I looked on horrified when the Thai used a native type rake and hit it directly on the head. When it uncoiled it must have been five feet long, though quite small in diameter. Fancy, someone might have sat on it. You can imagine how I tip toe in their now, look well around fearing the mate might be somewhere near.

Herman Seiler, manager of the American Club, said now is the season that snakes wash down from the rivers and crawl out of the klongs. Sue Parish told me her maid broke all the breakfast dishes on the tray when she looked up and saw one looking down on her from the rafters in the dining room as she was serving breakfast. I have never been in a place where I have heard such weird nocturnal sounds. And, even the daytime the caw, caw of the crows is eerie.

I am getting used to the shabby buildings. In fact, Bangkok has a way of growing on one if you could keep your eyes lifted from the squalid beneath you to the exquisite beauty of the temples above you.

October 5, 1954

Next weekend, as Monday is a holiday, I am going with Dinny and Bill Phelps to Hua Hin where I went in February, but this time we are renting the Borneo cottage way up the beach. They have asked a couple of chaps from JUSMAAG so we will drive down in a

Library of Congress

big station wagon and I plan to take all of my beach equipment. Last Sunday we drove to Ban Saing which is the beach nearest here. There are convenient little cabanas all along the beach where we had our lunch and changed for swimming. I just managed to have a swim before it rained. The only snag to the place is it can only be reached by car, but most people have them here.

I was kept busy meeting people at the airport last week. The Counselor at the embassy in Korea, Carl Strom, asked me to meet his daughter, Caroline, who was a nice young girl of about 20 who planned to join Lucy Briggs in London where she will be for a while. So, I shall give her the address of my British artist friend, Elizabeth Keith, who had presented me with her autographed book she had written and illustrated with her wonderful woodblock prints of Korea.

Then a brief telegram came saying, "Meet Mrs. Kennedy." She was due on a Saturday at 2:00pm, so I dashed away from my little sewing woman I always have on that afternoon, in order to be at the airport. The telegram gave no indication which Mrs. Kennedy she was. So, when she arrived I politely asked if she was the Mrs. Kennedy whose husband got a fish hook caught in his eye. She smiled and said, "We are the ones who had all of the nine children." So, I realized then, that she was Rose Kennedy, wife of Joseph P. Kennedy, who was our former Ambassador to the United Kingdom during the war. She was accompanied by her niece, Mary Jo Goggin. They had booked air-conditioned rooms at the Trocadero, but the PanAm man in Hong Kong thought they would prefer the Oriental, so the rooms were canceled. I took them to the Oriental. I had no more seen them up to their rooms and was talking on the phone to Mrs. Anschutz, arranging the car for them to the Sports Club, when I turned around and they were down again with long faces saying the rooms were too hot (of course it was the hottest time of the year). So, I quickly said, "We will go over to the Troc and see if we can retrieve your original rooms. So we did, but no luck, all of the air-conditioned rooms were taken. So then I suggested that we go around to the Princess Hotel. They said they had to have separate rooms, but they didn't look too inviting. Then I suddenly thought of the Rat Hotel (it really has another

Library of Congress

name but everybody calls it the Rat). It was quite a distance from the town but near the temples. Meantime, the embassy car wasn't working very well so they suggested taking a taxi and away they went, with them their luggage from the Oriental. I heard from Mr. Anschutz Monday they were back at the Oriental but moving to the Metropole, a hotel no one usually goes to, but could only hope it was quiet and air cooled and pleased them. I saw them again at Mrs. Peurifoy's and Mrs. Kennedy looked very attractive and young in a white dress printed with field flowers and a hat to match and wore magnificent jewels. Mrs. Peurifoy sent me home in an embassy car with them and when I got out at the American Club, Mrs. Kennedy said she was on a strict diet and wondered if the manager, Herman Seiler, would be kind enough to prepare a chicken for her to take on the plane tomorrow. Of course, he gladly acquiesced. She and the chicken flew away off the next day voicing deep appreciation.

Mr. Anschutz knowing I had given up my entire Saturday afternoon, kindly said I could take some time off on Monday, so I did as I had to arrange the seating for the American Association luncheon when the speaker was to be the German Charg# d'Affaires. Then I went to Jim Thompson's to get the painting Earl Wilson did at the American Club and had framed in a bamboo frame mounted with a white Thai silk mat. When his French assistant, Mrs. Burrows saw me, she said, "You have a present from Mrs. Kennedy." Well, I nearly fell over. When I opened it I found the most beautiful blue Thai silk stole. Mrs. Kennedy had asked Mrs. Burrows what color I liked and Mrs. Burrows said she suggested blue to match my eyes. I was really quite overcome by her generosity and wrote at once to thank her at the Ritz in Paris where she was going next. Jim Thompson showed me the May 16 issue of Life with an interesting article with colored pictures of his Thai silk business. He said Mrs. Kennedy ordered some silk exactly like that in the photo for a dress to wear in Palm Beach.

Library of Congress

In the March 7 issue, there is an interesting article on Rangoon. Mrs. Peurifoy said several months ago there appeared in Time an article about Miss Caulfield and the blind school. I feel I must subscribe to these magazines. One gets starved for such magazines out here.

October 11, 1954

Married in Japan just 24 years ago today. Had been wanting to go to the Nelson Hayes library and get some books on this part of the world with Mary Singhouse, the ambassador's secretary. Some people come in for a passport from Saigon and they say it is quite quiet there now.

American Club, October 16, 1954

The days are glorious and I plan to go to the Bangkok Sports Club for a swim on my noon hour now as two other girls do for we can ride over in the embassy car and they call to take us back to the embassy. I take a sandwich and eat it after my swim while basking in the sun.

I have met the Norths, friends of Alice Spaulding Bowen from Honolulu. He is a motion picture producer and she is very clever too in the business that puts bubbles in Coke Cola. Both are extremely attractive and have asked me to come up and watch them shooting scenes some evening at 9:00. It isn't far from here.

We have been very busy in the embassy lately and I am getting a lot of experience in the consular work for which I am most grateful. It is so pleasant to work for someone who is so nice.

American Club, October 21, 1954

I called the Coutons, Thai friends, and my Persian friend Malek. Mr. Couton was most cordial asking if he could come to the Club to see me that very afternoon and bring his

Library of Congress

wife. They couldn't have been kinder and asked if there was anything at all I wanted. I said I would like to find some silver paper for lining chests to send to my sister. They invited me for dinner at a Chinese place this Tuesday and then to their home. Mrs. Couton is going to Chiang Mai on the fourth of November for ten days.

Next Sunday I am taking the all day boat trip sponsored by the YWCA, up to the King's summer palace where the "King and I" was filmed. We leave at 7:00am and are supposed to get back at 7:00pm, but it depends on the tide, it may be midnight.

The UN black tie party the other evening was quite interesting. Most of the nations put on a skit of some kind. The French did a wonderful takeoff of the "Frere Jacques," well known nightclub life in Paris. The Chinese did sort of a drama in their gorgeous costumes and high falsetto voices. I loved the Japanese dances. Mr. Janning and his French wife, had taken Beulah Buck and me and wanted to leave before it was over. So, Miss Cliamous wanted to see the Laos program and Thai dancing.

The Marines at the embassy are giving a big formal ball and the Ambassador's residence the 10th of November. I got out my green taffeta formal and could hardly zip it up the back, so shall swim at noon all week again and only have a sandwich. I lost a few pounds in the week doing that.

Florence Barrington took me to see the apartment building going up just across the street from the church that was being put up by a prince, a member of the royal family. I had spoken twice with him about it.

I went to the library Saturday and got a book called "Land That Smiles," about Thailand and written by a Mr. Wood, a former British consul, now living in Chiang Mai, where I hope to go over the long Thanksgiving holiday weekend. We have a consulate there and Rufus Smith is the consul.

Library of Congress

Everyone carries baskets here. We have bowls of lovely small orchids on our dining table frequently and gardenia bushes grow along the klong. I love the mornings when I get up and look out to see the gay plumaged birds flitting in and out of the palm trees.

American Club, October 24, 1954

I finally sent my note of introduction Alice Pool gave me to her friend, Conrad Parkman, who invited me to dinner with a dear Australian girl and a Vietnamese chap, who had just received his visa to go to school in Illinois. He has a brother at the Vietnam legation who I had met at the Club. It was a most amusing evening. Conrad had two beautiful Siamese cats with the names of Cadillac and Quiet. Someone suggested giving the name of Jeep to the offspring. He also had a gibbons for a pet. In case you don't know, it is a small size chimpanzee. Many people have them here but they rather give me the creeps. Conrad, a chap of about 34, was a Fulbright teacher, but now in the police department and lived here about four years near the King. In the film he showed of his trip around the world were pictures of the King's mother who entertained in Lucerne. I understand she is coming soon to visit the King. He mentioned having some lilies planted their by him that were brought from Switzerland. Their house was surrounded by a klong and at the time I thought how romantic it was to sit on his veranda and looking at the lovely fuchsia colored water lilies that bloom at night. But not so. The next day I found my legs and arms covered with mosquito bits. It is the second time I dined in a house with no screens downstairs. You spend the entire evening waving away the bugs and scratching.

My friend, Florence Barrington, said, "Instead of spraying yourself with Chanel #5, you should have anointed yourself with mosquito preventative." How true!

When I arrived, his first remark had been, "Don't you want to take off your shoes?" I'm glad I didn't because my feet would have been covered too.

American Club, November 14, 1954

Library of Congress

Have just come from having luncheon with my friends, the Barringtons and feel very sad. They have been transferred to Manila. They are pleased because their son, Jack, has just been transferred there from Japan, Branch of the National City Bank, but I shall miss them terribly. Florence has been such a good friend and I have not met anyone like her here.

Also news came on Friday, while Mr. Lloyd was on holiday, that his home leave orders had come. He is to start immediately on eligibility, January 23, and then be sent to Oslo, Norway. I knew his wife would be anxious to hear the news so after work I took the message to her and we had a long talk together. I have liked them so much and shall be very sorry to see them leave. I understand his replacement will be coming from Trieste, but don't know when.

The rainy season is over now and the days are slightly cooler. Arthur (Inaudible) and his wife, who were in Paris, arrived and brought my pearl clips from Mikimoto in Japan.

The Marine Ball given at the residence which is just across the road from the American Club was delightful. When we walked up the drive it was like entering an old plantation house in the deep South. It is quite large and open all around.

It was Josie, the wife of our first Ambassador to Siam, Edwin F. Stanton, in 1946, who discovered the residence. It was set far back off Wireless Road with an avenue of magnificent dark spreading rain trees leading to it. A sprawling, sagging house, painted chocolate brown, with shutters hanging precariously and the whole house listed to one side. The extensive gardens surrounding the house was crammed with rusty junk, remnants of jeeps, trucks, etc., gun carriers and tanks, left there by Japanese troops. The property was encircled by a wide canal containing more rusted junk that jutted out of the water at grotesque angles. Nevertheless, the possibilities of the place kindled Josie's imagination. She found it in shocking repair. The Japanese troops had burned spots on the teakwood floors with their charcoal braziers. Plumbing had been wantonly smashed and ripped out. Not one inch of electric wire remained. The fine tile floor of the enormous

Library of Congress

patio was stained by motor oil drippings. The property belonged to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She asked if the Foreign Office would undertake the necessary repairs if the United States government were to rent the place. Taken a back they agreed. An army of workmen was set to the task of cleaning and renovating, a stupendous job that took months, complicated by the lack of material.

When I arrived, eight years later, 1954, I was enchanted with the place and it was still a sprawling structure but with great charm and atmosphere. The same magnificent shady trees still stood and led to the delightful house. Rooms opened on to the now beautifully cultivated gardens to accommodate guests, where a staggering number of government officials, prominent Thai, visiting VIPs and celebrities were entertained sometimes at small tables where conversation was always scintillating and the atmosphere was always warm and cordial.

A most horrible thing happened last evening. Mr. Depin, in our embassy general services, called me and said the packing company was getting his boxes out of the Godown warehouse and had gotten mine out by mistake. But it was one of those happy mistakes for they discovered white ants all over it, known in our country as termites and I should come immediately and look at it. So Mr. Alexander came for me and showed it to me by flashlight. I was horrified. He said it should be opened without delay because he didn't know how far the termites may have penetrated. So I was over there at 7:30 this morning having dreamed all night about it. Well, they sprayed it first, then began the grand opening while I waited breathlessly with ten coolies. Fortunately, the termites had not yet gotten into my boxes but, when the paper that lined the van was pulled up the termites were thick and they had already riddled the floor of the wooden van. Luckily it was lined with that oily paper or they would have made a sorry mess of my things. They had been working about a week. I was told this Godown was located near the river in dark low ground and the floor is of wood that the beasts love. So they started on my box which was of pine, which they also love. It was a godsend that it was discovered now. It would not have been long before I might have had a real tragedy. My linen and everything was strewn all over the driveway.

Library of Congress

The excelsior and boxes in the enormous van were all burned and made such a large flame that the police came for they had seen the smoke from the lookout tower.

The embassy had started classes in Thai every Monday and Thursday from 8-9:00. I have joined, so now I can say a few words in Thai.

American Embassy, November 30, 1954

Just a note to let you know I am safely back from my Thanksgiving weekend in Chiang Mai. I went up by train on Wednesday night which took 24 hours and flew back by plane Sunday afternoon, which took 2 and a half hours, and had a wonderful time. Mrs. Barrington sent her car and chauffeur to take me to the train where the Colsons were waiting for me with a box lunch and a note of introduction to the Prince of Chiang Mai. When I reached there, the First Secretary of our embassy here, Sam Eaton, who was spending a week there, met me at the station with Rufus Smith, the Consul of our Chiang Mai office. Shortly after I was taken to a progressive Thanksgiving dinner party with about 40 other Americans. The last place was the Harold Youngs. He is a famous animal expert who traps rare specimens to send to the National Museum in Washington and showed his zoo which is quite large and filled with bears, monkeys, lynx, etc., etc.

Then I browsed in the shops and saw the silk weaving, how they make silver bowls out of Indian rupees and visited the temples. An American artist I had met in Bangkok, Ara Lee Gaul, was staying at the same hotel and I was especially delighted she was there since no one in the hotel spoke English, although it was quite nice and modern and served the best food in Chiang Mai.

The prince, who had shown me around, said his wife would have taken me to see the elephants in the teak forests if I could stay over a day as they are very far in the jungle, but I felt I should get back to the embassy. Although, when Mr. Lloyd heard this he said I could have stayed on. He is always so understanding.

Library of Congress

Chiang Mai was surrounded by mountains and was so refreshing, not the hectic traffic as here and much cleaner. A quiet, charming place to spend a holiday.

It has been poignant with excitement here the last few days what with the arrival of the new Ambassador, Peurifoy, and his deputy he had in Greece and Guatemala, who he brought with him, Norbert Anschutz. The King's birthday yesterday and the Cinerama show on Saturday and the opening of the Fair which takes place tomorrow. Also the animal bazaar which was opened by the King's mother, who has just arrived from Switzerland. The Queen was to have opened it but she is pregnant, expecting in April. The King's sister accompanied the Queen Mother as she opened the booths. They are both very attractive. I bought a few odds and ends. It was very international. The wives from each embassy and legation had a booth and sold articles from their own country. I saw a lot of people I knew and chatted with the padre of the church. I was so glad to at last meet Mrs. Yamamoto of the Japanese embassy, whom Mrs. Reisneider had asked me to look up but had not yet done so. I fell into conversation with a charming Japanese woman from whom I had bought a purse and finally said, "I wonder if you know Mrs. Yamamoto?" And so it was a lovely surprise when she said presently, "I am Mrs. Yamamoto." She said Mrs. Reisneider had written her I was coming and wondered why I had not gotten in touch, which made me feel a bit delinquent. She was adorable.

When I saw a very pretty woman standing with a little white hat on, which was rare as no one wears even little hats here, I inquired who she was. Florence Barrington said she was Mrs. Peurifoy and introduced me. Florence's son had crossed on the Cleveland with her and the Ambassador as he was going to his next assignment at the National City Bank in Manila and had a pleasant chat. Her husband had been brought around to the various offices at the embassy the day before. He is very good looking and seems like he has a strong character. Florence also introduced me to the daughter of the Premier Priboon.

Saturday night one of the boys at the embassy had a cocktail party and we all went on to the Cinerama show afterwards. It was a big invitational black tie affair given by the

Library of Congress

Americans. All the dignitaries were there, including the King and his cabinet and all the diplomats. Ambassador Peurifoy gave a wonderful speech, his first. I had never seen Cinerama before. It was terrific. I went with the Paralillies who have been transferred here from Paris and one or two others.

We went to Two Shay Eye afterwards. It was the nightclub here and was packed. I got home at 3:00am and was up at 7:30am to go to communion. Florence had invited me to lunch with some out of town friends.

December, 1954

I felt very honored the other day when the Personnel Officer came to me and said that Ambassador Peurifoy was interested in having the VIPs given special attention and wanted someone who could answer their letters. He was very anxious that the congressmen received every courtesy upon arrival and while here—making hotel and plane reservations, etc. So Mr. Clore, the Administrative Officer, recommended me! As soon as the other girl replaces me in the consular section, I am to go up to the Ambassador's office and assist him. I think it will be very interesting and I am very pleased to be selected.

December 9, 1954

I wrote my sister I wished I could have access to her secretarial books and felt I needed "Who's Who," so I would know more about some of the important people who were coming out here. The Personnel Officer, Mr. Janey, said Mr. Acheson, the Secretary of State, was not very popular with Congress and they are trying to rectify all that now. I would have to contact Marcelle L'Conte of our Paris embassy for a little job description of how she handled her work, but believe she is on route to the US now.

We have a holiday Friday and thought I should like to go away but decided to stay at home and get thoroughly settled in my room and all set for the new job. Mrs. Peurifoy has invited

Library of Congress

all of the American ladies to call tomorrow afternoon from 4:30 -6:00. Then she will be having a regular at-home every Wednesday.

We can telephone the US for \$9.00. I would like to call you all around Christmas if I can make the proper arrangements.

December 13, 1954

Christmas is creeping up all too fast. It is lovely, bright and warm here...

Today I moved into my new office, one of the few air-conditioned and next to Mr. Anschutz's, who is the Deputy Chief of Mission and who called me to his office and handed me this telegram from the Ambassador at Phnom Penh, Cambodia, saying that his wife, Mrs. McClintock, is arriving tomorrow and he wants me to meet her and assist her until her departure on Friday. Also, to make her return plane reservations. This will be the sort of thing I will be doing now. The telephone service is awful and I could not use the phone all morning, so I went down town at noon, ate a sandwich in the car, and made a reservation at all three hotels, the Oriental, Princess and Trocadero, just to be sure she would have one. It has been difficult now due to the Fair that is on.

Florence introduced me to the person in charge at the Oriental, so I will be sure to get the right attention on these things. Mr. Anschutz outlined a little more of my work. I am to find out first who Ambassador Peurifoy is to make official calls on and who he can just leave cards on. He also asked me to arrange the calls for Mr. Conover, the new man in charge of the economics section who incidentally was at the Paris embassy when I was there. Then eventually I am to write biographical reports. There will be various matters of protocol I shall have to know about. It all sounds very interesting and I am very pleased with the new assignment.

I saw Mrs. Peurifoy today and told her how much I had enjoyed her party. She is so beautiful and sweet. Everyone has fallen in love with her.

Library of Congress

I spent the long weekend getting settled in my room. I shall put white orchids in my gilt bird cage. They are only 30 cents a spray. I made a Japanese flower arrangement of three rose-colored anthuriums, the three only 75 cents. The manager is going to paint my room after the first of the year. Then I am content to stay here. It is so convenient to the embassy and just across the road from the residence.

You will probably hear from Mary Singhouse, the Ambassador's secretary who is now on route on home leave and will be transferred to Teheran where she wanted to go, I don't know why. She is bringing you a little gift, Mildred, and will tell you all about my job as she trained me. I will miss her terribly. She is the nicest girl I have ever known in the Foreign Service. The present secretary to the Ambassador, June Acough, and the one to Mr. Anschutz, Georgia Marlow, are newer than I, so we are all feeling our way.

The Ambassador just gave a reception for 500 people and it was an opportunity for me to meet quite a few. I met Elaine Trimble's neighbor, Mr. Kunjara, and his daughter, Toi, who remembered them. I had a long chat with the Japanese Ambassador and his wife. Others I met were Mr. and Mrs. Peekdip. He is in charge of protocol here, and I shall have a lot of contact with him. Then the Norwegian Minister and his wife, General and Mrs. Hull. He has taken MacArthur's place here in the Pacific. He appeared with six of his officers wearing the new bestowed Order of the White Elephant and very impressive. I also met the French wife of the Minister of Finance and the Chinese wife of the French military air attach#. When I said goodbye to the Ambassador, he introduced me to the Belgian Minister standing beside him and chatted with the wife of the Swedish Minister I had met. Also met several Americans in several organizations I had not known before. There was a very good orchestra and the house and garden lent themselves very nicely for the number of people who came.

The Peurifoys are beginning to give a lot of dinners now and I am to arrange the seating according to protocol which is quite a job, knowing where to put the royal family and where

Library of Congress

to put in the diplomatic corps and all the others. It is all very difficult, but interesting and so much to learn. I am enjoying it all immensely.

January 20, 1955

Dear Mildred

You will be interested to hear that I have just come from meeting Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. and her daughter, Grace, Mrs. William Macmillian, at the airport, and taken both of them to the Oriental Hotel. I remember that you had written that they were planning to come out here. Then a circular airgram was received from the Department that they were coming, but gave no exact date, until a telegram arrived this afternoon about 2:00pm from Bill Donovan to say they would be here today! I immediately called the Oriental and PanAm and luckily the plane had not yet arrived but due at 4:30pm. Ambassador and Mrs. Peurifoy were relieved to hear that I would go to the airport for I had mentioned having met her son at some of your cocktail parties and her daughter-in-law, Frances, who married her son, Quinton, was an old friend. Mr. Martin Taylor from PanAm had already arrived at the airport and was assisting with their luggage but discovered they had left their passports on the aircraft, but he hastily retrieved them.

I inquired about Frances who was supposed to meet them here, but Mrs. Roosevelt said that when she spoke over the telephone in Manila with Cornelius, learned that Frances' mother, Mrs. Webb, was still in the hospital waiting to have an operation, but hoped to come soon.

I remembered how kind your long time friends, the Webbs, had been to me when I was on route to Washington after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Princess Rangsit, invited me over to tea the other afternoon and then she and her husband took me to see the apartment he is building. He had decided to put in a frig and facilities for cooking since I spoke to him some time ago. I think I would be warm on the

Library of Congress

third floor. Still feel I am better off at the American Club where I am properly feed and safe and I love looking out upon the spacious lawn at beautiful birds and palm trees.

There are about six VIPs arriving on the Cumshome I have to look after, but will be happy to look for your friends, the Conger Pratts.

My new job has kept me terribly busy. The Personnel Officer said, "We will try to get you a good grade." At present I am an FSS-12 and I hope I can become an FSS-11 for it would also mean I would have a better living allowance.

January 20, 1955, American Club, Bangkok

We [Roosevelts] had such a pleasant chat driving in from the airport. They said Frances had planned to paint 40 paintings while here. Mrs. Macmillian knew Jim Thompson, of Thai silk fame, who told me later he was so glad I had gone to the airport to meet them for his car broke down at the last minute. He is having them to dinner tonight with Mrs. Peurifoy. The Ambassador is in Chiang Mai. There are also about four royal princesses that are entertaining them.

I have engaged a car and guide for three hours tomorrow to take us to the marble temple and emerald Buddha. Then luncheon with them at the Oriental Hotel. I have still a photo that was snapped of Mrs. Roosevelt standing beside me as I released a little bird from its cage which had a Thai religious symbolism. I may suggest taking them over to the Sports Club afterwards if they aren't too tired.

Mrs. Peurifoy gave a small luncheon for them and invited me, but it was on the Friday that I could not go, but appreciated her thinking of me.

Several weeks after Mrs. Roosevelt had left, Frances did arrive, but unfortunately in the midst of the SEATO conference when there were no hotel rooms available. In fact, PanAm sent cables to al of their passengers not to come for several days and warning them that

Library of Congress

there would be no rooms. Luckily, I managed to get a room for her at the American Club. She could have gone to the Oriental the next day, but liked the American Club so much she decided to stay here for several days. Then went to Angkor Wat for a week. When she returns, she will probably have to stay at the Park Hotel next to the American Club as there is nothing available at the Club now. Then she hopes to go to Chiang Mai and do some more painting.

I took her on the early morning floating market trip last Sunday with the Phelps. It was, of course, most picturesque and Frances sketched the entire time. Then we all went over to the Phelps for some cold beer.

The night after she arrived, she was invited to the Ambassador's dinner he gave for Senator Margaret Chase Smith. It was a big affair with so many celebrities that I worked very hard over the seating arrangement. Princess Sawan invited her for dinner Sunday and to see the Thai dancing. She is a dear girl and so like her lovely mother, I always liked so much. She said she stopped off in Kansas City to see her and she looked surprisingly well.

Frances left me the most precious little pen set with brilliant stones when she went off to Angkor Wat. On April 2, 1955, the day before Palm Sunday, I saw Frances off on the plane at the crack of dawn. I asked Mr. Anschutz if I should engage a car to take her to the airport at 4:30am and he said he didn't think it was necessary as she was not a VIP or great American and had no claim on the embassy, even though he had gone to school with her in Kansas City, Missouri. But, somehow, I couldn't see myself lying in bed while she went off at that early hour alone for I know how I appreciated it when my friends made an effort to get up at such hours to see me off, and said as much to Mr. Anschutz. Then he said, "Of course, if you want to, it would be very nice." So, I did. And there were a lot of little things I found I could help her with at the last minute. She really is a dear girl and I have not for a long time been so impressed with such a personality. She is truly worthy of the great name she bears. She did quite a few sketches I liked but didn't finish them. She

Library of Congress

plans to put in the sky and foliage when she got home to Oyster Bay, New York. She was very popular while here and was up at dawn to paint and out nearly every evening. She left presents for everyone. She wanted to leave me her book, Cultural Southeast Asia, a marvelous book with wonderful illustrations on the subject. Costs about \$6 here, but as she had made so many marginal notes I knew she would really like to keep it and I would feel guilty accepting it. She tried to get it here for me, but was told it would not be here for months. I really did want it very much, but relinquished it with deep appreciation for her very kind thought.

Frances and my sister Mildred had been friends for many years and my heart ached for her ever since I heard of the terrible tragedy that befell her. She was in England during the war working with the Red Cross Club Mobile when she met Quinton and they were married in Bradford, England, April 12, 1944. Quinton had graduated cum laude from Harvard. During the war he took part in the North Africa and Normandy invasions, was severely wounded and decorated three times for gallantry. Soon after he was sent to China. After the war he worked in New York in the office of China National Aviation Corps an affiliate of PanAm, then was sent to Shanghai as its American manager with his wife Frances and their three little girls. Late in December 1948, he flew from Shanghai to Hong Kong. The pilot of the plane apparently blinded by sudden fog over Hong Kong crashed and burned on Basalt Island. None of the 35 passengers and crew survived. Frances and her three little girls came back to the United States and lived at Old Orchard, Oyster Bay, Long Island, with their mother-in-law, Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. who wrote in her autobiography, (this book was given me by Mrs. Peurifoy) "Day before yesterday was an incalculable blessing to me," because she came to live with her.

Frances, every Christmas sends me a sketch she does of her growing family which touches me deeply.

March 7, 1955

Library of Congress

My trip to Hua Hin was just what I wanted and had, a real rest on a most heavenly beach and in a very nice hotel. I took the train on Friday so was a day ahead of the crowd, and walked along the divine beach with sandwich so I could stay out all day. I was about the only one on the beach, but the next day it was very crowded. The Ambassador and Mrs. Peurifoy came with little Danny, their nine year old son, and the Norwegian Minister and his wife and several people from our embassy. Mac Hall, second secretary in the political section, drove down with one of the Thais in the Ministry who showed me all around Hua Hin. I decided to return on the train Monday, although the Ambassador said the German Charg# would drive me back and Mac Hall also offered to drive me the next day. But I feared already I had had too much sun. When the Ambassador returned he said I should have stayed over and seemed a little piqued that I didn't. We had had a pleasant chat on the beach where he was heavily guarded and which seemed to annoy him.

The next night was a reception at the Lewis Davises. He was the manager of the Bank of America and had known Charlie when in London. He had a large house and lovely garden where there were many guests I enjoyed meeting, including Prince Sawan and several other Thais. I chatted with the Charg# from India, Mr. Setti, who was very attractive, and several others from his country. And Prince Rangsit, with whose wife I had had tea. I had gone with the Spinks who invited me for dinner after the reception. He is a great scholar of Japanese and had a fabulous library of books on Japan, many of which were in the Japanese language which he reads fluently. They lived for several years in Japan and their charming home is filled with many Japanese things they collected while there. I love looking at his Japanese prints.

The other evening the chief of USIS (United States Information Service), Dr. Meagor, and his wife, gave a lovely reception in their garden which was all decorated with Japanese lanterns and artistic flower arrangements. I went with Sam Eaton, Secretary of the embassy and his attractive wife from Chile who spoke with a charming accent. After the reception, I invited them to come back to the American Club with me for dinner. The other

Library of Congress

night they invited me for dinner with the Conovers. He was in our embassy in Paris and now counselor of the economic section here. Also, the Attach# of the German legation, a German doctor.

Not long ago, Mac Hall, a most attractive chap in our embassy, whose sweet mother is here with him, thought I might like to look at the house of a departing American belonging to Princess Priboon. So we were invited to tea. But I thought the house was too big, however, I did enjoy having tea with them and meeting Princess Priboon, who was an authority on Buddhism. The departing American was Virginia Hightower, being transferred to Chile to be head of the language center there.

I went home with the Halls for pot luck dinner with them. I was sorry to hear that Mac was being transferred to Naples and I will miss them. Mrs. Hall lent me a fascinating book on Thailand entitled "Mango Season," by Grung Hall. The characters in it are disguised by name but actually certain people who used to be in our embassy. Mac and I are going to the Siam Society for dinner this Thursday and I have asked him and the Spinks to come by for a drink before.

The day the Cumshome arrived was Washington's birthday, but no holiday for me. I had about four couples to look up plus the Conger Pratts and Pearsons, who were not on my list. Mac Hall asked if he could come with me to be of any help and I was most grateful. But when the Ambassador heard they were aboard, he asked me to write them a little note for his signature to say he was sorry he couldn't entertain them but he was having to go to the airport to meet Mr. Robinson, the Assistant Secretary of State.

The Conger Pratts invited me to have luncheon with them, but I was obliged to decline because I had several people to look after, but asked them to have cocktails with Mac Hall and me at the Oriental before they rejoined the Cumshome.

Library of Congress

I would have liked to have seen the ship, but they had to come up the river in a tender that took about three hours. The newspaper said, "It was a millionaire's cruise." Mrs. Pratt said one passenger had her own masseuse aboard with her. I enjoyed them all so much.

Last week I was asked to come down to the consular section while the girl had to relieve the secretary of the administrative section, who was on leave. So, I have been carrying on wearing two hats and getting as many inquiries on protocol here as I am on consular work.

I must be up at 5 tomorrow morning to go to the airport to meet the Ambassador from Canberra and Mrs. Peaslee, and then at 11:00 to the Oriental to help arrange the seating for the American Association luncheon, which is given every other Tuesday with some important man being the speaker. Tomorrow it will be the Austrian Minister.

Shortly after received a beautiful pen from Martin Taylor, manager of PanAm with note. I received a nice note from my sister's sister-in-law introduction to General Cunjara who lived next to them in Washington, D.C., and planned going to the States soon. And also a note from Mrs. Hubbard and one from Florence Davidson saying she had given Helen Keller, a very old friend, a note to me. But I don't think she is coming to Bangkok from what I read in Time magazine.

It was such a shock to hear Mrs. Peurifoy's father died on February 14. I immediately wrote her a note of sympathy and she sent such a sweet thank you. It read

"Dear Mrs. Biddle, Yours was the first note to reach me after the sad news of my father's sudden death and your kindness and thoughtfulness helped me so much. Thank you for your sympathy. Losing a parent is never easy for me, for we are never prepared to part from those we love. Sincerely yours, Betty Jane Peurifoy"

She is so gracious, everyone loves her.

Library of Congress

I go to help her at home every Wednesday and find it helps me in meeting various people. I met the sister of Ernest Hemingway who said to me, "I met someone in Singapore or Manila, who wanted to be remembered to you, but I couldn't remember who it was or where."

March 28, 1955

Lucy Briggs, the daughter of the Ambassador to Korea, now assigned to Peru, came through a few days ago. I met her at the plane and bought a white skirt from her for \$7.

I plan to go on a holiday to Pinang soon where I hope to find some cottons. I decided to have the Phelps and P.D. Howard, an Englishman, for dinner on the night of my birthday. Will get a couple of bottles of champagne from the Commissary. They are about \$3 each. And I will have Herman Seiler, manager of the Club, bake me delicious birthday cakes.

The other day I went to the airport to meet Mrs. McClintock, wife of the Ambassador in Phnom Penh, whom I have met before, and a Mrs. Allen and Lucy Briggs. While we were riding into town discovered Mrs. Allen was in Saigon when her husband was Charlie's boss. I asked them to have cocktails at 6:00 with me at the Oriental and we chatted some more. They flew back to Cambodia the next day. Lucy Briggs is on her way around the world. Mrs. Allen was most delightful and invited me to visit her in Phnom Penh and said, "My husband would like to meet you." It strikes me very strange that I should keep meeting so many of Charlie's friends, as if that phase of my life is reopening periodically.

Saturday I went with the Eatons to the Naval Attach#s reception for Rear Admiral Davis, who arrived on the airplane carrier Essex. I wore my black dress and put up my hair, it is getting so long now and is much cooler. I stuck a little brilliant pin in the back and felt very gay. At the reception I received an unexpected invitation from Lt. Miller, one of the Rear Admiral's aides, to go to dinner at the Prime Minister's guest house where the Admiral and four aides were staying. So, off we went. The guest house is beautiful. It is where Senator

Library of Congress

Margaret Chase Smith stayed and some of the SEATO and many dignitaries. Others to dinner besides the Rear Admiral were his two aides, the Captain, and Bill McGonigal, our tall and handsome Naval Attach#, his aide and wife, the daughter of JUSMAAG Army Captain Picton and a Thai woman in a most striking dress of Thai silk. They wear some beautiful dresses.

The dinner was delicious as was the champagne served afterwards. I had a wonderful time. When I got home I was amazed to find it was a quarter to four in the morning!

The Ambassador is having luncheon on the Essex today and going out by helicopter.

