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

LEILA WILSON

Interviewed by: Hope Meyers
Initial interview date: June 15, 1987

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pre-Foreign Service
- Zimmern School, Geneva, Switzerland 1933
- Met Evan Wilson
- Graduated from Smith College 1934
- Married Evan Wilson 1935
- Background in New York Adirondacks
- Washington D.C. during the Depression
- Volunteer work on Inter-collegiate Council
- FS Exams 1936

Mexico, Egypt, and Israel
- Guadalajara, Mexico 1937-1938
- Birth of daughter in Washington
- Assignment to Cairo, Egypt 1938-1941
- Breakout of World War II
- Educational lectures about Egypt
- Hon. John S. Badeau
- Vice Consul Pierre Winkler
- Mrs. Lewis Jones (Polly)
- FS Class of 1936
- Living standards in Egypt
- King Farouk
- Sir Miles Lampson
- Evacuation to Jerusalem
- Hon. Alexander C. Kirk
- Members of Consulate
- British army in Cairo
- Evacuation to South Africa 1941
- Trip to New York
- Women and children evacuated from Cyprus to Beirut 1963
- Six Day War in Jerusalem 1976
- Coping with 35 boarders in Consulate

India, Iran, and Lebanon
Work with Orphanage and Mother Theresa, Calcutta, India 1952
Assignment to Tehran, Iran 1947-1949
Mrs. Louis G. Dreyfus
Iran-America Relief Society
Hon. John C. Wiley
Hon. George V. Allen
FS relationships
American Women's Club, Beirut Lebanon
Docent at National Gallery of Art
Docent and adviser at Textile Museum
Personal tragedies of families
Raising children in FS
Hon. Nicholas E. Thacher
Arabists
Consulate Difficulties in Jerusalem
Evan Wilson's two books concerning Jerusalem and Palestine
"Wristonization"

INTERVIEW

Q: This is Hope Meyers. I am about to begin an interview with Mrs. Evan Wilson, Leila Wilson, at her home in Washington, DC. The date is June 15, 1987.

WILSON: I was a history major. I had spent the summer of my junior year at the Zimmern School of International Studies in Geneva (Switzerland).

Q: What college did you go to?

WILSON: Smith. I'd gone to the Brearley School in New York and to Ethel Walker's and then to Smith. In all three I had the most extraordinary good luck in the teaching of history. It was promoted in all three institutions, and I became a history buff at a very early age. I just loved every word I read. When I got to college, I came under the influence of President Neilson of Smith and the remarkable faculty there. My interest became international relations. This was in the early thirties.

The result was that my junior year the opportunity came to go to Geneva to the Zimmern School. Zimmern was a professor at Oxford who conducted this school for international studies, mostly graduate students, in Geneva. But there was also a group of undergraduates, so a group of us from Smith went over there for that period. There turned up Evan, who had spent the entire summer there the year before. He'd been so impressed and happy that he'd come back for a brief revisit. We encountered each other, and that

was the beginning of one of those things.

Q: He'd then gone there from Oxford.

WILSON: He'd gone there for his summer vacation from Oxford. He had graduated from Haverford and gone on to Oxford. In those days, it was totally unimportant whether a man had a graduate degree, Ph.D., or doctorate or master's or anything else. So he just took another A.B. and took courses he wanted to take in international politics and economics. That was his determination. He wanted ultimately to go into the Foreign Service.

Q: He already had the idea?

WILSON: Oh, he had the idea from a very young man, a boy in fact, that he wanted to go into public service. He was fascinated, wanted to be a part of the action. So his studies were directed along that line. These were the years of the Depression. There were no jobs available, so he pursued further education. We were not married until 1935, because in those days one did not get married if you didn't have a job and a means of self-support.

Q: What was the year that you met in Switzerland?

WILSON: 1933.

Q: In other words, a wait of two years before you were married, during which you kept in touch?

WILSON: Oh yes, we kept in touch. He had another year at Oxford. I had another year at Smith.

Q: In other words, the Atlantic was between you.

WILSON: And then I crossed over and met him and we toured around England a bit. I first visited him in Oxford. I was accused of burning the candle at both ends and doing a very dangerous thing, but in actual fact, we were awfully good. I think back now and it all seems sort of silly.

Q: You traveled in England then?

WILSON: A bit.

Q: And then you came back here, both of you, to be married here, I assume?

WILSON: Oh, I came back to finish Smith and he stayed in Oxford to finish Oxford. He didn't have enough money to come back and forth to the United States, but traveling around Europe could be done very, very cheaply by going third class and carrying your piece of bologna and cheese.

Q: Where did you grow up? Were you a New Yorker?

WILSON: Yes, I grew up in New York City and had three brothers. We spent the summers in upstate New York, between Albany, Williamstown and Pittsfield and that general area where New England and New York come together. We spent time each year in a cottage up in the Adirondacks that was part of the hunting and fishing club my parents and grandparents had belonged to. My grandchildren are the fifth generation to go there. We still have a house up there.

Q: And that's the famous North Woods Club?

WILSON: That's right. That's the place where Winslow Homer did his Adirondack paintings and it's still in the wilderness.

Q: One of your brothers also painted in the Adirondacks, didn't he?

WILSON: Yes, Jim Fosburgh painted a great many still lifes up there and portraits. He painted there and in New York. His most spectacular one was of John F. Kennedy, done after Kennedy died, but it has been kept by the Kennedy family and it's never been shown in public. He did a good many others, too.

Q: Well, you came back to Smith. Evan continued his studies. Then Evan joined you on this side of the Atlantic and you were married?

WILSON: Yes. He got a job ultimately with the Home Owners Loan Corporation which was a New Deal agency lending money to farmers so that they might get on their feet again. You may be interested to know that every loan made was entirely repaid. It was one of the most successful New Deal operations and it was terminated without loss of any money at all. It gave him a job. That was the important thing, and we were able to get married and move to Washington in the Fall of 1935.

Q: You were married then virtually directly upon the receipt of your graduation diploma?

WILSON: A full year and a half later.

Q: And what happened in that interval? Did you work then? Did you get a job?

WILSON: No. I had a few interviews in which I was extremely amateurish, but I worked as a volunteer with a student organization in New York. I ran the home for my brothers. We had no parents. I kept an apartment where they could come from school and college and share in a home life.

Q: What organization was it that you did volunteer work for?

WILSON: It was known as the Inter-collegiate Council. They provided various services for student organizations interested in general welfare, whether it was housing or prison reforms or international relations. My particular job was running a speaker's bureau that employed or got in touch with people who were willing to speak to student organizations without the usual high fees paid for professional speakers.

Q: And then following that interlude, you and Evan were married and came to Washington and set up housekeeping here?

WILSON: That's right.

Q: Where did you live?

WILSON: 2810 P Street. It was a perfectly marvelous area at that point. Across the street was the house of the Dean Achesons, but next door to us was what was then known as poor white trash: the poor old man would sit out in front of his house and he was never quite sure whether that man in the White House was Roosevelt; sometimes he thought it was Wilson and sometimes he got a little confused about Abraham Lincoln, but he was a pleasant enough chap. Next door to him was our colored maid who was paid $10 a week to clean and fix up the house. But Georgetown in those days was a very nice, mixed-up social community, and nobody thought anything about who his next-door neighbor was.

On our other side, we had a Christian Science practitioner. She owned our house. Evan was working then for an oil burner company (that was after he'd taken his Foreign Service exams), and he succeeded in selling our landlady an oil burner for our house which up to that point had been absolutely an iceberg.

Q: How long did you stay in Washington then? Evan had passed the exams and so he had to wait how long?

WILSON: The exams weren't given until I think it was 1936, and they were told soon enough if they'd passed. They found out that by being summoned for an oral exam and they knew that they passed the oral exam if they were told to go and have a physical. It seems to me that it was six months before the oral exam took place and the physical, and then it was nearly six months before jobs were found.

This was the first time exams had been given for the Foreign Service since about 1929 or 1930 and the depth of the Depression. First, leaves were cut off; then travel expenses to and from posts were cut off; and then people were suspended.

Q: I believe salaries were reduced as well or certainly held stable. I think there was evidence aplenty that the salaries were actually cut.

WILSON: I'm sure they were reduced. And the beginning salary at that point was $1,500

a year. It was not a profession to go into to get rich, but we were happy about it. We knew we were not going to get rich, but we knew we would have an interesting life and be somehow or other involved in what was going on in the world.

Q: Did you and/or Evan have any supplementary income that you were able to apply to this $1500 income?

WILSON: We did. My parents were dead, and I had a family inheritance. I must say that has helped sustain us over the years. And he had a small inheritance, too.

Q: I think it's almost without exception that it was a necessary addition.

WILSON: Oh, absolutely. Nobody could have taken the job without a little something to help himself along with. We were allowed a certain allowance to rent housing. There was no government housing.

Q: This is overseas, of course.

WILSON: Oh, yes. But there was no government housing provided overseas, and our first post was in Guadalajara, Mexico. At that point, new officers were assigned to posts that were very near, as near as possible to Washington. They were supposed to be temporary, eight to nine months, a year at most. Then they were summoned back to Washington to have a three-to-six-month period in the Department to get a sense of how things operated. There was also a very personal feeling about Foreign Service officers. My recollection is that there were only about 800 of them altogether around the world.

I was pregnant in Guadalajara and quite ill with that first baby. So they said, "You'd better come back to the Foreign Service School now." There was a class being brought back in two installments. His name began with "W", and there were several other Wilsons and a great many "W's", so that I was in the second installment of the class, supposed to be, but for compassionate reasons we were brought back home so that I could get health care and the baby could be born here, which was fine with us.

When she was born as the Foreign Service Class baby, he was assigned to the Department, to the news reporting division of general information. I can't remember the name of the bureau, but he attended the President's press conferences and covered the press for the State Department and had a fine time until they decided it was reasonable enough to take Leila to Egypt.

Q: That was at least a year that you were here then?

WILSON: Oh, no. Six months. Something like six months.

Q: And by that time, Evan's early professional training, choice, assignment was in the consular service?

WILSON: New officers were all assigned to the consular service. It was not exactly one service. In fact, they were rather definitely divided. When we got to Cairo, the Office of the Consulate was across the hall from the Embassy, from the Legation. We didn't have all ambassador. There was a Consul General in Alexandria. The Minister ordered and arranged that all mail for the Consulate in Cairo should be sent from the Embassy to the Consulate General in Alexandria, and the Consul General in Alexandria could then dispense the mail to the various consulates. There was one in Suez and there was one in Cairo, so it took quite some time to get the mail from Cairo to Alexandria and back to Cairo again, but that's the way the judge chose to handle things.

Q: It was during that time that war broke out, during the time that you were in Egypt. In any case, the War in Europe, not necessarily affecting the United States?

WILSON: Oh, it affected the United States.

Q: United States interests in Egypt and in the Mediterranean area generally is what I mean.

WILSON: Well, yes, but a lot of things were going on that I didn't know anything about and I'm not sure that Evan knew much about. He was the lowest ranking, most junior vice consul of any nationality in Cairo, and our official responsibilities were not sensational. We found out more about Egypt and Islam and the Middle East in general than I've ever learned in one short spell in my life, but he had very little political work to do.

Q: How did you begin your self-education? You spoke about your and Evan's joint interest in history and international affairs. Had that extended to the world of the Middle East, Islam?

WILSON: Not in any way. We knew nothing really about it. In those days, and it's even true today, there is practically no attention, serious attention, paid to the Middle Eastern part of the world. I find that friends and acquaintances know extraordinarily little about Islam either as a religion or as a culture, while the politics of the Middle East are so completely dominated by the position of Israel now that it's very hard to arouse people's interest or understanding of the affairs of the Arab world. It was completely by chance that Evan asked to be sent to Cairo on his first real post

Q: That was his choice then?

WILSON: Oh, it was his choice. We felt that if we were going in the Foreign Service, we would just rather be in the foreign Service and not an extension of the United States which we regarded Western Europe to be. We really just didn't want to go to the Far East. We didn't know much about that either, but he had a feeling that the Middle East was interesting and would become more so. He was definitely laughed at by people in the Foreign Service. I was going to say "senior". Of course, they weren't very senior at that

time, but I think it was Chip Bohlen who said, "What in the devil do you want to go to Cairo for? Nothing ever happens in that part of the world!" And Evan said he wasn't so sure. He thought it was a very interesting part of the world, and we were in that part of the world for the better part of his thirty years in the Foreign Service.

Q: You said that from the beginning of your stay in Egypt, whether it was in Cairo or in Alexandria, you and Evan set about informing yourselves about the land and the culture in which you had chosen to be. How did you go about doing that?

WILSON: There was a large missionary group in Cairo under the leadership of couples who had been there twenty-five, thirty and more years, and I found them a source of the most fascinating information. How to run a house, how to cope with the problems of life in general. And they were certainly informed about the religion of the country and the customs of the people. I attended lectures that they gave, certain of them. There was a Dr. McClanahan who was most fascinating, and he gave a series of lectures on Islam for foreigners only.

