

Interview with Yvonne Leveque Jordan

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Foreign Service Spouse Series

YVONNE LEVEQUE JORDAN

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Yvonne des Landelles Leveque Jordan was interviewed on January 15, 1987, shortly before her 90th birthday. Mrs. Jordan was born April 28, 1897, in Vitry, Brittany, France, and was a young woman in post-World War I France when she met her future husband, Curtis Jordan.

JORDAN: He was a police commissioner in Brittany, an officer in the American Army, and I was an interpreter in a jewelry store owned by a childhood friend of mine. When the American forces arrived, (the owner) needed someone to help (who could speak English). It's a funny story how I met my husband, and it has nothing to do with the Foreign Service.

He came into the store with his Captain, who was a Catholic and wanted to buy a rosary for his wife. I showed him various rosaries at different prices and I said to the Captain, "If you buy this more expensive one I will give you a nice case for it." Well, my English was not perfect, and Curtis did not understand me perfectly. He thought I said "kiss". He asked, "What do I have to buy to get one?" "Get what?" I asked. "Why, a kiss," he replied.

From then on he was a faithful attendant at the store. He was always there. We were engaged a few months after that, before he was discharged in September. He left for the States, and didn't see him again until he came back to be married in 1921.

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Before his discharge, he had gone to Paris to take the Foreign Service examination. It was the first time it had been given outside the United States. This was in 1919, and there was quite a group of young American officers still in France who wanted to take the exam. I laughed at him when he told me he was going to Paris to take the examination.

I said, "But you haven't studied."

"Oh," he said, "I don't need to."

He was very well read and he told me later that he spent an hour at the Bibliothèque Nationale and read on foreign laws and so forth and passed the examination very well. He hoped then that he would get a post in France and that I would say "yes" and marry him, because my family objected very much to my going off. But we never did get a post to France.

He was first assigned to Belgrade, then to Prague. When I thought he was on his way to Prague, I got a cable and it said: "Haiti". That was far from being in Europe, and my mother said, "Of course, you are not going."

"Sorry, Mother," I said, "I've waited two years. I am going. I will marry him."

Letters were exchanged. He wrote, "There's a girl from Paris here and she came and met her fiancé here, and they were married. Aren't you as brave as this girl?"

"It's not a question of bravery, but this girl does not go after her man. He comes for her." Which he did. My family hardly knew him, so it was only fair that he should come and get acquainted with the family. He did, they loved him, and it worked out very well.

Q: And so you were married and went to Haiti?

JORDAN: We were married and we went on to Haiti, which was a perfect place for a honeymoon, because it was lovely there and we used to go horseback riding into the hills

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and so on. Of course, it was during the American occupation, so we had access to the horses from the “gendarmerie”.

The Minister was Bailly Blanchard who was a “boulevardier” if there ever was one. They say he could tell the kind of champagne he was drinking and so forth. Anyway, he went home on leave and decided to retire, and my husband, although it was his first post, was left as Charg# d'Affaires, which was very good for him. He had a promotion within two years. So it was vergood. One time, the Minister, who as I said was a known “boulevardier”, didn't want any fans in the Legation. Of course, there was no air conditioning in Haiti, and my husband suggested that they have some fans. He said jokingly to me, “I hope they send the old guy to freeze in Finland.” They got the fans, and we didn't think anymore about it. But when our transfer came, wwere being sent to Finland!

Q: Why didn't he want fans?

JORDAN: Old fashioned, old fashioned. You just sweat...

Q: ...and endure.

JORDAN: ...and endure, that's right.

Q: Stiff upper lip.

JORDAN: When the transfer came in 1922, my first child was about to be born and no shipping line would take me in those days. There was no flying then, so I had to stay there until my child was born.

Q: In Haiti?

JORDAN: In Haiti. And we left when my little girl was seven weeks old. My child was born with a black doctor and black midwife in attendance.

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Q: In a Haitian hospital or at home?

JORDAN: At home.

Q: At home, which was probably better. Was Haiti as poor in those days?

JORDAN: Oh, Haiti was poor, but the people were not unhappy. They just take it for granted that's the way life is and, in fact, they were quite jolly. We liked them very much. We were great friends with the Foreign Minister, whose wife was French, and we love Haiti.

Q: This was before the Duvalier regime? Way before the Duvalier regime?

JORDAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, a long time before. Dartiguenave was President. They had the Tonton Macoute then, but they were not in sight. Of course, there was American occupation (U.S. Marines).

Then we went to Finland where the Minister was a political appointee from Beloit, Kansas. Somebody who had never been away. You ought to hear stories about that guy! He had never had a formal outfit and he was parading up and down in tails ready to go to a big function. He said, "If the guys in Beloit could see me now!" His wife came to Finland for only a short visit. She refused to buy anything but tailored suits. "I've always lived in a tailored suit," she said. She was completely out of style in Finland where we did dress (up) quite a lot. Life in Finland was nice. We enjoyed it. We met a lot of interesting people. It was shortly after the end of the War (World War I), so there were a lot of wonderful Russian people who lived there...General Woyeikow, for one, who was the last person to speak to the Czar when he was put on the train and sent into exile.

Q: The General was in exile?

JORDAN: The General had left Russia, of course. His wife was in hiding. She was the daughter of the Grand Baron Fredericks, who was Majordomo at the Imperial Palace, and

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she was put in jail in Russia. One of the cleaning women took pity on her, gave her her clothes so she could escape as a charwoman, and she walked out of Russia into Finland. She was living in a little town on the coast there in hiding. She never came to Helsinki. She was one of those china doll types, very pretty.

Q: Of course, this is right after the War?

JORDAN: And there were some very interesting people there. We were there until 1924.

Q: I have one very mundane question to ask. Going from Haiti to Finland required a whole new wardrobe? I bet there was no allowance from the State Department.

JORDAN: Of course. Not only that, but they didn't even have the money for our transportation. They calmly said that "the travel expense fund was exhausted. Please pay your fare, and we will reimburse you later." Fortunately, Mr. Russo, who was the Dispatch Agenin New York, was very kind and arranged that we didn't have to pay for it ourselves. Just one year married, you know, and we hadn't accumulated that much.

Q: And the salaries must have been seemingly minuscule.