Palm Sunday, American Club, Bangkok, Thailand, April 3, 1955

It is getting really hot now and necessary to shower often. I am delighted to hear that the Department has established my position at the embassy. I now have my own air-conditioned office to myself with a little plaque beside the door "Protocol - Mrs. Biddle." I am enjoying the work so much now that I am getting into the swing of it. It makes me feel very proud to have reached this stage in my career. I am hoping to have some holidays in May, as we have several long weekends. I am awfully anxious to go to that nearby but little heard of country called Laos. Planes do go but it is difficult to find a place to stay. Some go and stay in tents, it is that primitive. But the old capital, Mrs. McClintock tells me, is something out of a fairy tale with temples along the river and very primitive transportation. We have a consulate there and another girl from here and I will go together. I also hope to get to Pinang, I hear it is a little paradise.

April 11, 1955

How I wish you could be here so I could give you a big hug for being so sweet and remembered me so beautifully on my birthday. Wish you could have been here to help me celebrate the 5th. At noon, went as usual to help with the sitting arrangement at the American Association luncheon when they all sang "Happy Birthday" to me. In the evening

Library of Congress

I had invited Bill and Dinny Phelps and my English friend, P.D. Howard, for dinner but didn't tell them it was my birthday, until the champagne was poured and the cake all decorated with white and pink roses were brought in. Herman Seiler, the manager, has an excellent pastry cook, and he out did himself. When one of the guests discovered it was my birthday played "Happy Birthday" softly on the piano and I cut some cake and sent it into them.

The next day was a holiday and Bill and Dinny asked me to go with them to see the room that is open only once a year that contains statues of the five kings of the Chakri dynasty. The present king is King Rama IX. Then took some colored photos around the palace grounds and stopped at the Rat Hotel for a cool drink before going on to their house for luncheon. It is so hot now. I find myself lying on the chaise rather limp.

Sunday we had a mango shower. It cooled things off considerably. It is the season for them and they are delicious.

The Prime Minister Priboon and a number of his staff, including Cunjara are leaving for the States and Europe on the 14th. Martin Taylor is going part way to see that all goes well. So gave a dinner for the American Association at government house and I was very pleased to be invited. It was a black tie affair and about 125 there. I went with Mrs. Conover. Her husband had not gotten back from Japan in time for it and Mr. and Mrs. Clore went with us. He is the admin officer. The Ambassador and Mrs. Peurifoy and the Anschutzes had gone to the beach for the weekend. It was a wonderful party. The government house is tremendous of Byzantine architecture and looks like one of the chateaux on the Loire, and particularly so on Saturday when it was all illuminated. The Prime Minister does not actually live there, but all of his official entertainment takes place there.

He greeted us graciously as we entered the magnificent marble hall and were ushered into the reception rooms where cocktails were served. I chatted with the other guests while

Library of Congress

little rivulets were pouring down my back, front legs and arms. It was so hot, especially after I had a Scotch and soda. I realized then my green taffeta was not to be worn in a hot country!

Shortly after dinner was announced and as Conrad Parkman happened to be standing beside me, offered me his arm to dinner. It was delicious. Sherry with the soup, sauterne with the turbot, red wine with the pigeon and then curry and champagne with the ice cream. An orchestra made up of old Thai instruments and some modern Western instruments played the entire time, while men and women sang. Young men in sailor suits served us and it was very impressive to see them come in in single file. Of course, there was a speech by the Prime Minister and Martin Taylor and a toast to the King while the Thai national anthem was played and a toast to the President while our national anthem was played.

There were tiny little corsages of orchids and other flowers for the ladies. After dinner coffee was served on the terrace where colored lights played on the fountain. Then we returned to a grand room where we saw a beautiful performance of Thai dancing in their exquisite costumes. Mrs. Davis, wife of the manager of the Bank of America, sat next to me and said the Bank of America is meeting the Prime Minister in San Francisco and showing them all around that part. Then they go to see the Grand Canyon. Then to Niagara Falls and will be guests at Blair House in Washington. It is the first trip for the Prime Minister in thirty years. His wife appeared in a beautiful purple Thai silk dress with silver threads in it and wore a gorgeous diamond necklace. Their daughter married to a doctor, Roc, also will be on the trip. I got home about midnight and felt it had been a very interesting experience.

(Inaudible) had written me a birthday letter and was amazed it had reached me on the very day from Paris. I don't feel at all like 51 and only hope I can keep as well and as young as I feel now.

Library of Congress

April 25, 1955, American Embassy

I am off to Pinang at 7:00am on the 5th and will be gone until the 9th, flying Thai Airways. We have a holiday the 5th and 6th, so I am taking every advantage of this long weekend. I will have a few days, but only one will count against my leave. I will reach Pinang about noon and will spend that night at the Ian Knoll Hotel. I will look around the shops and do a little sightseeing, then go to the Lone Pine Hotel. I hear it is lovely on the water where I will spend Friday, Saturday and Sunday and plan to return to Bangkok early Monday afternoon. The plane also on route, both ways, stops at small places called Phuket and Songkhla in southern Thailand. I hear Songkhla is a lovely spot for swimming, but no hotel there. I am very much looking forward to this little holiday.

Yesterday there was a lot of trouble in Saigon and no one is traveling there. I wonder if I will ever get there. You will have my letter by now acknowledging your nice birthday check. I may buy one of the little heads here that are collection items.

So many of our people will now have duty in Washington. The consul in Chiang Mai is to have the Thailand desk in the Department that Kenneth Landen had. His wife wrote "Anna and the King of Siam." Dinny is expecting her baby in August, so afterwards she won't be able to do very much. We are planning some little excursions.

Yesterday we drove to Peta Buri, about three and a half hours from here on the road to Hua Hin where there are some famous caves where "Sainte Vinya" was filmed. A blue colored film written by Robert North, who died just a week before it had its grand gala for charity. It was so tragic. He had only been ill a week. He and his wife were friends of Mrs. Alice Spaulding Bowen in Honolulu, she had asked me to look up. It was a rather steep climb up to the caves, but lovely with the frangipani trees in full bloom. Inside the caves were different sized Buddhas. This is where Frances Roosevelt came to paint a couple of times. We had our picnic lunch beside the ocean sitting on the sand under a tall palm with

Library of Congress

a heavenly breeze blowing while we watched the native fishermen bring in their nets of fish. We were the only ferrangi, as they call us around here.

There is a new hotel just built near here, but not a tree around it and it looks so uninviting. It is set in a pichi buri which is lovely. The hills are graced with old temples and the King's palace was gleaming white in the sun. We had stopped at Nakorn Pathom on route to see the biggest chedi in Thailand, which was very interesting. It had been a delightful outing. We plan to go to Hua Hin in the end of May and rent the cottage that belongs to the Borneo company. They have a good cook and it won't be expensive.

This Saturday, Christ Church is having its 50th year jubilee and the Bishop will be here when there will be a big reception at the parsonage. Bill Phelps said the King may come. The Church was given by the previous Kings Mongkut and Chulalongkorn made famous by the plague.

I saw the film "The Last Time I Saw Paris," Saturday with the Eatons. The music was so beautiful. I want very much to see the next film, "Beau Brummel" for it is laid, I am sure, near where I visited last Easter, Bath, England where so much of their Edwardian era was depicted in books and plays.

There was a dance given at the residence last Thursday evening for the Personnel staff of the embassy, including the Thai employs. Mrs. Peurifoy looked exquisite in a long gown made after the fashion of those in "Gone With The Wind," draped with a pink rose in the back of a full skirt. As the residence looks like an old Southern plantation house with lanterns everywhere and an orchestra playing in a marquee on the lawn, it was a perfect setting for her. The Ambassador came and sat at my table and talked for quite a long time. He is most attractive.

May 4, 1955, American Embassy

Library of Congress

This is just a line or two before I take off at the crack of dawn tomorrow for Pinang. I must be up at 4:00am when an embassy car will take me to the airport. The plane takes off at 7:00. I had gone with the Phelps to the 10:00am service because of the big jubilee, 50th anniversary of the church. Bill ushered and the church was packed. The Bishop was here from Singapore and the padre's wife, Mrs. Folk, invited us for coffee after the service. Besides the Bishop and his wife and a young British couple, the Normans, the Australian Minister who was the speaker at the American Association on Tuesday, and the Rev. Rayburn and his wife. The Folks are leaving in June and I shall miss them. The new minister will be the Rev. Gilman. The day before at 5:00pm was the tea at the parsonage when the Bishop spoke and others. A letter was read from His Majesty the King.

...for luncheon. Then we went to the national museum and looked at all kinds of interesting things until it closed at 4:00 when there was a terrific downpour, but finally made it to the car and drove to the thieves market and browsed a bit, but bought nothing. Then, looked at some paintings done by Earl Wilson of our embassy. I bought for \$2.50 one he had done of the American Club. Quite charming. I shall have Jim Thompson frame it with a white Thai silk mat in a bamboo frame. Then to the Phelps for hot chocolate and to see the "Egyptian." A bit disappointing.

Bill McGonigal, our tall good looking Naval Attach#, gave a big cocktail party at his place prettily situated on a klong where I enjoyed a long chat with Prince Ram, the Foreign Minister, who said he would be leaving soon to attend his daughter's graduation from Wellesley. He said she wanted to be an ambassador. His wife seemed pleased over this, but she is getting wary of traveling with him so his daughter could act as his hostess, I believe was the idea. He was elated over his success with Japan in getting the amount of money Japan owed Thailand. I followed with such interested Prime Minister Phibun's visit to America and so when Ambassador Peurifoy had attended the decoration ceremony at the White House.

Library of Congress

I started Thai lessons again, now after work, from 4:30 to 5:30, Tuesdays and Thursdays and really find use for what I am learning.

I went to a delightful cocktail party, the retiring Navy Captain in JUSMAAG gave with his daughter the other evening. Then on to the Phelps for dinner they gave for several of their men returning to the States.

I have enjoyed meeting the James Van Allens who are here from their place in Newport, Rhode Island, and who I have had under my wing and in turn so kind to me. Mrs. Van Allen was first married to Frank (Inaudible), whom I remember had a house near my school, Briar Cliff, and used to come over to the school frequently for he was on the board of directors. They invited me to the Oriental the other evening for dinner in the Bamboo Bar. Had the most delicious wine. They were commissioned to do an article on Angkor Wat for National Geographic and now would like an audience with the King which I had been trying to arrange. They were off tomorrow at 8:30am for Hong Kong, so we planned to have a cup of coffee together at the airport before we go our respective ways. I was leaving on a holiday in Pinang. They will come back if they are lucky enough to have the audience.

May 10, 1955

This is to let you know I am safely back in Bangkok from my holiday in Pinang. For years I have been haunted by the uncertain remembrance of that little island I simply could not recall if I stopped there on my way around the world in 1939 or not. Now the satisfaction of knowing means more than I could possibly tell you. I do recall very definitely sitting on the terrace of the hotel and looking out to sea. Remembered it reminded me so much of the hotel in Honolulu. Well, now I know that was the Runnymede Hotel. It has since been taken over by the military for officers' quarters. That is the reason no one speaks of it as a hotel anymore.

Library of Congress

Believe I have mentioned the plane stops at Phuket and Songkhla in south Thailand. Well, there was nothing but three little mat huts at Phuket at the so-called airport, but the scenery between Phuket and Songkhla was breath taking. Beautiful little islands covered with trees dotted the sea. Songkhla was a much larger place and had a half hour wait. The only thing I could see to read in English in the little building where we waited was the schedule that amused me. "Daily, except Sunday, Wednesday, Tuesday and Friday." Everything else was in Thai.

We arrived in Pinang about 1:15pm and I took a taxi into town where I stayed at the Ian Knoll Hotel, the best hotel there. Situated directly on the water. The food was delicious. I had a lovely big room with a small balcony and for this and breakfast I paid \$5. I changed my money before leaving Bangkok and got 3 Malayan dollars for 1 American dollar. After freshening up a little I went out to see what I could find in the way of cotton dresses at the English department store that is all over the east.

I thought I would drop into the consulate and ask a few questions. The nicest little Chinese girl, Betty Yee, was so helpful.

I tried on several things at the department store, but those English dresses did not fit me until I saw the most divine evening dress that had just been unpacked, not even marked yet. When I put it on it just fit me, and absolutely a dream. It was white knit, with a full skirt and wide band of black lace around the bottom, bodice made of black pleated net and black lace. I just fell in love with it and felt I had to have it, especially as I really did need it. So I bought it for \$245—don't faint, that is Malay dollars, although it really looks like a 245 American dollars dress and I am sure it would be that in the states,. it actually came to \$81 American. It merely needed trimming off a little at the bottom—five layers, one cotton, one silk, two net and the outside layer.

Then I ran across the street and bought that book on culture in Southeast Asia that Frances Roosevelt wanted to give me. Took a little samlar, though they are called

Library of Congress

something else in Pinang, back to the hotel. That night I had a delicious dinner and sat on the terrace in the moonlight and listened to the jet planes darting back and forth in the sky, and watched the ships at sea.

The next day after a wonderful English breakfast I liked so much, I ordered it twice—the best meals the English serve are their breakfasts and teas. It was so nice to hear the nice quiet refined voices of so many English people around me.

After the enormous breakfasts I took a drive around the island previously arranged with a smiling Malayan who had brought me in from the airport for \$7.50 American, almost 40 miles. I asked to go up Pinang Hill, via funicular cable car like in Hong Kong. It was 2300 feet in the air and it did feel so bracing and there was a marvelous view of the island and mainland beyond. Stayed up there about half hour and then continued on around the island stopping at the snake temple which fascinated me though I hate snakes. It is curious how the Chinese worship them. They were everywhere, coiled above and beneath everything, doped by the incense they burn. They are vipers. I was invited to touch one, which I declined, of course. They say at night they all come down on the floor and crawl around.

We passed a number of military barracks, charming Malayan villagers, and like every other place in the world where Chinese are, the most enterprising, many Chinese villages and small rubber plantations. The hills were covered with lush tropical foliage. A winding drive finally led us along the sea coast and then arrived at my hotel, the Lone Pine. I had heard many people speak of it. It was very simply operated with Chinese. The food, not as good as Ian Knoll, but beautifully situated directly on the water. The palm trees were growing right down to the water's edge. Everyone had a little veranda off his room and could step out onto the terrace in his bathing suit and in a few minutes jump into the heavenly surf for a swim. We lunched and dined under the pine and palm and as it was a full moon weekend, it was most romantic. It is only at times like this that I am sorry that I am alone.

Library of Congress

The next day I spent most of the time in my bathing suit and had several swims and basked in the sun in comfortable chaise lounges. Most of the people were an odd assortment of English with the wrong accents. I didn't speak to anyone the whole time I was there, but was quite content. Wrote one letter to Nicole in Paris so she could have the stamps for her collection.

Saturday morning, Betty Yee came out and drove me in her little Morris car to waterfall gardens and I knew the moment we started driving through there I had been there before. I remembered the monkeys running across the road. It was lovely and quiet and cool and, like the whole island, refreshingly, green and clean. Then she took me to a Chinese shop she knew where there were the smartest dresses. I found three that fitted and fell in love with.

May 13th, American embassy

Dear Aunt Edith,

I know how interested you will be to hear of my meeting Helen Keller and her companion, Polly Thompson, whom you have admired so much. I thought of you the entire time and wished you could have been here to have experienced the thrill I had and felt it should have been yours. It all happened very suddenly. I was just ready to sit down to lunch on Wednesday when I had a telephone call from Mrs. Anschutz saying, "Did you know Helen Keller was arriving at 12:30pm?" I said, "No," breathlessly swallowing my last bit of lunch. Although Florence Davidson had written me some time ago she had given her a note of introduction to me, I had read in the paper she was not coming to Bangkok. Well, it happened that the Indonesian legation had been notified of her arrival and telephoned Mrs. Peurifoy, but she was going out and could not be at the residence when they arrived to offer them hospitality. So, I went over, it was just across the road from the American Club. At about 2:15 the third secretary of the Indonesian legation arrived with their luggage and said they would be at the residence in about five minutes. It seems they had been

Library of Congress

guests of the Indonesian government in Indonesia and had to come this way in order to get a plane to Rangoon the next day. He had also contacted a Miss Caulfield who is head of the blind school here, who shortly arrived with them.

Meantime, Mrs. Peurifoy had returned to the residence but had several things to do so asked me to receive them. They stepped from the car a few minutes later and, of course, I was delighted to greet them. Helen Keller had a face of an angel and does not look at all her 75 years. Polly Thompson is Scottish with all the charm of the Scottish people. It was terribly hot and they were awfully tired. They declined a dinner invitation at the Indonesian legation and said preferred just a tray in their room. They were put up at the little guest house because Mrs. Peurifoy already had Mrs. Yost and her two children staying with her. Mr. Yost is our ambassador in Laos. I had some cold water for them to drink. But they said they would like to have some Scotch and whiskey, which was a little unexpected, but Miss Thompson told me later that the doctor ordered it.

While the boy was fixing the sheets on the bed, I lost no time in asking about the film, "The Unconquered," that you have been so anxious to know about. They said they did not know where it was playing just now. It was privately financed but cast in Cornell and Mrs. Levy and others in New York did not want it to be a Hollywood spectacle because it is a true story. Polly Thompson said she thinks it is to be shown in schools and places like that as a documentary and will live forever.

That afternoon was Mrs. Peurifoy's at home day so I returned at 4:30pm, but they did not appear. They just wanted a quiet rest and didn't want to see anyone. The moment I approached Mrs. Peurifoy I detected on her the most heavenly fragrance and mentioned it. She said, "Well, I thought as Miss Keller couldn't see me, she would be able to smell this fragrance." I thought, how dear of her. As Mrs. Peurifoy had to make a call the next morning she suggested I take them out to the airport in the private car of the Ambassador's with their six pieces of luggage. So I was at the residence about 9:30am. An Indonesian Minister came a few moments later to pay his respects and we had a

Library of Congress

cool drink. Then going out to the car I said to him, "Will you be going to the airport, Your Highness?" And he replied, "No, I have to go and give some blood." When I said, "How patriotic," he explained that he had been for a long time head of the Indonesian Red Cross here. And then I added, "So you must set the example."

When we got into the cars, just sitting up in front with the driver, Polly Thompson wanted me to sit in the back seat with them so that we could talk together about Florence Davidson. En route to the airport we stopped at the blind school for Ms. Caulfield and a Thai woman who is well known here for her work with the blind. It was interesting to see how Polly Thompson made Helen Keller understand what we were talking about. She holds her hand and spells out the words on it and at the same time speaks aloud repeating the first syllables and some of the words. Helen Keller smiles sweetly and raises her hand frequently as if she had experienced some inner glow about something. When I was sitting along with her in the car, I lowered the window and she said very plainly, "Thanks." Although it is difficult to understand most of her other words, when she met Mrs. Peurifoy she pronounced the name with a French accent. I hear she speaks French fluently. She mentioned that she smelled the fruit as she drove out to the airport. Polly Thompson said her sense of smell and touch are, of course, highly developed. She thought it was a long drive, as, of course, it is, and was so hot. It seems they are making this trip under the sponsorship of the Foundation for the Blind, but they had not put Bangkok on the itinerary. They felt there was not enough for them to do in Pakistan so they accepted the invitation of the Indonesian government and decided to go there instead. They said they have no time to write but Polly Thompson wanted postals of the water buffalo and klongs. Helen Keller asked if the cattle were sacred. Polly Thompson, said, "No, we are in a Buddhist country." They will be coming this way again next Thursday on their way to Hong Kong and Manila and I hope to see them at the airport for a couple of hours. Polly Thompson said they were very spoiled having been guests at the homes of presidents and governors, and governments all along the way. I began to get a little nervous at the airport because the third secretary did not turn up with their passports and tickets until about 20 minutes

Library of Congress

before they were to take off. I naturally felt very responsible for them and drew a sigh of relief when he finally appeared. An American came by to ask if she could be introduced to Helen Keller. She was a newspaper woman but did not want an interview, so I introduced her. I was glad they were driven out to the plane as it was a bit of a walk and so hot. Polly T. kissed me goodbye and said to kiss Helen Keller. So I did. I told her what an admirer you were, Aunt Edith, and she said to send you her love. I longed to have you by my side for I knew what a pleasure it would have been for you, dear Aunt Edith. I am sorry I could not obtain anymore information about the film, but perhaps schools in Pasadena, particularly the blind school, would know about it. Do hope you are keeping well and you and Dad are taking good care of each other. So much love, V.

American Club, Sunday, May 22, 1955

Dear Dad and Mildred,

This is the one day in all the year that our hearts go out to one another in deepest sympathy because of the loss of our precious mother, thirty-one years ago today. The 19th, too, I felt we were thinking of each other. And dear Harold we loss three years ago. May is indeed full of sad memories for me. But I am so grateful we still have each other although we are so far apart. But we always have the thrill of seeing one another again.

Dear Aunt Edith,

Now I have more to tell you about Helen Keller. I believe I mentioned that she would return through Bangkok on her way to Manila. Well, she did, at 4:30 in the morning. The embassy had a telegram from the consulate in Rangoon to notify Mrs. Peurifoy and Miss Caulfield and so I did. I thought it wonderful of Mrs. Peurifoy to get up at that early hour, but she had bought some Thai silk for them, and for one reason I suppose she wanted to be sure they liked it. She called for me in the embassy car at 4:00am and then we picked up Miss Caulfield. It was raining. I took along an extra umbrella just in case they didn't have one. Also, the morning paper and my letters from Mrs. Joe Davidson, Florence, that I thought

Library of Congress

would interest them and some postal cards of the water buffalo and klongs they mentioned wanting. We were there to greet them just as they stepped off the plane and had such an interesting visit for about an hour and a half.

They said the temples in Rangoon were magnificent, the gold leaf on them marvelous. So, now I must see Rangoon. Miss Thompson read a letter from Catherine Cornell regarding the preparations for Helen Keller's 75th birthday on the 27th of June and her request to give to the blind and not to her on that day. Miss Thompson had more news about the film, Aunt Edith. It seems the State Department is going to take it over, so they will know where it is going to be filmed. Helen Keller's new book, "The Unconquered," will be out in October and she had me give her my card with address and wrote "book" on the corner. So, perhaps I shall receive an autographed copy, which would be wonderful.

The rubber band on Helen Keller's hat had gotten loosened at one end and Polly was holding it helplessly in one hand, so I thought I would come to the rescue and said, "I have a pin, I will fix it." Whereupon Mrs. Peurifoy nicely said, "Oh, Mrs. Biddle always has everything." We chatted together so pleasantly and when we went to the ladies room I led Helen Keller over to the sink to wash her hands. Polly said that the East Asiatic correspondents were reluctant to ask any questions and she had to conduct the interviews simply because they revered old age and infirmity so much they do not like to speak or touch such people. I could well understand it, for I felt the same way. She is really a saint and would not be too surprised someday to hear that she was canonized. Just to look at her is an inspiration. I will never forget her beautiful blue sightless eyes. We stayed until they left and then came home.

Mrs. Peurifoy is such a dear and I enjoyed being with her so much on this rather long trip back and forth at such an early hour to the airport. She said when we parted, "Now you must take some time off during the day." It was so characteristically kind of her. But, I didn't because I was much too busy. We both felt it had been a heartwarming experience. As Mrs. Peurifoy said she felt she may never see her again and I was reminded that

Library of Congress

Florence Davidson wrote that they had said they were going on their last trip around the world. It was announced after, over the radio, that the President of the Philippines honored Helen Keller with an award.

1955 American Embassy, June 28

Today I had to arrange the seating of 60 of the diplomatic corps and important Thai for the Prime Minister's welcome home luncheon the American Association gave. He told us of his trip. There were about 500 there and the biggest thing of the year. Mr. Jim Scott gave the important ladies an orchid and I was quite touched when he presented me with one. Now, I have also been trying to get out 215 invitations for the Fourth of July reception the Ambassador is giving on that day. Then I was put on the food committee for the Fourth of July picnic which the American Association is giving that day from 11-4. There are a lot of details connected with all of this. I have to get all of the food, that is, hot dogs, beans, and buns for about 800 to 1000 people.

Then there had been Senator Dirksen and an ambassador visiting for whom the Ambassador and Mrs. Peurifoy have been giving a series of dinners. And, of course, sending the invitations and arranging the seating of them takes time. Then I have to go to the airport to meet some of these people which takes a lot of time from my duties.

The two inspectors are here now. I have started dance lessons every Monday, Friday from 5-6 but not always able to go. It is the Thai dance which is so pretty and graceful.

It is raining a lot and sometimes not able to get to the coiffeur and get my hair done so go on my noon hour and eat a sandwich either in the taxi or under the dryer.

The Symphony of the Air was here and, of course, thrilling. The Ambassador and Mrs. Peurifoy had a summer party for the cast after one of the concerts and kindly invited me. The president, Mr. Gillus, who I had gone into supper with, invited me backstage the

Library of Congress

second night when the "Rhapsody in Blue" was played. I invited the Phelps, the Landreths, a darling couple from the Naval Attach#s office, Commander Bill McGonigal, the first night.

I hear Perle Mesta is coming in July and also (Inaudible) Roosevelt, Cornelius's brother.

Mildred, your plans for coming out sound wonderful. I should love to see the Taj by moonlight which will be December 28, so let's try to count on that and work out the other plans accordingly. Dad, I shall be thinking of you on July 9 and have happy memories of our reunion last year.

July 9, 1955

Dear Mildred,

I am writing this at the Bangkok airport to say that I am taking off in about one hour on Admiral's Stump's personal plane for Saigon. There are eight others from the embassy having the same free trip. I am so excited to at last be seeing that little Paris of the East. I hope to get a USOM plane back early Monday morning. If not, I will take the next available commercial flight. USOM would not cost me anything. It is the government agency Charlie was in.

Incidentally, Penny Robinson is secretary to the Naval Attach# there and knew him. She was here visiting last week. I hope she will have made reservations for me there for two nights. All of this came up because of Lt. Colonel Bill Letterer, who is aide-de-camp to the Admiral, was on the Coolidge with me in 1939 and we had many pleasant chats together about writing. His "All the Ships at Sea" became a best seller. The American Association picnic was so glad the Fourth was over. I was chairman of the hotdog stand and after counting all of my chits we took in \$175. Then I had to look after the 2000 guests who came to the reception that evening when the Star Spangled Banner was played. It was a beautiful party at the residence.

Library of Congress

Looking forward to our Christmas holiday together in India.

General Powell had paid for decorating the entire place. The gardens are tremendous and little pavilions were put up here and there to keep the guests out of the rain. We never knew when it would pour. All of the members of the diplomatic corps were invited, plus 215 Thai dignitaries, plus all of the Americans.

The Fifth was a Thai holiday, so went to the Sports Club to relax and swim with Penny Robinson.

After the Ambassador's party, Commander McGonigal, Bill, asked me to go to dinner with him and Penny. So we went to the Bamboo Bar at the Oriental and danced and danced. She was very attractive.

American Embassy, July 15, 1955

As you know Professor Smiley and his party were here to view the eclipse and invited me to the palace at Ban Pang where they were to set up their camp. The Queen and King's sister were there, but I did not receive the message sent by one of the newspaper reporters that I had met them all at Mrs. Peurifoy's at home. It was fascinating. It got quite dark and then a burst of light leaving a beautiful rosy glow over everything just like that rosy glow in the south of France at Province where Renoir and the Impressionists loved to paint. Shortly after, he lectured at the Siam Society. I spoke to him again. The King's mother and sister sat directly in front of me and many in the diplomatic corps were there and Prince and Princess Rangsit, with whom I had had tea, and Prince and Princess Prim, whom I had also met. The princess is very charming.

July 15, 1955

This is to let you know that I arrived back safely from my trip on Admiral Stump's plane to Saigon, but not without very exciting experiences. The plane was beautifully appointed and

Library of Congress

you could hear no sound of the engines. We arrived at 4:00pm. The Naval Attach# met me and said Penny was waiting for me at the Majestic where she had made reservations for me and that there would be transportation into town for me and my friends. There were a lot of other uniformed men at the airport. The Majestic was very comfortable. The best hotel in town, as a matter of fact. I found it a little cooler in Saigon than in Bangkok. Alice Lukso, the only other girl who stayed over, was put up by a friend she had there. The girls in the embassy had the most attractive living quarters and nicely furnished. Some are air-conditioned. But they should have some compensation for the confused political state they live in, but they all seemed to take it in their stride. Fortunately, the shops stayed open quite late so we were able to shop for the cologne I wanted.

There were numerous shops all giving different prices. It truly was like a little Paris with its sidewalk cafes and the French language signs. Although all the street signs are now in Vietnamese with French underneath in small letters. It had the stimulating atmosphere of Paris and it was fun to hear and speak again the language I love so. I had got an excellent rate for my dollar in Bangkok which was double what I could get in Saigon so I took back two large bottles of Coty's Le Monde and two of a label just slightly cheaper than Paris. Then I got a large bottle of champagne like I brought back from Paris for Dad's birthday for two dollars and a small bottle that serves about two for 37 cents.

That evening Penny and I dined together. It was good to have delicious French food again with champagne and watch the dancing. Who should I see but Anita Lauve, the girl I was first assigned to when I went to Paris, who was cultural affairs officer then and now political officer in Saigon. In fact, there were several girls that I had known in the embassy in Paris.

The next day, Sunday, we shopped again and it was wonderful to have the shops open on Sunday, too. I bought some hairpins which, believe it or not, I could never find in Bangkok. After lunch we went over to the embassy and Penny showed me some photos that had been taken at a benefit party at Charlie's she had attended. Photos of Yeti and her daughter. Yeti looked glamorous in a very tight Chinese dress slit up the side. I

Library of Congress

thought Charlie looked quite grey. I thought, "What a small world." Then we went back to the Majestic and met some of her friends sitting on the terrace of the hotel and joined them for a drink. We had not been there long when we noticed a lot of pamphlets being dropped in front. Some students across the street read them and marched across to us and began to rally around, the leader holding the red and yellow Vietnam flag. I had to ask a lot of questions to find out what was going on and finally found out. They were demanding the communists who were staying in the hotel, a delegation of 16 who had come for the elections which are taking place soon. The police arrived shortly after with their Tommy guns to keep order. There was still a lot of milling around and confusion. Just as if a firecracker had been lighted, the shooting started. At this point Penny and I ran into the hotel. The gates to both entrances to the hotel were closed and people began running down the street. When I finally emerged from the Men's room where we had fled, not knowing just where we were going, there were hats and sandals and shoes lying in the middle of the street and I saw those boys piled in the paddy wagon being taken to the police station. Then they came back for their bicycles and piled them in the back end of the truck. So often when things get tragic they get comical. They were all falling out of the back end and they had to come back again and again for them. Then we saw the police searching one of the men, I suppose for a hand grenade. Then someone saw a body with blood streaming from it being thrown in the car and carried away. Then we heard other demonstrations going on in other sections of town. When we finally thought it was safe to get into the cars to drive over to where Alice Lukso was staying, who was trying to see about getting us on the USOM plane, her phone wasn't working. We found a note not giving us much hope. I had already booked on the Air Vietnam plane that morning, just to be on the safe side and lucky I did for it was the last seat.

Then we went on to the apartment of four boyfriends of Penny's called Open Arms and on the little boy's room it said "guys" so we just knew it would say "dolls" on the little girl's and it did. We were not there long when one of the boys came in to tell us the anti-Americans had put a time bomb on the steps of USIS, our information bureau, but the security officer

Library of Congress

had found it before it went off. I learned that there are so many factions that the people there are confused about the situation. They are becoming terribly anti-American and there are different factions fighting among themselves. The people who lived there said they had not had such a demonstration for some time or been so near one. I was really interested to see a little excitement and would have felt cheated if I had come to Saigon without seeing something like this.

The next day I shopped some more and found some adorable clothes. I fell in love with the most precious black lace dress. It had been \$79 but the French woman let me have it for \$42. By this time I had run out of money, but just as in Pinang she allowed me to take it anyway and send her the piastres.

The French are all leaving by the boat loads and selling their businesses, etc. I went up to one of the apartments above the USIS building where several of the girls lived, for a drink with one of the girls I had known in Paris. Just next door was another girl I had known in Paris so we had a wonderful chat. Their apartments were most attractive, like little penthouses in New York. They showed me a big hole in the sidewalk where a hand grenade was thrown not long ago. Now I know what goes on in Saigon.

I was up at four the next morning to take my plane to Bangkok. It was a small plane and certainly not comparable to the admiral's, but it was the first return passage I could get. Alice Lukso was still there when I left, but came back Thursday on the USOM plane. We landed in Phnom Penh, Cambodia somewhere in a field which I thought rather strange. When I asked some one they said the brakes were broken. We were not far from the little wooden airport station so sat down there to wait the takeoff which was supposed to be in a half hour. But it was three hours before we finally left.

Meantime I wanted so much to call Mrs. Paul Allen, who had invited me to come to Phnom Penh some time, but thought we would be leaving any minute. However, I finally decided to ring the embassy and spoke with her husband, who I had never met. I hardly had time

Library of Congress

to say hello before I had to say goodbye because I saw my fellow passengers going out to board the plane. I could hear him say, "Can't you stay over? If Mrs. Allen had known she would have been at the airport." But it was all too late then. It only cost \$20 to return on the plane.

Someday I should like to go to the little resort in the hills they say is so cool and lovely called Da Lat, but I am wondering how much longer Saigon will be an open city. Laos is now the hot spot. Poor Thailand, so quiet and calm and happy and peaceful, but absolutely surrounded by turbulent countries.

The inspectors have been here and I had an interview with a Mr. Morris. He knew I was very interested in continuing the work I am now doing, but thought the number of posts requiring a person for this type of work were very few. So, he proposed that I spend two years in the Protocol Office in Washington and getting a good background and then could be sent out to one of the bigger embassies fully equipped for a better job of this type and asked if that was what I would like. I said, "Yes. I am very fond of what I am doing and am very happy here."

I went to the French embassy on the occasion of their 14th of July celebration, each embassy gives a reception on their national holiday, and it was something out of a fairy tale. The embassy is an old one situated on the river near the Oriental Hotel. In fact, it used to be call Embassy Row, but now only remains the French and Portuguese. It was so impressive. A long line of French sailors, so picturesque in their little sailor hats with red pompoms on them, stood at attention at either side of the long driveway. I said, "Ma F#licitation" to the French Ambassador and several members of the staff I knew greeted me. One couple said they were so sorry they could not come to the American Association's luncheon on Tuesday and I replied that I was not there myself, I was in Saigon. The Pakistani Charg# introduced me to his wife as the manager of the embassy. We stood beside each other as the national anthems were played and we toasted the President of France and the King of Thailand.

Library of Congress

What was so unusually impressive was the ship, just anchored across from the embassy all decked with flags. Launches went over periodically for people to go over the ship where white wine and more hors d'oeuvres and caviar were served.

When I happened to see standing beside the Danish Minister and said, "Oh, I believe this must be Danish caviar." And he said, "I am afraid it is," thinking he was belittling his native country's delicacy. I quickly added, "But I love Danish caviar."