Q: Where was that done, privately or through some public arrangement?

WILSON: I can't remember where it was, but it was some hall where a group of people -- I don't think there could have been too many of us -- could gather together, a place belonging to the Presbyterian Mission. John Badeau, who became President of the American University of Cairo and then American Ambassador to Cairo (Hon. John S. Badeau, U.S. Ambassador to the United Arab Republic, 1961-1967) was then head of an organization which in due course became the American University of Cairo. I took courses in cultural, religious and philosophical subjects from him.

They were, of course, for an international clientele. Fuad Sarruf, whom we knew later in connection with the American University of Beirut, also gave courses in modern Egyptian history. I remember Badeau's course was ethics in Pharaonic Egypt, all based on inscriptions and interpretations of inscriptions in the ancient tombs. Fuad Sarruf gave a course on Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth Century Egyptian history. The Twentieth Century was fairly young, of course.

We spent the better part of every weekend exploring the city and the area around us and had our trip to Luxor and Aswan and camping trips up the river and across to the Red Sea. Wonderful New Year's Eve spent on the Red Sea! Through our own exploration and the friends we made in the international community, we knew more pyramids than anyone else knew existed. We got the greatest joy from our archaeological friends of sundry nationalities, and then when we went to Luxor and Aswan, we had introductions to other archaeologists and really made it our business to find out where we were and why. I remember particularly Flinders Petry and William Smith of Boston Fine Arts. There were teams from Harvard, Chicago and the Metropolitan as well as French, Italian and German groups.

Q: You and Evan were, of course, in a very enviable position, considering your interest, the job, the freedom, comparatively speaking, to spend a good deal of time enriching your own lives. Did many other in the diplomatic community do the same?

WILSON: We had a French friend, Vice Consul Pierre Winkler, who went on many, many excursions with us. He and I made a photographic study of Egypt which we put together with what we considered impressive captions and submitted it to Life magazine. They had the gall to return it to me and tell me when they wanted some information on Egypt, they would send their own people out! In the meantime, it had no interest for their readers. I still have that document. Pierre was a great friend and went with us many places.

There were at least two American Foreign Service officers who went around with us, and one a most remarkable linguist; nearly bought us a donkey he was such a good bargainer and dealer with the local population. I was nervous, it being our car. I feared we were going to end up owning a donkey that had to come back with us. Somehow or other, we called the deal off. The local population loved the whole process and were rooting for our friend very hard. They wanted him to win.

Q: Was it on one of these expeditions that you or someone else, perhaps your French friend, photographed Evan on a camel?

WILSON: Oh, I took that picture. Lewis Jones had been in Cairo as Assistant Commercial Attaché and he brought his wife on a visit from Greece to see Egypt. We went out together to visit the pyramids and tombs that are no longer open to the public, very, very early tombs that are remarkably funny, entertaining and really delightful, but which are closed now.

The camel business...Polly (Mrs. Lewis Jones) wanted to ride a camel badly, and I guess I did, too, but in any case, Lewis started bargaining and finally the camel owner took him by the chin, and shook his mouth open and said. "Let me look at your teeth." They had decided that the one who could guess the other man's age the closest would decide the price for the ride on the camel. Lewis, I suppose, was in his late twenties. He was a little older than we, and the man looked at him and looked at him and finally said, "sixty-three." Well, that was a blow to Lewis, I must say, but he turned around and guessed the old man was something or other, fifties perhaps. Well, Lewis won, and we paid twenty-five cents for the camel. After Polly rode it, we all rode it and I got a fine picture of Evan.

Q: How large was Evan's class when he entered the Foreign Service, and have you kept in touch with class members?

WILSON: Most of those class members remained close friends over the years. I don't hear many people talk of Foreign Service classmates, but the class of 1936 most certainly did. There aren't many of them still alive, but we keep in communication with various of them, especially Brewster Morris and Jeff Parsons and Maury Bernbaum and the widows

of many others.

Q: How many people were in that class? The reason I ask is that you spoke about having had, the State Department had had, a gap of approximately seven years between the time the last examination had been given and the one that took Evan into the Foreign Service. Was the class unusually large, do you recall, or was it just an average sized class of, say, twenty people?

WILSON: Oh, it seems to me that there were something over eight hundred applications for the examination, and I think there were thirty people in Evan's class that passed. There were three who were married, one had a baby by the time we came back here for school, and my baby was number two. I think there were around thirty. Money was very short. They could only take a few that they could place and pay for.

Q: Speaking of money being short, I take it that Egypt had some advantage in that the standard of living was considerably to your advantage so that you could do things with dollars at your disposal that you might not have been able to do if you had been living elsewhere, either back in the United States or in Western Europe.

WILSON: Oh, well, yes. It was certainly cheaper than living in the United States, but I wouldn't say the standard of living was very impressive. And there were few luxurious temptations available except in the bazaars. I took Arabic lessons. Of course, Evan took lessons in whatever language of whatever country we were in all his life, going to the office an hour early each day. I took simple Arabic so I could go around the city, do shopping and housekeeping. It was a pretty low grade environment, dirty, bug-ridden. I know I got fleas most terribly sitting on the porch of Shepherd's Hotel waiting for somebody one day. We had bedbugs on the train going to Luxor and one never knew what you were going to pick up where.

Bilharzia, the eye disease, was endemic among the local population, and the eye troubles that you saw around you were shattering, as was the poverty of the people in general. A missionary explained to me one day that you could see that things were beginning to improve, “because you see an undershirt on a few more people than you used to. They're not naked to the waist," he said, "and once in awhile you see a bicycle. Those are indications of increased wealth and well being."

No, it was not an advantageous social situation. Towards the end of our stay, after we had been evacuated to Jerusalem and returned during the War, Leila, at the age of two and a half, got typhoid fever and was very sick indeed. People used to come around to comfort me and to sit with her. There was nothing whatever to do except feed her purees mostly, applesauce and mashed potatoes and such soft things. The missionary said, "You know, you mustn't feel guilty about this. It's just a wonder that everybody doesn't have typhoid. There is no way that you can protect yourself at all times."

We boiled the water, although Cairo water was supposed to be well purified, and we

boiled the milk. After that, we never used milk again. We used powdered milk during all the years in the Middle East.

Q: The implication of what you've just said is clear: the Embassy, not only perhaps in Cairo, but elsewhere at that time, offered no medical assistance?

WILSON: No, no, no. There was no medical assistance. There was no commissary. We would make a personal order from a wholesaler, White Rose or some such in the United States. Those orders were expected to take about six months to arrive, so our principle in ordering for many years was to get some taste thrills. There was no use trying to live on things from abroad.

Our liquor, of course, came from Saxony and Speed in England. It was always a great satisfaction when we went to a new post and Evan would put in an order to Saxony and Speed, and they would write back and congratulate him on his new assignment and tell him how glad they were to hear from him again and hoped they would be of service to him for years to come. I thought that was marvelous.

Q: With whom did the diplomatic community as a whole, Americans included therein naturally, with whom on the Egyptian side were there contacts? The Egyptian government at that time was?

WILSON: King Farouk and Sir Miles Lampson, the British High Commissioner. You have to realize that at that time as I said before, Evan was the lowest ranking vice consul of any nationality. He was not vastly sought after as a companion for important Egyptians. We had friends of equally low rank in the British military and we still see and correspond with an air commander in the RAF (British Royal Air Force) who stayed in our apartment both times I was evacuated. We had English friends, French friends, Italian friends, and it turned out that the unimportant people often produce very interesting material if you're sharp enough to pick it up and pass it on. It was useful. I know this to have been a fact about Evan. But the friends we had among the Egyptians were not particularly important or numerous.

Once the women had been evacuated and the military had gone out into the desert and were less available, the workload of the Consulate, Legation, became heavier. Evan, not being encumbered by a wife, was much more in demand and made quite a lot of Egyptian friends in the social circle of the day. They are people that I really never did come to know particularly well.

Q: I suppose the picture that I carry in my mind of the social life of Cairo is based on Lawrence Durrell's <u>Alexandria Quartet</u> as much as anything else; an exotic, flavorful combination of individuals and circumstances.

WILSON: Oh yes, there were wonderful nightclubs to go to and dance and there would be a belly dancer entertainer. I can remember a New Year's Eve in Shepherd's Hotel a

group of us went to, and at midnight, a gorgeous girl stark naked came out on the balcony and blew a trumpet from which hung various flags. It was an enormous success. Confetti was thrown and paper hats were put on and crackers twisted. In places like that, a New Year's Eve celebration can be a fairly raucous affair, bibulous, too.

Ordinarily, there were good restaurants to go to and often with music and entertainment. There were places even then to go to out near the pyramids, but they were not as popular or as numerous as they became in the time of Alexander Kirk. (Hon. Alexander C. Kirk, Minister to Egypt, 1941-44. The U.S., Legation was raised to an Embassy in 1947.) We were in Egypt from 1938 to 1941, and in 1940-41 a lot of people got tents and established themselves with places for entertaining. There was always a busy social schedule of cocktail parties and dinner parties and there was a certain amount of entertaining for the military on their leaves from the Western desert and for newcomers headed for Eritrea or back from Eritrea after the fall of Keren. We had a great dinner dance for the latter, a tremendous celebration of the rout of the Italians in Eritrea, but we were not the socially elite of the city.

Q: How many officers were there in the American establishment at the time?

WILSON: In the Consulate there were two and then three. In the Legation there was one Secretary, Gordon Merriam. I guess he was Second Secretary to begin with. Then there were Ray Hare, Joe Jacobs, and Norris Chipman (whose wife, Fanny Chipman, has been interviewed for the Foreign Service Oral History Project collection). Once the War had really begun, there were more people, both civilian and military, but it was not a large establishment while we were there.

Q: Would you talk now about the evacuation that took place that you've mentioned several times?

WILSON: It all has to do with a period in the War that's pretty well forgotten by most people, long before Pearl Harbor. It was before Rommel and before the days of the Wehrmacht coming across the desert. It was a question of the Italians who were very anxious to take over Egypt and to get hold of Eritrea. On the way, to begin with, they had to control Libya. People don't realize how ill-armed and ill-prepared the British were. There was a large barracks on the Nile in Cairo. I don't know how many men there were, but it was large and there were soldiers and airmen to be seen on the streets at all times.

My first period of evacuation took place within hours of the Italian declaration of war. There was an enormously large Italian community in Egypt who included the closest advisers, private advisers and secret advisers of the King. An uprising of the Egyptians was expected to be stirred up by the Italians in order to create vast trouble that would get the British out and the Italians into efficient political control.

I was told at a later date by the friend who stayed with Evan in my absence that almost the entire barracks and, in addition, the soldiers already encamped on the desert, were out on

maneuvers when word came through that they were to get back to Cairo as fast as their transport would allow. They rode back to Cairo largely with wooden guns. They didn't have real guns and they didn't have ammunition. They had swords and spears and hand grenades. All the way back to Cairo, they were drilled in truck after truck after truck on how to conduct street fighting. This was not something they had been prepared for or armed for, and they were to make themselves extremely conspicuous and to look as though they were heavily armed and that the trucks were heavily laden with able-bodied men. So they raced back to Cairo.

On the way to Kasr el Einl Barracks, they had to cross through a very major intersection of the city streets. As they approached, a scarlet car, a large one, crossed the intersection and stopped in the middle. Now, no one in Cairo or in Egypt was allowed to have a scarlet car, except the King and his personal entourage. It was clearly a royal car and it was stopped across the path of the homecoming British Army. They kept moving and kept making a noise. In any case, they approached the intersection and slowly the car moved on. They figured that that was the day that the Revolution was to have taken place. It was a close run thing. The Army got into the barracks and nothing happened.

About my evacuation: That situation of the British and their lack of strength in Cairo and the strength of the Italians and the potential that they created for an internal revolution, was the reason for wives with small children being evacuated the day after the Italians came into the War. Jule Hare (wife of Raymond A. Hare) had two little boys. I had one little girl and I had an English nurse. She had a German nurse. So the English nurse went with us to Jerusalem. The German nurse could not leave.

The funny thing is, I remember very clearly every move when we came back home on Christmas Eve, but I don't remember much about our trip by train from Cairo to Jerusalem. We had to cross the Suez Canal in some kind of boat and then proceed on another train to Jerusalem. We stayed there for seven months until the British were rearmed and Montgomery started moving the Army westward on the desert. We were allowed to come back on a refugee train.

Q: By home, you mean back to Cairo, of course.

WILSON: Yes, back to Cairo. We had each been allowed one weekend to visit home, and our husbands had each been allowed one weekend to come to Jerusalem and take his wife to the King David for overnight. But we were finally allowed to come back and stay on Christmas Eve of 1940.