JORDAN: I think it was \$1,100 when my husband joined the Service.

Q: Are you living here alone?

JORDAN: Yes, actually, but my son is here also. I am very fortunate. This house was just perfect for me, because there are servant quarters in the back, which have room and bath, and then I have a guest cottage on the other side. So, it's perfect. He has a small house, but comfortable, with his own bath, of course. He uses the kitchen, and it's wonderful having him here. He's not married. He was 58 day before yesterday, and I can hardly believe it.

Q: Now, is he the oldest one? Is he the one who was born in Haiti?

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JORDAN: No, no. He was born in France while we were in Spain. I went to France, because of the experience of the black doctor in Haiti. I should have stayed, because they had wonderful doctors in Barcelona, but I wanted to go to France to be with my family. The daughter who lives here within three blocks...that was my daughter on the telephone...is the one who was born in Port aPrince. She had five children...four boys and a girl. They're all married and have children, so I have fourteen great grandchildren.

Q: I think that's absolutely marvelous to have them all here and see them, watch them grow up and everything.

JORDAN: Yes. I am very fortunate to have all my children near me. Thfarthest grandson, the oldest, lives near San Francisco, and thone granddaughter lives near Ventura, so they're all very close. We can get together often. They're planning a big get-together for my birthday, my 90th birthday.

Q: I know. Isn't that just marvelous! It really is! I was looking at Finland in 1922. I'm trying to think who was the U.S. President...Coolidge was President in...?

JORDAN: No, the one who died...

Q: Who was before Coolidge?

JORDAN: It was before Coolidge...President Harding, the President who died while we were in Finland.

Q: So, Harding was the one who appointed your Ambassador who left something to be desired? Harding made other mistakes, too.

JORDAN: Actually, it was a Legation. In those days, we had very few embassies. So, he was a Minister, a lawyer, from Beloit, Kansas, who probably had done very good work campaigning for Harding.

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Q: And contributing and what have you. So, did your husband, as a junior officer, on \$1,100 a year, have to buy white tie and tails?

JORDAN: Of course. I had to have an extensive wardrobe. To go to Haiti, they had to be lighter, and then to go to Finland, they had to be warm. I couldn't even buy wool to knit something for my child to go to Finland.

Q: In Haiti, because there was none?

JORDAN: There was nothing. Oh, it seems to me that I used to have to buy clothes in winter for warm climate and in summer for cold climates. It never worked at the right time.

Q: It never worked out.

JORDAN: But we managed. I usually stopped in France for some time, if possible. I was in France for two months before going to Finland, so I was able to equip myself in France for Finland. We only had three days in New York, so there was no question. I did buy something to wear daytime on board the ship, and that's about all I could do.

Q: And Finnish is a language that's like Hungarian..unrelated to other languages?

JORDAN: Finnish is a fiendish language. It has 24 cases in its declensions.

Q: Oh, good heavens!

JORDAN: And they did not like to adopt any words from the usual, for instance, "telegraph", which is almost international. In Finnish, it's "linnetan", meaning message by wire. And I was able to count up to five in Finnish; that's as far as I went. I didn't take any lessons at all. I managed to learn quite a bit of Swedish. I am a sponge for languages, so I was able to manage very well in Swedish. My first maid spoke English, so that helped

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me for the first few months, but I did absorb quite a lot of Swedish. English is an adopted language for me.

Q: And also the transition from Haiti with your hours of sunshine to dark, dark Helsinki.

JORDAN: It was quite a change. We ate all our meals with artificial light for months and months, and then in summer, we had to have triple the curtains to be able to sleep. I remember taking a train on our way to Rovaniemi at one o'clock in the morning, and it was bright daylight. It was fun going to the midnight sun.

Q: And very hard to get your children to go to bed in the summer?

JORDAN: Well, I didn't have any trouble because I only had the one...the little girl...who was a few months old. She went to bed when it was time to go to bed. But it was difficult to care for a child. We had to have her all bundled up, and instead of a pram, she had a sleigh in winter. You have to be very adaptable to be in the Foreign Service. Fortunately, I was.

Q: I wonder if we are adaptable before we go in and it just makes it easier for us or if we learn that adaptability?

JORDAN: I was adaptable before I went in. I was sent to England for three different summers and I took to it like a duck to water. In fact, my mother resented a little bit the fact that I could shirk my French mode of living and adopt the other. But it was very useful in the long run. Very useful.

Q: Oh, yes, because I see from Finland you were bounced back to the Caribbean to Cuba in 1924.

JORDAN: In July! At that time, I had long hair, and combing my hair was terrible because it would stick to my back. We didn't even have ceiling fans in those days. Cuba was really our most uncomfortable post. Definitely, because living was very expensive. We still

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didn't have very much money, and there was an Embassy and quite a bit of social life there. But, again, my husband was lucky. He was left in charge of the Embassy. He was Charg# d'Affaires in Cuba. Although he was Third Secretary when he first went, when the Ambassador went away, he was the one left in charge. That helped the finances quite a bit, but we lived very simply. We had a very small house. We had to.

Q: And did the Mission provide the housing in those days? Or did you have to find your own?

JORDAN: No. You had to rent your own house. All your entertaining, everything, was at your own expense. We didn't start getting allowances until...was it Mexico? I think maybe it was when we were in Mexico that we started getting rent allowances.

Q: That was 1943?

JORDAN: Yes. You see, we had to struggle a long time before that. In Spain, we had to do quite a bit of entertaining, in Barcelona and Madrid both. But we had no allowances, and it was a big expense.

Q: That was after World War II? That was after...1946...that there was a new Foreign Service Act? Did that have something to do with the increase in allowance?

JORDAN: Yes, yes. While we were in Finland, my husband came home one day and he said, "Give me your passport."

I said, "What's the matter?"

He said, "You're not an American anymore." He was, of course, kidding, but the Act had passed that you did not become an American automatically. Of course, it was not retroactive, so I waan American.

Q: But in 1921, when you were married, didn't your husband have to get permission?

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JORDAN: No, not yet.

Q: Oh, not yet. That was before...?

JORDAN: That rule came very much later when the Ambassador...I'll tell you why that rule went in. The Ambassador in Moscow suddenly realized that they didn't have a single American woman at the table. All the Foreign Service officers from the Embassy were married to foreigners.