I knew if I waited for the time to write you all, this will be delayed due to the rate my life goes these days, so I am writing to you now at this late hour, even before I remove my pretty black lace I bought in Saigon, to say I have just returned from a dinner party at the Ambassador's in honor of Mrs. Perle Mesta. There were 22 at a table. The guest list included the British Ambassador, recently knighted as he is now Sir Barclay Gage, his wife, Lady Gage; the French Ambassador, his wife stays in Paris; the Netherlands Minister and his wife; the Spanish Minister, Senor Bendez, a good looking bachelor; the Portuguese Charg#, the suavest man in the diplomatic corps; the Pakistani Charg#; and John Marquand, the famous author and his son John, Jr., who was a writer and visiting here. Mrs. Mesta asked all about you Mildred and hoped to see you in Washington. She gave a graphic description of her experiences in Saigon. I had had a preview of it all.

To Mildred. July 28, 1955 at the office, 5:00pm

I was just going down the stairs of the embassy last Thursday to meet Mrs. Mesta at the airport when the Marine Guard handed me a telegram saying she would not arrive until the next day. So I went to the snack bar to get a sandwich and there was a man there just up from Saigon who said that the Majestic Hotel, where I had stayed, was completely demolished and Perle Mesta had been staying in it. Of course, I was horrified and understood so well what she must have experienced having so recently seen what was happening there. That evening there were headlines in the paper and an article about Mrs. Mesta having arrived in Singapore with teargas stains on her dress. I at once thought

Library of Congress

of my friend Penny and was relieved when Bill McGonigal handed me a letter from her saying she was all right. But all her pretty clothes I had so recently admired in her closet had been thrown out of the window. She was not in the hotel at the time. Some American girls found them and they all had to be sent to the cleaners. The hotel has been evacuated and they are all living with friends. She said it was a good thing I was not there. They would have played havoc with all my cologne, champagne to say nothing of my pretty new clothes I had just bought there.

Telegrams kept coming in to the embassy, each one announcing the arrival, the cancellation of Mrs. Mesta, but she finally arrived on Sunday at 11:00am. The Ambassador had already planned to give a dinner party for her Monday evening and I had already made out the guess list and arranged the seating for 22 people. She had two ladies traveling with her but we didn't know in what capacity. But Mrs. Peurifoy ascertained they were her assistants, one a secretary and the other sort of a maid, and did not accept social invitations. When Mrs. Mesta arrived, the Ambassador brought her over to me and said, "You know Mrs. Biddle, don't you?" He apparently had heard from Mrs. Peurifoy that Mrs. Truman had given a note of introduction to her when you invited me in Paris and was invited to visit her in Luxembourg. I was a trifle embarrassed for a second for thought she would not have remembered me and I would feel so foolish. But, no, and she greeted me most enthusiastically. "Why, of course, I remember you. How is your sister?" Then I mentioned your delightful visit with her in Luxembourg.

Dinner was delicious. Sauterne with the stuffed lobster, red wine with the lamb and champagne with the peppermint ice cream encased in chocolate. As I am low man on the totem pole here, I am usually placed below the salt at their dinners. So, at the very end of the table from Mrs. Mesta who, of course, was at the right of the Ambassador. When she caught my eye she graciously raised her champagne glass to me and, of course, I was very touched and smiled and raised mine in silent toast to her. After dinner I sat chatting with one or two. Mrs. Peurifoy came over and said, "Wouldn't you like to go over and chat with Mr. Marquand. He seemed quite happy with Lady Gage by his side, but I

Library of Congress

knew I should obey the request. I very much enjoyed our conversation. Then, Mrs. Mesta called me over and I joined the little group around her. She was interested in talking to the Pakistani Charg# because she is going to his country. She is giving up Indonesia because she said the Commies were after her and thought it wise not to go there. She gave a graphic description of her exciting experience in Saigon. While in Bangkok she was a guest of the Thai government and stayed at the government guest house. The next day after the dinner she telephoned me and we had a long talk over the phone. She asked me if you were in the State Department and I said no, that you had married Jim Trimble, son of the Honorable South Trimble who for forty years was Clerk of the House at the Capitol in Washington and after your husband died was given a job decorating the veteran hospitals all over the country. Whereupon she replied, "Bless her heart." Then she asked me to have you call her because she wanted to tell you that she had seen me. Then mentioned that the wife of the Foreign Minister, had given her a silver compact and wanted to know how to address a thank you note to her. She asked all about my work here and wanted to buy some emeralds here. Frances Roosevelt had bought some here recently. If she was going to India she would find some there. She spoke of having some Thai silk from Jim Thompson's shop. I thought it so nice of her to phone me and couldn't have been more friendly calling me, "darling" a couple of times.

Mr. Jenkins from our embassy and I called for her and her assistants at the guest house today. Met her secretary, Mrs. Prichard, and the Scottish maid, Mrs. Anderson. Mrs. Mesta and I rode in one car, the two assistants and Mr. Jenkins in the other and all the luggage in the station wagon. Monty Taylor, manager of PanAm, who was at the airport, told me she had pay \$163 excess at each place. On the way to the airport she gave me a few commissions to do: a telegram to send to Washington, a note to give to Mrs. Peurifoy, and two autographed photographs to give to the two Peurifoy boys, Danny the little one and Clinton, a spastic in a wheelchair with only two years to live. They opened the VIP room for us at the airport where there were several men from protocol and manager of SAS. She was flying to Karachi. I happened to know one of the men. She told me in the car she

Library of Congress

mentioned to the ambassador that we were very good friends of the Trumans and he said, "What?" And he said.....

...I was so pleased to hear her say the Peurifoy's were very fond of me. She plans to stay at the Plaza Athena in Paris, but when she heard I had stayed at the Vouillamont for four years she went into raptures saying she loved it and would go there if she couldn't get in at the Plaza. She is to meet Elsa Maxwell in Athens and will go with her on a cruise through the Mediterranean. There will be a hundred people aboard and a ball is being given by the queen. She was anxious to see the clippings of the press conference she gave last evening to about 40 pressmen. When I asked just where she was living now, she said in a Louis XIV house which she wanted you, Mildred, to see. I spoke of her charming collection of mice and birds I remembered so well seeing in her house in Luxembourg. It really was fun being with her. She was so friendly. When she left she kissed me on the cheek and blew a kiss to me from her seat in the plane. The Thais had sent orchids for all three.

August 11, 1955

This is a hurried note to catch the mail to say I just had an opportunity to fly to Manila on the Air Attach#s plane, leaving here next Thursday, the 18th, returning the 26th. I couldn't resist the free ride over and back. And the thought of seeing again my dear friend, Florence Barrington was thrilling. Then, too, I had been wanting to get to the PX over there. I have never been to Baguio and as I have been wanting a holiday in a high cool place, I have written Florence I would like to spend Saturday, Sunday and Monday up there. We fly over North Vietnam and are due to arrive at Clark Field about 5:00pm. It is about 60 miles from Manila. It is a good time for me to go for the Ambassador and Mrs. Peurifoy leave this afternoon for Hua Hin to be gone until the 21st so there will be a little less work for me to do, although heaven knows I always have plenty whether they are here or not. Tomorrow, being the Queen's birthday is a holiday, but I may just work a little at the embassy. Fortunately I have a lot of leave so can go away freely. I must take 16 days

Library of Congress

before the end of the year or lose it, which I am sure will leave me enough for our trip to India at Christmas.

What tragic news this letter will bring. This is at the embassy, August 14, 1955

Dear Dad and Mildred.

Not news, of course, because I am sure by now you both have read in your papers of the horrible accident our Ambassador had on Friday the 12th. I have been so stunned by the shock. It has been difficult for me to type this letter and to put into words what is weighing so heavily on my heart, but I know how anxious you must be to hear. I had written you that I had been invited to fly to Manila in the Air Attach#s plane, so I thought I should come to the embassy to get caught up a bit, even though it was a holiday. I had been working all morning. At about 2:00pm I went into the pouch room to post a letter to Mrs. Barrington in Manila. The young girl, Miss Cazille, in there said, "Have you heard the news?" I hadn't and she said, "The Ambassador has been killed and little Danny." I said, "I don't believe it." She said that it must be true because they sent a cable to the Department. I was so shaken I simply fell on a diplomatic pouch. When I had slightly recovered I went down stairs and all of the political officers, pressmen and others were looking very concerned. The telephone operators were not on duty as it was a holiday, so the little Thai telephone operator was sent for. They needed someone to translate. Mrs. Spinks and I sat together absolutely shocked. We wanted to do something but, of course, at a time like that we didn't know just what to do. Her husband, who is with USIS, advised her not to ask any questions and sit quietly, so I did the same.

The first news we had was that the Ambassador was driving a jeep. That kept puzzling me and it was not until some time later that we learned he was driving the Thunderbird, he had actually given to Mrs. Peurifoy but she never drove it.

The complete details were not clear at first, but we did know that the Ambassador and Danny, who was in the front seat with his father, had been killed and Clinton, the other

Library of Congress

child who was a spastic, and not expected to live for more than two years, was in the back seat and was badly injured. It was fortunate that there was a plane with a radio to bring Mrs. Peurifoy and the ladies back as there isn't usually plane service there in Hua Hin. So, further news reached us more quickly.

It seems the Ambassador was driving with his wet Japanese clogs on and couldn't manipulate the brakes fast enough to avoid a truck loaded with heavy lumber coming head on over a narrow bridge. I finally said to Mr. Anschutz, who also looked ruined, "Shouldn't someone go over to the residence?" So, after a while the wife of our Army Attach# was sent over. The Naval Attach# had gone to get Mrs. Anschutz to take her to the airport to meet Mrs. Peurifoy who stayed at the hospital at the airport for a while and then was brought to the Seven Day Adventist Hospital where Clinton is still with both legs and an arm broken. Mrs. Peurifoy is spending most of her time there and only comes to the residence to shower and change and have something to eat and then returns to spend the night there.

I had not had any lunch but simply couldn't eat. I waited at the embassy until 4:00 in the afternoon and it was decided that Mrs. Spinks and I would go over to the residence at 6:00pm. We were told that Mrs. Peurifoy would be coming shortly but did not want to see anyone. She came in with the Prime Minister and Lady La-iad, who had called at the hospital and insisted upon bringing her home. After she had changed, she came down for a bowl of soup and I was simply amazed at her fortitude. She was dried eyed and never a trace of the horrid tragedy you knew she must be suffering. She did say, "I must hurry back to the hospital." When she came in I kissed her on the cheek but could not utter a word. I knew she understood. We left her with Mrs. Cowen.

I have been busy making rosters for ladies to go to the residence and read to Clinton as Mrs. Anschutz said she wants to spend next week packing and wants to leave Bangkok as soon as Clinton is able.

Library of Congress

I went down stairs to select samples of cards to acknowledge all the many, many telegrams, notes and cards that have poured in from all over the world from the President down, but none to be found. Then I suddenly remembered I had kept one I had received from the White House after the death of Mrs. Truman's mother, and sent it to Mrs. Peurifoy for her approval. It was worded very simply. "The President and Mrs. Truman deeply appreciate your condolences in their great loss." She liked it very much and wanted me to have some made like it. Since the quality of the paper was not very good at the stationeries here, they sent to Hong Kong for some and they were here in a day. PAA rushed the order. In fact, no stone has been left unturned for her. Five hundred were ordered. I have answered over 400 hundred and listed where they were sent for her records.

Today was cremation service at 9:00am. Only Mr. and Mrs. Anschutz and Mrs. Yost attended. The ashes were brought back to the embassy in two golden urns from the royal household, placed in the Ambassador's office, on his desk. Official mourning will be for two weeks. The men are to wear white suits and black ties and I am distributing black arm bands for which they pay 5 baht. The memorial service is to be held tomorrow afternoon at 4:00 at the International Church. It has always been traditional to have these services at Christ Church for our diplomats, but Mrs. Peurifoy joined the International Church when she arrived. The embassy is closing at noon. I have been trying to find out the protocol regarding the dress for the ladies at the service. Mrs. Peurifoy is wearing a black dress, shoes and stockings. She said the ladies could wear white if they wished. But, I have just spoken to the wife of the director of protocol, and she said all the Thai ladies will be in black, in fact do not consider white to be mourning. They wear no hats but will be wearing stockings. I asked where one would find black stockings in Bangkok and she told me of a little shop near a temple or, she said she had several pairs she would be glad to lend some of the ladies. Thai ladies don't wear hats, but she said, "I presume you ladies will." When I told this to Mrs. Anschutz, she said, "No, they won't, for the hats we all lent the Thai ladies to wear in the United States had not been returned. I don't possess any

Library of Congress

hat except for an old green velvet one so probably won't wear one either. I will try to get some black stockings. Haven't had any on at all since I have been here." Everyone is so horrified and shocked over the great tragedy and are eager to do anything they can for Mrs. Peurifoy has been a real inspiration to us all. Must close.

It is after 7:00pm and I must get back to the Club for supper which is being served now and go to bed and try to get some much needed rest. Last night I sat up on the edge of my bed all night just staring into the darkness too stunned to sleep.

August 25, 1955, Thursday, 4:30pm at the embassy.

Dear Dad and Mildred.

Yesterday was the saddest day I can ever remember except for the day we lost our dear mother and the day we lost our dear brother, Harold. I had become so very, very fond of dear Mrs. Peurifoy and felt it such a privilege.

Saturday morning I went to see Clint and took him a little bunch of roses. He was, of course, in traction, his legs both broken and arm in a sling and bandages on his forehead. He also had an injury to his left collarbone. His expression was better than I had expected. It took four nurses to give him a bath. I did not stay at that time, but went back again on Sunday to read to him and he looked better.

On Monday, Bill phoned me, Dinny had had her baby, so I took a basket of pink anthuriums to her and saw the infant, a girl, adorable. Just like Dinny who was doing very, very well. We chatted for a while. Then I ran up to the next floor to see Clint. Mrs. Peurifoy was sitting in the room quietly reading. Clint was able to hold a book and read to himself and looked even better than the day before. Mrs. Peurifoy offered me a ginger ale, but I thanked her and said I could only stay a minute. I mentioned the clipping you, Mildred, had sent me, and when she said she would like to have an extra copy to send to

Library of Congress

the Ambassador's family, I gave her all you had sent me from the Washington papers. It had seemed so little I could do for her.

The service on Monday was beautiful. The little International Church was crowded to capacity. Many seated outside. Of course, the Prime Minister and Lady Priboon were there; the Foreign Minister, Prince Ran and his consort was in a long black dress; the King's emissary, sat alone in a white uniform in a chair in front of all the pews; Mrs. Anschutz came with Mrs. Yost; Mrs. Peurifoy's dear friend, who came down from Laos when she heard the sad news; many Thai dignitaries, and all members of the diplomatic corps. The choir sang beautifully her favorite hymn, "Jesus Calling," and Reverend Rayburn gave a very comforting service. I could not take my eyes off of Mrs. Peurifoy, not a tear did she shed, not even a handkerchief did she have in her hand. She has been absolutely wonderful throughout this whole tragedy. Everyone has simply marveled at her. The Pakistani Charg# rang me the next day and said he was amazed and wished his women were like that. He didn't even bring his wife, he said, for he knew she would break down.

The official mourning, which has been for two weeks, ends tomorrow. The entire community has been stunned and grieve beyond words for the Peurifoy's have been so popular here and the Ambassador was doing so much for Thailand. It is a most appreciative country and generous. Priboon has given \$10,000 for a fund at the hospital to pay Clint's hospital expenses and for a reserve fund. Flowers were asked not to be sent, but a contribution made towards each one's church instead and a book for the little library in memory of Danny, is also desired. Of course, some did send flowers. I took a little basket of orchids over to the residence on the Sunday after the accident with a note. Mr. and Mrs. Anschutz, of course, have been overwhelmed. Poor Mr. Anschutz comes to the office red-eyed every morning but is carrying on wonderfully. Of course, everyone is speculating who will be sent out as ambassador, for he would have the full cooperation and backing of the entire staff. He is so kind and capable.

Library of Congress

I went to the airport with some of the members of the staff. Admiral Stump had a special plane equipped to take Clint and Mrs. Peurifoy and the ashes of the Ambassador and Danny to Tulsa, Oklahoma. Again, many of the diplomatic corps and Thai dignitaries were there. A red carpet was spread from the special waiting room out to the plane which was not far from the terminal. There was a very impressive honor guard of soldiers near the plane. The Army Attach#, Colonel Cowen, and Naval Attach#, Commander McGonigal, borne the urns, now encased in blue velvet. I thought, what a sad role my friend Bill McGonigal had to play in this unexpected phase of his Ambassador's career. Following the two attach#s came Mrs. Peurifoy, smiling to everyone in her gracious way. Of course, there was a battery of cameras. She walked between Mr. and Mrs. Anschutz, up the stairs of the plane and joined Clint who had previously been taken on. There was a retinue of nurses and doctors who accompanied him. It was all arranged at the last minute that Mrs. Cowen accompany Mrs. Peurifoy because she had been a nurse and very sweet and would be a nice companion for Mrs. Peurifoy. She may come back from Honolulu, or go all the way.

The band played the American National Anthem, then the Thai Anthem and then there was a nineteen gun salute. Mrs. Peurifoy stood there bravely, as always. Mrs. Anschutz, who had been with her most of the time, rather broke down after she came off the plane and Mrs. Cowen, the number two lady walked out with her arm around her. I watched the plane out of sight and never felt so forsaken and sad.

Several spoke to me. The wife of the Counselor of the French embassy, and I spoke together for some time. Then the Italian Charg# came up and Osmad, the Pakistani Charg# came. Her Royal Highness, wife of a dignitary from Vietnam, who was so lovely, and the wife of the deputy Prime Minister, Mrs. Roc, who is the daughter of the Prime Minister. I was almost paralyzed. No words were adequate to express one's feelings. Mrs. Peurifoy certainly showed everyone here what fortitude is. It is the saddest day I can ever remember.

Library of Congress

Needless to say, I went home very tired at night. Then thought about this terrible tragedy. Never have I wanted to understand more the mystery of life and death. When I think how happy and gay we all were surrounding the Ambassador on his birthday, the 9th, when there was a big cake for him in the snack bar. And, of course, we all wished him a happy birthday. Then, again, at the American Association luncheon shortly after. I had tipped off Marty Taylor, the president, that the next meeting would fall on his birthday, so Jimmy Scott got a beautiful silver cigarette box to present to him with appropriate words. Then, to think a few days later his ashes would be resting in a golden urn on his desk beside those of his son, little Danny.

I completely broke down at my desk after work on Tuesday evening when the thought came over me that she would be leaving the next morning with the ashes of her husband and son, Danny, and Clint on a stretcher. At times like this one does not like to intrude and I knew how (inaudible) she was and it would be impossible to see her to say goodbye. So I wrote her the following note: "Dear Mrs. Peurifoy, As I probably will not be given the opportunity of seeing you again before you depart, I could not have you leave without expressing again to you what is so deep in my heart. The fervent prayer that Clinton will continue to improve and that you will continue to receive the God given strength which thus far carried you so bravely through your sudden and tragic bereavement. You have been a magnificent inspiration to everyone. May I also say how greatly I have appreciated the rare privilege I have felt to be one of the members of your husband's staff. The association I have had and the pleasure to have been with the Ambassador and yourself will always remain one of the most cherished memories in the Foreign Service. I shall especially miss hearing your cherry voice over the telephone, dear Mrs. Peurifoy, for I have regarded you with great affection and esteem. May God bless you and Clinton to be with you on your homeward journey. Most sincerely, Virginia Biddle."

I took it to the residence and gave it to the number one boy who said he would take it to her at the hospital in the morning. The residence was absolutely deserted and my heart

Library of Congress

sank when I saw the lift vans and emptiness of what so recently had been so happy and gay a place.

I gave up my Manila trip. I just simply couldn't leave at the moment when Mrs. Peurifoy needed me more. I wanted to be here to do all that I possibly could for her. So I sent a cable to Florence Barrington. I am sure she understood for she had already sent a cable to Mrs. Peurifoy when the sad news reached her.

So, I am taking a different kind of holiday, but one which will be exactly what I need now. I am leaving Saturday noon on the Banseramsy which takes about 12 or 13 passengers down to the Gulf of Siam, touching several little places on the coast and some of the picturesque islands in the Gulf. Some of the embassy people have just returned and give it a good recommendation. The first stop will be Songkhla where I stopped on my way to Pinang. When I saw the magnificent scenery from the plane, I was determined I would someday take the boat trip. It is so cheap that I decided I could take the one deluxe cabin alone. It takes about ten days and the regular price is only 600 baht, about \$30. I am paying about \$63. It will be something like cruising in the south seas and will be restful and relaxing. I am taking some reading and hope to come back refreshed.

American embassy, September 7, 1955

Dears,

Back from my trip through the Gulf of Siam feeling so refreshed after my ten day holiday. We sailed 2:00pm on Saturday, August 27 and I found there were only three other passengers besides myself. A couple from USOM, Mr. and Mrs. Travell and a British civil service chap, Brian, about 25, who had been sent to Thailand to learn the language. So it was like being on our own yacht.

The native people and their produce had settled themselves neatly below decks on their mats. The decks were filled with bananas, beetle nut and all kinds of baskets. Mr. Travell

Library of Congress

had brought three cases of beer aboard. I had brought a few snacks but wished I had brought more for our tea. The food was exceptionally good. There was plenty of deck space where white wicker furniture was placed—tables, chairs, chaise lounge—and striped canvas on deck chairs for those wishing to sleep out on deck. I had one placed outside my cabin and slept nearly every night outside.

We were some time getting out of the muddy river to the Gulf. We passed the French embassy, Portuguese legation and Oriental Hotel. It was interesting to see the places from the river. When we reached Klong Toi I suddenly realized that it was here I met the 400 passengers coming off the boat. The entire Thai fleet was tied up here and Mr. Travell, who was always so informative, explained each type of ship to me. Their one destroyer was sunk in the war with Korea. The Thai captain, who could only speak a few words of English, had been the captain on the (Inaudible). It was lovely to see the little houses on stilts and the napa and mangrove growing right out of the water on the river's edge and all kinds of craft on the water.

Late in the afternoon we began to see sampans with sails made of matting. The captain said we would pass Hua Hin about midnight and would be about 35 miles from shore. I was just as glad it would be midnight because I don't think I would ever be happy seeing that place again. For now it only holds tragic memories.

We passed a dredge. Mr. Travell thought it was one where the Prime Minister was kidnapped from in 1951 which caused the unsuccessful coup. I noticed flowered leis and joss sticks on the bow of the ship which I think is a Buddhist custom and reminded me of Halliburton's Chinese junk, similarly decorated, we saw put out to sea when we arrived in Hong Kong. It was good to reach green waters and fun to watch our course on the bridge for never have I had the privilege of spending so much time on a ship's bridge before.

We reached Songkhla about 4:00 in the afternoon and Brian wanted to go to the British consulate to sign the book. So we took samlars and rowed in the moonlight to the

Library of Congress

residence. It was suggested that he run in and we would wait. But he called out to us shortly to say they wanted us to come in for a drink. The Consul and his wife were charming. We chatted a bit, and, of course, the Consul's wife spoke of the horrible tragedy to our Ambassador, nor did Brian ever sign the book for there wasn't one. But we enjoyed the little visit very much.

Back to the ship and I was lulled to sleep by a deck passenger playing softly on a bamboo flute. At 6:00 in the morning I awakened to see the Malayan baydar, those picturesque sailing ships, coming towards us with their cargo. When they reached our ship they lowered their sails and began loading dried salted vegetables in large earthen jars from China. At no port were we able to tie up. Each time we went ashore we went ashore in a different type of boat. This time we got into what looked like an old paddle boat, but much smaller. In fact, the water was so shallow, the boatman got out and pulled us to shore. The Malaysians are the seamen in the south of Thailand. It was an hour and a half before we reached the little town of Pattani, which used to be a famous port three or four hundred years ago. When we arrived arrangements were made to hire a car to take us to the points of interests which were the caves and waterfalls. Afterwards a Chinese lunch eaten with chopsticks overlooking the town. I was so fascinated by the women and their colorful native dress and the Malay so prevalent here. The casual nonchalance with which they tossed their gay colored things around their heads and let them fall down so gracefully over their shoulders. And on top of their heads carried trays of tropical fruit. Each are a perfect model for Gauguin. The grace of their carriage reminded me of the Balinese and Javanese women, lovely to behold.

We started out in this car with a native driver hell bent for heaven and no persuasion could make him slow down so we could see the scenery and people. Small rubber plantations and napa huts. When the driver was not tearing along like mad, he was stopped with the hood up looking into the engine, too frequent for comfort. But, we finally made it to the caves by mounting a long flight of steps similar to the ones we had seen at Pedge Buri, full of Buddha images. I longed to see the birds that were making such unusual sounds in

Library of Congress

this quiet, peaceful place. It was some distance to the waterfall up in the mountains where we ran into a shower. But, we didn't mind, in fact, loved it for it was a better shower than we could have in the first-class lady's room on the ship. It was fun bathing in the tiny pool under the waterfall, around the rocks. We had sandwiches in the car and I had brought limeade in my thermos.

We arrived at Tukby early the next morning, the last port in Thailand on the border of Malay. Before we could finish breakfast, a life boat was being lowered to take us ashore. Mrs. Travell and I changed into our bathing suits behind the sand dune. It looked first like a scene on a desert island. Thatched roofed huts where no one seemed to be stirring and typical south sea islands. We browsed through the village after our heavenly swim, but found nothing but an odd assortment of European goods, flashlight, fruit and washing powder and a conglomeration of things.

Back to the ship and watched them loading smelly shrimp paste. Sailed about 8:30pm. The Danish engineer, Mr. Nelson, who had been with the company 36 years and the only European on the ship, came up for tea one day and then frequently thereafter. He arranged for us to have a car the next day to take us to a waterfall that seemed to be the only point of interest. This car, something like a station wagon, had all of its seats removed and, in fact, replaced by rattan chairs. We drove 28 miles over a road like a washboard and our conversation sounded as if we were all losing our front, back and side teeth. There were 28 bridges and we came to one where they were putting in some new logs and we couldn't cross it until it was finished. We promptly took out the chairs and thermos bottles and Mr. T. even got out his case of beer and planted ourselves on the edge of the bridge and made ourselves comfortable until it was finished. It was all quite amusing. Mr. Nelson, to add a little zest to the occasion, said there were tigers in the hills.

The waterfall was lovely and again had a delightful swim and hiked up to the top where there was a little Buddhist shrine. We picnicked on a rock beside the fall and watched a family of black baboons with long tails jumping from tree to tree. We browsed again in

Library of Congress

the tiny village and I picked up a couple of sarongs. Returning we passed over the most colorful Malayan boats painted bright yellow, blue and orange, near a palm fringed island and the boatmen waved to us gaily.

Back on the ship we were invited to a Chinese dinner given by the compodore, sort of a high class stevedore, in celebration of the Chinese ancestor worship. We had scotch throughout the dinner followed by cognac. I knew only one word in Thai and it was "delicious," so I felt I could show my appreciation to these people. Under the captain there was the compodores, assistant and two custom officers who had boarded the ship to watch the rubber we had taken on, to see that we took it to Bangkok and not to Singapore or some place else.

The ship loaded cargo all night and now I am just beginning to get whiffs of the smell of copra, so reminiscing of the south seas and that sweet sickly odor reminded me of Tahiti. The men had to count each coconut before it was put in the hold or in a rocky...

All through the night I heard them counting, etc. until I thought I would go nuts, but at least I learned to count up to ten in Thai. It was a beautiful moon light night and the breezes were balmy and we followed gleaming, sandy beaches, tall palms with mountains behind. The simplest things became of enormous interest as the days went by. I read a lot and slept a lot and became very lazy. It was a perfect type of holiday for me at this particular time. I loved to hear the Thai boy singing out the depth of water each time we would stop. They called it the stringing of the lead.

When we returned to Songkhla, a Thai couple boarded. The gentleman spoke English and when I heard they were from Chiang Mai, I asked him if he knew the Prince of Chiang Mai, who had taken me to see the old temples. He said he did. The next day he produced some photos of the Prince and his wife swimming in the waterfall. I was sorry I did not have with me the one that was taken with him at one of the temples.

Library of Congress

We made several stops at the coconut islands, no road connecting any of the little villages. The only way was to bicycle or go by foot. We were really in an uncivilized part of the world. The people all stared. Some of the babies ran from us in the villages. We were probably not too often seen. The scenery was absolutely magnificent on the homeward run. Something like out of a Wagnerian opera. The dark blue tones over the mountains, the islands gave them a very dramatic appearance. We stopped at several fishing villages and saw a great many fishing traps in the water. But we were never on schedule. In fact, I didn't get back in time for the American Association luncheon. As we passed the Oriental Hotel, I could see the long tables set up as Mrs. Roosevelt had been asked to speak. But, I felt I looked like a weather-beaten lady from the hinterland and had to get my hair done before I could put in an appearance because I knew the entire diplomatic corps would be there, plus a lot of the Thai dignitaries. I had prepared everything for the president in the event I didn't get back.

When we handed in our chits for the extras aboard, after one coke, an orange drink, etc., it read "How about 24 bob?" I thought it was the final touch of humor until I found I had to disembark through the holds of the ship. They had to move cargo to let me off.

After I got thoroughly civilized looking again at the Tock Hotel, where I had my hair done and a shower and lunch at the American Club, I went to the embassy to find nearly everyone had gone to the American Association luncheon at the Oriental. I didn't mind too much missing Mrs. Roosevelt this time, because I had remembered hearing her when I was a nurse's aide in Washington during the war and what great charm she had.

I am bronze and rested and will now have new energy for making arrangements for our trip to India, Mildred.

Just received from Sheridan Logan a clipping from the New York Times dated August 8, of the death of Mrs. John Hubbard in Paris on the 6th. A long article all about her many activities and her photograph. I am crushed beyond words. As you know I adored her

Library of Congress

and she was so dear to me. The papers did not say what caused her death so I wrote to Marcelle L'Conte to inquire for me. I also sent a note of condolences to her granddaughter, Mrs. Clarence McCaylus at Mrs. Hubbard's address where I had been entertained when in New York.

September 22, 1955

Dear Mildred,

I know you have been anxiously waiting to hear from me. Plans are shaping up for our trip to India. After the Pakistani Minister had spoken at the American Association luncheon, Mr. Setti, the Charg# d'Affaires of the Indian embassy, took me to see Dr. Gangi, their press secretary, who Mr. Mennen, their ambassador now in India, had introduced me to, and asked me to see when I got ready to go. He said that Kashmir wouldn't be pretty at that time of year, besides the roads might be impassible. People, if they can get there at all, go to ski. I believe Delhi will be cold enough. He warned me it could be snowing. Please have Sue Parish bring me a warm dress, a nightgown, when you see her.

Today, an airgram came to my desk and I thought the name rang a bell. It said the Honorable and Mrs. Higley were going to the dedication ceremonies, the opening of the veterans' memorial hospital in Quezon City and would return to the United States via Asia and the Near East and Europe. We were asked to make reservations for them for the night of November 29. They leave the 30th. I shall tell Mr. Anschutz that is your boss and that you decorated his office, for I remember the letter of commendation he had written you after it was done. I will get a room for them at the Oriental and meet them at the airport.

September 28, 1955

Just heard we now have APO privileges and hasten to send you the news for now packages can reach me in about six weeks against two and a half months via the

Library of Congress

diplomatic pouch. But letters come faster by open mail rather than via APO. I get yours in about eight days.

Susan Frost Parish, our cultural affairs officer, is due back the end of October. She is adorable and everyone here loves her and her house and garden.

At the Embassy, Saturday, October 8, 1955

To Dad and Mildred,

I have been asked to write up my trip on the Gulf of Siam for our little weekly bulletin. So glad you got a map and could follow my trip and so nice of you to be so interested and getting books on the places where I am and found when I come home you are sometimes better informed on the countries than I am, myself.

Now the rains are getting heavier, but it is getting cooler so the fans are used less and the light blankets a little more. I have been trying to ward off a cold by going to bed as soon as I get home every evening in order not to miss a day at the office for I hate to spoil my record of not having had a day's sick leave since I have been here. I probably have been over tired too, for I have been working hard on a list of prominent Thai in Bangkok. It is finished now and will be extremely valuable to everyone. I had to list the office addresses and telephone numbers and their home addresses and telephone numbers, which is not easy, especially when the names can be spelled several different ways. Then, too, I was trying to get out my Christmas cards for the pouch, and a long list I have, too.

You asked how things were going to be now after the Ambassador's death. In my particular case I find a great deal of the glamour missing from my job. Mrs. Peurifoy, who was so sweet and gracious and charming, required me to do many things for her. Arranging her calls and party lists, and I was there almost every Wednesday for her at-homes, meeting people and assisting her and sending out her invitations. Now, all that is finished until a new ambassador comes. The embassy is in very capable hands as

Library of Congress

Mr. Anschutz is now Charg# d'Affaires. His wife, Roberta, is very pleasant, too. I arrange her calls, but Mr. Anschutz' secretary, pretty Georgia Marlow, has taken over their social engagements. There is not so much for her to do now, with the Ambassador's secretary, June Acough, still here.

I find I keep so much healthier in tropical climates and it is so important when one has a job to do.

Tell Perle Mesta I loved the article you sent me about her impressions of Russia— “They cannot survive because they do not seem to believe in God.”

Sorry I did not know George Williams was here at the time of the Ambassador's death, but at that time everyone was so distressed they couldn't be normal. I read in the paper the funeral service will be in Arlington on Thursday. I am longing to know if you met Mrs. Peurifoy. I am sure you would try if you possibly could. I read of all the Thai dignitaries who were there.

I think we should make our hotel reservations at Agra as soon as possible, for I read somewhere, “when the dining room was full, the moon is full.” Mr. Anschutz has approved my leave from December 16 - January 3. Someone has said it would be very nice if we could arrange to stay at the Maharajah's guest house in Jodhpur.

At home, October 13, 1955, Thursday

The doctor has advised that I stay at home for a couple of days because I was feeling so tired. Not really ill in any way, but followed his orders reluctantly for I hated to spoil my record of not having taken any sick leave in over the year I have been here. But, I suppose it is time now, and I am beginning to feel debilitated from the heat. He is giving me B12 shots in the hip and I am taking yeast tablets besides my usual vitamins, so I should be picking up shortly.

Library of Congress

When you see Perle Mesta, ask her if her instructions (inaudible). I spoke with Mr. Setti, the Charg#, personally about it, to contact the embassy in New Delhi to see that she had the interview.

I planned our itinerary in India to be in New Delhi on December 24-25, as I thought it would be more gay and to put us near the Taj nearer the full moon time. I suggest we leave Banaras one day earlier, more fun than staying in Calcutta, in order to get to Rangoon where you say Malek has a friend who can give us a beautiful party on New Year's Eve.

I met at the airport one day, Mrs. Satterthwaite's, the wife of the Ambassador, when she was on route to join him in Rangoon. He had just been transferred there from Tangier and we found we had several mutual friends in Morocco.