Q: How many were in that group evacuated? Just you and Jule Hare, or were there others?

WILSON: There were others who left and who went all the way home to the United States by way of India and the Far East. We stayed in the American School of Archaeology. It was a very fortunate situation. George Wadsworth was Consul General in

Jerusalem. He was a very strong and determined personality. He knew that there would be many women and children evacuated from southeastern Europe, from Egypt and from the Middle East, and he wanted a place to put them. The American School of Archaeology, which is still there in the same building and equally important and significant in the archaeological world, wanted someone to take them over before the British took them over for an army barracks. So a deal was struck, and Uncle Sam through George Wadsworth took over the American School of Archaeology. We were fed in the School's communal diningroom. Other people came and went. A few stayed for a fair length of time. Some were strictly transients.

Q: You must have been among the longer...

WILSON: Oh, we were the longest, no question. We lived a fairly easy life. We worked for the Red Cross making bandages. Jules' older boy went to school. Our two little ones, aged two and two and a half, had to be taken care of and things done for them. We had various chores of work that we did with the American colony. I don't really know how our life passed. We were well taken care of, but we were certainly on our own as far as finding things to do, occupations and so forth, I made good friends with a certain Arab who took me all through the Old City, photographing, sometimes, in the Arab city and sometimes in the Jewish city. I still have that rather amazing book. He was a good friend.

The Polish Army came down from Beirut, made up of soldiers who had individually made their way, escaping the Russians and the Germans, down through the Balkans and across Turkey by any means, disguise or subterfuge, that they could. They congregated outside Beirut. The day that Vichy took control of Lebanon and Syria, the Polish Army pulled out within hours and simply moved to a camp near the sight of the present airport. Jule Hare was of Polish extraction and spoke a few words of Polish, so we were interested. We encountered the Army one day when exploring the old city. We heard some marvelous music corning out of the church in the Garden of Gesthemane and decided we'd investigate. It turned out to be a Polish soldier's mass, and the place was jammed with these men singing with all their hearts. The Poles are famous for their singing around the world, so this was a really heart moving and emotional experience.

Q: It must have been breathtaking.

WILSON: Absolutely, it was. It was simply incredible. We were speechless and spellbound and enchanted, and when the service was through, Jule said she simply must speak to that priest. The result of that was we made very good friends with the priest and his tentmates. They had us down to the camp and introduced us, the hard way, to vodka, and we had them to our famous apartment and introduced them, the hard way, to the martini. They gave us some pretty good times. So we were not devoid of entertainment. Then, too, there were always British coming and going, and one way or another, one made friends. We got about and went sightseeing.

Q: Life in Jerusalem was reasonably calm at that period?

WILSON: Life was calm. There was no particular Arab-Israeli, Arab-Jewish problem, it was certainty there undercover, so to speak, and I have some notes telling of a visit to a certain Arab town and a home of an Arab leader. The minute British soldiery came in looking for somebody, and it never was explained to us, we were hustled home. There were incidents that you sensed. We just plain didn't. But it was safe.

Q: Was that your first view of what later became the state of Israel?

WILSON: No. Evan and I had been there in the Fall of 1939. He was supposed to have some local leave, and we'd had various rather elaborate plans to go to some place cool and mountainous, possibly green. My idea was Morocco, but that vanished. Then there was an idea about Romania, and that vanished. But we did have a brief vacation in Suez and then we had another week in Jerusalem. That's where we encountered the man who became my great friend later, a member of the Husseini clan whose sorrow in life, his *shame* was that he was the only member of the family who had *not* been in jail. He took us to Amman and took us to call on King Abdullah in his camp on the road. Unfortunately, the King was out hunting, and we didn't actually meet him, but we had a chance to explore a little bit and went to Nazareth and Bethlehem and a few of the available places with a hired car.

Q: Then, after a period of time that you say was over six or seven months, you did return to Cairo and then perhaps on to Alexandria after that?

WILSON: I think our spell of substituting for an absent officer was the year before when we went to Alexandria for temporary duty for three months. We went back to Cairo from Jerusalem on a refugee troop train on Christmas Eve. It was a twenty-four hour journey that was just terrible. I don't know how they got us a compartment, but the Consulate did that and got us on board with fourteen various pieces of baggage. I think we had a tricycle and a stroller and all kinds of equipment for very small children. We couldn't stretch out. The children could be laid out on the two benches in the compartment, and we took turns going into the refreshment car of the train where we could get a drink. We had brought some food with us.

Q: After that first evacuation experience, you had others as well in which you were a participant, wither as a person being evacuated yourself or involved in any case in operations of any kind.

WILSON: Yes. It was a very different evacuation when I left finally from Egypt in 1941. Leila, then three years old, had had typhoid fever and simply had to be taken away to recuperate. Jerusalem was no longer quiet and peaceful. There were riots and shootings, and it was a dangerous place. There was a Revolution in Iraq. Vichy was in charge of Syria and Lebanon. Nairobi was so filled with evacuees from France and various parts of Europe that they were not prepared to receive any more.

So Leila and I, after considerable maneuvering by Evan, were given seats on a Sunderland flying boat to go to South Africa. It was a five-day journey. It flew only in the daytime. One other woman went with me, because she was not yet an American citizen. Her husband was an officer in the Consulate.

We stopped five nights on the way, had a little difficulty getting out of Kenya (something very heavy was being loaded onto the plane), and when it came to taking off on Lake Victoria, Nyanza, an Air Force friend who was riding in the back of the plane, came forward and most comfortingly said, "You know, if you try three times and you don't make it, you don't try it again."

Well, we tried three times and we made it! It later became evident that British gold was being moved out of Kenya and they had as heavy a load as they could take. We got to Johannesburg and took the train from there to Cape Town where we waited for an American ship for a month. I know the misery that refugees, evacuees can feel. It was a lonely, hard road to hoe. No decent hotel would accept a child, let alone a three-year-old, even if she was on reins. So we stayed in pretty dingy quarters and waited.

Q: You and Leila, your daughter, were alone?

WILSON: With this one other woman from the Consulate. She was sent out because she was of Eastern European extraction. They did not think that it was good for her to stay in Cairo when the Germans or Russians might in due course move in, which, of course, they didn't.

We waited a month in Cape Town, then caught an American ship back to New York. (This was the first and last voyage of the SS Garfield. It was converted to military use immediately.) Evan stayed in Cairo for another six months. He followed us, arriving by the first more or less regular flight from the hump of Africa to the hump of South America. He never knew from day to day whether or not he would have a seat. He got to Ghana and what is now Chad and then into Liberia, in those places waiting several nights for the anticipated plane. Finally, he was given a seat on a "bucket" and crossed the Atlantic the day after our son was born in New York.

I do know... we are talking about being an evacuee, how lonely and helpless one feels. You don't know if you're going to see your husband again. You don't know what's going to happen to you. Suppose he is killed in one of those bombings; and they were bombing the Cairo area. This didn't materialize, but one simply didn't know, and the suspense and uncertainty of life in these circumstances becomes all but intolerable, I do know how evacuees suffer, but I also know something about how to prepare people for being evacuees and how to receive them.

In Beirut, back in the early sixties, during the trouble in Cyprus, the entire female American population of Cyprus was evacuated to Beirut. This must have been 1963. Harold Snell was in charge of the arrangements with the airlines, the hotels, with the

airport and the transportation. The wife of the Administrative Officer was in charge of arranging hotel housing for women and children. It fell to me to be a general supervisor and morale builder, at least a person who tried to build morale and stability and security among the wretched women who came with no preparation, no equipment of any kind. They expected to be supplied with bottles, diaper service and cooking, sterilizing materials for their baby equipment, all necessities, in fact.

Q: How many were there?

WILSON: Ultimately, there were two thousand but they were not all there at the same time. It was in the hundreds at any given time, probably over a thousand at one point. But they were totally demoralized. Their behavior was outrageous. The Lebanese hotel keepers had been more than kind and helpful. The American College for Women had provided space, equipment and help for running a day nursery. I would go from hotel to hotel and find the bars swarming with women, babies crawling all over the floor upsetting pots and plants, disrupting the interior decorations of one hotel after another. Frantic managers were trying to figure out how to clear up the situation. There was no one specifically in charge who came from Cyprus. There was a CIA (Central Intelligence Agent) group, there was a naval communicator's group, and there were other naval groups. No one among them would assume leadership over anyone else.

Q: Were these all American official people?

WILSON: They were very simply people, They were wives of very simple sailors and communicators, radio technicians etc. We had a listening station in Cyprus, and the personnel had very few personal resources or imagination. Nobody knew how to control them or keep order among them. And they resented our disciplinary attitude. The entire American community of Beirut pitched in with the head of every bank and business and their American staffs, cooperating with the Embassy wives in doing things for them. I cannot emphasize enough that that could only have been done because there was a pleasant, happy relationship among the assorted members of these organizations. They were perfectly willing to cooperate and help. The morale in the American community was high, with the American Embassy wives as leaders. This close personal relationship and the acceptance of the need for mutual support in one way or another made the Foreign Service in my lifetime what it was. Together, we kept our spirits up and our morale intact as we went around working with these distracted women.

I saw then what could be done to prepare wives to take care of themselves better if they were subjected to refugee situations. This turned to my advantage during the Six Day War when we were stationed in Jerusalem and all the women had to be evacuated, except one who was on in years. That couple had never had any children. She wished to stay with her husband, who was stationed in the Old City. All of the other wives, of whom there were about ten, and their children had to be evacuated. Those living in the Arab sector were sent to Amman, and those living in the Israeli sector were sent to Rome.

I invited them all to my home. They did not have to come. All, but one did come. And I told them they must undertake their journey prepared with the essentials that they required for the care of their children. If diapers were required, they must have with them a reasonable supply. They would not be able to travel with Pampers and things that were vastly space-consuming. They would have to take a pot in which to heat whatever formula they used and any other essential equipment. They would simply not be able to get on arrival the things they might want. They would have to have a change of clothes and soap and things with which to take care of themselves and they must make as few requests, let alone demands, as possible. The more they asked for, the more short-tempered the people on the receiving end would be. There was no way in the situation that was about to break forth in the Middle East that the numbers of people could be coped with as if they were individuals. I told them I was sorry but that was the fact of life.

Well, each one of them came to me later and were grateful that I had reminded them to take a dish, a spoon, a pot and be able to cope with their necessities until they could get established. I think they comported themselves with credit to Uncle Sam and to Jerusalem and to everybody, but again, I was able to get through to them and help them, because we had done things together. Nobody had to do anything we did, but they could if they chose. I had, for example, arranged for visits to convents with fabulous medieval libraries or kibbutzim, not usually open to the public, and so forth. So we became a trusting group in Jerusalem (before the outbreak of the Six Day War).

We became a little family group that met together I think once a month to do something that individuals could not do on their own, visiting both sides... the Jordanian side and the Israeli side. We stood in for two or three babies' godparents when they were born and we celebrated each others' promotions. We were a family group.

When we had a dance party in the Old City, the head of the CIA group got me the Dead Sea Stroller's Band. Somebody else arranged with the Inter-Continental Hotel to borrow a dance floor. Somebody else had an electrician friend who strung the garden with lights. We had friends all over the community and had a great party, largely thanks to the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) for tables, tablecloths and cutlery. There was no question of my having to provide everything which, of course, the Consulate did not have. It was part of the family atmosphere that can and used to exist. Nobody had to come to your receptions or parties if they didn't want to, but it was advantageous to do so, because by doing so they had an opportunity to meet people that they would not otherwise meet.

I look upon the Foreign Service as a place of continuing education, at least for me. We could take courses at universities, as I did at Beirut and in Cairo, and we could mingle with people in running local organizations, charitable centers, etc. In Calcutta, we saved two polio patients, took care of their treatments and survival.

Q: How was that accomplished? In what context then were you working to achieve that remarkable result?

WILSON: I was asked by an Indian friend, who was either tied or near the top of the local Red Cross, she'd known Americans around the world, to organize a group that would bring some sort of entertainment and enrichment to the lives of about one hundred and twenty orphans, aged from two to twelve, who had absolutely nothing in the way of comforts and joys and no activities. "Could we run a sort of nursery program once a week to give them something to look forward to and something that would be pleasurable?"

So, I talked around and about and in due course we organized a group. There were more Americans than others, but there were several Indian women and several British women. Some of the women had had some nursery school training and could work with the children, teach them how to use scissors, crayons, etc. They had no sense of coordination in any way whatsoever. Some knew how to get children started with paper and pencil and crayons. Some taught knitting. I got some materials and advice from Beauvoir School in Washington where my children had gone. We made building blocks out of empty beer cans that we cut the tops off of. This was what my own children had played with in Tehran, where they had had the best time building the most marvelous castles out of beer cans. So, we tried to introduce them to the children of the orphanage. I personally did what I called “physical jerks”. I led an exercise drill until somebody came along who had been in the army and knew the army routine. Then we all took directions from her. Our driver did the translating as far as language was concerned. It was a real rewarding experience to see these children learn to throw a ball and to catch it, to enjoy doing something with crayons and to make cut-outs, the most rudimentary and simple, unsophisticated things. But they were *something* and they had had *nothing*.