Q: What year was that?

JORDAN: Oh, it was 1946. When did that Foreign Service Act...I don't remember just when. But I remember very well that (the wives) were all non-American, and the Ambassador didn't feel as free to talk as he would have otherwise.

Q: Do you remember which ambassador that was?

JORDAN: No. I would have to look it up. My memory is getting worse all the time. [Mrs. Jordan is referring to William C. Bullitt, who was Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1933 to 1936. Ambassador Bullitt had sufficient influence with President Franklin D. Roosevelt to have legislation enacted which required a Foreign Service officer to formally submit his resignation and request permission to marry a non-American.]

Q: The same situation really is beginning to exist today, I believe. Perhaps it's not quite 25%, but a growing percentage of wives are foreign born.

JORDAN: Oh, yes. It's created quite a bit of difficulty for the chiefs of mission.

Q: But you never really felt that you were like a foreigner?

JORDAN: No. As I say, I'm the perfect sponge. I'm very adaptable. I'll tell you something that I mentioned when I was made Woman of the Year (in Santa Barbara, California, in

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1971). They mentioned that I was foreign born. I said, "You mentioned that I was foreign born, but let me tell you about my Americanization."

While we were in Haiti and my husband was Charg# d'Affaires, we had a visit from an American warship and, of course, were entertained by the Admiral. After dinner, the men went for their usual drink after dinner, and the women sat in one little room, all around the room. I can still see them. I was the only non- American born I should say. They talked. I spoke English fluently when I was married. I never had any difficulty with the language, but they were talking about things I knew nothing about... interest in American life and so on.

I went home that night and I said to my husband, "Now, no more French magazines and so on. I want to be an American completely and be more informed than I am now about American life."And I've never stopped. I'm truly American, but that was the night that it struck me most forcibly.

Q: And I'm looking to see if you had a Washington post.

JORDAN: We were in Washington between Cuba and Barcelona. We were several months in Washington.

Q: And that was the...?

JORDAN: He was in the Department of East European Affairs.

Q: And that was in 1930?

JORDAN: That was in 1926 when Loy Henderson was in East European Affairs...that's when we met Loy Henderson. He was in the same office as my husband. He was a great guy. Parker was there, and we used to play bridge together. It was nice. Where are we?

Q: Well, we were talking about Barcelona and Madrid.

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JORDAN: Barcelona was a very pleasant post. We liked it very much. My husband took a house before I went to Barcelona and he really saw big. He rented a beautiful villa. We didn't have enough furniture to fill that place, but we enjoyed it. We stayed in that house for quite awhile. And then, we got a smaller one which was more manageable. We enjoyed Barcelona. We were very much surprised when we transferred to Madrid, because it's so seldom that you're transferred in the same country.

We didn't like Madrid as well as Barcelona. Of course, it's a bigger city and the climate is certainly not as nice as Barcelona for a family with children. At that time, we had both children. In Barcelona, you could go for a few miles and have wonderful picnics and for children to play. But, in Madrid, you had to go a hundred miles before you'd be away from the plains and have some trees and water, except Aranjuez was the only one. And the climate was hard. It was...they called it "tres meses de infierno y nueve meses d'invierno" or "three months of hell annine months of Winter." And they said, "The wind that blows from the Guadarrama will not blow out a candle, but will kill a man." It was a hot climate. Madrid was not as pleasant as Barcelona for another reason. There was an Embassy there, and that always puts a Consulate at a disadvantage.

Q: Oh, that was in the days when the two Services were separate?

JORDAN: Separate, that's right. They were separate and yet, no...you could opt. My husband chose to switch from the Diplomatic to the Consular Service for the very reason that in the Consular Service you can have a post away from the capital which, after all, is almost the same all over the world. But if you get into the inside of the country, you're closer to the people and then, very often, you are your own chief. And that's very important.

Q: My husband always enjoyed doing consular work. He always enjoyed it.

JORDAN: Well, it's interesting.

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Q: Yes. He liked helping people. He was usually the Economic Officer — Economic/Commercial.

JORDAN: What posts have you had?

Q: We had Holland twice, Rotterdam twice and...

JORDAN: Were you there with Bob Wilson?

Q: Yes, yes. And then Sierra Leone and Morocco, Cura#ao...

JORDAN: You were there when Neumann was there in Morocco?

Q: No. Henry Tasca was there when we were there.

JORDAN: I didn't know him.

Q: We did meet the Neumanns at a dinner in Washington a number of years ago. And I saw her recently at a meeting. I talked to her about being interviewed, too, when I come back from this trip, and she said, "Yes, by all means."

JORDAN: What was your last post?

Q: Trinidad.

JORDAN: Trinidad. Oh, did you enjoy that?

Q: Yes, but before that, we'd been in Brazil, and I really enjoyed Brazil more.

JORDAN: Oh, you did?

Q: It was more interesting. We were up in the Northeast in Recife.

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JORDAN: I enjoyed Trinidad. We were there on a trip. I love the drums.

Q: The steel drums?

JORDAN: Oh, I think the steel drums are fascinating. It caused me to miss a bus.

Q: How was that?

JORDAN: I was on the trip with a group here, and we went to the San Diego Zoo. We went out to the country, out of town. There was a steel band, and I was fascinated by the steel band. They didn't tell us just what time the bus would leave, so we understood that since they had taken us to that concert, they'd wait for the end. And I waited until the last note was struck, and then, when we got there (to the bus stop), the bus had gone. At eleven o'clock at night we were there, left about fifteen miles from San Diego. We got a ride with somebody, and I never told the tour director that she had left us behind. She doesn't know to this day. I wouldn't give her the (satisfaction). Anyway, I had enjoyed the steel band. It was worth it.

Q: Were you in Delhi?

JORDAN: We were in Madras which does not have the best climate. It's certainly very hot there, but we enjoyed India because we liked the British, for one thing, and they liked us. Then, we were given a job really, something to accomplish. Before that, the American Consul had paid very little attention to the British, and many people didn't know there was an American Consulate. The Inspector had been there. We missed him, but he went through Singapore, and we were going through Singapore, so he left word with the McIlhennys in Singapore to be sure and tell us that there was some socializing to be done in Madras. So, we took it to our heart and we really established a Consulate there. We entertained a great deal and we were great friends with the Governor. They were Lady Marjorie and Lord

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Erskine. They were very nice to us. So, we enjoyed India. We were there for seven years. We were there when the War broke out.