I have been reading an excellent book on India called, "This is India," by Rama Rawl, an Indian woman married to an American, Phelbian Bowers, who writes about the Oriental theater. Then, another book by a Frenchman called, "Diamonds and Dust." And now, "Lancer at Large," by Yeats Brown. I am taking notes, and there is so much to know about that vast country.

I have been asking Herman Seiler, the manager, to fix up the room across from me for your special visit and he promises me he will.

At the airport, October 16, 1955, Sunday, 12:30pm

I have come to the airport to meet Penny Robinson, the secretary to the Naval Attach# in Saigon, who was so nice to me there. Bill McGonigal had a letter from her saying she was coming through today on route to the United States via the Middle East and Europe, for home leave. Then she is being transferred to Melbourne. Bill couldn't come because the deputy Prime Minister had invited him somewhere, so he sent his car and chauffeur to pick

Library of Congress

me up at Dinny Phelps, where I have been spending the weekend. I will take her to lunch and see what she wants to do until 6:00 when Bill hopes to see her.

When I arrived at Dinny's on Friday, was greeted with the news that her number one servant had gone and only had a new wash amah, so with the new baby needing to be feed every four hours and no servant in the house I was kept busy trying to help her.

Mildred, I was so touched to read the wonderful letter describing the services at Arlington for Ambassador Peurifoy. I wept when I read that you did go and did meet Mrs. Peurifoy, for I know you too would love her.

October 18, 1955

Had luncheon with Penny Robinson on Sunday and again on Monday at Bill McGonigal's. She was to see Ambassador and Mrs. Heath in Beirut.

Charlie wrote me the Ambassador had written such a nice letter when he was let out with him at the embassy in Saigon.

The padre has invited me to the St. Andrew's Ball the end of November and a buffet at his house.

Tell Perle Mesta, the dinner the Ambassador gave for her was the last large dinner they had before his tragic, fatal accident. I was checking through his files the other day and it gave me a pang to see the guest list on top of the files and nothing since. I was so pleased I had been invited.

At the Embassy, October 22, 1955, Saturday, 4:30pm

I have come over here to the embassy to work on our trip to India. Lady MacFalgher, whose husband, Sir Alexander, is with the United Nations here and lived there for years and invited me over at 6:00 on Thursday to give me some notes. I liked her the minute I

Library of Congress

met her at one of the American Association luncheons when she reminded me so much of my friend in Paris, Princess Conderov Barris. She gave me a note of introduction to an Indian friend of hers whose sister is the Ambassador for Pakistan at the Hague and whose husband was Prime Minister and assassinated in 1951. She is writing that I am coming.

I am about to subscribe to Holiday. There is an article in the October issue on Siam by a friend of Mr. Lescher with our USIS here.

This morning I went over to the church to help decorate it for the harvest festival, and it does look lovely. This is a long weekend as Monday is a holiday, but the rains deter one from making many plans. A group of people had to give up going to Hua Hin for the roads were all under water and also the railroad tracks and even the airport. I was sorry for them, but I have no desire to return there any more.

I am invited to the Prime Minister's reception on Monday evening, United Nations Day. Then, next Saturday, I am going to a costume party, Halloween. I got out my Japanese bride's kimono, but decided it would be too hot, so decided to wear a red and white sarong I bought in the Fiji Islands in 1939 and make leis of the frangipani that is now in bloom and keep cool. On November 10th the Marines give their annual dance and the 26th is the ball for the benefit of the blind. And, then the St. Andrews Ball, which is quite a social event. This begins the social season here, though it really never ends.

Bill Phelps tells me P.D. Howard wants to take me to the Masonic Ball where we had such fun together last year.

October 26, 1955

Mildred,

Just a hurried note to ask if you would like to arrange to stay over in Rangoon and take a trip up to Mandalay. I have spoken with several who have been there and I, for my part,

Library of Congress

would like very much to go if you would. I hear the USIS officer has a lovely house where he puts up guests. I have such poignant memories of reciting as a child Kipling's "On the Road to Mandalay," and it would be fun to see, "where the flying fishes play and the dawn comes up like thunder out of China across the bay," although they say it really doesn't.

November 4, 1955

I have written to Don Rogers, the vice consul in Rangoon regarding staying in the house of the public affairs officer in Mandalay.

November 7, 1955

Glad to hear you talked with Madame Mesta and that she had a one hour interview with Nehru and that a new nurse is coming to the embassy, Joan Carter, and a darling.

November 8, 1955

Regarding the rate at the American Club, I pay \$6.42 per day and that includes three meals, plus tea and cocktails and sandwiches and a limeade known as a Nominau I have afterwards on the veranda.

At the Embassy, November 12, 1955, Saturday

Came to the embassy to continue writing my Christmas cards. Deeply touched to receive such a sweet letter from Mrs. Peurifoy.

November 14, 1955

Going to a church committee tonight. Was put on the church council by Bill Phelps. The costume party was fun. Wore my sarong, tucked a flower behind my ear, made anklet of flowers and carried a basket of fruit and flowers. I could have managed to carry it on my head but wouldn't have been able to dance. And went barefooted and kept cool.

Library of Congress

I went to the Marine Ball with some people from the embassy after we had gone to the airport to see the chief of USOM, Mr. Sponiler and his wife off.

Bill and Dinny are coming to have Thanksgiving dinner with me at the Club, so shall not be going away that long weekend, saving all my pennies for the trip to India.

November 18, 1955

I am having dinner with Lea Knot, who used to live in India, and returning there soon, so will glean more information. I am taking the Phelps and Baron von Plason to the Martha Graham dance recital. I have been invited to the Pickerings for supper. He is head of USIS and entertaining the troop after the performance.

Mrs. Allen asked me to come to Phnom Penh in Cambodia for Thanksgiving but had already invited the Phelps.

We have a series of Congressmen coming now and lots of invitations to write, so must stop.

November 21, 1955

Mildred,

Just had a nice letter from Betty Purdy, enclosing check for \$5 for us to do something on Christmas eve in India. Perhaps we must buy some champagne or have a cocktail to toast her. We must have peds for the temples. I will bring some for you, if you don't have any.

At Embassy, November 27, 1955

These days are absolutely heavenly now, cool like California. The fans not going so much and have donned sweaters for going to work.

Library of Congress

About 300 were at the Masonic Ball and P.D. Howard took me with the Phelps. They always have lovely gifts for the ladies. This year they were especially pretty, George Jenson pins. I was so pleased because I have always wanted some George Jenson silver. The ladies were all in long dresses and I wore my new ball gown I bought in Pinang, white net with black lace, and danced nearly every dance and didn't get home until 3:45 in the morning.

Mildred, the Phelps told me about the dinner they want to give for you while here. They are inviting the Bishop, who will be here to christen their new born baby, the Rev. and Mrs. Gillmore, the Lord Mayor of Bangkok, whose wife is Princess (Inaudible), sister of Prince Sawan, the Thai Foreign Minister, who is now in the United States, and Baron von Plason and P.D. Howard, and the German couple who live next door, Mr. and Mrs. Haft. They have asked me to be the proxy godmother for Susan Elizabeth at the christening on Sunday, January 9 at 4:00pm. I felt very honored and they hoped you would be here for the small christening party after.

The Higleys are due Tuesday. Mrs. Anschutz and I will meet them and I shall put on an orchid in their room for Mrs. Higley to wear to the Anschutzes' dinner they are giving for them that evening. I will add your name to the card.

January 9, 1956, Monday

Dear Mildred

Have just returned to my room to find your dear sweet note which has touched me very deeply. I have been thinking of you so much since I waved you goodbye this morning. Had a sandwich at the snack bar and went back to my office. Many asked about you and said what a success my party had been. At 4:30 went to the tea at the parsonage and sat at a table with Mr. Mark Jackson and some English girls. The Bishop spoke as did the padre, both with great humor. The British Ambassador, Sir Barclay Gage and Lady Gage, were

Library of Congress

also there. I went with Dinny and Bill. After to Bill Brownsey's who was the treasurer, but resigning, another English chap who was there and very witty. We laughed and laughed.

The Phelps are giving a cocktail party for the British Charg# who is leaving.

I, too, thought we had such a wonderful trip together, Mildred, and do feel so let down, but it will be nice to look forward to rejoining you before too very long.

January 11, 1956

Busy now arranging calls for the new ambassador, Max Bishop.

January 16, 1956

Dear Mildred,

The Ambassador is giving four parties this week so had to dash in a hurry then spent all Saturday morning addressing the envelopes with the secretary of Mr. Conover and then requested special messenger to deliver them. He is speaking at the next American Association luncheon, so I have busy times ahead. Went to church as usual at 8:00 and kept thinking of last Sunday when I was so happy to have you by my side.

January 17, 1956

After the church council meeting last evening, Bill and Dinny, and Bill Brownsey, the red haired Englishman who was the resigning treasurer and so much fun, and I went to the Jacksons for a drink. Then, to the Phelps for dinner to see the pictures of the christening.

Official mourning for the Queen Grandmother is over. When you arrived in Bangkok you may have noticed all of the diplomatic corps were wearing black ties and mourning bands due to the death of the 92-year-old Queen Grandmother of the King.

Library of Congress

Dad, dear, I forgot to tell you that I bought with the \$5 you were so sweet to send me for Christmas a little silver box in India for my box collection. I love it as it has the Mongol design and the flower on it that is in the Taj Mahal and will be such a pleasant souvenir of that exquisitely beautiful world famous place. How I wish you could have seen it with Mildred and me.

January 18, 1956

Last evening Bill Phelps sent their car for me for their cocktail party. When Baron von Plason arrived he said he had also stopped for me. I thought how kind. They had a few people in to say goodbye to the Charg# of the British embassy and sat in the garden. There I met the Blacks. It is he who was lecturing at the Siam Society on 19th century old ruins near the border of Siam and Cambodia. They are said to be older than Angkor Wat and both countries are claiming it. I am taking that nice girl, Shirley Herd from the Australian embassy as my guest.

January 20, 1956

Received a letter from Mr. Liper in Mandalay saying he was sorry he could not have been there when we arrived, but was called to Rangoon unexpectedly for consultation, but hoped we enjoyed ourselves. Clem Dillar he said was most pleased to be with us.

Mr. Black's lecture was most interesting on a sanctuary now in ruins dating from the 9th century. Prince Donni introduced him and Dr. Spinks, from our USIS, gave him words of thanks after. Marjorie Lescher was there and said her husband had been to this place. I should have loved to see it, but apparently it is frightfully difficult to get to. Must go over rough roads in a jeep and very few have been there. Mr. Black was telling me at the Phelps that now that the French are no longer in that part of the world, they do not know how those temples of Angkor Wat, for instance, will keep preserved for the Cambodians, themselves, do not care about keeping them up.

Library of Congress

My little Austrian friend, Friedel, called and wants me to meet her for a swim at the Sports Club on Sunday. She dashes around Bangkok on a motorbike and shares a house with the secretary of the Danish Minister.

January 23, 1956

I was invited to dinner at the Joseph Goulds. They had a young man there who was a pilot on the MATS plane and who pilots all the VIPs. This time he had the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Godell, and his party and will take our Ambassador back to the States to get his wife, who has just had her third child. He is speaking at the American Association luncheon tomorrow. Mr. Scott is planning for 300 so I will be busy arranging the sitting for the VIPs.

January 25, 1956

I was rushed off my feet getting the seating arrangements made for the American Association luncheon at the Oriental where our new Ambassador, Max Bishop, was speaking. There were 290 and I had to arrange 50 to be seated according to protocol. The Prime Minister and Madame Priboon came and many members of the Thai cabinet and nearly all of the chiefs of mission. He spoke very well and sounded down to earth.

After I got everyone seated, I just dropped down in any vacant seat available and who should I find myself seated across the table from in that enormous crowd of 290, but a Mr. Sperry from the National City Bank in Hong Kong. None other than Hank Sperry, who I had heard about for ages. He said he had tried to look me up in the embassy but couldn't find me, not knowing I would be at the Oriental in the throes of seating 50 VIPs for our Ambassador's first appearance at the American Association luncheon. He said Don Keating, an Englishman in their office, had heard from Charlie just a week ago and mentioned that a branch of the Bank had been opened in Beirut.

Library of Congress

After I went back to my office and worked on the Ambassador's list for a dinner he was giving in honor of the Prime Minister and his party of 34 that he had taken with him to the United States. Toi Cunjara was invited with her mother and father, and I thanked her for taking us to the emerald Buddha.

Prince Sawan, the Foreign Minister, returns the 30th and will be the next speaker on the 7th of February, so that will be another big seating arrangement for me to do.

January 27, 1956

Last evening I was invited to dinner at the Rocholtz. Mr. Rocholtz is the manager of Caltech, and acting president of the American Association. There must have been about ten couples there. It was buffet and we ate at small tables. The nice young chap, Mr. Doherty, who was seated next to me on the plane coming to Bangkok, was there.

We had not seen each other since we had arrived here on August 28, so we compared notes on how we liked Bangkok. Both agreed that we did like it. Also there was the Charg# d'Affaires of the Belgian legation, the former Charg# of the Austrian legation, who sat at my table with his Vietnamese wife who had great charm, as I have found all the Austrians to have. A couple visiting from Stanford University traveling around the world and a Mrs. Conover, whose husband was at a conference in Bangalore.

January 31, 1956

The embassy received an airgram the other day that John W. Hauser is arriving February 10 to see about building a Hilton Hotel here. I don't know if it ever materialized.

Received such a nice note from Mr. Higley. Mr. Anschutz is again Charg# until the Ambassador returns with his wife and three children on February 13. Poor Bill McGonigal is in the hospital with pneumonia.

Library of Congress

There is a lecture at the Siam Society on Burma this Friday, which will interest me more than ever. I am taking June Acough as my guest.

February 8, 1956

Prince Sawan spoke at the American Association luncheon yesterday where I had arranged seating for 44 members of the diplomatic corps and important Thai. The popularity of the Americans here is very great and funnily enough this time I again sat across from someone who knew Charlie, a visitor from Singapore. A most attractive Dutchman who has lived years in the Orient and had known Yeti's first husband. It is beginning to be uncanny.

Dinny Phelps is going to Hong Kong on the JUSMAAG plane Saturday, but we are not allowed to travel on it. Tailors in Hong Kong are like dentists, everyone has his favorite to recommend and you don't know which one to choose.

February 13, 1956

Mr. and Mrs. Sistonovich sent out amusing invitations to a costume party to celebrate the anniversary of Abraham Lincoln. They dressed as Abe Lincoln and his wife. I decided to go as Marie Antoinette, for in my long black lace and white net ball gown all I thought I needed would be a wig and a diamond necklace. But, alas, not so easy. I couldn't find a wig, so with Dinny's help piled high rolls of cotton, then tied a black velvet ribbon around it, tucked in a pink French flower and draped it with strands of pearls. The jeweler Ainsley, kindly lent me a brilliant necklace for the occasion. When I started to leave the American Club for the party, I knew I could not get into one of the tiny taxis they have here so I asked a Chinese boy to have a large one sent. When he saw my costume and towering headdress, he politely asked and in all sincerity, "Madame, would you like me to call a truck?" I was so amused and thought the truck might be the appropriate way to arrive, after all—Marie Antoinette on her way to the guillotine.

Library of Congress

When I arrived at the Sistonoviches, they said, "Hello Martha," thinking I was Martha Washington and also was called Betsy Ross and Dolly Madison, which were more appropriate as they were American historical characters and what I should have called myself. But, I wasn't the only one not recognized quite accurately. The British Ambassador, Sir Barclay Gage said to me, "You wouldn't know I was Clive of India, would you?" He just had a red cummerbund around his waist. Another man was dressed as Caesar, but said very indignantly, "I am not Caesar, I am Brutus!" Sue Parish came as Narcissus wearing bath towels and a mirror tied around her neck and kept looking at herself. Some wit said, "Are you a near sighted chariot driver, or what?" I asked one woman what she was and she said, "Well, I'm off a postage stamp, the woman who fought off all the Burmese." "The King and I" was represented. A Thai came as the King and his English wife as the governess, Anna.

The most amusing couple who arrived came as a pink elephant which depicted a real historic episode. The Siamese government had sent Abraham Lincoln two pink elephants when he was in office.

Even the music was of the time, played on an old clavichord. The host and hostess sounded just as Abe and wife might by saying "Won't you come into the parlor and dance." Lincoln's picture was hanging on the wall in the parlor and actually bore a striking resemblance to the host. The Sistonoviches had been posted in Italy and Palermo where George Palmer is now. Their house, with attractive object d'art reflected their sojourn there. I enjoyed meeting the well-known writer, James Michener, who was a guest there with his attractive Japanese-American bride.

A few days later, Mrs. Sistonovich rang to ask if I still had my wig I wore to the costume party and when I said yes, she asked if I could come over at 6:30pm, they were going to take some pictures. They were asking as many with interesting costumes as they could. I

Library of Congress

had returned my diamond necklace to Ainsley, but thought it wouldn't matter too much, as long as I had my wig on. The photo appeared in the Foreign Service Journal.

Tomorrow I am going to the Phillips for cocktails. He is our administrative officer, and his wife formerly designed clothes for Elizabeth Arden. Then, on Friday invited to the cocktail party the Japanese Ambassador and Mrs. Ota are having to bid farewell to his friends as he is being transferred to Rome. Next Monday there is a party at the Ledekers given in honor of someone off the Cumshome that memorable ship that brought so many celebrities I had to meet last year.

Our Ambassador is due to arrive this afternoon with his wife and new baby and two other children. Dinny's trip to Hong Kong was postponed due to the SEATO maneuvers.

February 15, 1956

Just heard we are to have a holiday tomorrow and Friday because of the SEATO maneuvers. It makes a wonderfully long weekend but at this late date don't know what plans to make. Rang Bill to ask what they were doing. He and Dinny were planning to go out to the airport to see the display and asked me to go with them. The most spectacular was the drop of 600 parachutists. We had a picnic lunch under a nearby wat. Last evening at the Phillips' cocktail party, Sir Alexander MacFalgher, asked if you, Mildred, got home all right. You may recall it was his wife who had given us a note to Mrs. Southernly in Delhi.

In Dad's last letter, he said, "I am counting the days until I see you," so I have decided now, that I will leave just as soon as I can after I am due on August 28, rather than wait until October, the more comfortable month to travel, to get to him as soon as I can for I realize so well he is aging.

February 24, 1956, Monday

Library of Congress

Mrs. Anschutz brought Mrs. Bishop, the new Ambassador's wife, to me with a long list to go over. She is having a series of teas to meet the different groups of American ladies on certain days. Yesterday, I assisted her again when all of our American ladies from our embassy and USIS came. Today will be JUSMAAG and next week USOM and all non-government. Then will begin her regular calling days.

She is very sweet and her two little girls were all dressed up in blue organdy dresses as she held her new two-month old baby part of the time she was receiving. She and the Ambassador are to be presented to the King and Queen on Monday and I have been inquiring what is protocol for that occasion as the court is still in mourning. I am told she must appear in a black dress, hat, gloves and stockings, and courtesy.

Gwen Donovan has been here so they have been entertaining them, although he is actually a guest of the Thai government. Meantime, Tom Logan came to see me. He is taking over Mr. Barrington's job here, who's retiring. Had dinner with him at the Oriental, then took him on to a shadow play that had not been given for eight years. Then he came to the Club for a drink and will be leaving for Saigon and Indonesia next day.

The Ledekers gave a beautiful party at their lovely place with a huge garden. Enormous pink water lilies were floating in the klong with lights in them. Twenty-four Thai dancers performed in their exotic costumes. Mrs. Ota looked lovely in her Japanese kimono at their farewell party the other evening. When I arrived I said "good evening" in Japanese and when I left, I thanked them in Japanese, which brought broad grins. The Japanese lanterns and flower arrangements were so reminiscent of my interesting days in Japan.

Last evening I had tickets for an Italian film which the Countess Franco, wife of the Italian Minister, had asked me to buy at the Japanese Ambassador's party. I invited a new member of our embassy staff, Mr. Hart, to go with me as he knew Italian and was very pleased to go. He took me to a Chinese dinner before and I sat next to Lady MacFalgher and Lady Gage.

Library of Congress

March, 1956, at the Embassy

Dear Mildred,

Our new Ambassador, Max Bishop, has insisted that everyone get to the office on time now, so here I am on the dot of 7:30am. He will be leaving for Karachi tomorrow for about a week. I may be off on that long looked forward to trip to Hong Kong and Manila Monday. I have written to Mrs. Crocum in the Eileen Curshaw shop at the Peninsula Hotel to alert her that I will want a camel hair coat made in two days.

Sunday I am going with the Siam Society on an all day trip to Ayutthaya, the old capital, and then to Ban Pan Hin, the summer palace, returning by motor launch. It is there those interesting little heads are found.

Did you see the interesting article Frances Roosevelt wrote for the February Women's Home Companion, illustrated with some of the paintings done here?

I hear Dulles is coming to Bangkok.

At the airport, March 5, 1956, 5:30am

Just a line to say I am taking off in the Air Attach#'s plane for Hong Kong and Manila in a few minutes and will spend two night in Hong Kong and perhaps two in Manila. Due back Friday afternoon. I am writing here in a wool dress and stockings and it is so hot, but expect to be more comfortable when I reach Hong Kong.

At 9,000 feet on route Manila, March 7

Will have this ready to post to you from Manila. Had a pleasant flight from Bangkok to Hong Kong. Plane was comfortable and trip very smooth. I sat with Mrs. Garland, the wife of the Air Attach#, Mrs. Anschutz and Mrs. Smith, whose husband is in the political

Library of Congress

section. Others were a couple from our embassy and two ladies returning to Clark Field where we will land.

We arrived at Hong Kong about 2:30pm and all stayed at the International Hotel on Kowloon, not far from the Peninsula, operated by Chinese. The Cumshome was in port so everything was packed. I dashed immediately to Eileen Curshaw's shop to see Mrs. Crocum. She had cabled me to bring 12 yards of black Thai silk for men's suits, which I had under my arm. Her shop was full of old ladies off the Cumshome buying things. I selected a lovely shade of half cashmere and half camel hair and a tailor took measurements. I had fitting the next afternoon, but didn't want to rush him by taking it with me, so hoped Dinny, or someone could bring it to me.

Then I got a black cashmere sweater set, Pringle, for \$35. The slipover was \$14 and cardigan was \$21. And, also, a white cashmere slipover. Always thought you were so smart, Mildred, to wear yours next to your skin when traveling in cold countries. Looked at camphor wood chests made of teak but couldn't find any I liked.

When I saw Hank Sperry, he said they wanted me for dinner Tuesday, but they were all booked up with Cumshome people.

I got a little box for my collection from Charlotte Hortsman, who had a beautiful shop near the National City Bank. A friend of a friend of mine I knew in Paris is making very chic coats from the big Thai silk stoles, as is Mrs. Crocum, slightly slit up the side. I took my three Cavershawn star rubies, finally bought from Ainsley, to Jack Arkus, who had been highly recommended. A Russian, internationally known as a designer and had been in Shanghai and Paris. He also worked in platinum, which they can not do in Bangkok. He is a naturalized American. He got so excited when he finally hit on a design for earrings and rings of lily of the valley made of the diamonds from mother's bar pin. They will be ready on April 5, a birthday present to myself.

Library of Congress

It was marvelous to be in Hong Kong again, but tantalizing to have so little time. Kept thinking how lucky I was to have been given free transportation.

Later, Manila, Clark Airbase, Friday, 7:00am, 1956

Dear Mildred,

Will take off shortly for return to Bangkok. Florence Barrington met me here when we arrived. I looked around the famous PX but didn't find too much. They were selling the cotton dresses from Japan from the Dynasty shop in Hong Kong for \$4-5.00. I loved them so for hot countries and bought one. Then drove to Manila with Florence. It has, of course, all been rebuilt since I was there. All so civilized I felt I was back home again. She has an apartment with a breathtaking view. Shopped a bit and had dinner at the Town Tavern. It was marvelous to be able to eat lettuce, cottage cheese and grapes and drink milk. We drove out to see her daughter and little grandson in Quezon City. She had a precious apartment with an exquisite gold screen from Japan.

I asked to see your Veteran's Hospital on the return and Mr. T. Smith showed us around. I loved the orange colored walls at the entrance and balustrade made of nara wood and Chinese effect of wrought iron design at the balustrades.

We lunched at the Army-Navy Club and then returned to the base on the bus at 3:00pm. Saw Bill Phelps here, also Commander Bill McGonigal, who returned with us. Florence sent me home with the most enormous delicious avocados which I simply devoured.

March 20, 1956

The Ambassador gave me a letter he had received from Fraser Wilkoms in the State Department to look after two friends of his mother's, Mrs. Roland Redman and Mrs. George Nickols, no relation to Barbara Bowen's husband, George, although Mrs. Redman went to school with George's sister. So, on Saturday, I went to the Trocadero to meet

Library of Congress

them, but Mrs. Nickols had become ill in Honolulu and had remained there. Mrs. Redman invited me to dinner that evening and said she was also a friend of Frances Roosevelt, and her mother-in-law, Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. I enjoyed her so much and was told her husband was the president of the board of directors for the Metropolitan Museum. She kindly invited me again for lunch, yesterday, but as the *Coronia* was in I had to be on the lookout for Mrs. L. L. Marcel, mother of Mrs. Davies, who you wrote me about. I took her shopping at Jim Thompson's shop which was packed with passengers off the ship. There were 500 of them.

I went to dinner with Mrs. Marcel and her friend from Kansas City, Missouri, at the Rat Hotel, where they all were staying. It was most amusing to see them come in with their loot under their arms and some wearing those lampshade straw hats the natives wear. I went with them to New Harbor to board the boat that took them to their ship, the *Coronia* and discovered it was the *Banseramsy* that I had taken the ten day cruise on in the Gulf of Siam. What a pleasant surprise that was. I saw the Danish engineer and had a chat with him. Then a Mr. Fritchie, who was also seeing friends off, and had been in Japan, came back in a taxi with me.

Today is the American Association luncheon, but I must write 177 invitations for the Ambassador and Mrs. Bishop's party they are giving for the embassy staff and local employees.

Sunday, if there are 28 people to fill the plane, they are going to Angkor Wat, including the sightseeing, which is very reasonable, \$38 round trip. Dinny and I are going. I want so much to see that seventh wonder of the world again.

Mrs. Redman, whom I have been seeing a lot of, will go to Angkor Wat, too, over the weekend, so we may see each other there. She has invited me to visit her in Oyster Bay and said she and Frances and Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. would give me a whirl. She is the most charming and interesting person I have met for a very long time.

Library of Congress

I have just finished my article on protocol that I was asked to write for the little magazine published here. My name appeared in the newspaper last evening as having been renominated, with some others, to be on the Christ Church Vestry. We are to raise funds for the repair of the organ by giving a premier of the Walt Disney film, "The Lady and the Tramp," in May. Saw excerpts of it and thought it will be highly amusing.

Angkor, Cambodia, March 25, 1956, Sunday

Will have this ready to post when return to Bangkok this evening about 6:00pm when Bill meets Dinny and me. At the last minute, they sent a guide with us, for \$2.50, but he certainly has not been worth it. I have gained far more from my books, "Cultural in Southeast Asia." I simply had to see these fabulous ruins once again and, of course, appreciated them more this time. It is said, however, to see slight changes occurring due to the departure of the French from this part of the world. The neglect is beginning to set in. I hate to think what will happen in a few year's time if they are not preserved. But, they said it was the jungle that preserved them before, so perhaps history will repeat itself. Dinny and I ate our sandwiches on route into the little village in a samlar.

Regarding Angkor Wat. It is so true one should never go back to a place they love, for it was pitiful to see the neglect since the French left. That long avenue of the demons on one side and the gods on the other, you may recall Mildred, that was in good condition when I was there before, found all toppled over. And when I asked the guide he said it was because the Cambodians had no interest in keeping it up. So, it will be such a tragedy if it gradually goes back to where it was before the French did their wonderful work of restoration.

In the afternoon we saw Bayon and the early ones where the enormous banyan trees are growing out of them. Fantastically craved temples. Saw Mrs. Redman and had a brief chat with her. It has been hot and we are all pretty weary.

Library of Congress

March 28, 1956

Dear Dad and Mildred,

I know this will reach you too late to wish you both a happy Easter, and I am so sorry, but in this Buddhist country one is not reminded of Christian holy days to be foresighted enough to send you proper greetings earlier. I shall go to communion as usual and Bill Phelps has invited me to have luncheon with him. Then will go to the airport to meet Dinny, who returns from Hong Kong and is kindly bringing my camel hair coat and jewels designed. They have invited me for dinner on my birthday, April 5, and asked the Baron von Plason, which I think is sweet of them.

I got up at 4:00am yesterday, Tuesday, to take Mrs. Redman to the airport. She left me a most fascinating book by James Michener, I had met at the Sistonovich party entitled, "The Floating World," about Japanese prints and beautifully illustrated. I am thrilled to have it for I love my study of them under Mr. Haper, considered a well-known authority when Charlie and I were living at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. She also left with me a brand new bathing suit, and some cotton lingerie. She is the most interesting, cultivated, charming person I have known for a long time. She wants me to come to Oyster Bay when I return to the United States and said the airport is really nearer to her than New York.

It has been awful hot and I am getting a bit weary of the heat. We at last have air conditioning at the embassy and feel much better by the end of the day than I did before.

Last evening there was a big party of JUSMAAG people at the Club and the grounds were all lit up which reminded me of my party I gave for you, Mildred. Perhaps I started something.

April 3, 1956

Library of Congress

Bill and Dinny have invited the Rev. and Mrs. Gillmore of Christ Church with the Baron von Plason to celebrate my birthday. I am so fond of those people, so it should be a nice little celebration. The Baron is an ex-German diplomat and was at the German embassy in Washington. He is a relation of Bismarck. I remember, I think, the Chancellor's son married his mother's sister. He is a most entertaining person.

The padre and Mrs. Gillmore are Scottish and very nice.

When Bill and I met Dinny she said the plane had been held up by bad weather on route to Hong Kong in South Vietnam and stayed the night in a funny little old hotel, but fortunately the weather was delightful in Hong Kong. She brought back my camel hair coat and, of course, all kinds of lovely things for herself.

April 5, 1956, my birthday

Dear Mildred,

June Acough and Georgia Marlow sent me a most amusing card and I was quite touched when I noted Mr. Anschutz had added his initials to it.

Yes, Mildred, tell Betty Purdy I was at the SEATO maneuvers and saw all that she saw on television that was so exciting. Especially the 600 parachutists jumping without a casualty.

Ambassador and Mrs. Bishop have been giving a series of dinner parties I have had to arrange.

April 25, 1956

Last Thursday was a holiday and I enjoyed a rare moment sitting in my deck chair in the garden, getting caught up on some back reading. When I arrived at my desk the next morning, there was a note to standby. The Ambassador wished me to take the American Ambassador to Ethiopia and his wife, shopping in the afternoon. He was Mr. Simonson, en

Library of Congress

route on home leave and reassigned there. Mrs. Bishop called me over to the residence where they were staying and I finally got a car and took them to Jim Thompson's and Alex, a jeweler. Then it was time to return them to the residence for luncheon. They wanted so much to see the emerald Buddha but due to rehearsals in the palace grounds for the cremation on Sunday of the Queen Grandmother, I had to get special permission. We went in the afternoon and it was so pleasant not to have crowds roaming around and to hear the tinkling of the temple bells, which was such a sweet sound. The official of the royal household has kindly granted permission for me to come this Saturday at 10:00am to take colored pictures, which I shall do.

I was to go to a cocktail party Thursday evening at Colonel Hensen's, a very nice Englishman who is on our Church committee and I knew I would probably meet a lot of charming people. But, just as I was about to leave, I received a message from the Ambassador that he and his wife wanted me to come to the residence to fill in at the dinner party they were giving for the Ambassador and Mrs. Simonson as the wife of General Powell couldn't come at the last minute. So, of course, it was a command performance and I was obliged to go, especially as the Bishops were sending a car for me at 7:45.

The other guests included, General Powell, who is deputy chief of (inaudible), seated to my right and Mrs. Bishop's left. Then across from me at the table was our military attach#, Colonel Cowen, and His Serene Highness Prince Dilecream and Prince Credecron and his wife Princess Credecron. She is the sister to the ranking prince of Thailand. I had a long chat with her after dinner and she was charming. Then Colonel Cowen's guest, Brigadier General Munson, who was military attach# in Paris when I was there and said he remembered me. General Vichitsonngam was there. He had just given a speech at the last American Association luncheon on Tuesday. And then, John Hart from our embassy. The Portuguese Charg#, who was to my left at dinner, spoke of the last time we had been together at dinner at the residence when Perle Mesta was here.

Library of Congress

I said, "And do you know that was the last dinner party the Peurifoy's had before he was killed." And he said to me, "And do you know that they were at my house for dinner the next evening, which was the last dinner party they attended before he was killed." I was deeply touched when he added, "And they were very fond of you." I cannot tell you how I miss them.

The next evening a most terrible thing happened. A crazy man tried to get into the embassy and the residence to see the Ambassador, but was stopped by the guards. He was on the street in front of the British embassy and was finally shot and killed. Some thought it had some political significance but the Ambassador emphatically denied that. This man had tried this before and was locked up but had escaped.

The following day was the fantastic procession of the cremation of the Queen Grandmother. We had tickets to sit under the tent along the route and I got some photos of the place in the grounds where she was to be cremated.

I went to 7:00 communion Sunday and Dinny picked me up at 7:30, even then we were a little late getting down there, there were such crowds although it didn't start for an hour later. Such a procession! It was all so glamorous and fantastic. There were three bands, the Army, Navy and Air Force and, of course, a rather mournful funeral dirge was played. In the distance one could hear the guns booming, one every minute. As she was president of the Red Cross the nurses marched in their uniforms, then school children belonging to the school that she had founded for young princesses. Preceding the golden urn that held her ashes was a monk sitting high in a chariot drawn by men in most colorful costumes. Then came her in a most elaborate chariot, gold leaf and gold umbrella carried by a colorfully dressed men and monks in white and silver dress. Some umbrella's looked as if they had come out of the museum which I am sure they did. I have tried to find out if there was a full description of it in English, but it does not exist, only in Thai, I am told.

Library of Congress

It was very hot sitting under the tent and while I would have liked to have returned at 4 to see the actual lighting of the pyre, I could not face the mob and heat, and now regret that I didn't. I did accept a ride back at 10:00 in the evening to see the fire.

I have received an invitation from the Ambassador of India and Mrs. Mennen to attend Indian dances and will go with Mr. Mascotti, from our embassy. Toi Cumjara is being married May 1, to a grandson of a British peer.

I am kept always very busy here in the office for Ambassador and Mrs. Bishop are entertaining a lot and frequently invite me. I went to the Grand Palace Saturday morning and was escorted around by an official in the royal household and got the colored photos. All those colorful temples and palaces. The little magazine...