Two of the children had polio. The older one, I suppose, was about six when we started. She had never been off her knees. She kind of huddled on her knees in the corner with the most sorrowful face you ever saw. The other was a baby in diapers, tiny and crippled. We persuaded an Indian doctor to take care of them for free. We paid for the boots and the braces that were necessary. One of our members transported the children as often as was necessary, whether it was once a month or once a week, I do not remember, but she took them to the doctor and back again regularly. In due course, the older girl was walking. Above all, she was smiling.

They kept her at the orphanage until they decided that she was adolescent. I wouldn't know how they came to that conclusion, but they said she had to be carried up and downstairs, and carried in and out of the building. The only person that was able to do so was the sweeper, and he was unsuitable. A little girl simply could not be handled by a boy. So, she was installed in a Methodist home, better equipped and staffed, and they took the child in to keep her indefinitely. I’m afraid I don’t know what has become of her, but I’m sure she has a life that is livable.

We got great satisfaction out of that, as we did out of helping Mother Teresa at the same time. It turns out that we were the first people who raised money publicly for Mother Teresa in 1952.

Q: May I interrupt you here. You have said "we", and I'd like to have you talk a little bit about who this group was in more detail, because you spoke about its formation. Was this just an "ad hoc" group? Or did it come to be...?

WILSON: We had an American Women's Club. There weren't very many members. Most of us belonged to Indian groups that we spent more time with than with the Americans. But it was a way to draw together Americans who otherwise felt excluded from the activities of the Consulate General. Similarly, my husband made a great point of playing golf with the American businessmen, so there was a sense of community and cooperation between them. That small women's club sponsored our group that went to the orphanage and did other things as we saw necessary. We decided at one point that we really should do something to raise money for Mother Teresa.

Q: We are now where?

WILSON: Calcutta, I'm sorry.

Q: Yes. I realized while you were talking that I had not made quite clear exactly where the locale of these activities was.

WILSON: That's right. We started in Cairo and went on to the experience of receiving the people from Cyprus in Beirut in 1963, then sending my own wives out of Jerusalem in 1967, and I was talking about the relationship between officers of various ranks or no rank and the consulate or embassy and the local community.

Q: And this was Calcutta at about 1950 or so, was it not?

WILSON: 1952. We were there from 1951 to 1953 and we put on a bazaar to raise money for Mother Teresa in 1952. The important point was that it was the first time that anyone ever had raised money for her publicly. She had been supported by the church and communicants before that. It was through a Roman Catholic friend that I had met Mother Teresa and gone around with her on her rounds through the backstreet busti (the worst slum areas) of Calcutta.

Q: You knew her then from a close view?

WILSON: Oh, let me tell you, a view that gave me nightmares for a week beyond which you cannot imagine anything more horrible. But it was that that convinced me that here was something we could do, no matter how little money. We only raised about $3,000, but it was a fortune as far as she was concerned. We thought we'd done pretty well, because it was a bazaar participated in basically by Indians. We had silly games of chance, we had dancing, we had people who sang and people who ran booths of entertainment so that there was something for everybody to do, and of course food.

Q: You were very much involved, perhaps in charge of this?

WILSON: I was in charge. I was the head of the club, and there was a group of us who kind of fought our way through. There were those who thought we should not support Mother Teresa, because she was not Hindu. Anyway, it was argued out, and we decided to do it, because it was Hindus, Moslems, anybody who was dying and in terrible shape, leprosy and cholera and typhoid and tuberculosis patients that she was ministering to day-by-day and running little schools of sorts for their children.

Q: Did she already have a reputation beyond the people for whom she cared?

WILSON: No, really she didn't. The Indians were a bit embarrassed, because she was taking care of people they knew in their hearts they should be taking care of, and she was not one of them.

Q: She is Albanian, I believe.

WILSON: She's an Albanian. She's a Roman Catholic and she had been teaching in a sophisticated school for Indian girls in Calcutta. She decided she had to leave that way of life and devote herself to those who were totally poverty stricken and totally helpless and hopeless. She could at least give them love and hope, and it was a pretty emotional thing to go around and see what she was doing and accomplishing with just plain nothing.

Q: How long had she been involved in this kind of activity at the time?

WILSON: Well, I read when she was given the Nobel Peace Prize, the Award for International Peace, and when later she was decorated by the Pope, that it was 1952 that they talked about her starting her mission. She must have been working at it for a year or so preparing something, and they had a very simple house, minimal rooms, minimal equipment, just running water. I think they had electricity, but nothing elaborate whatsoever. But it was organized, and she had six or seven nuns working with her in 1952. All the reports describe her as having begun her mission in 1952, so we were really in there on the ground floor.

Q: Yes. Have you had any contact with her in the interval since then?

WILSON: Yes. I can't say the name of the Foreign Service widow who is in charge of her work in this country now, still, but she arranged a little service, an opportunity for Mother Teresa to talk to interested people. (Wilson is probably referring to Vi Collins, widow of FSO Frank Collins. According to Muriel Hanson, who also worked for Mother Teresa from 1956 to 1958, Vi Collins became Mother Teresa's leading co-worker. It was Frank Collins who wrote Mother Teresa's resume which alerted the Nobel Peace Prize Committee of this incredible woman. Unfortunately, Frank died before Mother Teresa received the prize. Vi Collins, to this day, who has extraordinary executive talent, is Mother Teresa's national co-worker in America.) This gathering was arranged in a church

in Bethesda, Maryland. Evan and I went and were seated on one side. Mother Teresa was taken up front, but when she looked down and saw me, she left where she was standing and came up and embraced me most fondly. I don't think she was told I would be there, but there was no question that she remembered. It was to me a very emotional and happy encounter.

Since then, she has become well known to all. I have tried a few times to call her in the various convents where she was staying, but she was sought after by too many people, and I have not seen her since, it was a wonderful experience to be in on the ground floor with her and one of the most worthwhile things that I was able to do in the Foreign Service. That and working with the orphans really made a difference.

It certainly makes a difference to them and it makes a difference to the thinking of our driver who took us out each week. He was as interested in what we were achieving with the children as we were and he was able to pat them on the back and tell them to stand up straighter or help them coordinate enough to catch a big ball. He became a part of it, but the day that he drank water from the great jug that we always took with us, water that we participated in, too, was a real crossroads. He had come to feel that we were not untouchable after all. He was a Brahman himself and he drank from our container.

Q: Among other activities that you participated in outside of your diplomatic and official responsibilities, there must have been others that occur to you after the passage of time that stand out in your mind, individuals as well as events perhaps that you felt were significant?

WILSON: I may say this, that wherever I've been I have felt that I simply *had* to do something that was *my own thing*, as they say these days. I could not devote myself just to official chores, looking after ill members of the post or playing bridge or just participating in a diplomatic life. I had to do something and this, of course, is personal. I just had to do something that was educational and creative as far as I was concerned. Perhaps that's the heritage of my education; the ability to seize the opportunities. I had to do something to keep the mind alive, as well as the body in those hot, hot climates, if you don’t take exercise, you really do go to lard. The photographs before and after Calcutta are quite revealing on that score!

When we were in Tehran from 1947 to 1949, I became active in the Iran-America Relief Society. Mrs. Dreyfus (Mrs. Louis G. Dreyfus, wife of the U.S. Minister to Iran, 1939-1943) was the wife of the Minister in Tehran during the war years. She had spent her time ministering to the patients living in the cave area south of Tehran, which was considered the most devastating slum area in the city. There was an outbreak of typhoid fever and she went down there, I was told, day after day after day. She would go among them and take what medicines she could and minister to them. She would be taken home, take off her clothes, everything she had on, and send them to be boiled. She'd get into the bathtub and practically sterilize her body, she had been in such really terrible areas. When the plague was over, she established a clinic. I suppose that clinic has ceased to exist, but it did exist

up until the 1970's, I know.

When I was in Tehran, we raised money for them every year, and there wasn't a Persian anywhere who had fifty cents who wouldn't give a contribution towards what we were doing. The name of "Dreyfus" was magic. and it was *Mrs.* Dreyfus they were talking about. The clinic was really a great innovation of the time.

While we were there, the Iran-America Society established a new building under the guidance of an American doctor, Ben Avery, who was advisor to the Iranian Government. It was a tremendous event when the new clinic was opened with new, modern equipment, X-ray and other machinery, with Iranian doctors working and running it. We were responsible for seeing that it could still run, which was also the case with an orphanage.

Q: Was money for that clinic contributed as well by American businesses in Tehran?

WILSON: Oh, I'm sure the American businesses and the oil companies gave us money, but it was raised throughout the community. Whatever we did was supported by the diplomatic corps and hundreds of Iranians. Sometimes it was a bazaar in the embassy grounds, sometimes it was a ball with the Shah's sisters presiding, mostly we prepared great garden party bazaars with games, etc.

The Iran-America Relief Society also provided for an orphanage supervised by two Iranian women and two Americans, one of whom was a missionary lady who had been in Tehran for over twenty-five years, spoke perfect Farsi, and did our translating. It was really a priceless experience with these two Iranian ladies who spoke a bit of French and better shattered English than my Persian. But we would go together and discuss the running of the orphanage and the meals, what they were to eat, to make sure that they had balanced diets and find the cheapest way to buy rice and other necessaries, and who to get to contribute. It was a terrible place where they were, but it was better than nothing and it was one of those situations where you made use of local facilities and local means of carrying on. So you met people who were important in the social set-up of Iran, like these women in the Iran-American Relief Society, and met the person who was actually running the orphanage. (She happens to have been Armenian.)

On the lighter side of life in Tehran, we had the opportunity with our husbands to participate in excursions around the country, where we could meet with Persians, whom we certainly could not have visited with if it hadn't been for our diplomatic status. It is to the advantage of any embassy to have the members of the staff travel and learn as much as possible about the country. But that doesn't happen to have been the view of our second ambassador in Tehran, (Hon. John C. Wiley, U.S. Ambassador to Iran, 1948-1950), who decided that Evan could not leave town. But that was a somewhat unusual situation.

Q: Was he a career ambassador?

WILSON: Yes, he was. The first one was also a career ambassador, (Hon. George V. Allen, Ambassador to Iran, 1946-1948), and we happened to have been very good friends. He encouraged us to go on excursions and to find out, to learn what we could. Our second chief, Wiley, resented that, but under Ambassador Allen, Evan was sent out various times.

There was a wonderful trip to the Persian Gulf that he went on to greet a small American warship, perhaps a gunboat. He read the regulations about how you boarded a ship and how you saluted and what you said and so forth. The young lieutenant in charge of this ship did the same at his end. So they met, and Evan walked up the steps, somebody blew a pipe, and there was some saluting. Then, ultimately, this young officer and Evan looked at each other, and one said to the other, "You know, that really wasn't very well done. Let's do it over." So they did the whole thing over with more aplomb and general satisfaction.

I didn't get to the oil fields, but he did. Likewise Meshed... (considered the most holy city in Iran, now the headquarters for the Ayatollah Khomeini). No women were allowed at the time. We had it all laid on to go on a trip with the Qashqa'i migrating tribes, but Mr. Wiley lowered the boom and that was that. But we got around a bit and we were able to go places and meet people through our friends in other embassies.

Wherever one went around Iran, you went in convoy. You never went in a single car for fear of the breakdown on treacherous roads. On our trip to Isfahan, Persepolis and Shiraz, we blew out three tires. We carried two spares. So we would have been high and dry, but we got into the car of our British colleague and went on. The next day, the British driver was sent out with the last two retreads available in Isfahan and had the car fixed up. No new tires were available at that time. We found out afterwards that the Minister from Czechoslovakia came in the same day and he had blown three tires, but there weren't two there for him to buy. We'd gotten them first.

So, that's the way life was, and there was no air conditioning, there was so little electricity that there were no functioning fans, and it was a hot, dry, difficult climate to be in.

Q: And I believe also not very warm in winter?

WILSON: Oh, terrible. There was the time we had twenty-six inches of snow, and I went around the Embassy garden tapping the trees because they were so packed down with snow. The poor guard followed me around. He was scared to death. He thought I'd gone crazy and he didn't know quite what to do. We finally made contact and communication, and I went about my snow tapping.

People were skiing on every hill, and that was really terrifying, because there were, of course, no ski lifts, nor any conventions as to where to climb up and where to ski down. You skied up and you skied down, and neither Evan nor I had ever had a lesson. We borrowed skis. The children borrowed trays. The Embassy was very well equipped with

round tin trays which were excellent for coming down snowy hills and were generously loaned out. But you get out on a hill and look all around for a place where there wasn't anybody and it would be safe for us to have our try. But as soon as we got on the hill, by Jove, that was like a magnet for attracting other people. No, we didn't have very successful skiing excursions. Coasting on trays was more satisfactory.