Q: I was just going to say that. It takes you into World War II.

JORDAN: Yes. As a matter of fact, we were transferred before Pearl Harbor. We were transferred to Vigo, Spain, and all our furniture was packed and on the dock ready to be shipped when Pearl Harbor happened. We were in the hotel, and they woke us up at three o'clock in the morning with a message from the newspaper saying that America was at war. Then, of course, my husband found the cable at the office that morning, and the transfer was canceled. So we had to unpack everything and resettle in our house — the same house — and we stayed there until, finally, in April...I wasn't feeling very well, and we wanted to leave...we were transferred to San Luis Potosi. That's what we wanted very much, to be on the same side of the water as our children. Our son was in the States, too, so we were very anxious to be back where we could be in contact with our children.

We wanted Guadalajara actually, but we got San Luis Potosi, which is not the best post. It's fairly high altitude. It's a pretty dull town. The Americans live very much to themselves. They are not interested in the country. I was told by the Department that we should have a Red Cross group there, but it had to work under the Mexican Red Cross. They couldn't be called American Red Cross. It was called the Red Cross under the auspices of the Mexican Red Cross. Anyway, I organized a group, and some of the Americans resented it very much. They made trouble for us. They objected very much to doing things.

The Consul General from Mexico City came to find out what all the rumble was about. It was just that they didn't want to be disturbed. They wanted to play bridge and poker and give their winnings to the American Red Cross directly. They did not want it to go through the Mexican Red Cross. And what we were doing was doing things through the Mexican Red Cross, which is what I had been told to do. But it didn't work.

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Q: In most or all posts, did you do that type of volunteer work?

JORDAN: I tried to, yes. In Finland, there was nothing to be done. In Cuba, we did organize a few charity things. I don't remember what the charities were at the time, but I know because somebody crept into the tent and stole my purse while we were holding the party. And then, of course, in India I was very much involved. I was a member of the YWCA and became their President. The first time they had a Roman Catholic as a President of the YWCA and enjoyed that very much.

Then, it was wartime, and we organized a fund raiser. We were not allowed by the State Department — there were quite a few things we were not allowed to do — and at that time, we were not in the War yet, but we could help the British in a charitable way, but not for arms. It was a big party on the grounds of the Government House, and we had a hamburger stand. We made more money than any other group there. It was great fun, and the British were a little bit jealous, because it was so American and it went very well.

Then I joined the St. John's Ambulance Corps and took the examination. I had to hand it to the British. Although I was not British, I was first — I finished first in the examination. We also did knitting and bandages for the Red Cross.

And the second one was a Dutch woman. So, I thought they were very fair. And, again, the British women were a little bit jealous but I guess we had worked a little harder. One time, the Governor was away on leave, and they had put an Indian as Acting Governor. They were having a party and, of course, it had to be a “purdaparty.” [“Purdah” in the strictest sense refers to the veil worn by Moslem women in the Sub Continent; a “purdah party”, as Mrs. Jordan experienced it in the days of the British Raj, meant that men and women were separate whether Indian, British, or American]. The men were out in the garden, and the ladies were in the Banqueting Hall. And the ADCs (aides-de-camp), who were very good friends of mine, had the bright idea to make me the ADC to the wife of the Governor. I was supposed to be the one to greet her and introduce everybody to her. I said, “You can't do

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that. Your name and my name will be mud with the British women if you have me, the wife of the American Consul, acting as ADC.”

So, finally, they relented. I was one of the ADCs, but they put somebody else in charge. I just couldn't see that. That would have been terrible. It was fun. The ADCs were a very nice group of young men. Maybe our American household was a little more thrilling than the British. I don't know, but, of course, I had a very pretty daughter then. That didn't hurt.

Q: That didn't hurt at all!

JORDAN: The ADCs were very pleased with that. Let's see...from India... oh, we went on leave. We had home leave while we were in India. And then came back to it and left April after Pearl Harbor. Before my husband left, they evacuated all women and children, especially the people who were in the school in the hills, you see. Because if the bridges leading to that school were bombed, there was no way of getting them out except through the jungle on the Bombay side.

Q: And you had children in the school?

JORDAN: Oh, yes. There was a large group of children. So all the women and children from the hill were evacuated.

Q: And you went on a troop ship?

JORDAN: I stayed, but the others went...all the American women and children went on the troop ship.

Q: And they were sent home?

JORDAN: Yes.

Q: And you stayed with your children or did they go home?

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JORDAN: I didn't have my children there. We had left them in the States. Denise went to Mills College, and Bob went to grade school in Hollywood.

Q: And eventually the two of you left Madras?

JORDAN: Eventually we left Madras and transferred to San Luis Potosi. We left Madras by train to Bombay and Karachi; then by air to Jerusalem, where we had to wait until Cairo was able to arrange transportation from there. Cairo was so crowded that our office in Cairo asked us to wait in Jerusalem. It was a terrible train trip to Cairo. We flew from Cairo to Nigeria in a stripped DC-3 which was used to ferry pilots and supplies to Burma. We must have had a little time in the States, certainly.

Q: Since it was during the War, as you said, I'm sure you were happy to be back that close to home.

JORDAN: Oh, yes.

Q: Well, maybe you came back and bought a car and drove down to your post in Mexico?

JORDAN: Yes, we drove to Mexico, definitely. We went to California, of course. Yes, we went to California and then drove from California to Mexico, taking our daughter with us. Our little boy was then left in school in Ojai. At that time, there was a very nice academy there, a sort of British-style school up in the hills.

Q: It was Thatcher or Cate?

JORDAN: No, it wasn't Thatcher or Cate. It was in Ojai itself and a school that had been in Orange County and had transferred to Ojai California Prep, and it was very nice for him. Then, after awhile, we brought him to Mexico and sent him to a military school near San Antonio which was easier and we could see him more often. Our daughter lived with us then and met, in Mexico, a young man who had just come back from South America,

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an engineer. They were engaged, and she came to California. He went into the AiForce. They were married in Phoenix. She's the one who's living here and has given me five grandchildren.