I came back to the embassy for the first time after a long siege of flu. I was so weak for so long and it has been very prevalent lately. One Thai doctor diagnosed 90 cases in a week. The doctor is giving me all kinds of medicine to build me up, but the truth of the matter is, he said after one has been here 18 months they begin to feel the effects of the heat, the hot climate. As I have been here nearly 24 months, I suppose it could be expected.

So many are leaving in the next three months. Mr. Anschutz has been chosen for the National War College and they depart next month. The Phelps are off in the morning and Mr. and Mrs. Conover left the other day to be in Washington. They have been perfect dears.

At present Ambassador and Mrs. Bishop are taking a week's trip to Indonesia on the Air Attach#'s plane.

June 4, 1956

I have been back to work now a week today and am beginning to feel stronger and should for I am taking five kinds of vitamins and get B1 shots every other day.

Library of Congress

June 11, 1956

Some of the staff here due for home leave are not receiving their orders on time and had to cancel all of their arrangements. I do hope that does not happen to me. I am due August 28 and hope to leave September 3.

I am having some Thai silk dresses made. Dinny was so pleased with her tailor, so I am having him make a Thai silk dress to match the stole Mrs. Rose Kennedy kindly gave me in a heavenly soft gray blue. Cecil is making shoes to match.

I went to a cocktail party that Sir Alexander and Lady MacFalgher gave. Colonel Hensen from SEATO took me to the Bamboo Bar at the Oriental for dinner afterwards, with some other people. Then we went on to the Luna Club. I had not been out for over a month, so thoroughly enjoyed myself.

June 13, 1956

There are five hundred invitations to get out for the Ambassador's Fourth of July party, from 12-2:00. He is having just the top men of the diplomatic corps and the foreign community. Then, the Americans are invited in the evening to a reception. Then there is the American Association's picnic during the day. Thank goodness they realized I did my stint last year which I appreciated. I turned over all of the American Association luncheon business when I returned to the office, as I am leaving.

Now more work from Mrs. Bishop. She entertains so much more than Mrs. Peurifoy.

I am going to my Australian friend, Shirley Herd, for dinner now that she has a house. Then, Wednesday, Bill McConigal is having an enormous party at the Rat Hotel to welcome the new assistant Air Attach# and bid farewell to the present one.

Library of Congress

Saturday is a "going native" party given by the Bakers to bid aloha to the Anschutz. I shall wear my sarong from Fiji. Mrs. Moran from the American Club will help me make a lei with her special needle.

Mrs. Bishop is giving a big tea for Mrs. Anschutz and her successor, Mrs. George F. Wilson.

The next dinner the Bishops will give will be for the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Foreign Eastern Affairs, Mr. Sebald.

June 26, 1956, at the embassy

Yesterday was a Thai holiday, but I spent the entire weekend trying to finish my project of going through all of my papers. Besides, it is too wet now to sit in the garden in my deck chair. The rains are getting heavier, although the sun shines. The lawns are looking like swamps because I suppose we are only three feet above sea level.

The "going native" party given at the Bakers was a perfect place for such a party with an enormous sheltered patio. The entrance was covered with dry palm fronds, so you feel as if you are entering Trader Vics. The moment we arrived we were offered a rum punch in a bamboo container, which we sipped through a straw. Mats were on the floors with cushions, a la Japanese style. Nearly everyone from the embassy was there. The Ambassador and Mrs. Bishop were invited but did not come. A pity, because it was such a good party. Everyone certainly looked native. Georgia Marlow was priceless. She had put red lipstick on her teeth to represent a beetlenut woman and when she smiled she was too funny looking for words. She wore an enormous straw hat, like the women on the boats wear and a black jacket, and carried on a pole, two little baskets of fruit, and, of course, was barefooted.

In the middle of the evening they called to the floor about six of the fattest men to do the hula. Cellophane grass skirts were tied to them and some of them were so fat the skirts

Library of Congress

didn't even meet around their waist. Mr. Anschutz' was marvelous. The prize was a huge clump of bananas growing on the stem. When it went around his neck, he looked like a prize filly that had just run a horse race.

A little later they asked for six girls. If Bill McGonigal didn't call out my name. I said under my breath, "I will get even with you." I had never done a hula in my life, although I had lived in Honolulu eight years. Never will I forget, Mildred, when you did a perfect one on a picnic on Waikiki beach and had only been there two days. Well, anyway, they put a white skirt on me, Mrs. Anschutz and a few others, and I just danced around the floor wiggling my hips and waving my hands. The applause was amazing. When Mr. Anschutz danced with me I said how pleased he must be to be appointed to the National War College. He said he was but very glad to leave this place. He, as well as all of us have very sad memories of the lost of our dear Ambassador Peurifoy and his young son Danny in such a sudden tragic accident here.

I have been assigned cabin S-19 on the sundeck on the October 9th sailing of the United States from Le Havre for New York. I bought a book of the countries I am planning on visiting by Julian Huxley, entitled "From An Antique Land," which has beautiful illustrations. I am longing to get to Petra, outside of Amman in Jordan. Now I must get to work. The phone keeps ringing and after a long weekend there is much to do and Mr. Anschutz has just come in to ask me to arrange a call for Mrs. Anschutz on the wife of the Prime Minister.

June 28, 1956

Mrs. Bishop gave an enormous tea for Mrs. Anschutz and Mrs. Wilson. Mr. Wilson is our new Deputy Chief of Mission.

Florence Barrington wrote me that Athens was a good place to buy Persian lamb. A friend bought a short jacket there for \$65.

Library of Congress

I offered to do my part at the Fourth of July picnic from 11-4:00, but Mrs. McGill, who is taking over the job, said I worked so hard last year, she was not asking me to do anything this year. I was just as pleased and appreciative for I could use the holiday to good advantage for going downtown to see about my trip home. I, in any case, will have to be on hand for the reception for the Americans from 6-8:00.

I went to the airport with Georgia Marlow to see the Anschutz off on Saturday and, of course, there were many there including Thais. The VIP room was open for them and Mrs. Anschutz had the most beautiful white orchids given her from Princess Nadip wife of the Foreign Minister and gave another lei to Mr. Anschutz. We were all so sorry to see them leave. I do hope to see them in Washington.

People aren't getting their orders on time. Helen Wilson, our Personnel chief said to make my plans and she would see that I would get mine on time. It is difficult to get bookings from this side of the globe at the last minute. I am going to book from here to Beirut, then must write some people I know in the Middle East to see how conditions are there. Just before Mr. Anschutz left, he went over my efficiency report with me. He said I couldn't have possibly have worked any harder than I have. But it is because I have loved my job. I discovered that the Ambassador in Damascus is the former inspector, William S. Moose who I met in Bermuda, Tangier and Paris. So I am writing to ask about the feasibility of motoring from Beirut to Jerusalem and, if possible, to go to that extraordinary city of Petra. The Travells, who were on the Banseramsy going through the Gulf of Siam, have invited me to dinner on Saturday. They have just taken the most interesting trip from Pinang to Rangoon by ship.

Packing household effects all weekend.

This weekend Mrs. Bishop said the Prime Minister was expecting Vice President Nixon as he is to be here only four hours and will not have time to be entertained.

Library of Congress

Mrs. Davenport, whose husband is with JUSMAAG, told me at the reception yesterday all about Toi Cumjara's husband. His grandfather was British married to a Thai so he is about a quarter Thai. He had been married before and had a child. Now Toi is pregnant.

July 10, 1956

Dear Mildred,

Vice President Nixon's plane was late and did not arrive until midnight, so the Prime Minister moved part of the dinner he had planned for him at government house out to the airport. But, instead of 60 guests, there were 30. I did not go out to the airport to see him.

What do you think of Ambassador Sherman Cooper finally deciding to run for the Senate?

Friday, July 13, 1956

Mrs. Bishop asked me to address 80 invitations to an exhibition of paintings by well-known Chinese artists. Some of the proceeds were to go to the school for the blind. They were all lovely, done as only the Chinese can do, with delicate fine strokes. The Ambassador and Mrs. Bishop bought a beautiful kakemona one. To do my bit I selected a set of postal cards all very good reproductions and will send to Helen Keller and Polly Thompson as the proceeds are to go to the blind.

Mrs. Choinski, whose husband is with JUSMAAG, sent me yesterday a gift all wrapped up in the prettiest bon voyage paper which is rare in this country. It was the book, "Brief Interlude," written by our first Ambassador to Thailand, otherwise known as Siam, and I am simply thrilled. She is the kindest person and also sent me a lovely plant when I was so ill.

There is an attractive new girl I have met at the embassy, Josephine Navaro, who was posted in Istanbul and as I am going there on route home, I plan to get into a huddle with her soon.

Library of Congress

I went to the Bangkok warehouse to check the box with my trap in it. I just stuck my hand through the box to be sure it was still there and caress the side of it. And what a thrill it was bringing back my drives in the Bois for four years when posted in Paris. I do hope I will have an opportunity of using it again before very long.

July 17, 1956

Dr. and Mrs. Spinks have just received their orders for home leave and will also be posted in Washington.

Yesterday was a meeting of the Church Council and I verbally announced my resignation as the next meeting will be September 10 when I will probably be gone. All expressed regret at my departure. It has been an interesting experience for me. I have Bill Phelps to thank for that.

My room now is quite dismantled. I have been invited to the Spanish Minister's reception tomorrow evening at the Rat Hotel on the occasion of the Spanish National Day.

I received the sweetest letter from Baris in Paris. She is thrilled I am coming through there and is writing Fifi, the Princess of Hesse. She said they had a falling out after 20 years of friendship and thought my visit would bring them together again. I do hope so.

July 30, 1956

Dear Mildred,

Well, the big news that I received today is that my travel orders arrived by telegram—Loose pack effects. So that means I shall be assigned my next post when I reach Washington. I am going to June Acough's for dinner and she will go with me after to the Siam Society to see the film on the cremation of the Queen Grandmother, which should be interesting.

Library of Congress

Yesterday morning I went with the Siam Society to visit a famous Chinese temple. Inside were those lamps like you brought back from Bangkok, burning big fat candles in them.

Sunday evening I was invited to the Kolwinskis for buffet dinner to celebrate their 27th wedding anniversary. Both of them are perfect dears.

August 6, 1956

Dr. and Mrs. Spinks, who have been the most interesting and charming people in our Service here were all booked to sail for the United States when suddenly Dr. Spinks received an assignment to Java. When I saw them just now, they were undecided what they would do. That is life in the Foreign Service.

August 8, 1956

I do hope the trouble in Egypt will not prevent me from continuing with all of my plans, for I want so much to see that part of the world.

August 10, 1956

A charming letter came from Helen Keller's secretary thanking me for the postals of the Chinese paintings and said they would be delighted to see me when I came in the Fall.

August 14, 1956

Time is flying. I keep packing and packing and never seem to get to the end. If necessary to give up Egypt will plan to go to Athens earlier and spend that time taking some little steamer trips in the Aegean. I feel I should cancel that portion of the itinerary, but will wait for the result of the meeting which takes place in London tomorrow. Both sides sound very drastic.

August 16, 1956, Embassy, 6:30pm

Library of Congress

Mildred,

Just a line for the present. I am still at the office having just finished writing 50 invitations for Mrs. Bishop's cocktail party in honor of Mark Evans, TV celebrity, and his party arriving tomorrow. The deluge has started now.

Have definitely decided to take the five day cruise in the Aegean on the MS Sumarion, which goes to all the little islands. Someone said it would be more pleasant, especially at this time of the year as it would be very hot in Egypt now, and hot in more ways than one.

August 20, 1956

The Spanish Minister called me this morning and wishes to give a dinner party for me. The date has been set for next Monday, August 26, at 8:00pm and asked what friends I would like him to invite. I mentioned, the Naval Attach#, Bill McGonigal and Colonel and Mrs. Cowen, our Army Attach# and wife, who also are leaving soon. The Ambassador and Mrs. Bishop and Baron von Plason, who is an old friend of his, as is Bill McGonigal.

Bill asked me to give him the names of 20 people for a party on his boat about 6:30 before the sun sets, if there is a sun. There has been so much rain lately. But, hope the fates will be kind that evening.

Then Mr. and Mrs. Sistonovich, Deputy Chief of USIS, are giving a dinner for me this Saturday. So, I am getting rather booked up.

When I saw Jim Thompson was having a 3-day sale on remnants, I got up early on Saturday and was there from 9-12:30 going over all the colors and finally selected some Siamese pink, purple, blue and cerise in as large remnants as I could find for you Mildred.

Library of Congress

Received a letter from Mr. Moore, Ambassador in Damascus today, saying no reason not to carry out my plans to visit the Middle East and hoped I would stop in the embassy while I'm there and would be pleased to see me.

August 24, 1956

I received an invitation to our Ambassador's dinner, August 31 they are giving in honor of Ambassador Rankin.

August 29, 1956

Dear Mildred,

I am thrilled that you are going to be in New York on my arrival and do hope we can get tickets for "My Fair Lady." Mrs. Heath, wife of the Ambassador in Beirut, wrote my visas would be ready for me on my arrival and hope to see me. They remember Charlie who had been posted in Saigon.

I am so glad Martha Spinks called you.

The dinner at the Spanish Minister's was delightful. Baron von Plason said he would come to the airport to see me off.

September 3, 1956, Monday, 4:45pm at the airport, Bangkok

Just a line before I take off at 5:30pm. The plane was to take off at 4:30 but was delayed. For this reason Baron von Plason, who had come to say goodbye, had to go back to Bangkok, but left a beautiful bouquet of orchids. The Spanish Minister is here and brought me two gorgeous orchids I am wearing now. Received at the Club just before I left official recognition of appreciation for my ten years of Service from the Department of State. What a nice sendoff.

Library of Congress

Hotel St. George, Beirut, September 6, 1956

While waiting for my breakfast, will write to you. This is a beautiful place, so like Tangier. I finally took off from Bangkok at 6:00pm. Fernando, the Spanish Minister, the Wells and their four children, waved me goodbye.

I wrote you at the airport that Baron von Plason had come and left me a beautiful bouquet of orchids with a note and a dear little good luck piece that looks like a seal from Mrs. Durem, the delightful wife of the German Charg#.

I had a berth on the plane and it was really good to stretch out for I was exhausted. Arrive here about 7:00am and delighted to find an invitation to dinner from Ambassador and Mrs. Heath last evening at 8:30pm. Mrs. Heath had sent me a car to take me to the consulate for my visas. Then I went to the National City Bank to see about my various currencies. A Mike Arnold there and a Mr. Simons, regional manager, remembered Charlie. Then to Nawa's tourist agency who is sending a car to drive me back via Galbek. I was so exhausted my first evening when I arrived at 6:00, flung myself on the bed and what a nice soft one, and didn't awaken until 8:00pm. I didn't feel like dressing to go down to dinner so just ordered up some of those marvelous white grapes and then went to bed. I was up at 5:20 this morning and got myself organized and off at 8:00 to see the town museum and university and to Biblos where I met a very nice American, Mrs. Alan Johnson, whose father, Mr. Johnson, was in Congress and knew father Trimble. We had a delicious lunch together at a restaurant called Doyen. It was good to hear and speak a little French again.

Rested, then donned Betty Purdy's pretty dress and was off to the Ambassador's dinner wearing the orchids Baron von Plason had so kindly brought to me at the airport, which were still fresh. I gave the Heaths a little muddler of Siamese bronze ware. There were 30 guests in honor of the Mexican Minister and his wife. Of course, found mutual friends in chatting with many guests. I was placed to the left of Mr. Emerson, who was deputy chief of mission and friends of the Spinks and knew Sir Alexander and Lady MacFalgher

Library of Congress

in Pakistan. Also discovered that Mr. Simons, of the National City Bank is married to Mona Gardner Tate who I knew in Japan and who is now a well-known writer. The residence was filled with interesting collections from Indo-China where Mr. Heath was Ambassador. We dined at small tables on the terrace and it was most delightful.

The weather is pleasant and I am feeling more rested now. Breakfast has just arrived and I am having fresh figs with Devonshire cream and those delicious grapes that I have not had for years.

September 8, 1956

I am waiting at the airport to take off for Jerusalem at 2:30pm. I love this area around the Mediterranean and feel so well and happy. In that car from Beirut to Damascus was a Mrs. Chase and her daughter. Pleasant Americans with a company in Dhahran, Arabia. She knew this country well. The daughter was going to Damascus to buy some of that beautiful brocade for her wedding gown. I immediately went to see Mr. Moose, our Ambassador, who said I should try and see Palmyra.

September 11, 1956

Dear Mildred,

Back in Beirut awaiting my plane to Istanbul. Just discovered it also goes to Cyprus and am pleased I will see it from the air.

How I love the Holy Land. The American Colony Hotel, where I stayed was small with great charm. Mrs. Bertha Spatford, the American manager had lived there about 70 years and I read the book, "Our Jerusalem" she wrote and now out of print. Her daughter, Mrs. Lynn, who will soon come to the United States when she knows how the Egyptian case is going, is beautiful and has been so nice to me. I had an excellent guide, Gabrielle, and it

Library of Congress

seemed unbelievable that I was standing on the very ground that I had read about in the Bible and studied in Sunday School..

Jerusalem seemed so peaceful except for the sight of barbed wire and some armed guards here and there. So, I saw all the points of interest including a trip to the Dead Sea. The people are all complaining though that there are so few tourists now. They said I could have gone to Egypt but then I might have been on pins and needles. I sent a passion flower from the Garden of Gethsemane and a little note to Dad.

Istanbul, Hilton, September 14, 1956

Mildred,

I am waiting in the BEA office for the bus to take me to the airport for my plane to Athens. We had a brief stop in Cyprus where the airport was surrounded by armed British guards. They said that all of their leaves had been canceled, but smiled and added, "It is only to bluff Egypt."

We flew to Ankara, which I had not expected. No one on the plane spoke English so I didn't know we were to change planes there for Istanbul until my luggage was found in customs and was told, "No customs in Istanbul." So, didn't take off until quite late.

When arrived at the Hilton at 11:30pm discovered to my dismay they had given up my room so they put me in one of the cabana's by the swimming pool for the night. Next morning it was pouring and I couldn't even get out to the toilet which was on the other side of the pool and my umbrella was packed in my luggage left in the hotel. But, I was given the next day a room overlooking the Bosphorus.

I received a call from your friend, Mookie, saying they would come to take me out at 3:30pm, so in the morning I took a motor coach tour to the Blue Mosque and St. Sophia, etc. Had luncheon on the terrace of the Hilton. Mookie, her daughter and brother, took me

Library of Congress

for a delightful drive along the Bosphorus and tea later. Then came back to take me to a Turkish restaurant for dinner, but it was closed so had a lobster dinner on the terrace of the Hilton, which first tasted so good but it was windy and chilling and suddenly found I had lost my appetite.

That night in my room, lost all I had eaten, including all the toasts we had drunk.

I called Betty Carp at the consulate, who a girl in Bangkok had asked me to look up. A doctor came from the American Hospital and gave me belladonna to stop the nausea and some salts. So, all of yesterday I was in bed. It was cold and rainy so thought not too pleasant to take the ferry trip. Mookie and daughter came to see me yesterday afternoon and I am much better now. Will write more when I reach Athens.

Hotel Grand Bretagne, Athens. Greece, September 17, 1956

Here I have met Olga Humona, the excellent guide to visit the Museum of Archeology and the Parthenon, etc. Yesterday, took an all day motor trip to Corinth and last evening heard Orpheus and Euripides in the ruins of an old Roman theater below the Parthenon. What a thrill to sit in that 2,000 year old theater with the moon shining on it and the Parthenon and Temple of Nikki lit up in all their Grecian splendor. I adore Athens and the people here seem so alert.

This evening I leave for my cruise in the Aegean. Will stop at Crete and Rhodes, etc. The weather is nippy and there is a tinge of Fall in the air. I have donned stockings for the first time after two years.

Hotel Grand Bretagne, Athens, Greece, September 23, 1956

My cruise was delightful. About 135 on it and such a m#lange of languages. My French has been useful. We stopped first at Crete. Here the earliest Greek civilization stands. Then to Rhodes which would be a beautiful place to spend a holiday as well as being of

Library of Congress

historical interest, in this good hotel, DeRhodes, on a lovely beach where we lunched. The next islands were Kos and Patmos. Patmos was charming with little white houses high on a hill surrounding a monastery. It was here in a grotto that St. John was banished by the Romans and wrote the "Apocalypse." Then we sailed on to Delos which has been excavated by the French mostly and only ruins here. Then to Mikonos where all this interesting material is woven. Picked up some scarves here, cheaper than Athens. It was an adorable place with pretty little streets and gleaming white houses. A haven for artists.

On the ship was a couple from our embassy in Bangkok, Mr. and Mrs. Metcalfe, with whom I had luncheon the other day and found several mutual friends in the Foreign Service. Mr. Metcalfe had taken over Norbert Anschutz' job, when he left.

I came back from the cruise bronze and rested and Mrs. Humona saw such a difference in my appearance that she thought I had fallen in love. But, I said quite the contrary for I only wished for someone to pal around with, for everyone seemed to have someone. But, I did fall in love with the islands. Mrs. Humona took me to visit the Agora, where the Americans had done so much and to the Benaki museum and thought of you and could well understand how you loved it. Each tiny object selected with such exquisite taste. Now I am off to Paris where I shall be for ten days.

I dashed out at 11:00 this morning to see the changing of the guard in front of the palace. So interesting with music and all. I love the way these white accordion pleated skirts swished back and forth just below the bottoms of the Greek soldiers when they march. In fact, I have found Greece vastly interesting and glad for the time aboard ship so I can read up on all I have seen.

Hotel Vouillamont, Paris, September 27, 1956

Library of Congress

How glad I am to be where I am. I can stretch out for a few days. I got some beautiful silk and cotton material in Jerusalem made in Dimashq [Damascus] in 5 yard lengths. It is a glazed cotton stripe material used for the men's djellabas.

The flight from Athens to Paris was very pleasant. I sat next to Lumas Dean, photographer on staff of Life magazine returning from Cairo where he said nothing much was happening, but told of his experiences photographing the Arroyo Dorio. He was on the Ile de France going to Europe when they went back to pick up the survivors. He got off the ship to photograph and left all of his clothes and had to go to Macy's to replenish his wardrobe before he could fly to Europe to join his family. He said the Italian crew were the first off the ship.

Baris and Dimetri were the first to meet me when we arrived in Paris, Sunday, about 8:30pm. Dear Baris was bearing a bouquet of red roses for me which I thought so sweet. They took me to my hotel, the Vouillamont where I had lived for four years when posted there and invited me for lunch the next day.

...curtseyed to me in such a gracious little way, then threw her arms around me and hugged me so tight I could have wept. I was so touched. Fifi, Princess of Hesse, is back from Cannes and I hope to see her soon.

Yvonne Sonlegee, had a beautiful bouquet of dahlias in my room when I arrived with a sweet note inviting me to dine with her Monday evening, and when I arrived there, who should appear but Andre Triolet, so we all had much to talk about. He looked wonderfully well and had come on the 20th when he thought I was due. He said my pony is in Alsace and Gager has left Paris to be a trainer somewhere in France. I hope to see dear old Albert, my groom one day.

Library of Congress

I had luncheon with Florence Davidson and she had staying with her a Mrs. Lucille Swan, who has been everywhere. She stayed with Ambassador and Mrs. Stanton in Bangkok and knew my friend Baron von Plason, etc.

It rained all yesterday and I am already feeling the cold, so trying to take care of myself. Yvonne went with me to get a hat, I don't possess one. I am lunching with her tomorrow and she is taking me to a collection of John Patue where I hope to see the Odette.

M. (Inaudible) is no longer at (Inaudible), but have found most of the personnel the same, wherever I have gone. It is so nice to have all the French girls at Grandes where I had my hair done come up and speak to me. It was like coming home to have the same people come out and get my luggage when I arrived at the Vouillamont. The first thing that M. Dumas, the concierge, asked me was, "How is your sister?" Many, of course, have.

I was delighted to have been given my old room, 217 and to have dear Mary Louise, the same chambermaid, but had forgotten how really shabby this old hotel is, but still retaining its charm about it. The personnel is always so kind.

I rang the Duchess d'Richelieu yesterday and the maid said she was out of town but expected back today, so hope to see her.

Robert Javel, my French friend, is taking me to dinner Tuesday evening. Nicole (Inaudible) came to see me Tuesday and I will go there in a few days.

Everyone looks just the same and they say I haven't changed, in fact, look younger, which, of course, warms my heart.

Paris, October 1, 1956

It is bright and sunny now although it poured with rain when I came out this morning. So happy to be back in Paris, which seems like home. I have just finished lunch at Vebers,

Library of Congress

where one of the maitre d's came up and said, "Why, I haven't seen you for ages," which pleased me having been missed there.

I have spoken on the phone with the Countess d'Albaes, my Japanese/French friend. As I passed the Continental Hotel I thought I would inquire if Mrs. Essen would happen to be there, and there she was, but in bed. So, I went up to her room for a chat and she told me all about the Grace Kelly/Prince Rainier wedding in Monte Carlo, where she lives.

On Friday, I lunched with Yvonne and she took me to a collection of John Pat____. Everything was quite wearable and feminine. To wear those new hats well, though, one should do their hair like you did when in high school, off ears, like mother did, too. When hats were not worn, ostrich feathers were stuck on with a brilliant pin. Hope to go to see Christian Dior and Balman collection before I leave.

Friday evening had dinner with the Duchess d'Richelieu who was just back from Bruges with Frances Clarity, her companion. She said my friend, Baron von Plason was really fond of her deceased sister, Julie, whom you will remember, Mildred, invited us to lunch when we were in New York. The Duchess was most interested in news of him. And Frances tells me I am sailing home with the Windsors.

Dined with Baris and Dimetri Conderov last evening. Had tea with Nicole and tonight dinner with Robert Javel. Tomorrow I am going for the day to Jacqueline Cramer's who bought an 18th century house near Chartres. Miss Freeman, the dear little French woman who did my mending, left a bouquet of flowers for me at the hotel and I hope to see her.

Hotel Vouillamont, October 1, 1956

Dear Mildred,

I long for you today as I wrote you Jacqueline Cramer, a Swiss friend from Tangier days invited me down to her precious place in the country. She met me at Chartres at 10:00am

Library of Congress

and we took a look at the beautiful cathedral, I have, of course, seen several times. But, I am always enthralled by it. Then drove to her adorable house tucked away quite by itself. Part of it is 11th century, so it reeks with antiquity and tradition. Some of the stones were the ones that had gone into the cathedral of Chartres. It is surrounded by a little moat and the house is covered with old ivy. The garden has charming little nooks here and there where some old urns have been dug up, giving it a look of ruins I have seen in some of the Grecian islands. There may be hidden treasures there. She had staying with her a delightful friend from Brazil who knew my friend, Madeline Bounet Culaso, who lives there and I knew in Tangier. We lunched on white wrought iron tables on the terrace in the sun. It was a heavenly day. Her darling house is filled with exquisite antiques you would love. She sent me home with some white cosmos and two frames made of seashells.

Washington, D.C., November 15, 1956

Mildred my dear,

I just want to say again how awfully grateful I am for everything you have been so very sweet to do for me while I have been here. You have no idea what it means to have a home like this to come home to and I dread to leave it. So, write again. God bless you dear and keep you for my return.

Pasadena, California, November 23, 1956

It was so good to hear your voice Thanksgiving and I hope you had a pleasant day. I can't feel like being away longer than necessary from Dad, for I feel every moment with him is precious. The clippings you sent regarding the Travells, who had been with me on the Banseramsy in the Gulf of Siam, being killed somewhere on a cruise was an awful shock.

Pasadena, November 27, 1956

Library of Congress

Dad looks well. I am so happy to be with him in the wonderful climate. It is heavenly to sit out in the swing or take brief walks in the glorious sunshine without coats on.

December 10, 1956, 7:00am

By the time you read this I will be on the sea and thinking of you all. Of the wonderful things you have done for me and missing you very much. You looked so pretty as you always do, waving to me from the dock.

Aboard the Independence, December 10, 1956

I do hope you are not completely exhausted from all the parties, shopping, etc. and are now taking a good rest. I have been trying to do the same, but the ship has been rolling for days. Luckily not the type of motion to give you mal de mare, but gets awfully monotonous. I have met a Foreign Service couple and their daughter with deck chairs next to mine. They are going to Ethiopia where Mr. Balance will be administrative officer at our embassy. I mentioned I met his ambassador, Mr. Simonson in Bangkok, but he had not yet met him.

I have also met Camille Shadic going to our embassy in Rome, and the Jones family going to Belgrade. But the person I have been with most is a Finnish/Swedish woman, Lisa Valesca, who is a naturalized American. She is perfectly beautiful and utterly charming. She has been in films and on television and was Miss Finland in 1930. We have had many long chats together and she told me she had once been proposed to by the now deceased Maharajah of Jodhpur. We plan to take the all-day excursion together when we reach Lisbon and go by car to Sintra, then to Monterat and out to Estoril. She disembarks at Algeciras and plans to stay in Madrid.

Library of Congress

I am so pleased a tour is going to Taormina when we are at Messina. I shall try and present the note of introduction David Ayers gave me to his friend, Culver Sherrill, who lives there. It will be nice to have already seen this much of Sicily.

The fine lectures, Dr. Minard Owens Williams, has given with colored slides, have been most interesting. He is now employed by Export Lines. They pulled him out of retirement from the Bosphorus where he said he was getting too cold.

The food on the ship cannot compare with that of the United States, but the attitude of the personnel is more courteous. I have not participated in the evening activities because have concentrated in getting off my Christmas cards.

Tonight is Captain's Dinner and Miss Valesca has been invited to sit at the Captain's table and the poem she wrote some time ago will be read.

Later.

At the Captain's Dinner tonight a padre sang songs from "My Fair Lady,"— "I Could Have Danced All Night," "In the Streets Where You Are." You may know how I must have felt. I can only relive again the fun and pleasure it was to have seen it with you, and twice.

Aboard Independence, December 20, 1956

We are steaming towards Algeciras. It is less rolling now and the sun is out. I sent a cable to Bill Donahide to please send you a poinsettia plant, I wanted you to have it for Christmas, but thought it would please you to have it arrive on the 22nd, your wedding anniversary.

I am enclosing a little jasmine flower in this letter from the Montserrat garden I visited on a tour yesterday. We were due at 8, but due to fog and lack of space to berth, we were four hours late. Miss Valesca and I occupied a car with another couple and an American

Library of Congress

Express guide and drove first to see the royal palace at Quelec in the fog. It was truly a miniature Versailles where they were preparing for a visit by Queen Elizabeth in February. It was in the kitchen of the palace where the restaurant was that David Ayers wanted me to have luncheon and only wish we could have for it looked charming. But being on a tour was obliged to go with the others to the Central Hotel in Sintra where I bought in a shop under the hotel a big Majorca plate for your cocktail stuffed eggs.

After we left Quelec we drove to the Pina Palace, high on a hill of Moorish architecture, reconstruction of a medieval castle. It was so interesting and with a lovely view. By that time the fog had cleared and the sun came out, we had a glorious sunny day, then the day was just nippy. It turned into a charming place with beautiful trees and homes, so much more attractive than Estoril, where we went later.

We drove on but we didn't see anything of the city of Lisbon. I didn't mind but some did. I didn't mind, all cities are alike to me. I much preferred the country and historical castles.

I served your Scotch before the Captain's Dinner, to the Balances and invited Miss Valesca, but she drinks only tomato or orange juice, probably why she keeps so beautiful. In turn the Balances asked me to join them for a liquor in the lounge after dinner where we heard the reading of Miss Valesca's poem by a young actor.

I received a nice letter from the Consul in Palermo, Mr. John Auchincloss, saying that I would be met and assisted through customs when I disembarked at Naples. So my mind is at rest on that score.

No more news. On Christmas Day I will be cherishing the memory of the beautiful Christmas which prevailed in your apartment when you had the exquisite wreath and tiny tree with Merry Christmas on my dressing table and all of the other gay decorations in your apartment. I hope you really know how much everything has meant to me.

Aboard Independence, December 21, 1956, 11:25pm

Library of Congress

We are due at Messina at 1:00pm tomorrow. I have shared your Scotch with a Mrs. Lola Walker, who is returning to Rome and has been with the embassy for seven years. She has invited me to stay with her if I came to Rome.

I finished that book, "Roman Candle," by Tish Baldrige. You must try to read it, it is so amusing.

It has been delightful today ever since we left Gib and entered the Mediterranean it has stopped rolling. Had luncheon on deck beside the pool. One brave man actually went into the pool for a swim. I told Dr. Biera, the Portuguese Charg# I knew in Bangkok, how much I enjoyed his country.

December 22, 1956

The hairdresser has just set my hair with beer. She said it was better for the sea air and I must not miss seeing Stromboli we see about midnight after leaving Messina.

December 22, 1956, 9:05am

Dear Mildred,

A message came from Max Hall, my friend who was transferred from Bangkok to Naples and happened to be duty officer at the consulate today, inviting me to dinner and to stay until I leave tonight for Palermo.

I took a motor tour of Messina and Taormina, a divine place. Telephoned Culver Sherrill, the friend of David Ayers to whom he gave me a note of introduction, and he said he was having a cocktail party at 7:00 and invited me over. It was just a five minute walk from the Hotel Dominico where we were to have dinner. So I skipped dinner and walked over. He has a perfectly beautiful house with a swimming pool and terraces on different levels, two butlers in red jackets and two boxer dogs. A Sicilian chap, Johnny Pe, was there from the

Library of Congress

Palermo consulate and I met several attractive people. I was impressed by Culver, who was the most charming host.

I returned to the Dominico at 8:00 and rejoined our group going back to the Independence and sailed at 10:00pm.

Aboard Calabria , December 23, 8:45pm

I am now bound for Palermo aboard the Calabria. At Naples I was taken to the consulate where Max Hall, his mother and wife, Priscilla, were waiting for me. It was so good to see them again and met his new wife. We chatted a bit and then Mrs. Hall, Priscilla and I went to church.

I was introduced to the British Consul and his wife, who knew very well the British Ambassador, Sir Barclay Gage in Bangkok. In fact, he had recently stayed with them. I thought the padre looked familiar and discovered he had been at the British embassy church in Paris and I had attended several of his services when I was a regular parishioner there in 1952-54. His name was Mr. Johnson.

Max met us at church, drove us around a little. There was not much sun and it was misty so could not see Vesuvius or Capri and Naples now is very much like Hong Kong. Then to their apartment which looked gay with its Christmas decorations. We went to luncheon at a very attractive restaurant across the street. Then back to their apartment and sat around the fire and talked. I was requested to bring two turkeys over to Jean Smith and the steward of the Independence sent them to my ship and are now in the frig. Mrs. Hall gave me some Nescafe and chocolate.

I boarded my ship, the Calabria, about an hour ago and have been watching the Independence, that by curious coincidence has been berthed next to the Calabria, sail all aglow with all her lights on. Now I can visualize how it must have looked to you when I sailed on her and I live that day all over again. The snap of the

Library of Congress

_____ was like the heart string was snapping. We are due to arrive at 8:00 tomorrow morning.

Palermo, December 1956-December 1958

Christmas Day.