Q: You met a wide variety of people wherever you went. With many of these people, have you remained in touch? I'm not talking about Americans now, although one could speak about that as well, but your recollections, as they are so vivid, make one wonder whether or not these relationships have been maintained over a period of time.

WILSON: I have a queer sort of memory pattern. There are lots of people in this life who collect people, and I have just never been able to. I have made masses of friends and there is somebody from every post we've ever been to with whom I correspond and keep up, but not a vast number. They have been of all kinds of nationalities. Actually, when I left a post, I had to close a mental door in order to open the next door and start over in an attempt not to confuse issues and people. I still correspond with an Indian friend in Calcutta and certainly in Beirut and Jerusalem and many of our English and French friends from every post since Cairo.

There's been somebody from every post but not a great many. I have regarded each post as a kind of challenge. Maybe that sounds stuffy, but once at a post, I was determined to find out everything I possibly could about that place; the religion, the archaeology, the history, the geography and so forth. We traveled as widely as possible and made friends hither and yon and knew people, vast numbers of them very well. I worked with the women in locally-sponsored activities. I admit that I probably wouldn't have met those women if I hadn't been sought after as Evan's wife, and asked if there was anything I could do. What they had particularly in mind was, would I join this club with them and so forth. But they were not women who were in any way connected with the people who did business with my husband or with others in the Consulate or Embassy. They became my friends, my contacts, and when we had a party, my friends were asked as well as Evan's friends.

Sometimes. it was quite funny. He would think that certain people who came in were my friends, so he would go up and greet them most cordially and find out who they were. I would do the same for him. And then, once in Calcutta, a man finally came up to us and said, "But where is Dr. Esterline?" And we said, "Oh, he lives two doors down." And we'd been having the best time! He was a doctor. We had a lot of doctors present, and it never occurred to us, to me, that it wasn't a friend of Evan's. And it never occurred to Evan that it wasn't a friend of mine. So we had to put them straight and send them out quite late for dinner at the Esterlines.

But it was particularly fun in India, because we had a large garden and we did entertain outside, which people enjoyed. They knew they would meet a peculiar assortment of people when they came. It would be international. There was not an active diplomatic

corps. The consular corps met from time to time to have a pretty good time together, but they didn't have much business. We knew better the business people and the legal people and the doctors and the citizens, business British and business Americans and business Indian, and they seemed to appreciate very much being asked to our house.

Parties had not always been that open, and it was quite a shock to the British sometimes to see how many Indians there would be at our house and they were not just the ones who had gone to school in England and were a part of the Establishment. I'm afraid we referred to them, some of them, as the "trained seals", and that's not the group that we tried to get to know, and did.

I guess the greatest compliment I ever had was from an Indian woman who came and asked me to help her and her group do something about improving the diet of the poorest of the poor. They weren't eating poorly and they were weak. They were not well developed, and I could help them participate in teaching them. They had to learn to read. They had to learn to do something to make money and eat better.

I said I really didn't feel qualified. I didn't speak Bengali and I wasn't trained in the work they were talking about, I was flattered, of course but I just didn't feel adequate. She turned to me and she said, "You know, we're not adequate either. We don't know. We know from our experience with the British that certain things have to be done about the poorest people of our community and the refugees that come into Bengal from East Bengal. We've got to teach them and do something about it, but you see the British always did it. They didn't ask us to participate. We saw them do it, but we weren't doing it with them. Now it is up to us to do it, and we just don't know how. You come and help us try to learn." So I did. I don't think I was a great help, but it was too touching to refuse to go to their meetings, and they made a business of talking English so that I could participate.

Much the same thing happened in Beirut quite sometime later, in 1963. The American Women's Club there decided to try to run some sort of bazaar where we would have Lebanese come in and sell their own products. We would encourage, we would accept, only handmade things that were crafts of the country. They had to meet certain quality standards. It wasn't anything anybody chose to make, but something that we chose to accept as of artistic and economic value and beauty and some sort of significance, to promote their local trades and crafts of which there are so many.

It started on a very small basis, a great many things made by the blind, baskets and brushes and simple things woven with straw, some locally made knives and some marble work. It expanded gradually over the next three years until we had the whole lobby of a major hotel taken over by the American Women's Club. That was our part, to take over and organize.

Each booth was run by a different Lebanese charity and every religious confession in Lebanon was represented, anyone who had quality goods, each full group had its member

on the advisory committee which selected suitable goods that were of sufficient beauty and quality to be worth showing. So we had Druze, we had all kinds of Christians, we had all kinds of Moslems and all kinds of Orthodox groups, each with their own charitable organization represented and the goods that they made. A great deal of this, of course, was linen work and embroidery more than anything else. But we had many crafts which the group thought qualified as art goods, and it was a most enormous success.

I had a very dear friend who was the executive secretary of the Red Cross in Beirut, and she came and threw her arms around my neck at the close of one particularly successful year, the last year I was there, and said, "I just can't stand it. This is something I have tried all my life to bring the different confessions together under one roof doing something together. And here you came, a foreigner, and you've done it and it's just marvelous." Nothing has ever made me quite so happy as to have had this said, and the bazaar went on to bigger and better things.

It was such a success that the government allocated a building and permanent quarters so the sale could continue under the same sort of auspices with an American club's participation in it. This lasted until the recent troubles and revolutionary situations arose in Beirut in the 1970s. Whether it will come back, I don't know, but for the years that it lasted, it was really a step that everyone was proud of.

Q: What were the proceeds used for specifically?

WILSON: I think everyone made their own profits and used them for their own activities. I know that the American community wanted to put screens in a certain hospital.

Q: You spoke about your interest in the teaching of art in Jerusalem

WILSON: Yes, I'd been docent at the National Gallery for two years here during a Washington assignment and I suddenly realized that maybe I could put that experience to some useful, productive purpose in Jerusalem where it was extremely hard to find interesting, intellectually stimulating jobs of work to do.

Eventually, I got to teaching an Arab girl's high school art in the most simple form, history of art and something about appreciation. We've always traveled around the world with a great many art books of our own. These were my only resource materials. In due course, I got a similar position in a Jewish high school in the Israeli sector of Jerusalem. This was in 1965 and in 1966 up until the time of the Six Day War

It was necessary to use my books, and it was the only artistic experience of that sort that any of these children had ever had. It was, of course, very simple and perhaps primitive, but they enjoyed it and at least got some idea of what artistic representation can be.

Then I showed my notes from the National Gallery to the people who were then in charge of organizing the building just completed for the Israel Museum, and suggested that they

should have a docent program there. The lady in charge of educational work was very interested, came and looked through my papers. Then, clearly doubting my capacity she said, "Perhaps you'll come and demonstrate what you're talking about." So I went down to the Museum where I could not be a docent, because I did not speak Hebrew. They'd produced the group of people who would be available to be docents who did also speak English. They gave me one picture, a Monet, of water lilies, to discuss, to demonstrate what I was able to do with the docent techniques in discussing pictures with children, I had never done it except for children under the sixth grade. They were quite clearly astonished that I really was able to do it, and I went back three times to re-demonstrate for different groups.

Whether it did any good, whether they ever really established a docent group, I do not know, but I know it pleased them that I was able to cite specific examples of things that they could notice and observe in the beauties of Israel itself.. that they hadn't really appreciated until they actually looked at a picture and thought about what beauty is. So that was educational and rewarding for me and, I hope, for one or two others. Certainly the children learned something.

Q: It has struck me that your life in the Foreign Service has had two strands. One, your ability to bring some order out of chaos; that is to say, a good deal of your Foreign Service life has had periods where there was great personal difficulty, but at the same time, you have accomplished things with extraordinary skill. At the same time, you have also managed to pursue this thread of self-education and self-enrichment. This must have taken extraordinary determination on your part or was it something that came naturally to you? Were your interests so directed that you managed to seize the opportunities that came to you? I am thinking of your activities and your long association with the Textile Museum and the contribution that you made on a large scale to that institution, not only in the context of the collection itself, but in arousing the interest of others in the work of the Museum and gaining their participation.

WILSON: Well, that's kind of a sweeping statement! I don't know exactly how to reply except that I've always been intrigued by textiles, for no particularly known reason except that I was introduced to them at an early age at home.

Q: When you say you were introduced at an early age at home, what do you mean by that?

WILSON: Well, I was the only girl among three brothers, and there was always a great line of delineation between boys and girls. My stepmother figured that I should be female and I should learn all about lace, and if you're told that this is what you're going to learn, you learn it. But I did discover later that the woman from the Metropolitan Museum that I used to go and take lessons with really did arouse an interest that I was not clearly aware of, and suddenly I realized that these things were there to be seen and loved and admired.

From time to time throughout my Foreign Service career I bought pieces just because I

could afford them. They were not expensive like rugs. They were beautiful beyond words, and I just plain liked them. They weren't going to be broken by small, small children in the home or destroyed in the process of packing. They were safe to buy, and I did like them, so we used them as decorations around the house. I had quite a lot by the time Evan retired in 1967. I took a few pieces to a friend in the Metropolitan Museum, and she was so excited that she was telephoning all over the United States to try to get some information and then told me to go and see the Textile Museum.

Q: So you went to the Textile Museum?

WILSON: Yes. My friend, whom I knew at the Metropolitan, said I should go to Louise Mackie at the Textile Museum. She was her student and knew that Louise would be interested in what I had. I was so taken by Louise Mackie, a most remarkable, young woman, that I worked there from about 1972 to 1985 organizing and getting a docent program underway and keeping it going. I've never enjoyed a volunteer job quite so much. But I found that many of my pieces were pretty good. I had not made too many mistakes. They were well worth far more than the investment. Sometimes they're on exhibition at the Textile Museum now.

Q: This leads me to ask you another question that has been in my mind as we have been talking. Granted your academic grounding which was serious, a good deal of your interest in the places where you have been has included not only the historical and the political, but the artistic. You have acquired an expertise which goes beyond just the casual. How did you manage to do that? You have spoken about people who assisted you at various places, but it must have meant a great deal of study on your part and a good deal of traveling. At the same time, there must have been a strong interest on your part to have helped you acquire the expertise, which obviously you did.

WILSON: I really cannot claim to any great expertise. I grew up in a family that was keenly interested in the arts. My brother has been a painter all of his life by career and he taught me a great deal. Four years in London, I spent a great deal of time in museums, as I did in Washington, where we had two four-year assignments. Who is to know where one's appreciation may come from for artistic shapes, forms, and so forth? I have always been interested in learning about the arts available, out of the past or the present, in the posts we've been in. We've been fortunate enough to seek out archaeologists, teachers who knew what they were talking about, and just plain friends.

Anything that I have done, however, in the field of actual activities I must make quite clear, I never did alone, and I never forced anyone to participate with me. There have always been people who have thought that, "Well, this is a good idea. Let's go on with that," and have worked with me on the various projects. Nothing could have been done by me alone, and it certainly could not have been by lowering the big stick and giving orders.

But there are people artistically inclined in any post in the world, and you can find them and get involved. That has certainly been my interest. I have said l have always felt I had

to have something intellectual to some degree, to keep my mind alive and not get bogged down with the turmoil of the political or social situation in the posts in which we found ourselves.

Q: Would you say that the satisfactions that you and Evan Wilson experienced in the Foreign Service paralleled each other?

WILSON: There's no question that he was interested, in everything that I did and pleased that I did them. It improved the profile of the United States, and he was awfully happy that I was able to get involved with women in women's work and the activities going on in the community. He attended the performances that took place, but he was always interested in hearing and supporting my efforts. Needless to say, I couldn't help but be interested in what *he* was doing, but I never tried to second guess him. I tried to know his colleagues that he was working with of various nationalities and I tried to be aware and to keep up with the current political goings-on. There were, of course, many incidents in the life of the embassy or the embassy personnel that concerned me.

I think I tried to make this clear earlier on that one of the most satisfactory aspects of the Foreign Service was the intimate relationship of each to other. We had each other as a family. None of us had mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, cousins and what have you. We were each other's family and we could share with each other the joys and the sorrows.

In Tehran, I once told somebody that my real business was running a marriage bureau. We presided over either five or six weddings of members of our embassy staff, acting as mother of the bride and housing the bride and giving marital advice. It was incredible. And Evan became very good at giving away brides. But it was enormous fun to share in the joy, and we loved it. He didn't have to do it, but we were able to be friendly with all our staff and to make ourselves available.

Then, there were the times of terrible tragedy and awfully rough business. An Air Force plane crashed in Tehran, killing all five members, it was a pretty bad time with five sudden widows, and one producing a baby within a couple of days. If we hadn't felt close to each other, having shared activities one way or another, a perfect stranger isn't awfully useful at a time like that, but we had our friendly attachments and our connections from joint things that we had done together.