Q: Isn't that nice.

JORDAN: Let's see, where are we? Mexico?

Q: Well, you were in Mexico during the War and then to Mozambique right after the War.

JORDAN: Yes, yes. While in Mexico, a group of senators and congressmen came and, of course, we entertained them and were very nice to them. They were quite impressed. When they went back to Washington, one of them said that my husband should be a Consul General, that he was representing the country very well and that I always did my share in socializing with the natives and so on.

We were then assigned to Leopoldville as Consul General. That was the tropics again, and we felt that we were not young enough to take that, because that's right on the Equator, just one degree off the Equator and the climate was pretty hard. So, we tried for a day and a half to get in touch with somebody at the State Department...Robert Longyear, as a matter of fact...and finally got him over the weekend on the golf course and asked him to see what he could do about having that assignment changed. So, we left Mexico and went to Washington in the Fall, and then the assignment was changed to Mozambique, which was much better.

Q: At least it's on the coast.

JORDAN: Yes, it's on the coast. Well, of course, Leopoldville is on the coast, too. I went there later, several years later. I stopped there on one of my trips to France, and the Consul General was awfully nice to me. I said, "I'm glad you're here and not us, because it's just too darn hot and humid." You felt something that I hadn't felt in any of the other

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tropical posts, that the jungle was ready to catch you, to invade your privacy. The whole thing was just too overwhelming. I was there just for three days and that was enough. I went back to Mozambique which had really a very pleasant climate. We liked the Portuguese very much. They were very nice to us, and the Governor General was just wonderful to us, awfully nice.

Q: It was called Lourenço Marques in those days?

JORDAN: Lourenço Marques is the capital.

Q: Now it's Maputo, or something like that.

JORDAN: Yes, Maputo, I think. In those days, of course, it was Mozambique. The Portuguese we found very nice people, and the women were extremely nice. Most of them spoke French and English. We did take some lessons. That's the only lesson in foreign language we took, but while we waited for transportation...transportation was still tight at that time...we had quite a few months in Washington. In fact, we were in Washington from September to February, so that's a fairly long time without doing anything, no new assignment, just waiting for transportation. What did I start to say? I don't know what I started to say.

Q: Studying Portuguese?

JORDAN: The Portuguese were very nice. They were nice to me when I went through Lisbon. We liked them. They were easier to know than the Spanish people; although we'd been in Spain nine years, we never got as close to Spanish families as we did to the Portuguese families. The Spanish life seems to be much more close knit. Of course, we were in a colony and that may have had something to do with it. They were away from home and more open to the contact with the foreigners than the Spaniards who were there and that was their home, in both Barcelona and Madrid. But we certainly knew more Portuguese families in the short time than we did in nine years in Spain.

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In Mozambique, that's where we had our best living conditions. We first lived in an apartment over the office building. Then we succeeded in renting a house at government expense. That house was right back of the Consulate General and completely furnished, and then the State Department sent more things. So, life was very comfortable. We had three cars. We had a sedan, station wagon, and a jeep. It was much easier living than at any other post.

Q: Did you take trips?

JORDAN: Oh, yes, we did always. Of course, we took trips to South Africa. There was a Consular Conference in Cape Town, so we went to that.

Q: You drove from Lourenço Marques to Cape Town? Oh, how wonderful!

JORDAN: Yes, it was a very pretty trip.

Q: Through Krueger Park?

JORDAN: Oh, yes. Kruger Park was just a weekend trip from Lourenço Marques. We did that very often and we also went to visit the other posts, you see. We had a Consulate in Beira, so we took the trip inland and then went up to...what's the name of that big river?

Q: I want to say "Zambeze", is that right? I'm not sure.

JORDAN: Yes, Zambeze...the Zambeze River. We took a trip to the coast, to Beira, and saw the grave of Mrs. Livingston.

Q: Mrs. Livingston?

JORDAN: Mrs. Livingston. She was taken ill while she was there with her husband and died at a little convent and was buried there. Mhusband shot a buffalo on the banks of the Zambeze where there was a big sugar factory. There, we were entertained by the

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managers, and then we went to Beira and came back to Louren#o Marques by ship. It was a long trip. We enjoyed being in Mozambique.

And from there...I was ill...I had malaria, and my husband felt that I shouldn't be there through another hot season, so we were transferred. No, we just went to Washington on leave then. Wdidn't have a transfer. We waited there, and then he decided to retire. Something funny happened there. He was very anxious to be on the Mediterranean and told the Director of Personnel that. My husband went to a Georgetown hospital for the usual checkup and while he was there, the Chief of Personnel called me and asked me to come and talk to him. And he said, "Mrs. Jordan, I know your husband is very anxious to be on the Mediterranean, and the only thing we have available...it's not a post for his grade, but if he's interested, it is Gibraltar." Well, that was fine. "Will you ask him if he would accept Gibraltar although he ranks a bigger post than that? We don't have anything else available." So, I said, "Sure. I'm going to see him at the hospital this afternoon." My husband said, "Well, it wouldn't be too bad. We'll take it." So, I went back to the Chief of Personnel and told him that, "Yes, my husband will take it." And he said, "I'm sorry, Mrs. Jordan, but unbeknownst to me the post has been given to somebody else." And then I blew up! I said, "Unbeknownst to you? I thought you were the Chief of Personnel. Who can make an appointment?" Some woman in one of the offices had a friend who wanted Gibraltar and she had managed to get it to him. Then, my husband was completely disgusted. He said, "If that's the way things are going to go, I'll retire." And the Chief of Personnel said, "Well, you know, he might consider retiring if he wants to."

So, he decided to retire and then he made his good bye calls to the various...and, lo and behold, one of the ...I don't remember now which one...looked at him and said, "Oh, I didn't know you had such presence. Won't you be one of our ambassadors? Won't you stay, and we'll give you an ambassador's post?" But my husband said, "No, I'm afraid it's too late." You remember my husband, don't you?

Q: Yes, just briefly.

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JORDAN: He was a very handsome guy. In fact, he had the reputation among the ship captains on the coast of East Africa that he was the best looking Consular Officer on the coast. We went to the Consulate in Port Elizabeth one day on our way to the Consular Conference. The clerk, when he went in, the girl there said, "Oh, I see what they meant."