Several Italian battleships are lighted up in the harbor. Tomorrow will be Christmas Eve and I shall be in Palermo, my next post for two years.

(Inaudible), who had come over for the holidays. Mr. Auchincloss took me to my hotel, the Lincoln Hyacinth Metropole and before leaving very kindly asked if I would like to come to dinner tonight or luncheon tomorrow. Remembering it would be Christmas Eve and a family occasion, I thought it would be more polite to accept for luncheon. I had hoped I could have stayed with my own family for Christmas and felt a bit embarrassed to arrive just at this particular time, but my leave was up and my area officer said that if I didn't depart they would give the job to someone else, so naturally I had to go.

Eddie Pole I had known when we both were posted in Paris, came to the hotel shortly after saying he had received a letter from George Palmer about me. We walked over to the consulate where he showed me around and said I was to be in the visa section. Then he introduced me to the Consul General, Mr. Keeley, who invited me to a reception they were having the 27th.

A car and chauffeur called for me at 1:00 and we drove to the Auchincloss apartment down a lovely magnolia lined avenue appropriately named Via Magnolia where John and Audrey were just getting settled. They thought I might like an apartment that was for rent on the top floor of their building, but, of course, I didn't know the rent. They were a delightful couple and so kind.

Library of Congress

When I was relaxing in my room after luncheon, the porter knocked on my door bearing the most enormous bouquet of long stemmed red poinsettias and a festive Christmas basket tied with a red ribbon and filled with candies, stuffed dates and tangerines with a card saying, "From Consul General and Mrs. Keeley to bring you a little cheer on your first Sicilian Christmas." I was deeply touched and telephoned to thank them at once and also sent a note. It helped so much to get through Christmas Eve which I celebrated alone, but glad to retire early for the next day I knew I would be with friends.

My first letter home was written Christmas Day, 1956

I have just come from the most beautiful Christmas service and the most beautiful Anglican church I have ever been in. So beautiful that I brushed a few tears from my cheeks but I am trying not to feel too sorry for myself being away from you this Christmas. The Auchinclosses have taken me to church, also being Episcopalians, where Mr. Auchincloss read one of the lessons. Mr. Barley, the British Consul, apparently always read the first lesson. He introduced me to Mrs. Keeley who sat just behind us and, of course, the padre, the Rev. Hazelton and the British Consul and Mrs. Barley. I stayed on for communion and then walked across the street to the hotel opposite to look at rooms and inquire rates. It is a nice hotel and nearer my visa office which is in a different building from the main consulate.

I learned the Anglican church with its exquisite gold mosaics had been the chapel to the palace across the street which is now the Palma Hotel and belonged to the English Whittacker family. Joseph Whittacker built the Church of the Holy Cross in 1872-75 on land given by Benjamin Ingham, Jr., an uncle who called out the Whittacker family in 1816. He was formerly a cloth merchant from Leeds and later made his fortune in Marsala wine, furnishing it to the British fleet during the days of Lord Nelson. Marsala was named for the Arabic port, Mars-el-Allah, harbor of god.

Library of Congress

In the afternoon, I was invited for egg-nogs at the Poles. She was Joy Little when I knew her at the embassy in Paris. Then later, for Christmas dinner at Jean Smith's for whom I had brought the two turkeys. There I met some interesting people. An Englishman, Ralph Blum, studying anthropology, and David Begley, from the British consulate, soon be transferred to Hanoi, near Saigon, so he is not too pleased about it. But I remembered dancing with the Frenchman who said, "Hanoi, why it is adorable."

The weather is not very pleasant, misty and grey and the sun appears only intermittently. But the warmth of welcome I have received makes up for it.

On New Year's Day, Heather Ridwood gave a cocktail party for her mother, Doris Allen, who was chief of the citizen section at the embassy in Rome and had married a Foreign Service officer posted in Istanbul. I again met several interesting people. Just as I was leaving, Al Griegus, the director of USIS, asked if I would like to go to the Palma Hotel and see the inauguration of the link up of television with Italy. The president of Italy was to give a speech and it was considered a big event. After that, Italy became mad over television. Then he said he was invited to a New Year's Eve party being given by the McKeevers at their place in Mandello and invited me to join him. Mandello was a favorite seaside resort where many people had homes.

The consulate had been closed until December 27th when I reported for duty in the visa section where I was put in charge of the classified files and helped with the numerous correspondence from congressmen regarding visa cases. My colleague was Ellis Debolto, an energetic #migr# from the old aristocracy of Estonia and was very helpful to me. Robert Slutz was our superior officer.

I began my first Italian lesson which I continued to have every morning from 11-12:00 with an excellent teacher.

Library of Congress

It was the evening that Consul and Mrs. Katy gave a reception for the staff and Ellis and her husband, Alexander Bolto Van Hoehnbach, also from the Balkans and had studied for the diplomatic service, invited me to go with them. They also took me to the cocktail party the Slutzes gave in their home in Mandello and a dance that the consulate gave at the Jolly Hotel.

As we did not work on Saturday, I decided to find my way around the town and took a bus trip with several others. Our first stop was at a picturesque, unused church called St. John the Hermit, hidden away among the lush tropical foliage and flowers built by Roger II in 1132. Above the ragged leaves of the banana trees rose pink domes giving it the appearance of a mosque, which it was originally and later used by the Normans. The 13th century cloister with double columns was charming.

Then we stopped to see the cathedral, a beautiful and bewildering m#lange of different types of architecture, Arabic, Norman and Gothic. In this church Roger II was crowned first King of Sicily and here he is entombed with his successors who were creators of 12th century Palermo.

Down the little side street was the theater where the famous Sicilian puppets performed and hoped one day to see. The gem of the palace we saw next where a wedding was taking place was the Palatine Chapel, a priceless jewel of Arabian art, Byzantine mosaics and Saracenic arches. The painted wooden ceiling was a labyrinth of Arab intricate design known as honey comb. Never have I seen so much beauty concentrated in such a small area. It is, and rightly so, universally regarded as the richest and most exquisite royal chapel in existence.

We next went down into the catacombs of the Convent of the Cappuccinos, a ghostly and gruesome spectacle of thousands mummified remains of the aristocratic citizens who had been embalmed here in positions they had requested while still alive, either sitting down or standing up. Remnants of splendid garments fitting the body as elegantly in death as

Library of Congress

in life, still clung to bones like cobwebs fluttering in the breeze that eddied through the dank tunneled corridor. This, however, ceased in 1880. Every day, they say, the crypt is crowded with foreign visitors. I don't know why.

I was relieved when we drove up to see the famous Cathedral of Monreale and looked back at the rich valley called the Conca d'Oro, Shell of Gold, and to the sea beyond. Here was another gem of Sicily. Saracenic grace and delicacy, Byzantine opulence and elegance and Norman strength and beauty. A wealth of lavish decoration and the general effect was magnificent. Inside we stood bewildered by the glow and glitter. The statue of Christ was surrounded by dazzling mosaics portraying scenes from the Old and New Testaments. Outside cloisters with quiet gardens led to terraces with a breathtaking view of Palermo and the bay. It was a former Benedictine monastery, now a historic monument.

In the old quarters of town every street and every alley had a wayside shrine. In many of the cases there was only a small picture of a Christ, Madonna or saint protected by glass and illuminated by faint oil lamp and frequently protected by iron bars. Candles as well as oil lamps are lit on the day or days dedicated to whomsoever it represents and may be seen burning every day since scores testify in this way their gratitude for benefits received or plead for benefits to come.

In the center of Palermo was a conglomeration of 17th century architecture memorials to Sicilian kings and tall columns with holy virgins of Palermo. This strange mixture of Europe and Africa and the mingling of East and West, Christian and Muslim was everywhere. A curious blending that gave Palermo a fascinating character.

Margaret Hussman, the visa issuing officer, just back from her holiday in England came in and invited me to have dinner with her. She lives at the Mediterraneo, a nearby hotel, but does not serve meals. It is raining, but she drives a car. It seems to rain without the slightest provocation, so I always carry my umbrella.

Library of Congress

January 7, 1957

Dear Mildred,

Everyone here talks about the Palmers who left about a month ago and were in Bangkok where I liked them so much. I received a card from Charlie saying, "Welcome to Palermo," which I thought was sweet of him to send. I am studying Italian like mad. Spent the entire weekend on it.

Since writing to you last I have seen a place I am quite interested in that David Begley is giving up February 15 as he is being transferred from his consulate to Hanoi and he thought I might like it. When I saw it, I fell in love with it and have taken it. It had been a coachman's house in the earlier days of stabling and was tucked behind the old pink villa, Couchia, the ancestral name of the property belonging to Baroness Potino on Via Liberta, a spacious avenue flanked by handsome palaces and gardens. It was approached through the arch driveway of the villa and so covered with vines it looked like an English cottage outside and inside, because of the gay chintz-covered furniture. But there were touches of Italian ambiance in the ancient tiled walls and floors. The family's private chapel was attached on one side and a unique feature was a tiny opening between the chapel and kitchen where the chalice could be passed through. Also a niche in the kitchen where I eventually placed a gift from my Italian maid, Pena, a statue of Santa Rose Leo, the patron saint of Palermo. There was a fireplace in the salon downstairs, a small kitchen upstairs and a terrace paved with faded tiles. The rent was \$72 per month.

The day I moved, the consulate sent a Jeep and trailer for my stuff, my new Italian maid and me. The Baroness Potino, Jusapina Potino, had flowers in the house and everything tastefully arranged. She presented me with the keys tied up in a green satin ribbon. I thought I would need a special big bag to carry them in. One was for the grill gate for the cars and one to walk through which were locked at 9:30 at night and one for the house.

Library of Congress

The next morning I felt I was really in the country when I was waken by the birds singing and looked out over the tops of the lemon and orange trees. Edna Greenley, a colleague in the consulate, gave me a heater saying it was a housewarming gift. Nothing could have been more appropriate and appreciated. My own effects had been held up in Bangkok due to the Suez situation and didn't arrive until mid-May, when I was unpacking things I hadn't seen for six years.

Margaret Hussman had just been made consul and chief of the visa section and was trying to promote me. I am doing the best I can, but I am not frightfully interested in this type of work. It seems rather dull after my glamorous job in Bangkok.

The Keeleys often entertained, especially when the navy ships were in. Mr. Keeley was a congenial host and always greeted his guests playing with his amber prayer beads, tranquilizing strands wrapped around his wrist. An Oriental habit probably acquired at one of his former Arab posts.

A lovely party was given aboard the Navy ship, Iowa, when the Auchinclosses received with the Admiral as the Keeleys had gone to Rome to pay their respects to the newly arrived Ambassador, Mr. Zellerbach. When shown over the ship I was interested to see in the Captain's quarters the bathtub that President Roosevelt had especially installed when he was aboard going to Yalta. We had the opportunity of ordering some food stuff from the ship and I stocked up on tinned things and, of course, navy beans.

Margaret Hussman very thoughtfully said to me on April 5th, why don't you go home early, it is your birthday, and so, I did. And to my surprise was delighted to find some lovely little orchids and an Italian green linen tray cloth from Jusapina Potino and her sister Maria. General and Mrs. Thomas Camp, friends of my friends the Jim Purdys in Washington, D.C., had arrived, so came to help me celebrate with Margaret over a bottle of champagne. I later dined with them at the Villa Igea, where the Camps were staying, a hotel beautifully situated in a garden beside the sea on the outskirts of Palermo.

Library of Congress

One afternoon Ellis Debolto invited me to go with her and her husband, the Baron, to see her daughter jump at Fabereta Park. It is a part at the foot of Mt. Pelagreno, the big Gibraltar-like rock, landmark of this island. A Bourbon king lost a bet over a game of Bezique and had to make it good by building a Chinese fantasia there, and he did. So, with a flourish it was a kind of pavilion in Chinese lacquer with pagoda roofs of green, pint and yellow tile and called it La Fabereta.

Lord Nelson and the notorious Lady Hamilton, whose beauty ravished so many men, once lived there. It is said she painted a series of water colors that hung in the salon.

I sat with the Deboltos and their friends, Baron and Baroness Canolotti, in whose 14th century palace they have an apartment. The riders looked so pretty in their red jackets. One little ten year old boy jumped with great elegance, even more so than the president of the Riding Club. I hope to go more often to these concourses. There is a big international one in October.

Ellis and I went to see the film, "Anastasia," one evening and when the Grand Duchess, played by Helen Hayes, was flashed on the screen, she leaned over and whispered to me, "Alex has a very nice letter at home from her."

Mrs. Metcalfe and her daughter, Gabrielle, who was with USIS, invited about 50 people to see the famous Sicilian puppet show. They thought it would be a more original way of entertaining than the usual cocktail party and it certainly was. The theater was a tiny barn-like place where we sat on wooden benches without backs or arms. And to create the authentic atmosphere, munched melon seeds that had been passed around while waiting for the performance. In one corner a hurdy-gurdy played incessantly. The little play was in Italian, but Gabrielle explained it to us in English. The puppet theater represents the same historic incidents as many of the carvings on the colorful Sicilian carts. The epic struggle between Christians and Saracens. The scenes are enchanting and the quaint charm of the entertainment makes a curious emotional appeal. Everyone follows the story with

Library of Congress

breathless interest. Such beautiful armor, meticulously worked on, those puppets when they come clanking out on the stage with their shining swords and spears and shields. Death of the Christian warriors brought tears to the stoniest hearts, so nobly and pathetic were their dying speeches and so realistic the languid gestures of their arms and the last twitches of their bodies as the curtain falls. The curtain is grandly and pompously decorated with paintings of battling Crusaders. We all loved it and I never saw Mr. Keeley enjoy himself so much.

Everyone in our visa section was terribly excited about one of the local staff, Colaresi, going off to Bologna to enter the International Fencing Match. He is the champion for all of Sicily and Southern Italy, so we sent him a telegram wishing him good luck. He later went to the States to enter the World Championship.

That evening I was sitting to the right of Mr. Auchincloss at his dinner party. I was telling him how I had learned to fence with one of the British officers on a British freighter while zigzagging around the world and during the war in 1939. He said he had fenced while at Yale.

April 19, 1957

Dear Mildred,

I was grateful to be in the haven of my own home when the sad news came of Dad's death where I could be comforted by the dear sisters Jusapina and Maria Potino who were ready to take me in their arms when I hung up the telephone. They sensed what had happened when I wept and hear me say, "Put a red rose in his buttonhole for me." Then tucked me into bed with a warm drink and a hot water bottle, for I was trembling so as I had rushed out into the night to their telephone in my nighty and dressing gown. I remembered that he had a dream about my house and mentioned this to them in French, they spoke no

Library of Congress

English. As I looked at his portrait, said, "He was the handsomest man I have ever known and still think so."

Saturday, April 20, 1957, at home, 10:30 Am

My dearest sister,

You and I, dear, are now all that are left of our happy family. How I wish we could be together at this sad hour to comfort each other. Bishop Rose called soon after the news reached him and I asked about a requiem service for Dad. Jusapina had said they would have a little memorial service in their family chapel next to me, even though it is Roman Catholic. I was very touched. I feel so helpless not being there to participate in dear Dad's last rites. These services here will help. The news had reached Mrs. Keeley and Mrs. Kyle, who were decorating the church for Easter and came to offer condolences as did the Poles with flowers. When many inquired if I would return to the States, Eddie said I would not be able to get off the island anyway. Everything, air and ship, are booked until the end of the month. Mrs. Kyle spoke up and said, well in this emergency we could arrange something I am sure.

Mrs. Keeley offered her car and driver and invited me for luncheon tomorrow, but Margaret Hussman and I had already planned to go to Piana de Gregshe. At first I thought I wouldn't go, but Mrs. Keeley thought I should rather than be alone. Everyone was being so dear. Many go up into the hills to see the interesting people of this Albanian colony come down from their village at this time of the year in their colorful costumes as they come out of church. The women wear long dark skirts and brightly colored velvet bodices, opened to show a snowy bosom. They immigrated here as a result of the Turkish subjugation of Albania. They speak the Albanian language, belong to the Orthodox church and have special festivals of their own.

Library of Congress

It was a lovely day and we drove into the country for our picnic lunch. All along the roadside were many of our friends doing the same. Occasionally we stopped to pick wild flowers. I felt it was just what Dad wanted me to do on Easter Day.

Margaret brought me home along the seaside and we stopped and sat on the terrace of the little pavilion where we had a cool drink. It was there that I decided I would like to get away for a few days.

The weather is beginning to be pleasant. I feel so sad that I believe it will bring me some little solace. Before I returned last evening, the Auchinclosses had come around and left a note. "Dear Virginia, John and I are so sorry that you have had such sad news. It is dreadful to be too far away to not be able to return home in time to say your last goodbye to your father, but I hope there will be comfort in knowing that he lived fully and in good health for so long and that you did have a chance to enjoy each other again not so very long ago. We are thinking of you a great deal. We wondered if by any chance you would like to spend tonight here with us. We would love to have you here under our roof. We expect to be home from 4:30. We would love to have you for supper, too, a little after 9:00, if you would like that. Don't bother to let us know, we know you have no phone, but please feel free to come anytime you want and don't feel any obligation to us that you must come or call us. This is just that we want you to know we are here. Very sincerely, Audrey" I have quoted it verbatim so you will see how wonderful they are.

Then Audrey came to see me and asked me to talk about Dad if I wanted to, and I did. Then took me home with her and had supper, but did not spend the night. They were perfect dears and lent me the book, "Wonders of Italy," when they learned you and I plan to see the hill towns. Love Virginia

Another wave of sadness sweeps over me as I type this letter knowing that never ever will it again be "Dearest Mildred and Dad."

Library of Congress

Easter Monday, April 21, 1957, 3:10pm

Dearest Mildred,

If I have calculated the time correctly, in just about an hour our dear father will be lying beside our dear mother. It is not easy to bare this great lost at this great distance, but so grateful the Bishop was able to arrange a requiem service at 9:00 this morning in the lovely Anglican church where I often worshiped. It was beautiful. I sat between the Bishop's wife, Mrs. Rose, who has also been most comforting, and Margaret Hussman. Audrey and John Auchincloss were also there and Joy Pole, Ellis Debolto and Jean Smith, who volunteered to play the organ. The visa section had sent some lovely white carnations which I placed on the alter. I felt it was a beautiful time for Dad to go for now he has risen with our Lord. May God comfort you in our great sorrow. With all my love, Virginia

I had written to Dad, April 15th, my sister's birthday

“Dearest Dad,

I have just received your letter written on April 9 and nothing makes me happier to have good news from you. It sounds as if you are so much better and in good spirits. I wait so eagerly to hear from you and do hope by now you will keep as fit as when I last saw you. Oh, how I, too, wish I could be sitting in the swing with you again, basking in the sun. Those were happy days with you.”

I cherished every moment I spent with him in his declining years and he meant more and more to me each time I was with him on home leave, but this was to be my last letter and never was seen by him because Good Friday, the 19th, the telephone call came from my sister that he had died on Maundy Thursday, the 18th.

I did book a trip around the island with CIT (that's the tourist bureau) and on Sunday, April 28, 1957 I wrote my sister from the Grand Hotel, Catania, Sicily.

Library of Congress

This is a modern deluxe hotel equal to the Waldorf with heated towel racks and telephone in the bathroom. Such a surprise especially after passing through so much that was BC. From my room I have superb view of Mt. Etna through an enormous picture window that makes a perfect frame for Europe's highest volcano. It is soaring in the distance, gently spuming faint plumes of smoke at the moment with a bit of snow still on its sides. The unique feature of the city of Catania is that it has been destroyed eight times and rebuilt almost entirely of lava. The Elephant of Catania, known as the heart of lava, holds up a fountain in the main square, but it is the grandeur of Etna that dominates the scene here. At Siracusa I stayed at the Politi Hotel charming situated where I had a balcony overlooking the blue sea. The weather has been divine now.

Audrey Auchincloss has sent me a note just before I left saying, "I hope your heart will not be too heavy to really enjoy Sicily in the spring." My heart is still heavy, but I am greatly solaced by at last finding spring in Sicily. There is so much of historical interest around Siracusa. The Greek theater is indestructible as it is cut out of a stone hill and plays are still performed here. The stone quarries where Athenian prisoners were taken to die of heat and thirst after losing their naval battle, is now a beautiful orange scented garden where Winston Churchill comes to paint. The ear of Dionysus...it was constructed to hear every whisper of his prisoners so extraordinary were the acoustics. Arethusa Fountain, where the fish and geese who float there preserve the water, where weeds and papyrus grow that were imported by the Arabs is famous. In June 1798, Admiral Nelson sailed into Siracusa with 14 warships and remained five days. It is said in a letter he wrote to Lord Hamilton that he had taken on provisions and fresh water there since water drawn from the fountain of Arethusa would certainly gain a victory. The prophecy was realized for his warships sailed out from Siracusa to win the battle of Aboukir.

I was so delighted when I heard we were to include a visit to Piazza Armenia to see those recently discovered mosaics I had read about with such interest in the National Geographic magazine. The Romans, in contrast to the Greeks, who built for views on

Library of Congress

spectacular sites, chose the sheltered spots and much is preserved intact of the mosaic pavement in this imperial villa depicting the luxurious life of a Roman ruler, including the savage beasts the ancient Romans hunted in Africa, and women who had their own steam baths and gym and wore bikini bathing suits. To see them to advantage, one must climb and look down on them.

We drove through some quaint 16th century towns. In one little town, Vizzini, the story of the opera "Cavalleria Rusticana," was written. The sea is bright blue and we have passed some lovely beaches. The fields are full of yellow daisies and lots of purple clover for the cows. The 5th century architecturally was the most dramatic period of Greek history and Sicily enriched it with temples we were most admiring today. It is said a city's statues could be judged by the number of and wealth of temples. They were a talisman of her treasures on the crown of the hill visible to all. Segesta and Selinunte. The main beauty of these ruins is their state of dilapidation. Noble mementoes of antiquity which speak so eloquently of fallen greatness and nothingness of man.

Given an interest in classical literature, history and mythology, archeologically the sights seen are bound to grow on one.

Taormina was a paradise and the grandeur of its setting makes it truly one of the most unique among the pleasure resorts of the world. It clings to its own cliffs on Mt. Tauro above the sea. And the majesty of Mt. Etna soars above it all in the distance. Taormina is very proud of their volcano for they claim they can forecast the weather by the smoke signals. I was booked at the Excelsior Hotel, but changed to the Timeo where I could almost touch the ruins of the Greek theater from my bathroom window.

When I came downstairs the next morning, I was presented with a lovely bouquet of lavender sweet peas and charming from Culver Sherrill saying that he understood I wouldn't want any parties, but asked if I would come in at 7:00 for a drink. Just a few friends would be there and we would be going on for dinner afterwards. So I accepted

Library of Congress

and met two chaps from Rome on holiday. A Mr. Van Brown from the United States, and a countess, who I had met there before and had admired her sweet bright face. Culver showed me a bit more of his fabulous house, swimming pool and gardens where he picked a white camilla for me. We had interesting conversation and Culver said he always felt so flattered that Clare Booth Luce, our American Ambassador in Rome, told friends the only two things to see in Taormina are the Greek theater and Culver Sherrill. I am writing him a thank you note saying, "Yes, this is true, but one can enjoy seeing the Greek theater once, but Culver Sherrill again and again," which is a fact for he is delightful, witty and very hospitable. I appreciated so much his kind thought of me.

The next morning I left Taormina at 8:00 in the morning very reluctantly. I could have remained in that heavenly spot for ever. For many it had served as an escape from reality. Lovers of beauty came here as to an enchanted spring that would quench any thirst. And anyone seeking consolation for their souls from the turbulent progress of life will find it in the voices of the past. It had done just that for me at this time.

On the drive back to Palermo, we stopped at Chefalu, perched deliciously above the Tyrrhenian Sea and backed by a miniature rock of Gibraltar. Chefalu's chief glory lies in the marvelous mosaics in the Norman cathedral practically as they were when installed in the 12th century. The famous mosaic, Head of Christ, whose eyes follow you through the church, is said to have provided a model for the better known and larger Monde all Cathedral.

When I returned to the consulate, everyone was busy making our office as presentable as possible for the visit of Ambassador Zellerbach. I rushed out and bought three fuchsia plants for our balcony and was pleased when Mr. Auchincloss and Mr. Memminger, the Supervising Consul at the embassy in Rome, remarked about them. About 300 invitations had been extended to the Italians for the reception held in the garden of the Villa Igea, which had the right note of grandeur. Many of the aristocracy who came bore names of

Library of Congress

the proudest names of Sicily. Mr. Auchincloss introduced Count Periera, Prince Mirto, and Prince Gangai.

As we were all standing together speaking French, Mrs. Fenzi came up and said, "Mrs. Biddle is the most charming person in Palermo." I felt suddenly flattered by such gracious compliment and thought what a charming person she was to pay me such a spontaneous compliment, especially in the presence of Prince Gangai as I had heard the ladies of the Gangai family were reported in every generation among the most ravishing in Palermo. And the palazzo Gangai in Magueda had a long romantic history.

The Auchinclosses have a great many friends here and are charming and gracious to everyone and so kind to the staff. Ellis Debolto said yesterday that they are so well bred it is a pleasure just to look at them.

One day, when I was lunching at Lucapres, I recognized the former Japanese Ambassador to Bangkok and his wife, who I remember had been transferred to Rome. We had a brief conversation and I heard the Portuguese Charg# d'Affaires was also posted in Rome, a most attractive diplomat I often sat next to at official dinners because protocol-wise we were both usually placed below the salt as we were low men on the totem pole.

The Fourth of July was celebrated here by a picnic with the Americans at Mandello.

My sister was on route to visit me, and in a letter to reach her in London, I wrote,
September 13, 1957

Dear Mildred,

So glad you saw "The Boyfriend." I nearly rolled in the aisle laughing. It reminded me so of my boarding days at Briar Cliff in the twenties. No more news except to wish you a pleasant flight over and assure you that I will be at the airport with open arms to welcome you to Palermo.

Library of Congress

But the day I was leaving the consulate to meet Mildred, I got stuck in the elevator and panicky I would not get to the plane in time. All the staff tried to pacify me by calling down the shaft, "Don't worry, we will get you there." And by some mechanical miracle they did. Then the parties began and a tour around the island.

We were entertained by Culver Sherrill, the ever hospitable host in Taormina and from there across the Straits of Messina to the mainland of Italy on a marvelous rapido train. We stopped in Sorrento and had fun in Capri giggling like two silly school girls as we lay flat on the boat as we had to do to go in and out of the Blue Grotto. I really preferred Anacapri where we roamed through Axelmonthi's interesting home and museum. We took a motor tour through the hill towns stopping at Assisi to visit a friend, Mrs. Rockwell. In Florence stayed at our favorite pension, the Tornabuoni Biacchi. The charming proprietress knew Mrs. Fenzi, Orlando Biacchi, daughter of the Countess Biacchi, who had died, was a friend of Mrs. Rockwell.

From here I bid goodbye to Mildred who returned to the States. The next day I booked a tour to Siena and San Gimignano, after passing once more the Baptistery to gaze in admiration at the gold reliefs of Ghiberti's famous doors. San Gimignano's imposing towers of nobility are unique in Italy and all of Europe. Only noble families were permitted to build a tower near their palaces. In the 16th century there were 65, but time and wars have reduced this number and some were dangerous and had to be topped. Each noble contrived to build his tower just a little higher than his rivals. Finally an end was put to this foolishness by having a limitation, although some nobles tried to get around the law by embellishing their towers with a Pisan-like lean just to advertise the virtuosity of their architects. I heard that an American woman bought one and is living in it. Like many painters and writers, I felt the charm of the place deeply.

Siena was more interesting than I had remembered. The cathedral, older than the one in Florence, built from bricks with the breathtaking red color, "terra d'siena."

Library of Congress

When my plane from Rome landed at Palermo, the Auchinclosses were at the airport to meet some friends and very kindly drove me home, bringing me up to date on the news. I had not heard, however, that the office hours had been changed and arrived a half hour early to find a note of thanks from Culver Sherrill for the chocolates Mildred and I had sent from Perushia.

My French friend, Andre Triolet, wrote he was finding the life in Tangier, "very boring." His English was amusing at times. And Yvonne Sonleshe wrote, "What would you think if I paid you a visit?" So, the two came. Andre, by the Independence and stayed at the Palma Hotel, and Yvonne by train and stayed with me. I gave a cocktail party of 15 for them and when Mr. Keeley arrived without Mrs. Keeley, when I asked where she was he said, "Oh, she is in bed with that Greek." When I exclaimed, "What?" He added, with a twinkle in his eye, "laryngitis."

I showed Andre and Yvonne the usual sights I had seen. On Sunday we visited St. John the Hermit and Monreale and the Palatine Chapel, where Mr. Cheli, the Chief of Protocol, who had given me a little Sicilian card and sent a couple of cards to me from the Scandinavian countries, rushed out and kissed my hand and said the German President had just preceded us into the Chapel.

The Baroness Jusapina Potino invited us for luncheon and as she spoke only French, it was enjoyable.

The consular staff had been invited on board the Julius Caesar an Italian liner going to South America, so Yvonne and I joined the grand tour of the ship with Mr. Keeley, the Auchinclosses and Lottie and Joe Kyle. When the Prefect with his chic wife, the Captain of the ship and the Captain of the Port joined us for cocktails, there was an explosion of flashbulbs. After the champagne and this excitement, Yvonne and I were in high spirit when we met Andre for dinner at Lucapres and had a gay time. They left for Taormina the next day with a note of introduction to Culver Sherrill.

Library of Congress

One evening there was a costume party at the Beach Club in Mandello for benefit of the poor. I thought I would wear my Japanese bride's kimono, but regretted I did not have a black wig. My French hairdresser, Pierre, said he could dye my hair black for one night, but I didn't think it was quite that necessary. So just tucked a white chrysanthemum on each side of my head. Pena helped me get into the complicated obi. When the Kyles called for me, people must have wondered where we escaped from. Joe got out of the car dressed as Napoleon with the proverbial hat and suit shining with gold braid and gold epaulets, all much too big for him. But he was as handsome as Lottie was ugly, as a witch. She had on a sleazy black satin dress, black stringy wig with horn rimmed glasses on to which was attached a nose, what a nose. It was enormous and hooked and had a slight off-center look to it. And she carried, of course, a broomstick.

Don Herdick, where we went for cocktails, accentuated his tallness by wearing a white fur Cossack hat with his Russian costume, rented as most were, from the Nasomo Theater. His wife came as a 15th century Desdemona. The Slutzes were in Spanish costumes. Bob said his costume was big enough for the bull and himself. Rose was pretty with a black mantilla covering a big comb and a rose over one ear. We all commented on each other's costumes and everyone said to me, "You are really authentic, aren't you."

After a few drinks we were ready to leave and Don, to be hospitable asked if anyone wanted to go to the bathroom. Looking at everyone else and thinking about my own tight costume, I couldn't help but say, "Oh, it is too difficult." For a brief moment there was embarrassed silence and then a roar of laughter.

The Club was prettily decorated with balloons and a great array of costumes. It was amusing to see three musketeers doing the rock and roll, a priest the jitterbug. Gradually people began to take off bits of their costumes and wigs, hats, swords and veils to be more comfortable while dancing. Later an announcement was made there would be a parade for judging the costumes and a half hour is allowed to get back into their bits and pieces. We all marched around to be judged and I can hardly believe my ears when I heard the master

Library of Congress

of ceremonies say, "The first prize for the most beautiful lady's costume goes to the little lady in Japanese costume." After I recovered from my surprise I walked up and made a low bow in true Japanese fashion and Don Herdick waltzed me off with the prize.

The next day I went with Margaret Hussman to the Deboltos for tea and met their very good friends the Duke Deboltos and his Danish wife. He was the Swedish and Danish Consul and he knew Alf Herdom, my Norwegian friend from Honolulu, who was first a composer of music, then an artist when he found Honolulu more conducive to painting than composing. I related the time I had attended a concert with him when Kirsten Flagstaff sang some of his songs and she announced that the composer was in the audience and how proud I felt to be with him when he rose and bowed.

Unfortunately I caught a cold over the holidays and was in bed on Christmas Day. But matters could always be worse. Poor Lora, a local in our office, fell and broke her leg at Margaret Hussman's party jitterbugging with her husband.

As I had to use four days of my leave before January 11 or lose them, I made an effort to recover sufficiently to go to Tunis. At the airport, two Americans introduced themselves, a Mr. McCann and a Mr. Hughes, studying at the University in Cambridge, England. They apparently were going to the same hotel I was, the Majestic, so we all piled in a tiny Renault, that looked like a baby carriage, with our luggage. I was most fortunate to find such heavenly sunshine which quickly baked out my cold. It was good to see again the men in the red fez and the women in their white veils against the gleaming white flat top houses. With a guide I went through the souks, Medina and Casbah and after lunch engaged him again to go out to the El Bardo museum, considered, and rightly so, the best archeological museum in French North Africa. It was formerly a harem of the Turkish dynasty and turned into a museum in 1888. Actually, it is four museums in one. A Punic, a Roman, Byzantine, Christian and Arab, each with many items of significance. The collection of mosaics are the most extensive in the world. Colorfully dressed guards were standing at the entrance of the Palace of the Bey, adjunct to the museum, where the Bey

Library of Congress

of Tunis, under French protection, visits three times a year. The guide was excellent so I engaged him again the next day.

We took the train to Sidi-bou-Said passing small villages along the Gulf on one side and the Lake of Tunis on the other. After about half an hour we reached this adorable native village perched on the side of the hill. I followed my guide in his flowing robes which seemed to float in the air, up the narrow street with pretty Moorish houses all painted with the traditional blue-trim to keep the evil spirits away. At the end rose an elegant minaret. We lunched on a delicious sole at a perfectly charming restaurant, Dar Zarrouk, situated on tiered terraces overlooking the calm, shimmering Gulf. All the tables, chairs, and even pots of flowers were painted the same shade of blue as the sea beyond and gave it a most lovely effect. Inside the restaurant the pillars and walls were draped with the carpet so well made, all knotted by hand in this part of the world. The hotel, just a few steps up the hill was a dream place. It was warm, peaceful and quiet and I vowed I must return again one day. I even thought I might like to retire here. A small house, I was told would cost about \$25 a month. Greta Garbo had a hideaway beyond the cafe where she left her signature on the shutters. This village has since been made an historical monument. I did return here once again and brought back a bird cage so artistically made, and made only here, in Sidi-Bou-Said by certain families. We looked over toward the beautiful and magnificently situated home of the late Baron d'Erlanger. He was a well-known Arab student who translated ancient works of Arab music and founded a conservatory for the renovation of Tunisian music.