In Calcutta, there was an occasion when we had two children in one family with typhoid fever. One, our number two's wife, was pregnant with their second child. There was another young woman. She and her husband were on their first post. She was pregnant, produced twins who were born prematurely and died and she went into convulsions. Someone else's child was pecked by one of the vultures flying overhead. A mad dog had bitten another person. These things all happened at one time in the course of one two-week period. A new arrival had a child who we thought had spinal meningitis, who was in a coma and delirious and desperately ill. They were all at one time if we hadn't had a series of wives ready to go from house to house to see what could be done, what had to be

done, where a doctor had to be called in as a consultant, and take action and do it, we would have been lost.

That period passed off. But the young man whose wife nearly died, and his babies did, was promptly riffed because he was too young to have had military service to his credit, and the Administration of the time was enforcing their first great RIF (Reduction In Force). Out he went. It was a heartbreaking time for the entire office. Someone, as a joke, sent out a notice shortly thereafter on the first of April saying that all leave had been canceled to save money, and the gloom was such that you can't believe. Nine months later, there were three more babies in the Consulate.

Q: Speaking of babies, one of the things that we haven't talked about, of course, is children and how you have viewed your own children and they their experiences and how you have observed other children in the context of the Foreign Service.

WILSON: I felt very strongly from the beginning that my life was primarily tied up with my marriage and my husband. The children were wanted, planned and adored, obviously, but I did not figure that my husband should be deserted on behalf of the children. Therefore, the children must be a part of his life and of my life. They must take pride in their father and family life as a whole.

In any case, we never allowed ourselves, in front of the children, to be sorry for them or to pity their hard lot in having to move, to leave friends, to go to a strange school. We have tried to make life an adventure and a shared adventure where they were part of Daddy's great career.

There was the time, of course, when our little boy, who was mad crazy for animals, told his father that if he didn't behave he was going to tell Dean Acheson about him and he'd better see that he got assigned to Nairobi. That's where he, Billy, wished to go. He was sure Dean Acheson could arrange it. So they did care and they did enjoy their life, and we had wonderful picnics and excursions of all kinds. In Calcutta, we even went off to ride elephants though the Kaziranga Game Preserve.

But that doesn't mean that it was all sunshine and light. It was really awful to go to Calcutta and have to put the children in boarding school. We knew that they could not tolerate the heat. They had had endless troubles with boils and eye infections in Tehran where it was hotter than Hades. We had no alleviation from fans or air conditioners. So we knew that they would not tolerate the summer in Calcutta. There was no use pretending, so we sent them to boarding school, to the only place where they could all three be together within reasonable distance of Calcutta. We could have sent them to a better school nearer Delhi, but it might have taken us two or two and a half days to get there if there had been a crisis. In Calcutta, we could get to Darjeeling in less than a day. They were then six, eight and twelve, and that was pretty awful. But we survived it, and they were home through the winter, through the cooler months. It wasn't very cool, but they were there.

Of course, it was the busy social season of Calcutta, so there were difficulties, but they were perfectly satisfied and came to know and play with the young of Calcutta. I think it was hardest on the oldest girl, because she was ready for more challenges and more experiences than the rather primitive school could provide. It was basically devoted to Anglo-Indians and run by very stern missionaries. She was ready for something much bigger, and I had to bring her back to the U.S. and put her in boarding school so that she had four years of boarding school here when we were in Calcutta and then London. A really tough way to mature.

But none of the children has ever regretted the experiences. Or so they say. They were made to feel that they were adventurers and that they were being part of the world. They have basically maintained an interest in the world and what goes on therein.

I have been able in the course of time, for instance, during that very bad time in Calcutta and the time I spoke of in Tehran, to help people in bad, bad trouble. I have had my own bad, bad times, and my friends have rallied around and made life possible. Our son died when we were in Beirut and he was at graduate school in Seattle. That's one of those things that you don't get over. You simply find a way to live with it. But it's your friends you care for and know who see you through, and you know that too.

Everything from this story works both ways. What you give, you get; what you get, you give. If you want to make it an exciting life, you can, and anything I've done, though it's been volunteer, I've had many very great rewards, intellectual and in terms of friendships. Above all, we held together as a family.

Q: The characteristic, that comes to my mind, of course, in listening to what you've had to say is that of considerable, more than considerable, a great deal of independence of attitude and execution. When you were first in the Foreign Service and thereafter, did you rely a great deal on people, women, around you as exemplars or did you go your own way instinctively? Do you look back on either individuals or sets of circumstances that you realize now or at the time were important as indications of a way life ought to be lived in the Foreign Service? Or did you make this kind of life that you and Evan lived the adventure that it came to be, out of your own approach?

WILSON: I don't really know how to answer that except that my whole education, the schools that I went to, particularly Smith College, with which I have retained close associations all my life, I suppose I absorbed a feeling of the obligations of life, participation, the necessity of participating and reaching out to others and trying to feel really a part of things, not just as observer of life and not just concerned with making money.

We entered the Foreign Service at a time when the posts were so small that one had very little guidance. We've had some wonderful chiefs and many wonderful colleagues we cherish to this day with whom we worked out problems together. On the whole, however,

I must confess that Evan found himself in pretty important senior positions. I suppose that during our years in Tehran, 1947 to 1949. I think he was a second or even third secretary, he was to all intents and purposes a DCM. They didn't call it that then, but he was the ranking officer. He was doing political work, but was also doing administrative work and accounting work for his sins, and when the Cultural Affairs Officer forgot to get a security clearance and was suspended, Evan became the Cultural Affairs Officer, and our art books came into their own. That's an extraordinary experience nowadays when there are probably a half a dozen second secretaries in Tehran or a post of that size.

He was Consul General in Calcutta; don't really know why. They just decided he could do it. Nobody was more surprised than he. When he got through with his year at the National War College, everybody got assignments the next day, except Evan Wilson, wondering if he was to be fired. He was beside himself. He went to see Ray Hare. Ray said, "Well, so-and-so was going to talk to you. You'd better see him." So he got him on the telephone and he hemmed and hawed and said, "Well, Bert Mathews was going to take care of this one." And he got nervouser and nervouser and nervouser and, finally, Bert got up the nerve to tell him they wanted him to go to Calcutta. They knew it was a terrible assignment, especially with three small children.

But we'd had a year of tranquility in Washington since we'd left Tehran, so were not demoralized. In any case, in those days 1951, no one thought of refusing a post.

The Indians seemed pleased to have somebody who was so young and getting around, doing things, seeing things, and asking questions. Besides, we did have a very nice house that we were allowed to paint and fix up, and a huge garden. All these things made a difference.

The most exciting people came through. I think immediately of Mrs. Roosevelt, Ralph Bunche, and Adlai Stevenson. But we had visitors of every type whom we had an opportunity of meeting and talking to and sometimes housing. And I want to tell you that makes you feel pretty good. Even Cardinal Spellman was an experience!

Q: Did you ever know anyone who was actually put out of the Service for alcoholism?

WILSON: The diplomatic life is a life deeply involved in protocol and ceremony, and there is far more drinking involved than is good for anyone, especially in tropical posts. I think it would have been done more tactfully. One wouldn't know. People would disappear for this reason or that reason or had to be transferred or there was some problem. I think that sort of thing would have been handled with extreme tact. There was a long period when homosexuals were simply not acceptable in the Foreign Service. They were considered a special kind of risk. An alcoholic can be considered a certain kind of risk, and I'm sure that those who were found to be such probably resigned for one reason or another in a quiet sort of way.

Nowadays, the Department gives help and counseling, support, and tries to take action

before trouble comes. In the matter of my own behavior and dress, I figured that so long as I could get dressed and fixed up and perform my more formalized protocolary duties, it was all right to do the other things too. I know I have shocked Foreign Service wives badly by appearing in the garden in shorts and doing the weeding myself, or planting plants, or sitting on the floor and painting our books with an anti-mildew chemical in Calcutta. The servants were sometimes so embarrassed that they didn't dare leave the room, but didn't know what to do until I finally said, “It’s all right, you can go, or else you can sit down and do it with me.”

Well, by Jove, they sat down and did it with me. Nobody ever heard of such a thing happening! But it did, and I never felt ashamed about doing the dirty tasks or painting or scrubbing up this or that as the necessity arose, because it was not understood or there was nobody for whom that was the assigned job of work. I have shocked Foreign Service wives who thought it was undignified but I felt it was all right so long as I could be dressed and dignified and carry on with appropriate manners when the hour came for that sort of thing. Naturally, it’s not everybody that agrees with me.

The same went with the children. You've heard all about the number of help that you have in a house in India, but my children were simply never allowed to ring a bell. It became known and understood in the kitchen that they were not to ask for milk or squash, whatever it was they were supposed to be getting for refreshment. They had to go and get it and they had to clean up the messes they made. It was wonderful the day I watched, without his realizing it, our head bearer in Calcutta standing on the porch with arms folded watching the kids -- there were six of them -- rampaging in the garden. When the visitors left, Mohammed pointed his finger at Billy and said, "All right, now clean up." And he did. That sort of thing seemed perfectly natural to me and to them, but that's not the way that people think of the Foreign Service in the Orient. It really depends upon the parents and how they see the situations that they’re in and how much they are willing to stand up and be counted as believing in a certain way of bringing up their children.

Q: To continue the family context or extend it a bit further... did Evan talk with you about his work, about the political situation wherever you might be or did you depend really upon yourself to inform yourself?

WILSON: Oh no, we talked, naturally. We talked a great deal, and he would explain situations, in general. But I never asked about particular details and in many ways, I suppose I was politically pretty naive, I didn't even know who the CIA officers were in Calcutta. I knew that there were an awful lot of political people, but they were all friends, played tennis together or what have you, and I simply didn't think about it. If I asked questions, he answered them, and there were times when he said, "Don't forget, this is absolutely between you and me and nobody else." But I'm a good secret keeper, it's never occurred to me to report what Evan said about this or that, though the temptation arose to ask about his mysterious meetings in Calcutta in 1953. Years later, I learned that Nick Thacher (Hon. Nicholas G. Thacher, later U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia) and family had gone to Kalimpong in India on "vacation" and various other officers made trips about

the Himalayan area. Coded messages were rushed back and forth, and it was almost arranged to bring the Dalai Lama out of Tibet and away from the Chinese. At the last decisive moment, dough balls were juggled in the air by His Holiness' retainers, and the one opened contained the order to "stay". The Thachers came home and no one knew what had been going on.

Q: A great many aspects of Foreign Service life that you've described have been very positive and so they should be regarded, but there must have been circumstances which were perhaps more difficult, in the context of embassy living and approaches to given situations that needed a great deal of skill in either resolving or making do-able.

WILSON: Yes, of course, that's true. We had two ambassadors with their respective wives who brought us near the breaking point through the difficulties they inflicted upon us, not only us, but the rest of the staff as well. Neither ambassador trusted Evan. I said to him one night, "You know, Mrs. Wiley simply doesn't trust me." He replied, "And Mr. Wiley doesn't trust *me.* We are 'persona non grata' and there's nothing we can do about it except try to follow orders." And they *were* orders. They were people with whom we could not discuss anything, and she would make requests of me that she knew were out of order and were impossible to fulfill.

The same situation arose later in Beirut in the 1960s where Evan, as DCM, was excluded from all substantive work, and accusations were leveled at both of us, at home and abroad, that would be termed unacceptable by today's standards. In the 1960s, there seemed no recourse. Evan might have demanded a transfer, but could not bring himself to make a complaint.

This is the sort of situation that has wrought havoc in the Foreign Service of the 1970s and the 1980s.

Q: You and Evan were in Jerusalem and at a particularly difficult time. Would you talk about the Six Day War period when you were there?

WILSON: People have often asked me how I liked being in Jerusalem at that time, which was 1964 to 1967, and "like" is not a word that you could use. It was interesting and stimulating. We saw our role as that of a couple trying to spread a little truth on both sides the line.

Jerusalem was divided into three parts. (See map of Jerusalem as of June 1967, included in this transcript folder.) The center sector was the old walled city with medieval walls built by Suleiman the Magnificent in the Sixteenth Century. The Israeli sector is to the west which was the obvious direction for Jerusalem to grow and expand, the land being open, rolling hills. To the east was the section known as the Arab Old City. It was a section outside the walls that had been developed after 1948 as the Arab city of Jerusalem and the capital of the West Bank. All roads circulated out of Jerusalem and kept in communication with Amman, Jordan, and the rest of the country.

We had a one-room apartment as a "pied-a-terre" within the consulate building in the Arab sector, and the main office and our home was in the Israeli sector. It was the first Arab house ever built outside the walls and is really a very beautiful building. The office was on the top floor, a 1ater addition to the house. That's where the electronic equipment was and files and records and so forth. We could cross the Mandelbaum Gate anytime we wished, except between eight at night and eight in the morning, it was closed to all traffic at that time.