I said, "What do you mean?"

"Oh, we've been told that the Consul General in Louren#Marques was the best looking Consular Officer on the east coast of Africa. I see what they mean." He was very good looking.

Q: But still, even though he retired then, you had 29 years from 1921 to 1950?

JORDAN: Yes, he went into the (Service in) 1919...he got his first post in 1920.

Q: Oh, 1920, so you did have very...

JORDAN: Yes. He took his examination in 1919, but his first assignment was in 1920.

Q: I'm trying to think back to 1921, in Haiti, were you still wearing long skirts or had hemlines come up then?

JORDAN: Oh, no. We had long dresses.

Q: You know, we travel today with wash-and-wear and a carry-on bag, and when I think back to all of your formal attire, your white kid gloves, your...I mean, how in the world did you manage without jet air travel? It must have taken time. It must have been more leisurely.

JORDAN: Oh, it was.

Q: A very leisurely...

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JORDAN: When you're transferred, it was exciting.

Q: A voyage, of course.

JORDAN: From Haiti, we took a ship to New York, and in New York we had the per diem while there staying in New York, and you wait for a ship to go someplace. So, we went to France and from France t...let's see...from France we went by train to Germany, I believe, and then by ship to Helsinki.

Q: So, that must have taken...how long that must have taken...several months?

JORDAN: I think so. Let's see...Denise was born April 14 and she was seven weeks old when we left Port au Prince, so that makes it the end of May. And it was June when my husband arrived in Finland, and I didn't get there until the end of August myself, because I stayed in France. He had just a few days in France and left me there.

Q: So, your Mother could see her granddaughter?

JORDAN: Oh, yes, her first grandchild.

Q: But it just seems to me that the whole pace of the Foreign Service was much more leisurely then and, of course, you were dealing with...in Africa, you were dealing with colonies. I suppose Mozambique, at that time, was directed by the Portuguese?

JORDAN: Oh, absolutely, yes. It was what they used to call a semi-diplomatic post. My husband didn't have to submit his reports to the Embassy in Lisbon. He dealt directly with Washington.

Q: With Washington, which was nice.

JORDAN: Which was wonderful. It was really very nice. We liked it. Of course, where we had the most entertaining to do was in India. With the Governor there, there was quite a bit

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of entertaining, very formal entertaining, and then the Viceroy made a visit, so we did a lot of entertaining then.

And something funny happened. The aides called me and said, "Mrs. Jordan, the Viceroy is coming. There will be a reception at the Banqueting Hall at which the American colony will be invited. Will you pass word to the American ladies that they are expected to curtsy?" So, we had one of the parties. Mostly Standard Oil people in Madras at that time were the American colony. I tolthem, "Girls, I have a message for you. The Viceroy is coming, and we are expected to curtsy." And one of them said, "Oh, I'veseen the Viceroy before and I've never curtsied." I said, "I've given you the message. You are expected to curtsy. If you don't want to, that's up to you."

The next day, the telephone rang from all the other girls. They said, "Oh, Yvonne, won't you show us how to curtsy? We don't know how." That one never came near me, of course. So the others all came and we practiced curtsying. We went to the party and, you know how those are, you have to promenade to the Viceroy and make your curtsy to the Vicereine and to the Viceroy. So, we did it. Well, that woman went and she was absolutely frozen. She was so uncomfortable, having to do it in full view of the whole assembly. She was sort of tall, gangly, a person who wouldn't do it very gracefully. She was miserable the whole evening, so nervous.

Q: So she did curtsy after all?

JORDAN: She had to. She had to do some sort of a gesture. The Viceroy was wonderful. He was Lord Linlithgow. He was very tall and, when you curtsied to him, he held you very firmly. That's very important in high heels. The Viceroy entertained. One night, they were staying at a very pretty little lodge outside of Madras and they had us for dinner. The Vicereine was leaving that evening for a trip. That night I had to curtsy seven times!

Q: Now, these are the very deep ones?

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JORDAN: Oh, those are the deep curtsies, absolutely. But he just holds you very firmly, and we curtsied to him when we arrived. Those ADCs are wonderful. There they stand and they announce your name. They never falter.

Q: These are the aides-de-camp?

JORDAN: Aides-de-camp. And then I curtsied to the Vicereine. We went in to dinner in the Banqueting Hall, and after dinner, the Vicereine left the dinner and curtsied to her husband as she left the room.

Q: 1936 we are?

JORDAN: Yes. And then the ladies left from each side of the room. They came and gathered at the door two by two and curtsied to the Viceroy before they left the room. I was a little bit nervous because the Indian women don't curtsy. They do their "namaste" [The "namaste" means a person bows forward toward his/her own hands which are held in a praying position.], and I was afraid that maybe I would be paired with an Indian lady and it would be difficult. I was paired with one of the Viceroy's daughters, so we made our curtsy and that was the third of that evening.

The Vicereine left for her trip, so we had to curtsy to her when she left. That was my fourth. After dinner, I was told I was playing bridge. I was told to play bridge. The aides always told you what you were to do. I was playing bridge, and one of the aides came and said, "Mrs. Jordan, I want you to come to talk with His Excellency." So I went to His Excellency and curtsied when I arrived. That was curtsy five. He said, "I'm sorry to take you away from bridge. I'm sure you would be much happier playing bridge." I said, "Your Excellency, definitely not. I've just bid a grand slam and I don't think we are going to make it." He was awfully nice.

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You know, those people were very well trained. He knew who I was, where we had been and so on. (End of Tape I)

It's wonderful. Everything is done by the minute almost. When my time was up, the ADC came to fetch me. The Viceroy stood, and I took my leave, so naturally I curtsied when I left. That was six.

Q: That was six.

JORDAN: And then, when the evening was over, the Viceroy stands there in the big hall and you say good night. So, there was my seventh curtsy in the evening. I said to my husband as we went home, "Don't be surprised if I curtsy to you when I say good night."

Q: But I think that's interesting that the Vicereine curtsied to her husband.

JORDAN: And when Lady Margery, wife of the Governor, took the Vicereine to her room, she curtsied to her in the hall before leaving her. I sneaked around the corner to see. I was wondering whether they did it when not in public and, sure enough, when she got to the door of the bedroom, the Vicereine went in, and Lady Margery made her deep curtsy.