Cartage laid beyond which we next visited. It was not only of great historical interest, but many Americans and other diplomats have homes there as well as Gustave Flaubert, who wrote "Salambo," there in a villa of the same name. From the train window I could see the American flag flying from our Ambassador's residence, Mr. G. Lewis Jones, who I had met in Paris and with whom I had a very pleasant chat at the embassy when I arrived in Tunis. We drove around Cartage in a carriage. It was beautifully situated on the sea and the reason it rose again and again after being so often destroyed. It was at one time

Library of Congress

second to Rome in greatness. In the Arabic Byzantine cathedral were fragments of the mortal remains of King Louis IX of France, the Crusading St. Louis, who died in the siege of his attack when it was a Muslim center. Above the altar is a very handsome reliquary in gilt bronze representing the Sanchapelle of Paris, built by Louis IX with relics of the royal saint from the church of Monreale in Sicily.

Sidi-Bou-Said bares its name in Arabic disguise.

The following day with my same guide in a taxi with three others, drove to Nabuel where the pottery was made, also embroidery, grass mats and lampshades. Then on to Hamamet where we had an excellent lunch of enormous shrimps with a mayonnaise made with a wonderful olive oil. I saw how they made the oil later. They use the tiny olives for this. My guide got a special permit for me to visit the Casbah, where an armed soldier showed us around. I must come back here in May and go down to the lovely, lotus eating island Gjerba. (I did several years later.)

When I arrived at the Palermo airport from Tunis Mr. Keeley was there with Joe Kyle and many others to bid goodbye to the ex-president of the region who was going to the United States, and drove me home. The surprising news I had received was that Mr. Auchincloss was being transferred to Trieste as principal officer. His job here was abolished. Apparently Audrey is quite enthused about going there. They will live in splendor in an enormous house with swimming pool and any number of servants, and of course it will be wonderful for Mr. Auchincloss to have his own post. But we all will miss them terribly.

When we all saw the Auchinclosses off, I certainly had a lump in my throat when I waved goodbye. They left me a lot of wood for my fireplace that was delivered in one of those colorful wonderful little Sicilian carts. Everything is carried in these two wheeled donkey carts and are seen here in all their glory. Intricate carvings of scenes from the islands, fiery history, battle conquest and religious furor painted in flamboyant colors, red, yellow,

Library of Congress

blue and green, to symbolize Sicily's oranges, sun, sea and grass, are all done by hand. The trappings of the donkey are glittering with sequence, flowers and ribbons and studded with tiny mirrors to divert the evil eye. Builders, carvers and painters hand on historical episodes from father to son. There are copies in all sizes and make charming souvenirs from Sicily.

I invited the Auchinclosses for lunch one day with the padre and Baroness Jusapina Potino, and Felipo from the consulate served. Pena preferred not to as she lost her brother while I was in Tunis and said it was too soon to even put on a white apron over her black uniform. The day she returned she looked so sad in deep mourning with the black shawl on. Her brother accompanied her, and apologized for his beard, explaining it was the custom for men to grow beards when there has been a death in the family.

Upon returning from Tunis I found among my mail a charming letter from Baron von Plason, saying, "Had I known you were in Capri, we might have seen each other last summer for before leaving Naples for Bangkok on September 11 on board of Celandia , I spent a delightful week in Capri with my cousin, Eddie Bismarck and his very rich American wife, formerly Mrs. Harrison Williams, known as the best dressed woman in the world." Of course, I too was very sorry that we did not see each other.

Also came a gift of a book from Helen Keller just the sort to keep on the bedside table to dip into now and then. Her thoughts are like spiritual vitamins. When we do the best we can we never know what miracle is brought into our lives or into the life of another. And a letter from my Swiss friend, Jacqueline Cramer, asking for rates of hotels here and about the weather. She wants to come and do some painting. But, best of all was an efficiency report from Margaret Hussman.

Then came an amusing invitation from Culver Sherrill to a carnival party. The note at the bottom read, "Come lose your head, and beg, barrow, or steal another for the occasion." As implied just a head dress was required. I was so glad I had bought a white wig I saw in

Library of Congress

a shop window on Saturday. Pena helped me decorate it with a black velvet ribbon wound with pearls and pretty pink rose. And, I found a black mask edged with lace to complete the disguise.

A letter to my sister Mildred written from Hotel Timeo, Taormina, Sicily, Saturday, February 15, 1968

I left Palermo in a London fog and since arriving here it has been coming and going ever since. From the balcony of my room this morning I had a thrill seeing Mt. Etna covered with snow and fuming with smoke. Then the mist came and hid it all from view. It has been like a veil, raising itself to give one a glimpse of beauty, like a Chinese print.

When I arrived yesterday afternoon, I said to the nice manager, Mr. Berndt, that I wanted to see the historical monuments this time and he very kindly sent his English speaking German secretary with me. On the Corso I happened to see Culver Sherrill and said that I was seeing all the old ruins. And he replied in his characteristic way, "and you will see another tomorrow night." I suppose he meant his house after the party is over.

The hotel is filled. Mrs. Fenzi from Palermo is here to see her cousins, the Copelands. Mrs. Copeland had been a former Member of Parliament and a great friend of Winston Churchill. She is quite elderly and her husband nearly blind. We all piled into a tiny taxi and went together to Culver Sherrill's party, which was very gay. Mr. Keeley was there as a sheik with some pearls hanging over his forehead.

I met quite a few interesting people, including Eugene Bonner, whose book, "Sicily Roundabout," I had just bought the day before and was told it was completely sold out in America. We met at the piazza for tomato juice the next morning where he autographed it for me. It is the place where some how or other everybody manages to find themselves between 12-1:00 to pass the time of day, make engagements or amuse themselves in general.

Library of Congress

Mrs. Fenzi asked me to sit with them at an excellent place to watch the floral parade. The streets were strung with lights. There was a treasure hunt by car and people were dashing all over, the treasure being 60,000 Lira. From our balcony we could watch the crowds of people from all over the country parading the streets, throwing confetti at one another, blowing trumpets, clowning, joking, laughing and shouting. The carnival spirit was contagious so we joined in the fun by throwing down paper streamers at the passing flood of participants.

The Keeleys came back on the same train with me and Culver came to the station to see us off and kissed me goodbye. We didn't reach Palermo until after midnight and shared a taxi. I had dropped them off first.

The next morning Mr. Keeley telephoned to ask if I got home all right. He said he was worried about me and had looked up my number in the directory but when he saw it was just an emergency number, the Potinos, he didn't call, but thought a lot about it afterwards. I felt deeply touched that he was so concerned about me.

Everyone was going to the festival at Agrigento to see the lovely almond blossoms, so one Sunday I went up at 7:00 in the morning, stayed on for the illumination of the temples and fireworks and returned to Palermo at 11:30pm. While there I met a delightful Englishman, Mr. Byers, who had been a guest of the British Ambassador, Sir Barclay Gage in Bangkok when I was posted there. But it was during the Queen Grandmother cremation when the Court was in mourning, so they did not go out but drank their whisky sodas behind drawn blinds.

The next day the inspectors arrived, Mr. Rice and Mr. Hart, with their wives. When I met Mr. Hart he said, "I hear you are an expert on hotels in Paris." As he had never been there and they go in August, I gave him a list, but regretted the Vouillamont, where I loved living for four years, was no longer there. I heard it is now a school.

Library of Congress

I invited them to my little house for cocktails one Sunday, but unfortunately it turned out to be a cold, rainy evening. Poor Mr. Keeley came but with a cold and when I said how kind of him to come out, he said, "Well, I remember that nice fire." My fireplace did emanate a nice welcome of real flames. The first thing he said to the inspectors was, "You should have seen this house when Mrs. Biddle's predecessor had it. He even had chickens up on the terrace." I was amused, but pleased he pointed this out. Mr. Hart wanted to see the whole house, so I gave him a private inspection tour. He was interested in knowing what I paid for everything and seemed to find it very charming.

Margaret Hussman and I received an airgram from the Department regarding our home leaves. We are the only ones due this fiscal year. We must also fill in our post preference reports. I requested leave December 24, exactly two years from the date I arrived and preferred my next assignment to be in a warm climate where I could do protocol work again. It depends where my post is, but if at all possible I should like to have Pena with me. She said, "Senora, I will follow you anyplace but darkest Africa." She didn't like hot countries. She was excited about coming to the States and when I told her my sister was inquiring about a visa for her, with tears in her eyes she picked up Dad's photo from my dressing table and said, "I will pray to your dear departed Father for the dead know what is in one's heart."

One Sunday after lunching with the Fenzis at Mondello at their lovely villa by the sea, they took me with them to have tea at Miss Delia Whittacker's. She was a very classical maiden lady in mourning for her mother who died at the age of 99. I was told when she was a child she sat on the lap of Garibaldi, the great general whose conquest of Sicily in 1860 with his thousands, was a famous expedition and proclaimed a great epic. Their fabulous home, Malfitano, was filled with precious collections. A pair of cloisonn# elephants came from the summer palace in Peking and on one table was an autographed photograph of the former king of Italy. When I said goodbye she asked to come to my little house sometime.

Library of Congress

Mrs. Fenzi and I went to see the film, "Sayonara," together and she was a wonderful person to see it with for she told me she had visited Japan in 1921 when her Italian brother-in-law was Naval Attach# at the Italian legation. It was at the time the then Prince of Wales made his first visit and she attended all of the elaborate functions given in his honor. Ernestino, her daughter, was then only four years old with flaming red hair which was such a curiosity that the Emperor turned and stared and stared at her when passing in a procession.

I also went to see "The Ten Commandments." It is such a thrill to see the name of Leroy Prines who arranged the dances in both films flash across the screen in a foreign country, who was the son of my old dancing master, Prof Prines, I had as a child in St. Joseph, Missouri.

I received a long letter from Sarah Redman, telling me her husband Roland, obtained his Florida divorce and married the Princess Lydia d'Fonstino Bodrero, half Italian, half American, and one time wife of Ballentine Macy. So she moved out of White Elephant and found an old ranch type house right on the way to Sagamore Hill with a charming little brook running across the end of the front lawn, complete with a small waterfall and has a nice guest room. Frances Roosevelt is teaching in the university about four miles from where she lives. Her interesting neighbors were Horst, leading German photographer for Vogue and Nicholas Lawford, English and erstwhile British Foreign Service and secretary to Anthony Eden, just writing his memories in three volumes. She has already established a sherry/biscuit before lunch get-together which she find popular. She hopes to get to Sicily during my tour of duty.

April 5, 1958, at home

I am just up from my breakfast and preparing to arrange the flowers for my birthday party tonight. Pena brought me some lovely yellow tulips which I shall arrange in Japanese flower arrangement in the green Peking glass bowl for the center of the dining table. And

Library of Congress

the gardener brought some sprays of white climbing roses for the two 17th century pots on the console tables. Miss Whittacker had sent some gorgeous birds of paradise from her garden, so you see my little house was like a bower of flowers. I did not tell anyone that it was my birthday, but word does get around.

The Poles invited me to dinner the 18th, remembering it would be a sad day for me, the day we lost our dear father just a year ago. I was very touched that they would think of me on this sad day.

Such a charming handwritten letter was received from Mrs. Joseph P. Kennedy, dated April 1, 1958. "Dear Mrs. Biddle,

It was a joy to receive news of you at Christmas time and to know that you were well and happy. It must be wonderful to travel around like you and see so many different countries. We have been in Florida the entire winter and the season has been most disappointing, cold, rainy, blustering. After Easter we go north and then I am going to go to California to visit my daughter, Patricia, who is married to the movie actor, Peter Lawford. All my family are very well and my two sons are working hard in Washington. I do hope to meet you again on some of my travels. My best wishes to you always, Very sincerely, Rose Kennedy."

Then a typewritten letter came in the same mail dated April 18, 1958.

"Dear Mrs. Biddle,

In answering your Christmas card I noticed on the decorating map a picture of a small Sicilian donkey cart. I recall such a cart as a decoration at Ambassador Luce's when I was in Rome. I would appreciate it so much if you would send me one of these carts as I think it would be wonderful with a doll collection which my daughter is making. I know that it can be sent duty free and am enclosing a check for \$10. Will you address the package to me at Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, and please mark it Attention: Wobert Marsh. If the cart

Library of Congress

exceeds \$10, please let me know, and if less, please drop the money into a box for the poor in one of the churches. I am most grateful to you for your cooperation. Very sincerely,
Rose Kennedy”

Of course I wrote and acknowledged both letters and said I would be very pleased to select one for her this Saturday when I go down town.

I often went on picnics with the Fenzis. I loved being with them. One Sunday we drove along the beach and picnicked among the wild flowers which we picked later. On that day Mrs. Fenzi had on a stunning Shetland wool suit. She said she had bought the material in Scotland and had Mussolini's tailor make it. He admitted he never tailors for women, but as his son went to school with her husband's nephew, he did it as a favor.

I invited them to luncheon the following Saturday with Miss Whittacker who stepped out of her liveried, chauffeur driven car bearing the most gorgeous bouquet of amaryllis lilies from her enormous garden, which I appreciated so much. After lunch she wanted Mr. Fenzi to take her to the botanical gardens, which I understood was the finest in Europe, where Mr. Fenzi's father was a great horticulturalist. In fact, he had written books on the subject. Mr. Fenzi had planted an avocado tree there six years ago and we were all amazed how it had grown.

One evening I was invited to the Sullivan's for cocktails. Mr. Sullivan is the British vice consul here and utterly charming, married to a chic Italian. Miss Whittacker invited me to tea one afternoon when the other guests were the British Consul's wife, Mrs. Barley, Mrs. Sullivan, Mrs. Fenzi, the padre and later Princess Niscemi arrived with her two daughters. I had met her some time ago but she had in the meantime been in America. She was of the wealthy Hersh family of Philadelphia, very intelligent. When I said goodbye, she invited me to cocktails Saturday evening saying she had some American guests come. A cousin of Miss Whittacker, Manfred Whittacker, was also there having just returned from India and brought back 65 paintings he had done there. He lives most of the time in Rome.

Library of Congress

Mrs. Fenzi, who knows everybody, told me an interesting little anecdote about the Niscemi family. Prince Niscemi's mother was lady-in-waiting to the Queen of Italy at one time (she is now the Queen Mother). When the Prince was a young man the Queen of Romania had been invited to stay with them. She did not want to be entertained by the nobility but asked to have the mafia invited. They were invited, but all came heavily armed and were asked to leave their arms below stairs. Then they danced and had a wonderful time.

The evening of this cocktail party, Lottie and Joe Kyle called to take me to their palace. It was like evoking the times of princely splendor in Sicily as we ascended the long winding marble staircase laid with red carpet. The dining room was decorated with coats of honor and all around the upper walls were paintings of the various kings of Italy. One of the daughters, who was showing us around, pointed out two kings and then added, "and that is the bust of Grandpa Hersh, in the center." Then we were shown the bed where Lord Nelson had slept and a few more rooms where there were treasures worthy of the Louvre. And then came out onto the terrace where Prince and Princess Niscemi were receiving. When I said, "Good evening Prince Niscemi," he quickly said in a friendly way, "Call me Conrad," as he was apparently known to his friends, as a naturalized American.

Their American guests were Mr. and Mrs. Greenfield from Philadelphia. The Kyles, Slutzes and I were the only ones from the consulate among the 80 guests. The others were mostly titled Italians. I knew a few. I immediately tried to think who I might know in Philadelphia and mentioned my artist friend, Ara Lee Gaul, who had done the sketch for me in Bangkok and Mr. Greenfield said he had known her for a long time and even named the street, Spruce, where she lived.

One of the Niscemi daughters wore a dress with the new potato sack look and looked like something out of Vogue. I hadn't seen shows for over a year, but here this is the height of fashion. She designs exquisite jewelry and Mrs. Fenzi tells me her mother is furious that she didn't accept a job with Tiffany. Her father took my hand and admiringly showed

Library of Congress

her the Cavershawn star ruby ring I was wearing that had been made by a Russian and designed with fleur-de-lis and diamonds from my deceased mother's bar pin.

I read in the Foreign Service Journal, the Norbert Anschutz had been assigned to Cairo.

On May 28th I left Palermo by non-stop plane for Rome, then took an express train to the little midget port of Piombino and thence by ferry to Portoferraio, Elba where I went to stay at a small guest house Picchiale, belonging to Colonel Powell West and his wife and recommended by Matilda Sinclair, the social secretary to our Ambassador in Rome. A letter to my sister describes the holiday.

Elba, May 29, 1958

Dearest Mildred,

Well, here I am on this lovely quiet peaceful island of Elba and I love it as I knew I would. When I was at the airport in Palermo, I saw the British vice consul, Mr. Sullivan, who introduced me to Archdean (Inaudible), he was seeing off on my plane. We sat together and had a very pleasant chat. He had come to Palermo at the request of Miss Whittacker to discuss turning the Whittacker chapel over to the diocese as she is the only remaining member of that famous family. He knew, of course, Bishop Rose who was such a comfort to me when Dad died and also old Bishop Chambers at the British embassy church in Paris. He has lived in Florence for years and was returning there. He knew the Countess Biachi where we stayed and Mr. and Mrs. Sutro, friends of Jacqueline Cramer, where I had lunch many years ago. Mr. Sutro had a large key collection and is dead now. Marguerite, his wife, lives in New York.

I made perfect connections on train and ferry and Colonel West was at Portoferraio to meet me. He looked more English than American, although from Nantucket, and was perfectly delightful, as was his wife. His house was renovated with beautiful taste from a 200 year old farm house set in 30 acres of ground the Germans had left in ruins when

Library of Congress

they were there to work the iron mines in 1943. I am the only guest at the moment, but today will arrive Matilda Sinclair to see about converting the Norman peasant house above the Wests' and her cousin, Mrs. Arnold, from Brazil, whose house in Trieste, the Auchinclosses by coincidence now occupy. It once belonged to her and was bought by our State Department.

We had the most interesting conversation over dinner. The Wests are the only Americans living here, but they mentioned Mrs. Simons, American wife of a banker in Beirut and New York, who has bought property here. It is probably Ralph Simons, who was in our National City Bank when we were living in Japan. Others he mentioned were Lord Hastings, who had bought some land from him and will eventually build near. The Duchess of Kent is said to be interested. Also Winston Churchill. They hope, of course, the island will not become too touristy. It is such a quiet charm now. They had staying with them recently Herbert Kubley, author of "Eastern Sicily," the book you so kindly left for me and is going to have an article on Elba published in Holiday in the fall. Then a Mr. Alexander was there writing an article for the Saturday Evening Post.

Colonel West has a very brilliant record. His second wife was the daughter of our Ambassador to England, Mr. Davies. Mrs. West had been married to a Darrell from Bermuda. I knew the name well, a great sailing family. And her daughter had gone to Briar Cliff, my alma mater.

Last evening, when I was asked to sign the guest book, my eyes were immediately attracted to a familiar handwriting, although I had not seen it since my boarding school days. What a thrill to read, Henrietta E. Six. None other than Henrietta Earhart my own Briar Cliff school chum. Her former husband is now married to Ethel Merman. They said that Henrietta was there just a few days ago and had been staying at the Biacchi and now had gone to London. I hope to contact her soon.

This afternoon going to visit Napoleon's two homes and museum. More later.

Library of Congress

At the station Piombino, June 2, 1958.

I have nearly 45 minutes to wait for the train so will tell you more about Elba. It really is the loveliest, quietest, more peaceful place. I most certainly could spend a week there. The island spreads out a lot and there are some beautiful beaches with villas clustered around them, with picturesque towns higher on the mountains. I have become delirious about the scenery and steeped in Napoleonic lore. You know I have always been especially fascinated by the Napoleonic isles. I will be off to St. Helena, next. Napoleon's brief visit to Elba was one moment of historical glory. He ruled for little less than 10 months with a hundred grenadiers and a naval force consisting of one brig. He captivated everyone with his knowledge of his exile kingdom and lavished his administrative genius which had previously organized a huge empire. He accepted his exile on one condition, that his wife and son would join him, but he waited in vain. Empress Marie Louise was busy with General Neipperg, who she later married and the Emperor of Austria held his son, his own grandson, King of Rome, a prisoner in Vienna. The only women who did come were his mother, Letizia, and the young Countess Waluwaska. Other visitors were Napoleon's illegitimate son who left after two days and his beautiful and scandalous sister, Pauline Borghesia, who arrived to head his court in the modest Villa Mulini. On the night she was to give one of her gay parties, her brief apology was, "canceled by destiny." It was in February, 1815 when Napoleon slipped away on the *Inconstant*, passed the British warship, went to Paris to be crowned the second time.

On this island of Elba one became conscious of golden bees, imperial eagles and the letter N. His country villa at San Martino, 2 miles from Portoferraio, is simple, small, infinitely touching like his birth place in Ajaccio, Corsica, the island one could see lying on the horizon. On the ceiling of the salon were painted sentimental symbols of the Empress and himself, a pair of doves tying lover's knots with blue ribbons in their beaks. I learned for the first time that Napoleon's only novel was *Clissona et Eugenie*, an autobiographical love story. The occasional pieces of original furniture were covered in the same blue he

Library of Congress

loved. A little Egyptian room tenderly intended, one supposed, to be a comforting memory of passed glories to a repenting tyrant. After a visit to Napoleon's houses there were no more monuments to see to nag one into activity. It was just like Napoleon once referred to it, "his isle of rest."

Delia Whittacker had given me a note of introduction to her cousin, Hugh Whittacker, an elderly man I was told imbued with spiritualism. He was not at home when I called, but I met his administrator who invited me in to his tiny apartment for a drink near the Whittacker's famous hotel Fonte Napoleone in Poggio, where the guest book included signatures of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. I regretted I did not have time to look up the British Consul's wartime friend, Major Robinson.

When I sailed from Portoferraio this morning at 7:00, I could see for many miles out to sea the Wests' precious pink house perched on the side of the hill. It really had been an ideal place for a peaceful holiday. The train is leaving now so must close.

Love Virginia

As soon as I returned from Elba, I plunged in for preparations for a cocktail party I was having on my upstairs terrace. The dim colored lights from my Moroccan hanging lamps cast a soft glow on the faded ancient tiles and the Bangkok temple bells tingled in the breeze. Princess Niscemi was the first to arrive and raved about the ambiance. I felt very flattered as it was such a far cry from her own palatial home.

A few nights later the Duke d'Belsito and his wife called to take me to the Niscemis for dinner. It was in honor of a Mr. Mund from Seattle, Washington, and his pretty new bride, who were returning to the States aboard the Ile de France. As we entered that romantic old palace, the Duke looked around and said to me, "You know my mother was born in this palace. She was the sister of Prince Niscemi's father.

Library of Congress

Among the other guests was the charming Italian, Mr. De Lucce, director of the American Express. At dinner I was seated to the left of Prince Niscemi and during the course of conversation he mentioned his place in Hyannis Port. So I ask if he knew the Joseph P. Kennedys and, of course, he did, very well. I told him how fascinated Mrs. Kennedy was with the little Sicilian carts and had asked me to send her one for her grandchildren's collection. He said he was going there in September and kindly offered to take it to her. But I thanked him and said it had already been posted. He also knew my brother-in-law's relative, Edgar (Inaudible).

It was a beautiful dinner, but unfortunately, during one of the courses, the pasta slipped from my fork and fell on the front of my blue Thai silk dress. When the Prince saw me struggling to wipe it off, with typical Italian gallantry he reached for his white carnation, that had also been given to all the men for their buttonholes, and gently tucked it in my bodice covering this spot and my embarrassment. Needless to say, I was touched and grateful.

When we left all of the ladies were presented with tiny bouquets of pink roses and jasmine. It had been an unforgettable evening.

A note from London arrived from Henrietta Earhart, my dear Briar Cliff boarding school friend. I had lost touch with her over the years and really didn't know if she was still alive.

"I can't tell you how completely amazed and delighted I was to receive your letter a few days ago. Leora Biachi forwarded it on here where I have taken a tiny flat for a couple of months. I think you were so clever to notice my name in the West book. That is a charming place, isn't it. What an interesting career you have chosen for yourself and how I wish I could have done such a thing instead of wasting my time in such an aimless way. If you find that a trip to London is in the offing, do try and make it before I leave here. We can spend a lot of time catching up for the last 25 years."

Library of Congress

What a wave of memories washed over me as I read it, of the happy times we had together at Briar Cliff and vacations spent with her delightful mother and father in their beautiful 5th Avenue apartment. She was an elegant little girl of privilege.

Also came a card from Audrey Auchincloss saying that they are going on home leave in October and booked on the Saturnia leaving Trieste on October 3 and will come via Palermo and hope to have a glimpse of me there. I was, of course, thrilled at the thought of seeing them again.

Also came a charming letter from Mrs. Kennedy thanking me for the Sicilian cart dated June 11, 1958 from Hyannis Port.

“Dear Mrs. Biddle,

The little donkey cart arrived Mary 23 and was greeted with exclamations of delight and admiration on every side. Thank you very much for your efforts in selecting the adorable toy. I do hope that all goes well with you. We shall be at Eden Rock on the French Riviera during the month of August, and if you are near, please contact us. My deepest appreciation always. Very sincerely yours, Rose Kennedy.”

On July 9, I wrote my sister from Sardinia where I had gone for the July 4th weekend. Jolly Hotel, Cagliari, Sardinia, July 9, 1958.

From the moment I stepped off the ship last Friday we have been on the move, but I could not go to bed tonight knowing the date, our dear Father's birthday, without writing to you for I know what must be in your heart too, today, my dear.

The weather has been pleasant, sometimes hot, but not unbearable. There are six Italians and one other American in the group taking the tour around the island. This is an island of primitive, unspoiled beauty. The scenery is most dramatic. Tall, spiny, reddish mauve rocks rise above green valleys, undiscovered beaches, deserted, rugged, solitude. Some

Library of Congress

of it peopled only by shepherds. Eagles glide silently above the mountains. Human life is glimpsed only briefly. It certainly looks like bandit country. As D.H. Lawrence wrote in his book, "Sea and Sardinia," "After spending six days here, from February 4-10, 1921, Sardinia is an island lost between Europe and Africa belonging to nowhere."

It is indeed like nowhere. It is a blessed wilderness. The people are essentially reserved and introspective and seem becalmed in the past. The women are ferociously beautiful with straight queenly backs. Then their pleated skirts flap at their ankles and their heads are tied with kerchiefs, one end drawn across the mouth. They weave baskets from the tall stalks of the asphodel plant whose blossom are like pale stars and dot the hillside. And they make rugs on hand looms from wool of their own sheep, must sort after. Then saddlebags of beautifully woven and patterns of the characteristic Sardinian colors, rust brown, lemon yellow and pink. They say the Sardinians are probably the most skilled peasant artisans in the Mediterranean. The men, the few and old that are left, are dressed all in black and white like magpies. White drawers, great white sleeves, black waistcoats and gaiters and black stocking cap whose hanging ends bobs like a top. A tassel in the back is called a berrette. With their remote stares, mounted on the tiniest donkeys I have ever seen, and believe exist in the world, they look like Cyclops.

What appealed to me most were the Pisan Romanesque churches, black and white basilicas which we came across all over the island. How wonderfully the Pisans made use of the romantic wildness of the landscape by building on remote crags completely isolated and their austere beauty so perfectly suited the Sardinian characters. Few countries have an ecclesiastical architecture which blends so strikingly into the landscape. What intrigued me most were the "nuraghi," curious remains in various stages of ruins, overgrown with weeds and briars scattered about the island. They were crumbling cone shaped forts rising like derelict castles from the prehistoric period. There is no evidence of mortar so they were supported heaven knows how. They could have served as a refuge for tribes and chieftains, shelter for herds, used as granaries or any number of other things. Nobody seems to agree about their meaning for few reference works exist and authorities are

Library of Congress

constantly contradicting one another. But it is their unfathomable mystery that is one of their great charms.

As we drove around the island we noticed every house we passed bore its DDT spray date in scrolled in black letters like a vaccination, a joyful attestation of immunity from malaria. For centuries throughout the whole of Sardinia, malaria worked its way through generations of Sardinians leaving them sick and inert until 1945 when American doctors subsidized by the Rockefeller Foundation set to work and completely eradicated it by 1952.

We spent a night in the Jolly Hotel in the hill village of Nuoro and heard we were the first Americans that had come there. A stupendous view could be had of Mt. Ortoben

which towered above Nuoro. Saved by tourism by its inaccessibility it was the birth place of Grazia Deledda, who won a Nobel Prize in 1926. She wrote fictional romances and her novels were interwoven with unusual anecdotes and a great deal of untapped and fascinating local history which gave Sardinia a place in literary.

Cagliari, the capital, had a museum housing a most important collection of bronzes, skillfully wrought and designed with artistry showing how highly developed was their civilization. It was in the prehistoric period Sardinia gained its greatest influence.

Alghero, the walled harbor, with its towers and bastions, looking like a transplanted port of Morocco or Spain, was a popular bathing resort on the sea, and the most cosmopolitan town we visited. I learned that the coral that Naples sells comes from this place and is bought there. Here we stayed in a CSIT hotel, a group of these unpretentious, yet attractive government hotels, like the Jolly, made remote, wonderful stopovers possible.

We took a small boat from Palau, little more than a stone jetty, to the island of Maddalena, where we stayed two night and from there drove across the stone causeway to the tiny island of Caprera, where we visited Garibaldi's home, now a museum. Maddalena, lying

Library of Congress

between Corsica and Sardinia had a scrubbed look that comes from being a naval base and is responsible for the beautiful upkeep of the museum and the gardens of the island estate, Casa Bionca. Giuseppe Garibaldi, the hero of Italian unification, was born July 4, 1807 at Nice, which was then Italian. He retired here in 1955 at the age of 48 after his fighting days were over and tortured by rheumatism to write a novel. The high point in his career came in May, 1860 when he landed with his red-skirted army of a thousand to liberate all of Sicily, Southern Italy and defeated the Napoleon force. A daughter, 94, still lives in a part of the original home. The rooms are kept just as he left them, with revered objects even the saddle of his horse, Marsala, named after the landing place of the thousand. Hanging on the wall was a calendar bearing the date, June 2, 1882, the day of his death. We walked down a neat gravel drive to his granite tomb flanked by those of his wife and children, under olive trees and among rich clusters of geraniums. It all had great charm and dignity. For an intelligent traveler it is a rewarding island. Love Virginia

Twenty years later, while writing this chapter in Bendenot on the island of Majorca, I met one person, Prince Gilles di Poliolo, cousin of the former King of Italy, who did not agree that Garibaldi was a hero because he told me that his grandfather and many of the nobility preferred Sicily to remain an independent kingdom and did not want to become part of Italy. But, when they rebelled, Garibaldi confiscated their land and striped them of their titles so they fled to France, where he was born.

After I arrived back from Sardinia, things began to happen. The minute I got home a note came from Lottie Kyle saying they were giving a dinner that evening for the Memmingers, who had just arrived from Naples. He is the Supervising Consul General at the embassy in Rome. So went to the hairdresser and had my hair cut and permed and felt marvelous. Margaret Hussman gave a cocktail party for them and included the new German Consul and his wife, British Consul and vice consul, and wives, and new Panamanian Consul and Prince and Princess Niscemi, and some others. And I am entertaining them on Sunday evening.

Library of Congress

Mr. Memminger and I began to talk about Bangkok and he told me he had relieved Norbert Anschutz in Athens when he went there and was a great friend of Ambassador Peurifoy. So I told him all about his terrible tragedy and showed him photos of the funeral and of the Anschutzes when they departed Bangkok. Then he noticed my autographed photograph of President Truman and exclaimed, "Oh, I see you have a photo of Harry." I explained the Trumans had been friends of the family for some time and they had always been very nice to me.

I was terribly happy to have the good news that I had been promoted to class FSS-11 and had waited so long for this decided to celebrate by giving a party for the entire visa section, locals and Americans, about 50, including spouses. They all came, even the Consul's chauffeur, Luigi and his dear little wife. Marcelle L'Conte sent me a congratulatory note from the Embassy in Paris which was a pleasant surprise.

At a cocktail party at the Niscemis I met Miss Jebb, whose father was British Ambassador at Paris. A sweet young girl who said she was on French Vogue.

Mrs. Kennedy wrote on June 6, 1958 that the grandchildren were all so delighted with the little Sicilian cart, would I please send another addressed to her daughter, Mrs. Sargent Shriver in Chicago. So, I did with pleasure.

On July 22 there was a staff meeting announcing that all local leaves had been canceled until further notice. Three hundred people were being evacuated to Rome from the Near East, due to the Suez situation. A few days later on a Saturday afternoon, Joe Kyle came to see me to say he had just received a call from Mr. Waterman in the personnel section in the embassy in Rome requesting that one American be sent over to assist them with the evacuation. So, I was the one selected to go and must leave Sunday evening by plane in order to report for work on Monday morning. The maximum time there would be for two months. So I hurriedly packed. "Flying Rome Sunday evening, detailed embassy two

Library of Congress

months, assist Near East evacuation, inform Charlie, writing, Love V.” was my cable to my sister.

Our embassy in Rome fronts the famous Via Veneto, a historic building on a historic site, once known as Palaco Margarete for Margarete Disaboiy, the first Queen of Italy who once owned it. When I approached it Monday morning it looked like a day nursery. There masses of children of all ages, sizes and sex and their fond Mommies swarming around, the newly setup evacuation office to the right. I thought, “Well, this is it.” I was assigned to Mr. Rosenthal and my particular job was to type messages, run them off on the hecto and route them. The code room was air-conditioned and all were on continuous alert duty. Code clerks stayed at post 24 hours at a time undertaking the arduous, delicate task of decoding urgent, Top Secret telegrams, long and complicated. My hours were from 4:00 to midnight.

At first the hours were a bit of a shock, but really didn't mind because it gave me the day free to look for a place to stay. All the hotels around the embassy were fully booked with tourists and evacuees. Rome was seething with Americans and one heard more English than Italian and one wondered who was at home. Matilda Sinclair very kindly suggested going out to Pairoli, the lovely residential section where she lived. And, I did see a charming little hotel, the Rivioli. Each room with a terrace and they had an excellent lunch there. But they were fully booked. I finally found the perfect place, a pension just a few minutes from the embassy called La Residenza. It was beautifully furnished and the bathroom covered with 16th century tiles. It had been recommended by the embassy and the guide I had in Rome several years ago, Lea Lelli, who had invited me to dinner one evening. Eleanor Roosevelt had written in her column, “Eleanor Roosevelt Day,” headed “The Countess Knows Her Home. On Friday, March 13, in Rome, my granddaughter, Nina, and I went out at 9:00 with Countess Lea Lelli, the most interesting guide one could have. She describes the history of Rome as if she had lived through each century and

Library of Congress

experienced each conquest and I can think of no one who could have given me a more interesting bird's eye view of the city as a group on different hills." This is all too true.

In the evening I dined with her and she gave me a list of recent archaeological discoveries to see here and I would have loved chatting with her longer, but had to get on to the Memmingers' party. She introduced me to her secretary, a young attractive American girl, Miss Rippel. It was the only evening she could see me because she was leaving for the Dolomites and would be gone a month, and gave me her address if I should come that way.