In the daytime, United Nations people and consular people could go back and forth at will. Non-official people could only cross if accompanied by somebody from a consulate. So when all those visitors came, we had to meet and transport them back and forth.

We had two sets of friends. They could never meet. We had the two homes and we had two sets of domestic help. The people who helped us in the Arab sector were the clerks in the office who made extra money by serving dinner, which I would have to transport from the New City where we had a cook. But they were kind, helpful and devoted and they could serve very nicely so that we could have as many as twelve people, three card tables, for a very attractive dinner.

If you are serving dinner under those circumstances, there is no way that you can maintain a strict formal protocolary atmosphere, people stand around and have drinks and then you ask them to pull to the side of the room while the tables are brought in, set, and ready. You sit down and eat, and when you're though, you stand up until the tables can be taken away. Then you sit down and have coffee, mill around. But that was a wonderfully productive way of having interesting conversation. People had to let their hair down. There was no way to be stuffy. We could have people meet each other from various parts of the West Bank and get many points of view that were extremely interesting.

In the New City, we had a dining room that could seat ten. All Israeli parties were small, and drinking light, conversation wonderful.

Q: But the decibel level was very high I've understood.

WILSON: Well, that's because the room was very low-ceilinged.

Q: No, I mean that Israelis love to talk.

WILSON: Well, we had perfectly marvelous conversations, I've never had a dull evening in Jerusalem, and we were generally the only foreigners at an Israeli party, usually ranging in number from four to ten. Meals were simple and good, prepared by the hostess, and the purpose of such gatherings was conversation, always stimulating and rewarding, with the subjects totally unpredictable. We could ask questions about religious practices that they felt quite free to answer, about the different sects and how they observed, and their problems with the American Jews who suddenly became more kosher than the

Israelis in Israel, although they had never been kosher in the United States. The culinary problems that created for Israeli hosts were nobody's business, because so many did not keep kosher kitchens themselves.

So we enjoyed them and were very well received and had a lot of friends, probably more friends than we did on the Arab side. Arabs are more inclined to be suspicious of Americans who lived in the Jewish quarter than the Jews were suspicious of us even though we went to the Arab quarter almost daily. Half of our staff lived on each side of the Mandelbaum Gate.

Q: Did you ever feel, either you personally as a wife or Evan professionally, derivatively as far as you're concerned, that he arrived in Jerusalem after most of his career or a great deal of it, up to that point had been spent in Arab countries?

WILSON: You mean, did that make it difficult?

Q: Yes.

WILSON: No, I think that by and large they were interested to have him there, I'm sure they were watching us very closely. I know that our house was debugged every so often and I know that we were watched. We were not allowed to have any association or communication with members of the Israeli Government. There were a few people who had been Evan's friends. He had worked with them during an assignment in Washington during the latter part of the war and immediately afterwards, before Israel was a nation, and there were various of them that he knew from then. They were good friends. He had made friends also serving as the Secretary for the Anglo-American Palestine Commission in 1946. He went to Palestine with the Commission and was there for three or four months.

Q: This is the Commission of Inquiry?

WILSON: Yes. Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry on Palestine. (The Committee's report was issued in April 1946.) He helped draft the final statement they unanimously agreed to. In the course of the hearings that he arranged and scheduled for Arabs, Jews, and British alike, he came to know them all and knew them by the names they had before Israel became independent. Most Israelis have changed their names into Hebrew forms since then. He maintained until the end of his life a close friendship with Eliahu Elath, who was here with the Jewish agency. Later, he was Ambassador for Israel in London when we were there and he was President of the University when we got to Jerusalem. We were always friends. Admitted that they disagreed on certain points, but on friendship they agreed.

The friends that he had known here during the early days and the colleagues he had met in London, he was not able to see when we lived in Jerusalem. One of them came to call as soon as he arrived in Jerusalem on assignment with the Israeli Government. He came to

see Evan and they sat and talked for hours and had a wonderful time. Evan was assured that in our case it's going to be different. "You and I will see each other. We will communicate, and it's just going to be that way." It never was. Evan never saw him again, and he'd obviously been watched going into our place. When he'd been there, he was told... never. So, I mean, they were first-name friends from years back. We just simply never saw anyone connected with the government.

This was because from the time of the partition of Palestine and the creation of Israel in 1948, Jerusalem was designated by the United Nations and accepted by most western powers and the United States as a separate entity, a part neither of Israel nor of Jordan. As Consul General, Evan reported directly to the Secretary of State and did not communicate through our Embassies in Tel Aviv or Amman. His reports often differed from those sent from the rival capitals, so he was not well received by either Embassy. In Amman, a cultural affairs officer sent to Jerusalem at Evan's request to run a library and certain programs was told not to "trust that man. Wilson. He carries water on both shoulders." In Tel Aviv, we of the Consulate General were referred to as "traitors to the cause." During and after the Six Day War. The Israeli reports on activities among the civilian population and the United Nations personnel as well as their buildings were quite contradictory to the facts observed and reported by Evan and his 'boys' on the West Bank, which forms a large part of the Jerusalem bailiwick.

We knew the justices on the Supreme Court that was centered in Jerusalem. We knew all the people connected with the Israeli Museum and numbers of doctors and administrators connected with the hospital, and then people connected with the arts, simple people, and very sophisticated people. They are a very root-conscious people and they associate with people of their own background and their own interests. There's a lot of snobbery about whom they associate with, and the British and American Jews, who have become Israelis, all lived in the same area which is known as the Anglo-Saxon Shicoon (district). And the French lived in the French Shicoon. And the Germans and Austrians lived in the German Shicoon and so it goes. That way they don't mix too much socially.

We had friends among all of them, and there was almost always some conversation about what was going on on the West Bank and we would tell them and hope that they understood how well the people were basically living. The driver over in Jordan had a much better life than the Jewish driver who had come from Morocco and lived in Jerusalem. We could talk about things like that, and they would discuss failings and failures and things that were not going entirely well with them. But we didn't get acrimonious or discuss the shootings and such. That was office business that Evan and his “boys” investigated and took care of.

The result was that we had good friends on both sides, and when the War came (Hostilities commenced June 5, 1967. A cease-fire went into effect June 11, late in the day.) We knew that almost everyone in Israel had a code number to respond to, and when that code number was called on the radio, that man knew exactly where he was to report and that he was to report at once. So our servants (the couple lived in the house) departed

before the War started. They had children and they had a home, and I guess their children were in a boarding school of some sort, or boarded with somebody. They didn't live with us. In any case, they were gone for the six days.

I had bought quite a lot of food and I suppose I was naive, probably stupid, that I hadn't bought potatoes and bread by the bushel. I had a couple of legs of lamb and I was afraid to take more. I thought it was greedy and that there were people who needed it worse than we. Well, I didn't know that a whole group of people had suddenly arrived in the Consulate and I don't know how they got there to this day. But they were called Communicators. They were in battle fatigues, battle boots, etc. Whether they were armed or not, I'm not prepared to say, but I know they had equipment put somewhere.

In any case we were responsible for thirty-five people for six days. There was a communal freezer in an annex to the office that was the consular section and the library, and we agreed forthwith: As we needed it, we would take food from the communal freezer, but I didn't have our own well packed as I suppose I should have. I just thought in terms of hoarding, of depriving the needy. But I did not know, it never occurred to me, that there would be thirty-five people!

The day the War broke out, the Israelis invaded the UN headquarters and took everyone out. This has all been written about in great detail in my husband's book (Jerusalem, Key to Peace, Washington, DC, The Middle East Institute, 1970), so there is no point in my going into it here. The UN group were to go to a certain hotel assigned to them by the Israeli Army, and that was the one place they were not going to go! They came straight to our Consulate. Now, we didn't have a great many rooms there. As soon as the shooting started, I had turned our livingroom into a dormitory and had eleven beds created out of bed parts and sofas, so that all could sleep in shifts. (Evan Wilson wrote: "At the height of the fighting, the Department ordered the evacuation of the remaining three wives. But as I informed my superiors with some asperity they were all working for me full time and, in any event, it would have been impossible to send them out with the heavy firing that was going on all around.") There was a little study where, quite surprising how many people got in there, but as many as there were fitted in. There was our bedroom, which was fairly large. So the UN people were turned loose there. They had a secretary with a typewriter and they did their business there. They gave their communications to be sent back to the UN headquarters to Evan to send out from the office upstairs. They are with us.

So, there was all of the UN crowd and a couple from the Hebrew School of Archaeology, the Deavers. He was the head of the School. She came to Evan and said she was a first class typist and she'd been a secretary before they were married. If she could be helpful, she would like to be. Well, Evan had one American secretary who could take notes and type and that was all. To have another person was an absolute gift of God. So he swore her in at once, and she started to work. They went back to the School only to sleep.

We had two guestrooms and had two people in each. They were separated from the house by a passageway. Nobody was very happy being back there, but that's the best we had to

offer. One wife, whose husband was on the other side, was staying with us, so she was sleeping in Evan's dressing room. It was a somewhat crowded situation with water filling two tubs. We were so afraid that something might burst and we had to be prepared. So we had two tubfuls of water and one tub empty. That could be used by everyone in the building. Some were inclined to forget that there were thirty-five other people waiting to use the bathroom.

I probably vastly underfed them. The Marines brought a great deal of canned food from their house, but nobody had any idea how many days the fighting would last. That it could end in six days never entered anyone's head. I was afraid that we were going to have to make what food we had last a long time.

However, we all survived. The last night before they broke up and all went home, we were only eighteen for dinner. We got out the turkey from the freezer. It was the last whole piece of meat that there was, and I said, "We're going to eat half of this turkey." It was a great big one, nearly twenty-four pounds, I think. In any case, I said, "We can only eat half of this, because there are a lot of people on the other side who haven't had a thing to eat and God knows when they *will* have. So we're going to eat sparingly, and I will take what's left to the Old City as soon as I'm allowed to cross." That's what we did, but needless to say, I did not cross the next day.

Neither did Evan. He didn't dare go to the Old City until he received absolute assurances that he would be allowed back. Being in charge of the office, he had to be where the communications were. Finally, after a couple of days, he did consider it safe.

The Old City Consulate office was the most severely damaged house in the Old City. There were gaping holes in the sides and roof. It was very badly damaged, and the men stationed there, there were fourteen people in the house throughout the six days, eating what canned foods there were around the place. We couldn't keep anything in our apartment so they were dependent upon the Pierson Halls who had the officer's apartment over the office.

The men came over, one a day, to get a bath, food, and drink, and then return. They knew the West Bank like the back of their hands and they circulated up and down seeking out American citizens for whom endless cables were being received and tracking down what was actually being shot up or blown up by Israelis after the War was over.

So it was a couple of days before I was allowed to cross and pursue various friends to find out what had happened where and to take food to as many people as I could. It had to be done on a basis of closest friends, because, after all, we didn't have for everybody. But I was able to find out what the situation was in the Old City. I mentioned before that I had been teaching art at a girls' high school, it was in the convent near the Dome of the Rock, by St. Stephen's Gate on the outskirts of the Old City, within the walls, a building known as Pilate's Palace.

I went to see if they were all right. They had not been damaged, but those nuns had realized that the War was coming and they had made their own personal, private census of the whole area around the Wailing Wall. They knew where everyone lived, how many women there were and how many children. The men were simply not there. So they knew that help would be needed and that there was bound to be trouble for all of those living in the quarter of the city beside the old Jewish quarter.

Within hours of the seizure of Jerusalem, the Israelis were bulldozing the entire quarter, creating what has become a great national square around the Wall. The Wailing Wall is the outside wall of the Temple Mount on which Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock are situated. Israelis destroyed everything in that area. Of the people living in the houses, some had a half an hour's notice, some of them had ten minutes, some of them were promised they were not to be destroyed, and then they were.

Q: These are Arabs?

WILSON: Arabs. They fled the area as fast as they could carrying as much as they could. Most of them had a child or more to take along, I spoke to a secretary who worked at the convent and had been living in that area. She had taken a mattress and a can of kerosene and somehow tucked away a change of clothes of some sort, and that's about it. She had two children to get out. They were not her own but somebody else's, and a woman who lived with her was similarly laden.

Something like 600 families descended upon a famous old caravansary, it was no longer a caravansary, but that was the being prepared to be an ethnic museum, so it was empty and took care of many masses of people who were living body to body with no sanitary facilities anywhere, no running water, and no food. But they had a place.

The nuns knew all about this, who they were, and had the numbers down. They said, "If we could just get food, we can get it to them." So I returned to the New City and called a great friend who was an understanding person and not in the least vindictive against the Arab population. She felt very, very shocked when I told her what was going on. No one in Israel knew about this bulldozing, but she believed me and said, "Obviously, we've got to do something about it. I'll call you back as fast as I can, but I'm quite sure that I can handle it."