Q: Were all of these formalities principally because of the Viceroy's visit or was your life in India in those days more formal?

JORDAN: It was formal. It was very formal, oh yes. We were told what to wear. We were told what to do, and it was very formal. Wdressed for dinner every night, even when we were alone. I had the long, cotton dresses, but we always dressed for dinner.

Q: Just the two of you? How large a staff were you managing? You must have had seven or eight?

JORDAN: Servants?

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Q: Yes.

JORDAN: Eleven servants.

Q: *That in itself is a full time job, just keeping that many people.*

JORDAN: I know it is. In the morning, before you leave your home, you have to give out all the orders. The groceries are given out every morning. You had to go to the storeroom with all the groceries, and the butler and the cook are there, and you give so much sugar so much tea, so much this, so much that. And then, another thing you have to do is check on the boiling of the water. You see, all of the water had to be boiled, and you have to see that it boils. So, they have it in a big kettle on the fire and you are told, "Water bubbling, Madam", and you have to go and see that the water bubbles. Another thing you had to watch for was the milking of the cow, because the milk was delivered with the cow, and the cow was milked right there in your compound. You had to see that the bowl that they were milking in had been washed before, that the man was clean, so forth and so on. Oh, it was complicated.

Q: *And you had the...caste system must have been very much in effect at that time?*

JORDAN: The what?

Q: *The caste system.*

JORDAN: Oh, yes.

Q: *You had to know who was willing to do what?*

JORDAN: Yes. Also, they would never eat our food. The food was brought by their wives. We gave them their tea and sugar.

Q: *Their food?*

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JORDAN: Yes. The servants' food was brought by their wives.

Q: Eleven people had their food brought? Oh, my word.

JORDAN: And the gardener couldn't come into the house. The "sweeper" couldn't go into someplace else. Everything was regulated. When the bath...we had tin tubs...we didn't have running water, and when the bath was ready, the water was heated outside on a few stones and a few sticks of wood, which had to be bought. Five gallon gasoline cans...that's where your bath water was heated. When the water was hot, the "sweeper" and the gardener would go on the inside stairway, the servants' stairway, and would go up where the "boy" would be, the "second boy". The "second boy" was in charge of the bedrooms. The "second boy" would come and say, "Bath ready, sir" or "Bath ready, Madam", and you took a bath when you were told. Of course, they knew when you wanted it. So then, the hot water was taken up that little stairway and put in the tin tub. Next to the tin tub was a big "olla", a big earthenware jar, with a tin cup. You put the cold water that you wanted in there in that tub, which sat in the corner of the bathroom with a little wall about three inches high so the water wouldn't run all over the floor. There was a big hole in the wall for the water to run out. Then, on the other side of the bathroom was a line of commodes, because that's all we had. That's all we had, and my little boy was six years old then and he just didn't like it. He was embarrassed to have to do his job and have somebody else clean it up. Really, we had trouble at first because he just didn't want to do it and he got very uncomfortable. But that's the way we lived when we first went to India.

We did have a bathroom built there later with a flush toilet, and the English people were horrified. "Oh, but what happens if this and that and if you don't have power and if you don't have..." They didn't like it. The plumbers would not put hidden pipes. Pipes had to be visible so they could...oh, it's complicated! Everything was very complicated!

Q: They had to see the pipes to know where they were?

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JORDAN: Exactly. I wrote an article on living in Madras, but nobody would publish it because it was too frank. They didn't want to hurt the feelings of anybody living there. The essay was entitled, "My Cook was a Hindu."

Q: Do you still have that article?

JORDAN: I must have it somewhere here, someplace.

Q: I'd love to have a copy of it.

JORDAN: Well, when I run into it...Leave me your address, and when I run into it, I'll send it to you.

Q: All right.

JORDAN: I published a cookbook while I was in India. Do you remember? Didn't I show it? I showed it to you when you were here before, I think. I'm pretty sure. For the benefit of the YWCA, I gave cooking classes, and they asked me to publish them, so I got interested in the game and instead of doing just the things that I had taught, I made a whole cookbook of 1,500 recipes.

Q: French or International?

JORDAN: International. It's called "Culinary Gleanings From Here, There, and Everywhere." That was, at the time, Cordell Hull had made a speech and he used the phrase, "Here, there and everywhere." My husband thought that would be kind of cute, so I sent a copy to Mrs. Hull.

Q: Now you still have copies of that?

JORDAN: I have two books left. And one belongs to my son, so I have one book left.

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Q: *You have one book left?*

JORDAN: I gave one to the library here and it was stolen. It disappeared completely.

Q: *Because someone found the recipes very interesting.*

JORDAN: Yes, apparently. I always thought I'd do it again, but it's a big job. I got so involved in Santa Barbara that I'm on ten boards in this town.

Q: *Oh, my goodness.*

JORDAN: I just resigned from my first one. Last Monday, I resigned from one because I didn't think that I was contributing anything. But, after all, I've slowed down naturally. I'm more of a consultant. I'm with the United Nations. It is the first one I joined. I'm with the English Speaking Union. My husband was President for a while. I've been Vice President for years. The University...I've been very involved in the University...what they call the Affiliates. It's the Town and Gown relation, and I was Vice Chairmafor a long time and Hospitality Chairman for years and years. Then, several years ago, I was made Honorary Life Director and I am the only Honorary Life Director involved. I still go to all the meetings. I find that extremely interesting. For my 85th birthday, they had a big party and they established a scholarship in my name, which is very nice. It's the Yvonne Jordan Scholarship for Education Abroad Program, for studies in France.

Q: *How nice. And your birthday is April?*

JORDAN: April 28th.

Q: *And so you were born in?*

JORDAN: 1897.

Q: *1897.*

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JORDAN: We had an auction at the dinner and we raised quite a bit of money, and then people keep giving to that fund so that every year we can help. Now we're helping two students every year to go to France. I said I was not interested in sending them to Timbuktu, that I wanted them in France. It's worked out very well. Many of the students might go anyway. We don't give a full scholarship, but we help them. If you give them \$500, it certainly helps them do some traveling and be able to really see France a little better. I'm in touch with several of them now, and every year on my birthday, I make a contribution to the fund. It's worked very well. We only spend the income. The fund remains there.