Just as I went into the Memmingers' party, Mrs. Jernigan arrived and said she had just seen the Ambassador off to the airport for his month's holiday. So that meant that her husband was now Charg#. I was delighted to see Margaret Hussman who had come over from Palermo for the visa conference and returning early the next morning. I was so pleased to see Mrs. Fritzlan, the nice English wife of David. They had been so nice to me when I had arrived at the legation in Tangier. But the poor dear said she was on holiday in Jerusalem with her two-year old son and now pregnant with another child and English nurse, when she received the news from her husband, who is now Charg# in Baghdad, to evacuate and left from Jerusalem and never returned to Baghdad again to see him.

I was beginning to gather bits of news here and there from various people about their experiences. When I thanked Mr. Memminger for the lovely party on leaving and mentioned what an attractive apartment they had, he said, "I will trade it for your little house any day." "All right, that would suit me beautifully," I said.

Margaret asked me to go to dinner afterwards and we went to a trattoria in a pretty little piazza where a fountain was playing and the moon rose over an old church.

My hours were eventually changed. I was now working from 8:30am to any old hour, but get paid for overtime, and was pleased because I was now on the heart of things. My job was to go out to the airport when flights came in, check the passports of the evacuees,

Library of Congress

assign them to their respective hotels, then come back to the embassy and type the list of arrivals to send to the Department. Among the refugees were many pregnant women who had to be sent on to the United States.

It is quite exciting watching the planes soaring in and out bringing the evacuees to safe haven Rome as it is called here. The chartered flights had been doing an airlift surpassing that of the Berlin one. Mr. Rosenthal gives a briefing in the embassy theater to every plane load that arrives. And when I listened I marveled at the wonderful organization, coordination of everything. Facilities were made for the children to play at the playgrounds of the embassy while the American officers' wives took their Mums to look for apartments. Always there were enormous buses drawn up in front of the embassy loaded with children to take them to a beach club. There was a wonderful cartoon in nearly every office in the embassy of an American family showing films to their friends of a demonstration abroad and the caption underneath it read, "An we took refuge in so many embassies our savings and hotel bills were simply fantastic!"

I kept meeting people I had known before. One day a woman came into the office to see Mr. Rosenthal, the evacuation officer, who was young, very nice and easy to work for. We both stared at each other and finally realized we knew each other in Bangkok where her husband had been with USIS and later transferred to Baghdad. She then asked me to come to her hotel for a drink that evening and I was eager to hear all about what happened in Iraq. She told me haltingly, looking away with tears nearly coming to her eyes, about the panicky exodus. She said it all happened quite suddenly, but felt a coup would come some time. They attacked the British embassy first and then burned their USIS. The Iraqis seemed to want to keep friends with the Americans and have cooperated very well. She planned to go to a resort on the Adriatic coast.

The next hot spot mentioned is Tripoli. Then they expect to evacuee Amman and Beirut.

Library of Congress

Staying in my hotel was Mrs. Gallman, the wife to our Ambassador to Baghdad with her two sons, the older one from Yale, the younger one from Berkshires. They had just come out in June to be with their parents for the summer holidays and only there a month when evacuated. They asked me to join them for dinner one evening and we had a very interesting conversation. A telegram was received from her husband in the embassy so touching I showed it to Mrs. Gallman and could see tears in her eyes as she read it, as they were in mine when I first read it, for it was such a tribute. "Messages are now coming back to us from our evacuees. Overtone of all is one of highest regard and friendly reception on arrival Rome and for smooth, intelligent handling of hotel accommodations followed by availability of all essential means to facilitate adjustment to temporary life in Italy. As I put these messages from our evacuees together, I get a clear picture not only about staffing, planning, administrative and executive skills, but the warm understanding appreciation of the hundred and one things that would trouble and preoccupy our wives and dependents. From their husbands and fathers in Baghdad, deepest gratitude. Gallman." He later became Director of the Foreign Service.

On August 1 it was so frightfully hot one became almost stupefied and the embassy closed in the afternoon. I stayed in the office to allow Mr. Rosenthal to take the afternoon off. He had been at this since June 26 and was doing a very good job on this evacuation program, but was beginning to get awfully tired, and the heat, of course, has been most debilitating. It was just like Bangkok weather, but one cannot dress exactly like Bangkok, unfortunately, because Rome is a sophisticated city. I only hope they continue to keep me busy so I can stay on here. I feel I have been given a wonderful opportunity and I am making the most of it in every way.

The Jernigans gave a cocktail party in their garden for 500 of the evacuees. I recalled under these gardens were once catacombs where Christians took refuge from the Romans, and heard that Ambassador Zellerbach, a wine connoisseur, tried to keep his wine there but it didn't work. It was too cold and too damp.

Library of Congress

In chatting with the Memmingers, I like so much, Mr. Memminger said if I could not get home for Christmas I could spend Christmas with them in Rome. Then Mrs. Memminger said, "I think you should get transferred to Rome." Of course, that was what I was trying to do. I overheard Mr. Rosenthal tell Mr. Memminger that I was doing a wonderful job, which was music to my ears.

Towards the end of the evening I met a Mrs. Simmons, whose husband was with MAAG, who invited me to their place for a swim and supper Sunday evening. They lived some distance from Rome in a new section of enormous modern apartments which surrounded a beautiful swimming pool and tennis courts. From the terrace of their fifth floor apartment we had a gorgeous view of Rome with St. Peters towering above all.

One of the other guests was an American, Miss McFarland, who lived in Chevy Chase, just outside Washington and whose father was in the Navy. Mr. Waterman, chief of personnel at the embassy, who lived just below, joined us for a drink. They spoke of the famous Palio in Siena that was being held this Saturday. It takes place twice a year and attracts thousands from all over the world and something I had always wanted to see. Although it was late to get tickets I began to try for Ruth Clark, Mr. Memminger's secretary, said she would go with me.

Mr. Martelli who had been so obliging at the CIAT office in Palermo called their office in Florence and got two very good seats for us. It had seemed hopeless because the embassy said they were all sold out in Rome. But, I waited until the last minute to pick them up because if something came in on the evacuees I couldn't have gone. But luckily nothing came in.

We took the most marvelous, deluxe, all air-conditioned, supper rapido for Florence. Then taxied to a pension for which I had the greatest affection and it was nice to have (Inaudible) at the desk say, "Yes, I remember you," having been there just last September with my sister. We had been given the most enormous room with a beautiful view over

Library of Congress

the campanile and Duomo from our window. Later in the cool of the evening walked up to see the Duomo and thrilled to see that the scaffolding, Mildred and I had seen around the campanile had been removed and it had been beautifully cleaned. Then we walked down to the Arno and stood on the San Trinita bridge and looked over towards the Ponte Vecchio. I remember so well when here in 1947, everyone lamented that the Trinita, the most beautiful bridge of all had been bombed. Then they planned to rebuild it just as it was and to see that it had been accomplished was another thrill. We had a delicious dinner at Santini.

The bus picked us up early the next morning to take us to Siena via San Gimignano where we had lunch after seeing the little town with its many towers rising into the glorious sky of Tuscany. We arrived in Siena in the heart of Italy's Chianti's country and one of Europe's perfectly preserved medieval towns, about 2:30pm. It was just about an hour's drive from San Gimignano.

We had perfectly wonderful seats right in the second row in front of the starting place where they let the ropes down for that made race. The race lasts less than two minutes but the parade goes on for two hours. The setting alone was enough to thrill one. The beautiful Piazza de Campo where the Palio is performed looked like an immense basket of flowers. Ancient mansions stand all around it and most beautiful of all is the town hall with its graceful lofty tower called Tour del Mangia. Byron said it was "the noblest town in Italy." The balconies were decorated with red velvet bunting and flags of all colors were flapping everywhere.

The bell in the tower tolled out to announce the procession. A historical pageant, an allegorical parade. Silver bugles and drums played the traditional march of the Palio. Bells tolled from all of the churches and the Mangia tower. The participants are dressed in colorful medieval costumes. One of the highlights of the Palio are the expert manipulators of the contrade (district banners), a flag twirling game. Two men stop just in front of our box and to the beat of the drum, cleverly twisted and turned their large banners around

Library of Congress

their bodies and between their legs. Then toss them high in the air. As each flag starts to descend the folds gracefully unfurl against the blue sky and before it touches the ground it is skillfully caught only with the left hand while he salutes with his right to the delight and applause of the crowd.

Then came the horseback riders bearing the colors of the contrade. Each group seems to have been selected from the animal kingdom. Paradoxically enough, the snail contrade was winner of a recent Palio. The wildly excited horses unleashed extraordinary emotion in the race. The rider who started off first kept ahead the entire time until he made the last difficult turn when he fell off, but his horse kept going and won the race.

With the sun setting and the swallows flying over the tall tower and medieval palaces with their gay red velvet hangings, it had been a spectacle to behold.

When I reached Rome, I went to the train at midnight to meet an evacuee from Amman. She had known the Peurifoy's when posted in Greece, so we immediately formed a mutual admiration society. I had to give up my room while gone, but luckily was given another, the guest room of the proprietor on the very top floor. It was air conditioned and quiet, but the telephone was down on the next floor. The Residenza is so crowded. Poor Mrs. Dorsey and her daughters, evacuees from Beirut, where her husband was director of USIS, had to move out. She was most attractive and lived just a block from my sister in Georgetown. Her two daughters were very accomplished. Caroline, the older, and Charolette the younger modeled for Pouchi.

After communion on Sundays I would often go to a little English tearoom I found at the foot of the Spanish Steps named for the 17th century residence of the Spanish Ambassador to the Vatican and decorated by a sunken large fountain by Bernini, in quiet surroundings where I could have a real American breakfast of orange juice, waffles, crispy bacon with hot American coffee. It was the Babbington Tea Room and faced the Keats Shelley house, where later I would browse over all of their mementoes in a tiny room where he died at the

Library of Congress

age of 26 with the famous painter Joseph Severn beside him. Later I visited the Protestant cemetery where they were buried. (I always had an insatiable desire to see where famous people were buried.)

The next evening I went with Gabrielle Metcalfe and her mother, now posted in Rome, to hear "La Traviata" in the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla. It is considered to have the largest stage in the world. It was a wonderful experience sitting in those 1700 year old ruins and listening to the most lovely voices from this charming opera. It was so chilly during the intermission that hot coffee with brandy was passed around in bottles with straws.

I was so glad to discover so much of Rome could be seen by night when it was cool and I was free. One evening I wandered through the Baths of Diocletian, through the museum alone with my guide books thoroughly enjoying myself. It was heavenly to stroll under a full moon through the gardens designed by Michelangelo where a fountain was playing, goldfish swimming, surrounded by the cloisters of the monks. To know Rome at all, you must feel it, then only will you begin to see it.

Another evening I took the CIT tour to Tivoli where the fabulous fountains of the Villa D'Este were illuminated and it was romantic beyond words wondering in those Renaissance gardens. At one time the composer Liszt lived there and wrote, "The Fountains of Villa D'Este."

After a late breakfast one Sunday at my favorite Babbington Tea Room, all I wanted to do was to find a cool spot and read a book as it had been 2:00am when I left the embassy after typing the list of evacuees. We had reached the thousand and one mark by now, but the refugee exodus was far from over. So, I walked up to the Borghese Gardens, sat down for a while to enjoy the magnificent panorama of Rome, bathed in the hot afternoon sun. Then remembered that I had heard of a charming restaurant, Casino Baladier in the Pincian Hills, but as it was 4:00pm the solitary waiter was resting his head on the table and there was not a soul on the terrace. So I just had a gin and tonic and a bag of potato

Library of Congress

chips, who had aroused himself to serve me, about the history of the place. He brought me a card with the explanation. It had been originally built for the King of Rome, the unhappy Aiglain, which interested me very much as I had followed Napoleon's family from France to Corsica to Elba and now here.

I returned another day to visit the Borghese museum where the aura of the Princess Borghese, the ravishing sister of Napoleon, Pauline Bonaparte, was potent still. Marvelous works of sculpture by Bernini. One I loved was of Apollo and Daphne as she was being turned into a tree, done when he was only 18. There were also wonderful painting by Del Sarto, Titian and many others.

I had read in a good little book called Roamin the palace of the president could be visited on Thursdays and suddenly remembered that an Italian I had known in our USIS office in Palermo was now a protocol officer to the president. So I rang him and he met me at the palace gates when my taxi drew up and kissed my hand while all the guards and flunkies around saluted him. An attractive gentleman in the thirties and it was so nice to have this personally conducted tour. There were such beautiful rooms, each done in different colors and appropriately named the Japanese Room, the Gold Room, the Blue Room, etc. As we looked out of the window at the gardens below, Serge said, "That is where the receptions are held in the summer and white swans are added to the pools when a party is given." It had formerly been the summer home for the Popes and served as a royal palace after 1870 and now the home of the president. Serge said he could live in the palace if he wanted to but preferred not to as he would have to pass the guards every time he came and went with guests. So he had more privacy living apart. He thought it was the most beautiful palace he had seen in Europe, mentioning the ones in Sweden and England. The candelabras were enormous made of Bohemia crystal, beautiful marble topped tables, rare marble mantelpieces. One of the eleven of ceilings were beautiful paintings.

When we finished the tour and walked toward the gate, the changing of the guard was just about to take place and we could hear the beat of the drums and the band approaching

Library of Congress

from outside. As a special favor they allowed me to see it from inside the palace while all of the others had to wait outside. The glorious picturesque guards with their shiny helmets, long horse tails falling from them down their backs, bright swords held in their white-gloved hands, white coats with blue trousers and red stripes, added a touch of the old monarchy to the palace. I came away feeling like Cinderella.

One noon, Mr. Rosenthal said I could take a longer lunch hour if I wished. So I dashed over to the Fontana Sisters near the Spanish Steps, just to get an idea of what sort of cocktail dresses they were showing. But the most interesting thing I saw was a perfectly enormous autographed photograph of Margaret Truman and her husband in her wedding dress they had designed.

On September 2, I received a letter from my Swiss friend, Jacqueline Cramer saying: "I am leaving September 1 for Ischia where I shall take the cure until the 20th and will stay in care of Duke Cameening l'Algarada, Porto Ischia. It would be great fun if you could come over, fly over, sail over, swim over, some day." I answered by saying that she probably remembers that I had been longing to come to Ischia for ages and hoped to get there before she leaves. I still don't know when I can leave. Mr. Rosenthal said they must have someone cleared for classified material, so that is the reason I am not be so really replaced. But, I hope they find someone soon because I don't wait too late to go to the lakes and find them frozen over. We already have had a few down pours.

One Sunday I took a bus with several others to see Hadrian's famous Rock Villa, especially interesting to me because the exquisite mosaics in the president's palace came from there. In the afternoon I made a tour of the Castella Romani, the Roman castle, situated on the Albani Hills. Tiny villages each with it peculiar charm. Our first stop was at Frascati where the famous white wine of Italy is made, to An Ariccia and then on to Genzano, arriving about 6:00 in the evening at Castel Gandolfo, a pretty little village on Lake Albano, the Pope's summer palace, where I heard we were going to see the Pope. I quickly bought two rosaries to be blessed as we walked up the hill with hundreds of others.

Library of Congress

We passed inside the gates where the guards were standing on either side carrying their medieval swords bearing jaunty black tams on their heads and in their gay uniforms that haven't changed since the 14th century. There must have been about 3,000 in the courtyard. When the Pope appeared all in white, such a cheer went up. An Italian girl kept shouting, "Vita, vita," which meant "long live the Pope." An American standing beside me kept repeating, "Oh, Holy Father, Oh, Holy Father." And another behind me was heard to say, "Look at his beautiful hands," as he blessed the crowd over and over again. After 15 minutes the door of his room was opened and he disappeared. It was a wonderful and most unexpected experience. He was Pope Pius XII, now 84 years old. The one with whom I had a private audience with Mildred and Charlie in 1934 was Pope Pius XI.

When I returned to the La Residenza, I found a message that the consulate in Venice called to say a Mrs. Wright, with her son and mother, would be arriving in the morning on the 7:23 train. The embassy car picked me up at 6:00am and I discovered she was the wife of the Charg# in Amman. When she heard I was from Palermo, immediately mentioned what a good job Mr. Keeley's son was doing, who had just arrived there.

Mr. Rosenthal announced on September 4 that the security needed our office as it was theirs originally and he was going back to his old job of management. So, my tour of duty would be over as of Monday evening. I plan to leave Tuesday morning for Milan and the Lakes and then on to Verona, Padua and Ravenna and hoped to get up to the smallest republic in the world, San Marino. Then back to Rome and take the train to Naples and go over to Ischia for a few days and visit with Jacqueline Cramer before taking the postali back to Palermo.

Mrs. Fenzi had come over to Rome to see her daughter for a few days and it was good to see her and have news from there. I had experienced one prolonged interesting break in the routine of office work in Palermo, but also looked forward to returning to my little house and garden and Pena.

Library of Congress

The next morning I left on that super duper train to Milan, the same one Ruth Clark and I had taken to Florence. The trip to the Lakes was delightful. First went to Lake Maggiore and never have I seen such enormous dahlias in the garden and I had a delicious lunch of trout from the lake at the Regina Hotel in Stresa. We crossed over to Isolabella and it lives up to its name that was chosen to honor Isabella, Countess Borronio. It was Count Vitaliano Borronio who made it into a luxurious residence in the 17th century. It had originally been just a flat rock with a church and a few cottages. (Later at Ischia, Jacqueline told me she almost married one of the Borronio family.) Now the huge palace is a richly furnished museum. Then on to Lake Como which sparkled like a three-pointed star and had tea at a hotel where I should love to return and stay one day, the Villa D'Este. It was so beautiful and so romantic. At Lake Garda, I heard it was the only lake that was not misty.

The next morning I was off on another bus tour to Verona with the courtyard of Juliet's balcony is still imbued with romance, and on to Padua where I learned that St. Anthony of Padua was neither a Paduan nor even an Italian. He was born in Lisbon in 1195 and christened Ferdinand, but inspired such love among so many that the Paduans erected in his honor one of the most sublime basilicas in Christendom and I found it more impressive than ever because of Donatello's celebrated sculptures and exquisite frescos. We stayed at the only first-class hotel in town, the Storione. It couldn't have been much older and still been considered first-class, but I loved it.

The next morning I dashed to a church to see some marvelous mosaics and became so enthralled and missed my bus to San Marino, but fortunately there was another one at noon, a local one that stopped at several little villages. When people got off they were carrying all kinds of funny things. One woman threw a mattress over her shoulder and carried it like this as she walked up one of the hills.

Library of Congress

Although San Marino is a republic, it is like a toy kingdom situated on very steep hills with gorgeous view. I had an excellent lunch at the hotel, Tre Pen...

...man with elaborate camera equipment who said he was with Burton Holmes and Warner Brothers. When I got back to Rimini I had a walk along the beach, but wouldn't care to come to the Adriatic coast for a holiday, although very inexpensive.

When I arrived at Naples and was checking in at the Royal Hotel I saw Mrs. Hall, the dear mother of Max Hall. She was spending her last night there as she was sailing the next day for the States and I think she was feeling very sad about leaving Naples. Max was going to administrative school in the Department and transferred to Iceland where she would not be going. I suggested that we go to a German restaurant I had heard was excellent and have some good German beer and some wieners. Then, afterwards, from the roof of the Royal we watched the fireworks from the castle just across from the hotel. They were the most gorgeous I have ever seen.

The next morning I took the boat for Ischia. Jacqueline had reserved a room for me at the Marimare Costello, just under the shadow of the old Arganase castle at Point Ischia. A perfect location directly beside the sea and very comfortable and reasonable and the food was good. The sea bathing was delicious. Jacqueline was taking the cure so I could only see her after 4:00, we would meet for dinner. She knew all of the restaurants so she would go into the kitchen and select what we were to have.

One day we took a trip in a boat around the island stopping at San Angelo where we took another little boat over to some Roman baths. It was amusing to see some people lying like mummies buried in the radio active sand. It was such fun being with Jacqueline who knew the island so well. I found her more beautiful than ever and so intelligent and charming. She said she was planning to fly to India to work with the Red Cross there. I found her not at all interested in the recent wedding of the Eden girl and the Berreli chap

Library of Congress

who were married in that little village where his family sold dresses and suits, etc. in a shop we passed.

I left the island about 4:00 in the afternoon and looked back at what is called the greenest island in Italy because it is almost entirely terraced in vineyards interspersed with groves of citrus fruit years, figs, palms and olive and orchards of peach and mandarin. The lofty umbrella pines and architecture of the villas with their white, washed, flat fronts and iron barred windows, reminded me of Morocco.

I arrived in Naples about 6:00pm and had a bit at Kafloss, a popular restaurant there. Then, down to board the postali. I would have preferred to fly, but was over-weight for the plane. My Italian holiday over.

When I arrived the next morning at Palermo, as I was going down the gangplank I heard someone call, "Virginia" and was delighted to see little Joy Pole. She had come in the consulate car with Andrea to meet me and brought me home giving me the news en route that the Herdecks had been transferred to Naples. When I reached my little house, Pena came running out with opened arms.

I went immediately to the consulate and was warmly welcomed by everyone. When I went in to speak to Mr. Keeley, he said, "I was sorry I couldn't accept your sister's invitation in Washington, but I had to go into the hospital and then out to California." Then added, "I heard you had gone to Rome to say nice things to the evacuees. You must have liked that." Young Mrs. Keeley had arrived from Amman with her two children and were moving into the Auchincloss apartment and had my Pena help them for a few days, whom they highly praised.

I invited the Keeleys for luncheon on October 15 and Louise Keeley said her husband, Bob, may arrive from Amman if he could catch a Navy flight from Beirut. So we all waited with great anticipation and he did arrive and come to lunch with his mother, father and

Library of Congress

wife. So, it was an exciting family reunion. He was perfectly delightful, very good looking with a nice clean cut face.

I was very sorry to hear of Pope Pius XII's death, having so recently been blessed by him, also the death of Mary Roberts Reinhardt at the age of 82. I remembered so well the day I met her with her son, Alan, at the Eaton's Dude Ranch in Wyoming and she autographed her book which I was reading.

On October 10th, an OM (operation memorandum) from the Department arrived saying I was assured of receiving my travel orders in time to arrive home for Christmas and my desire for a protocol job would be considered at the time of assignment by the Department, which pleased me very much.

Margaret Abell, who I had known in Washington, came through Palermo with a friend and they completely convinced me I should fly home via jet. The schedule goes into effect the middle of October. At first I thought it sounded a bit frightening, but Miss Canyon said, "These planes have had more tests than any other." So, I thought probably I should and would be quite an exciting experience.

Almost mid-November. Pena left one morning for her home in Castelloammare to obtain a legal separation from her husband and came back that evening looking rather haggard, but so relieved because she had obtained it. She had relations in Brooklyn and Utica, New York and we were trying to get her a visa for the United States. On December 9, I received my travel orders and the news I was being transferred to Stockholm as citizenship and passport assistant. I was, of course, pleased to have the travel orders, but didn't know whether to be pleased with the assignment, preferring warm climates. But Pena was delighted because she does not like hot climates and said, "Senora, I will follow you anywhere but darkest Africa."

Shortly after the news came, the Auchinclosses passed through on the Vocanyia and on home leave from Trieste and due to return. Mr. Auchincloss told me Mr. Bonbright

Library of Congress

had been transferred from Lisbon and was to be the Ambassador in Stockholm. I have never seen a couple with such devoted friends. Nearly all of the diplomatic corps and high officials were aboard drinking champagne with them. They were taking their Italian maid and said they hoped she would stay forever with them. And I had the same feeling about Pena. Audrey's last words to me were, "We will probably see each other some time in Georgetown," not dreaming that those words would come true later in life.

Then the parties began. The Marquise Casterelli, who everyone called Emily, invited me to cocktails one evening. She is president of the Italo-American Association and knows everyone as she has lived in Palermo for 30 years. Her other guests were four Italian women and one Italian man, Marquis Gagolo, a great archaeologist who was to have an article in the National Geographic soon. Henrico Elles, her constant companion was also there. He invited us to his place after for dinner. It was great fun.

One day Henrico took me to a place where I bought a pair of real ceramic pineapples, symbols of hospitality, the last purchase I made for my little house.

Louise Keeley invited me to Luckaprese for lunch with her mother-in-law and Mrs. Barley, the wife of the British Consul. They were being transferred to Bremen and invited me to visit them there for they were to have a lovely villa.

One Sunday I had tea with the Duke and Duchess d'Belcito in their charming apartment. He was the Consul for Norway, Denmark and Sweden, so I was interested in what he could tell me about that country. Their apartment was filled with priceless antiques. The Duke showed me around and pointed out six de Monti plates that were given to his mother by the King of Italy. The others are all in the museum in Naples. It is the museum I want most to see the next time I go to Naples where all of the famous de Monti is.

Miss Whittacker invited me once again to Moufettino for lunch before I left. The zero hour was fast approaching and Pena hoped to have her papers in order to sail December 30. I

Library of Congress

had been advised to take the postali over to Naples and the train to Rome just in case the airport was closed down as it sometimes is this time of year. So I did, in the pouring rain.

I was so touched that Henrico von Elles and Emily Casterelli had come to the ship in the down pour bearing long stemmed red roses.

I had sent my sister a hurried note on September 13 hoping to reach her in Washington before leaving for New York where she was to meet me to say that I was now leaving Rome by a DC plane and joining the jet in Paris as jets were not flying from Rome except on Saturdays because they claimed the noise at that time disturbed the eternal city and hoped to be in New York on schedule Christmas Eve to attend the midnight eve service with her, and I was.

Stockholm, March 7, 1959-May 26, 1961

This is a letter written to my sister: Grand Hotel, Stockholm, Saturday, March 7, 1959, 10:30pm

Just a line before going to bed to say I have finally arrived at my destination. When I got to the airport in Copenhagen this afternoon, I was greeted with the news that my plane for Stockholm would be delayed, so I actually arrived there at 6:15pm and there was no one to meet me. I didn't think too much about that with all the changes, but when I check in at the Grand Hotel, I thought it strange to be told my reservations had been canceled several days ago. So, I phoned the embassy, it was closed being Saturday and the Marine Guard on duty knew nothing about my arrival. By this time I was beginning to wonder if I had been assigned to Stockholm after all. Eventually I was connected with Mr. Persons the administrative officer who explained that he had sent someone to meet me but they were misinformed about my arrival time. He said they were to have taken me directly to the apartment assigned to me where the frig should have been filled with food. But, it was finally decided that I should stay the night at the hotel. I was just as glad, for I am sure I would have felt terribly forlorn on my first night going into a strange new apartment

Library of Congress

all alone and sitting down to a glass of milk on the kitchen table. As it was, I freshened up and went into the dining room which was gay with music, flowers and candles on the table and had a delicious dinner and a most exquisite and happy to be in such charming surroundings. I was given a nice single room but with one of those European type small semi-type bathtubs, but knew it was only for one night. I enquired about services at the Anglican church tomorrow thinking I would go as usual at 8:30am, but an English elevator boy who said he used to sing in the choir there spoke up immediately and said, "Oh, EVERYONE will be at the 11:00 service, including the Queen and diplomatic corps." I decided to sleep on it. It is late so will say, "good night" and continue this tomorrow. Love Virginia

Sunday, March 8, 1959

It was clear, cold and bright as I went to church this morning to attend my usual 8:30 services at the Anglican church of St. Peter and St. Siegfried and there admired the most beautiful stain glass window in memory of Margaret, first wife of the present King of Sweden, who died in 1920 and who was also English, as is his present wife, Louise, Lady Mountbatten, sister of Lord Louis Mountbatten.

On a knoll, not far away, stood our American embassy, located near the Norwegian and British embassies. The residence, now occupied by our American Ambassador, Bonbright, was nearby. The front lawn beautifully sloping down to the water's edge. Sidney Schuller, consul of the visa and citizenship section, called for me with the keys to the apartment I was to have in the government furnished quarters in a modern apartment building at 15 Oxenstierngotten. The name intrigued me and I was to learn that Oxenstiern was the steadfast, brilliant, loyal chancellor of Gustav II and when the King died in 1632, he became the regent of Gustav's daughter, the romantic Christina, then eight years old, who abdicated in 1654. Many of the staff lived in this building.

Library of Congress

My apartment was number 32 on the third floor and it was a pleasant surprise to find a girl I had known in Bangkok who was of Polish origin, Elinor Kaienicki, and was a secretary to the Agricultural Attach#. The building had an elevator and there was storage space for trunks on the top floor and in the basement where there was also a laundry room with electric washing machine and dryer and several vacuums for the tenants.

The apartment had a pretty aquamarine tiled bathroom where I was pleased to see had a full length bathtub. It was furnished in Danish modern with curtains of chartreuse and darkest blue. I was very lucky that there was an extra bedroom with its own frig and lavatory and separate entrance where I could put up Pena, my Italian maid who was to follow me, who had said pending my transfer from Palermo, "Senora, I will follow you anywhere except darkest Africa."

I had no bills to pay except for the telephone. My air and steamer freight had arrived so I could unpack my blankets, although it didn't seem as cold as I expected due to the fact, I learned later, that the Gulf Stream was in the Atlantic Ocean. A portion of my effects, including my pony cart had to be stored in Genoa for two years. The apartment was located near a shopping center called Konsun where lots of fruits, vegetables and tinned things could be found. And, it was just about ten or fifteen minutes from town where the shops were filled with beautiful things. I felt fortunate to be ensconced in a Danish modern furnished apartment so quickly and that it was within walking distance to the embassy and especially when I heard it was most difficult to find places to live here.

I reported to work on Monday morning. The offices were also furnished with functional furniture and there was a tiny desk, so compact, obviously reserved for me as consular assistant to Sidney Schuller, a very pleasant person whose owl-like eyes behind dark horn rimmed glasses impressed me. My duties were to register American citizens, issue and renew their passports, report births and deaths and be in charge of the classified files. My Swedish colleague was a pretty girl called Aagot. All of the Swedish girls had a certain

Library of Congress

delicate feminine refinement that was very appealing. The hours were from 8:30am to 5:00pm with a half hour for lunch and there was a cafeteria in the building and also a PX.

One evening one of the girls at the embassy, Audrey Miller, invited me to go with her to see "My Fair Lady." Of course it was in Swedish and has been a big hit here as it has been in the States as we so well know having seen it twice and loved it. These charming songs will ever ring in my ears.

On Sunday, Genevieve Rowan, Ambassador Bonbright's secretary, had me out to her little house for supper with one of the other secretaries. And, Wednesday, one of the girls I knew in Bangkok invited me for dinner. I am liking very much the personnel of the embassy and my apartment. Love Virginia

Palm Sunday, March 21, 1959

Dearest Mildred

I began lessons once a week in Swedish and to brush up on my Italian, I began lessons the other day. I went to 8:30 communion this morning and am so happy to have the Anglican church so near. Kiril Forelius, the nephew of my Finnish friend, Lisa Lotta Valesca, called last Sunday and upon entering my apartment, bowed low, kissed my hand and presented me with one lovely pink rose. It touched me deeply and cheered my rather bare apartment, to say nothing of myself.

March 24, Wednesday

I heard that Pena's ship the Gripsong is leaving New York on April 9 and will stop at Bremerhaven on the 17th. I decided to write Mr. Barley, the British I knew in Palermo who was transferred there, that Pena would be on board. I knew he would remember her pizzas.

Library of Congress

When Paul H. Pearson, the Consul General in Goteborg, was in our office, I mentioned that Pena would be arriving there and he very kindly said to notify consul Woollons when she was ready to disembark and he would assist me.

March 31

Dearest Mildred,

I just learned that the famous Passion Play at Oberammergau in Germany occurs only every ten years will be performed on May 16, 1960. Shall we make arrangements to go? I should love to see it.

Before leaving Washington, a friend there, Hedda Van Missenburg, gave me a note of introduction to the Italian Ambassador which I presented shortly after my arrival. A few days later he invited me to dinner saying, "No black tie, we don't dress." So I put on my black taffeta and tucked a red rose at the waist and wore my Cavershawn star rubies. The Italian embassy where the residence and offices were located was beautifully situated right on the harbor where sail boats pass by the front lawn. It had formerly been the home of the brother of the present King of Sweden who married a relative of the Russian Tsar and I learned later had also been the American embassy when Nelson Morris had been Ambassador and remember he had been a friend of my brother-in-law, Jim Trimble, and had sent a beautiful wedding gift when he married my sister Mildred.

When I arrived, the Ambassador greeted me graciously and I conveyed greetings from his old friend the Duke de Belceto I had known in Palermo. He said his wife was presently in Italy. The other guests were an Italian girl just back from Egypt who was married to one of Sweden's foremost actors, Palme was the name, who sat to my left at dinner. He said he could obtain tickets for me at the interesting old 18th century theater Drotnehand when it opened. Then there was another very nice young girl, part Viennese and part Czechoslovakian, who was a refugee. The other two were men, one an Italian consul

Library of Congress

of the embassy and the other a Swedish baron who brought me home. We were served champagne, red caviar before dinner. Two white gloved butlers served a delicious dinner with white wine and again champagne. The center piece on the dining table was an enormous bowl filled with yellow jonquils and sweet smelling narcissus. On leaving, Mrs. Palme said she would send me a card of her shop, the only Italian one in Stockholm where she hoped to see me one day in old town. Also told me about a place that specialized in the Italian shoes for about \$14, which I decided I must find for they are the only kind I will wear again. It had been a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

On hearing of the earthquake in Kobe, my thoughts went back to the day I was married there sixty four years ago. I sailed from San Francisco on the NYK liner the Tasatu Maru to become the bride of Charles Biddle and we lived in Kobe for the next two and a half years. In those days, people still spoke often of the devastating quake in which more than 140,000 people lost their lives in 1923, and Charlie remembered escaping in his pajamas. Now, over six decades later another quake has taken the lives of over 5,000 people, maybe some of the gentle Japanese whom I had known, certainly some of their children, grandchildren or great grandchildren. Charlie had recently been transferred to the Osaka branch from the Peking branch of the National City Bank of New York, now called City Bank, and we lived two and a half years in Shukugawa where the Bank had a compound of four houses connected by gardens and overlooking a double tennis court. It was one of those charming houses that awaited me when I was married in All Saints Church in Kobe on October 11, 1930. America was caught up at that time in a terrible economic depression but we seemed far removed from that in Kobe. My husband gave me a hundred dollars a month for our household and I always came out ahead. We played bridge with other American and British families and traveled whenever possible to see more of Japan in his Packard roadster. I loved the beautiful country and I adored the quiet manners of the Japanese. On Sundays we attended services at All Saints Church. Thinking of it all these years later, I telephoned the office of the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church and learned that All Saints had been destroyed in World War II and

Library of Congress

had become part of the Cathedral, St. Michael's, which is now heavily damaged. It is, of course, only one of many changes that have come to my beloved Kobe. And now there will be more change, rebuilding and starting again. My heart goes out to Kobe. I am profoundly shocked by this sudden tragedy that has come to its people and to the country I loved so much.

End of interview