A little bit later that day, she called me back and said she had made arrangements. There were two or three trucks that were going to be loaded with rice, flour and sugar in one-hundred pound sacks, and they would be taken to the convent. "Where is the convent? Where will we meet you? And how will we know?" So I said I would get to St. Stephen's Gate. They must enter the city by St. Stephen's gate, where gate and road offered wide enough space for the truck to pass, and I would go with them the few hundred yards to the convent. I would alert the nuns to be ready. And that's exactly what happened.

The nuns came down, and these powerful women carried one hundred-pound sacks up to

the top of the convent. They said, "If we don't get it up to the top, it will be looted, taken, and we won't be able to get it to the right people. If it's up there, we can control who goes up to get it and the right people will get the right amount."

Q: Is the convent still there? As a convent?

WILSON: Oh, yes, but I don't think as a school. The convent is still there. I don't know much about it. I went to see them when we went back to Jerusalem in 1973, and there was one sister that I had known. They are working among the Jews, I believe, and preaching and teaching. I don't know exactly what goes on, but the school had ceased to exist as such. It is a biblical historical place where Pilate was supposed to have held his court and judged Jesus. They show you the place on the floor where the game of knuckle bones was played. The Pilate part of the crucifixion story took place there or is supposed to have but no two people entirely agree.

Those nuns distributed the food and kept the people alive, and it was the head of the Hadassah Hospital administration who had made it possible. I had definitely gone to the right person. However, as I told you, the Israelis are a very group-conscious people, and this lady was a Scotch Jew, a botanist, a person with whom we used to go on picnics of exploration. Her husband was the chief administrator of the Hospital.

There were other friends of mine who were intensely jealous and resentful of my activities. One old friend, with whom I'd had the most laughing fun and many good times, became vitriolic. She called me up and said, "Just what do you think you're up to? What's Evan doing anyway, keeping snipers in the Consulate office?" And I said, "You'd better say that again, I don't quite understand." She said, "It's all in Newsweek."

The Newsweek arrived extraordinarily fast in Israel that week and was widely distributed. An American reporter had written that Evan had housed Arab snipers in the Consulate in the Arab section and that they had been shooting at the Israelis as they came through the Old City.

So, I said. "If you believed that story, you've known us pretty well for three years, I think you might have telephoned and asked him. You had no right to believe a thing like that without trying to verify it."

She said, “I don’t think it needs verifying.”

So I said, "Well, I guess there really isn't very much for us to talk about." I did not see her again before we left.

There was another friend who ran the school in which I taught in the Israeli sector and she called and made a similar accusation I said, "Well, I would like to come around and talk to you." So she said to come along, I went over forthwith and told her that I had been down there with the nuns and seen the desolation. She wanted to know what I had been

doing, so I told her what I had been doing and what I saw.

She turned to me and said, “You are nothing but a Nasser spy lying about what goes on. You know perfectly well no Israeli would do a thing like that?”

So I told her I was sorry if she felt like that. "If I'm a liar I think I'd better go home, but if you would like me to take you down there, I will take you now or tomorrow morning, whenever you say."

She said, “I wouldn't go there for anything!”

I said, “Well. I'm telling you what I've seen and what I know to be the truth, and you say I'm a liar, so I really think I don't need the rest of my tea." And I left, I never heard from *her* again either.

It was a terrible blow to find that people with whom I had been outgoing and outreaching simply didn't believe what I told them. They didn’t *want* to believe it. Demolitions were not published in the papers. Nobody reported blowing up village after village. But the Army knew exactly how much dynamite to put in a house so it would be seventy-five percent destroyed, but enough of the outside walls would be left so that, from a distance, it looked as though it was still a house.

Evan's men going in from the Jordanian side, knowing the inhabitants and being taken by the people and shown their houses, enabled him to report exactly what *had* happened, and the Embassy folk in Tel Aviv were furious because our military attachés had reported that the villages were intact. They had been allowed to look with telescopes from a distance, and from a distance it looked as if the houses were all right.

So it was a terrible ordeal, and when we went back to the Old City, it was a question of finding whom you could help, who was in the worst state, what money could do. Just walk around and talk to people trying to give some sort of comfort and encouragement, but by that time, we were punch drunk with exhaustion and there were so many people who needed so much. We were transferred in August. It was a place that was hard to go back to.

We returned in 1973. Evan was doing research for his book (Decision on Palestine: How the U.S. Came to Recognize Israel, Stanford, California, Hoover Institution Publication 218, Stanford University, 1979) and he had to go through the archives. So I went back and made a study of Palestinian embroideries for the Textile Museum, but it was pretty hard being particularly friendly with the people who had been so hurtful in wartime Israel.

Q: Of course, it's the more interesting that you talk about this right at this time when there is evidence that so much rethinking of attitudes toward subsequent developments in Israel is taking place.

WILSON: They had an enormous opportunity at that particular moment to build a constructive peace. The Arabs were so shattered and shaken, utterly distraught, that a little sympathetic understanding, a little effort, a real desire to have created peace would have been possible. In a conversation with a psychiatric doctor, an Israeli and an American citizen, he told me, "You should have had Arabs and Jews together here today." It was our farewell party held in two parts. I could only tell him. “It's fine for you as the conquerors to wish that the Arabs had come and bowed to you. I think if you had been conquered and trampled and your houses blown up, you wouldn’t care to come. The numbers of killed were fantastic. We had seen them lying in the street.

“Ask the survivors to come and have a drink with their conquerors? We simply couldn't subject them to that kind of humiliation, I said.

He said, “You’ve got it all wrong. They would be happy to be received as equals by us. We would all be equals together, and no problem would arise."

It was incredible to me that a psychiatric doctor could presume that that could be the result after a hideous, humiliating victory in war. It was indicative, I think, of a total tack of understanding of the pride, the humanity and the dignity of a whole people who had been displaced in the first place, driven out of their homes in 1948 and driven out of still more in 1967. The Israelis simply did not realize the depths of feeling and they really haven't realized it until today.

Q: If I can just ask you a little bit about the people who are denominated as Arabists. It has seemed to me in the course of these interviews that there was in the Foreign Service a group that came to be called Arabists, who very often spent most of their career in the Middle East and North African countries. Do you think that there developed a kind of group thinking about Arab-Israel relationships over a period of time?

WILSON: If you mean do I think that they have been tarred with the brush of anti-Jewish pressures... no. I simply do not. One could not. There is only one Israel or one Palestine, and there’s no way that a person could spend his entire life in a Jewish environment. It is commonly assumed, it seems, that all Arabs are the same. There are nineteen difference countries with different nationalisms and different cultures and different ideas... very different people. And the Arabs are as many, as diverse, and they have never been able to pull themselves together and unify.

They've done a great many, very stupid things. I don't think anybody is going to say the Arabs are one hundred percent right about anything, except that the Arabs formed ninety-five per cent of the population in that area in this Century and they were driven out in behalf of the five per cent who were Jews.

The Arabs are both Christian and Moslem and they had their own culture, their own ideas, their own sense of dignity and right and wrong. Why shouldn't people learn Arabic and work in the Arab World? Of course, this was true in China, where we had the best

Chinese service in the world. Suddenly, anybody who understood Chinese and understood the divisions that were going on was branded as a Communist. And the China service was wrecked. There are those who have tried to do the same thing to the Arabists.

Incidentally, Evan was never classified as an Arabist, because he hadn't studied Arabic in the Foreign Service Institute. He studied it on his own in the countries in which he was stationed. The only people that the State Department calls Arabists are people who have passed a certain Arabic exam. Evan's knowledge was not perfect. He could do pretty well understanding and making do with Arabic but he knew about the Arab World, their history, their culture, their religion and background.

FSO's in the Near East are not a group of people who try to indoctrinate each other and turn them against the Zionists. What they see is what they see. Basically, they report what they see and hear and what they learn from the people they talk to. Sometimes it's good and sometimes it's bad and sometimes it's stupid. There are rabble rousers and agitators in every community, and I don't know any officer who has lived out there who is going to support violence and the overthrow of governments or pushing the Jews into the sea or whatever you want to say. It is simply not true. The effort is to get actions and counter actions into perspective.

Now, in our own case, we went to Egypt. We knew nothing at all about the problem. We'd not been educated in it. We went there and were studying Egypt, and then, all of a sudden. We had an opportunity to go to Palestine. Later, I was evacuated there and I was shown around the Jewish quarter by an Arab, and people spoke to each other as acquaintances. There was a perfectly reasonable give and take. I'm sure on deeper levels and higher levels that it wasn't all that congenial. I didn't see that, and the pressures that were put on from various sources were something that we're really not involved with in this record

The Foreign Service officers enter their careers to learn from scratch like anybody else, and so a man serves in France for a long time, but that doesn't necessarily mean that he's anti-British or anti-German just because he speaks French. It's a specious argument that is used if you know anything about the Arab World. Then you have to be anti-Jewish, and that's a very hurting approach to those who are trying to serve the best United States' interests.

Q: One question I would like to ask you about is the changes in the Service that you saw as a result of the enlargement of the Service after World War II and the development of the so-called "Wristonization" of the Service. Did you feel at the time or afterwards that the people who entered the Service brought new things to the Service, new ideas, that perhaps in a positive sense improved the Service. Or did you have another view?

WILSON: Oddly enough, we were in London at the time of the "Wristonization" Program and Evan was the only senior officer who was willing to interview the candidates. One after another, the old-line Foreign Service officers had refused. It's one of those situations

that's got to be and it was perfectly possible to reject people, and he rejected several. One accepted for class 1 was such a superior character that his next post was DCM in a vert important country. His job at London was right at the top next to the Ambassador. There was no question but what he was an addition to the Service. He had been adding to it all his life. That was Win Brown. (Hon. Winthrop G. Brown, later U.S. Ambassador to Laos and Korea.)

There was another one, and as far as I was concerned, the wife came and pumped me dry to know how she should behave and what was important and what my thoughts about the whole situation were. I'm sure she had a lot to offer. She was an extremely intelligent active person, I think some were good and some were probably bad, I don't know. It's just the way things go.

You can't explain a lot of things that our Government does. At that time, no one could be a minister who was over fifty. Evan turned fifty at this time. Therefore, he was too old. The next President that came in, no one could be a minister who wasn't under. So he'd had it, so to speak, but that really didn't govern who was a minister and who was not a minister. There were things that were said. Rules that were not necessarily followed.

Of course, there are people who have been brought in from the outside who are deeply, deeply resented, and for good reason. It is most unfortunate that such a small percentage of career men and women are allowed to go to the top. It gets worse with every administration. That is something that tears everyone apart. It’s going to destroy the Foreign Service if there is no goal to reach. I had a good life and I did not feel that I was diminished or demeaned because I wasn't paid money. The opportunities that came my way made life interesting and exciting, We felt, as we had hoped, that we were a small part of the action.

***

BIOGRAPHIC DATA

Spouse: Evan Wilson

Spouse entered Service: 1937 Left Service: 1967

Present status: Widow of Minister Consul General Evan Wilson who died in 1984.

Posts:

1937-38	Guadalajara, Mexico
1938-41	Cairo, Egypt
1942-43	Mexico City, Mexico
1943-47	Washington, DC
1947-49	Tehran, Iran
1949-50	Washington, DC; National War College

1950-53 Calcutta, India
1954-57 London, England
1957-61 Washington, DC
1961-64 Beirut, Lebanon
1964-67 Jerusalem

Date and place of birth: March 30, 1912; New York City

Maiden name: Leila Whitney Fosburgh

Parents' names and professions:
James. B. A. Fosburgh, Investment banker, New York City
Leila W. Fosburgh

Schools:
Brearley, New York City
Ethel Walkers, Simsbury, Connecticut
Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts

Date and place of marriage: September 7, 1935; Berlin, New York

Children:
Leila W. Brown
Evan M. Wilson, deceased 1964
Martha L. Wilson

Profession: Foreign Service wife

Positions held at post:
Tehran. Iran: Iran-America Relief Society work on orphanage, Dreyfuss Clinic, American Women's Club, 1947-49; Calcutta. India: American Women's Club Chairman, Ran Benefit for Mother Teresa, Ran and worked with recreation group in orphanage, 1952; London, England: American Women's Club Dance, Family Planning Clinic, Women's Volunteer Services, Embassy Wives Speakers, 1956; Beirut, Lebanon: American Women's Club; Jerusalem: Taught Art History and appreciation.

Positions held in Washington, DC:
Board of Planned Parenthood of DC, 1936-37, 1943-44 & 1958-61; Doctors Assistant Planned Parenthood of DC, 1957-61, 1968-72; Smith College, DC Board various times, Benefit Chairperson 1958, Class President 1975-80; Major Gifts Chairperson 1950, Reunion 1985, Major Leadership Gifts National Fund Drive 1985-89; Docent at National Gallery 1959-61; Volunteer and Docent for Textile Museum 1972-86, Advisory Committee 1984, Finance Committee 1987.

End of interview