I've been busy with the French Institute here, too. It's a summer school. The teachers who are teaching French come here to get their Masters in French, and in three summers of seven weeks each time, they can get their Masters. Teachers come from France every year, and the students speak nothing but French for those seven weeks. They are allowed one weekend when they can speak English. It has worked very well. When they first came here, I asked how I could help, and they said, "Well, we need funds." So we established what is called the Friends of the French Institute. People pay a membership, and then there's always a voluntary donation for scholarships. Each year we are able to get the scholarships for the Institute, because it's costly for them to come here.

Q: Of course it is.

JORDAN: Some of them can't always make it. Two years ago I was called by the Director. He said, "I have a student who's had to abandon her post in Los Angeles and is not working. She can't afford to come. She only needs a little more, and it's too bad. Her parents are willing to help, although it's going to be difficult to pay a thousand dollars toward her coming here. Can't we get some money?" So, I got busy and I wrote two letters, one to a man in Santa Barbara, who I knew or thought was interested in education, and to a woman in the Santa Inez Valley that I knew was very generous and who was a member of the Friends. I sent them a copy of the letter from the mother telling about the

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situation for her daughter and I got an answer from this woman, which said, "Your student certainly seems deserving, and I'll be glad to help her", and there was a check included. In my letter I had asked for part help so the parents wouldn't have to give so much. I thought she was sending me \$746. When I looked closer, she was giving me the full scholarship of \$1,746 for that girl!

Q: How marvelous!

JORDAN: I was so thrilled. I was so pleased that that girl was able to come here without any expense because that included the books, the tuition, and her room and board. \$1,746 was completely paid, which was wonderful. So, every year we do something, but I can't always give a full one. I did three times. I was able to get the Affiliates to give money to the Institute. I usually manage pretty well. People say "no" to me very seldom. I raised some money for the United Nations here, and one man sent a nice contribution and said, "I told my wife that Yvonne asked, so we can't say 'no'."

Q: Oh, we need you in Washington to help us with our Project because this Project does function on donations, and we've done very well. I was told over the telephone last week, or the week before, that we had gotten a grant that was going to enable us to interview for a year.

JORDAN: Well, that's very good. That's wonderful. Everything takes money. My husband used to say, "You are such a beggar, people are going to cross the street when they see you coming. You're always asking for money," which is true, but people don't say "no".

Q: And all the worthy causes, too.

JORDAN: I've raised money. There was one man here who used to say, "Well, when you ask me, I know it's a worthy cause, so we can't say 'no'." I have been very fortunate in Santa Barbara. People have been extremely friendly and generous and trusting me.

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It's been a wonderful experience, a wonderful experience. Before you go, I'll show you something my husband wrote.

Q: I wanted to ask you. With all of these beautiful Indian rugs, did you go into the Indian bazaars and ...?

JORDAN: We bought them in Madras. The pastime in Madras on Sundays was for the rug dealers to come to your house and spread their rugs on your verandah, and you usually fell for them. We bought most of them in India. The dining room rug we bought in Finland and this one...I believe this one we bought in Santa Barbara. We have others that are not on the floor, and I have given some to... This is our most valuable.

Q: Oh, that's a beauty.

JORDAN: It's very fine...many, many knots to the inch. I had it on the floor, and when the rug dealer came here, he said that should not be on the floor.

Q: Put it on the wall.

JORDAN: So we put it on the wall. This is an interesting one, that hunting rug, the one with all the animals. That's very interesting.

Q: So the rug dealers came and brought the rugs to you?

JORDAN: Yes, and they allowed you to keep them overnight so that you'd think it over. One bunch was very pretty, and we were very tempted. We kept them, and then the room smelled of chlorine the next morning. They were rugs that had been done with non-vegetable dye, with chemical dyes, and they had been treated with Clorox to make them soft and silky. And, of course, all the rugs went off (were sent back), but they were very pretty patterns. It's been interesting. We've gathered things everywhere. We bought a lot in Spain. That little tipped-up table, I bought at the Thieves Market, and it looked terrible.

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It was dirty. It was awful. We had gloves that were our “los Encantes” gloves. I had rubbed that table. I could see that there was something under the dirt.

Q: Oh, so you wore your gloves to the market to touch the...?

JORDAN: Yes. I kept going back to the woman, bargaining. You had to bargain. If you paid the first price, they'd lost a little fun.

Q: Interest, yes.

JORDAN: So I did get that and got her down to my price. When we traveled, we just stopped wherever we happened to be. My first experience of strange beds was going to the hills in Haiti. We'd been told there was a cottage that would be available, but when we got there, there was a hut without doors and without any furniture. We had brought an army cot with us, so the two of us had to sleep on an army cot! It was very difficult. Then, in the middle of the night, the horses ran away, so we had to go and hunt them. But that has nothing to do with the bed.

Q: But you were traveling by horseback? Is that a monastery? What is that building in Haiti?

JORDAN: Oh, that's King Christopher's Castle.

Q: I think you still have to go up there by horseback.

JORDAN: Oh, yes, you do. And we did. We took horses on the train with us. The Army lent them. We went to the nearest town, and the Army gave us two horses and two officers to go with us. So, we rode up there, and my horse was blind in one eye. But, anyway, we made it.

Q: That's a precipitous trail, isn't it?

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JORDAN: It was very, very exciting. We have a really good picture that my husband took. He stood up in his saddle and snapped the picture. It's a wonderful picture of the outside of the Castle walls. I'll show you the picture. Another strange bed. We were traveling from Spain to Portugal and we arrived late in a little town. There was no hotel, and we were told that we could stop at a certain place, but all they had was a funny little room next to the stables. The mattress, we discovered, was full of corn husk. It was late, so we slept on the corn husk. So that was one more of our strange beds.

Q: You must have rustled every time you turned over or moved.

JORDAN: Exactly. Anyway, when I think back, it was quite interesting. Certainly unusual.

Q: All right, let's stop here. (End of Tape II, Side A)

The following is a letter received from Yvonne Jordan, dated July 22, 1987, from her home in Santa Barbara: "Dear Mrs. Fenzi,

Thank you for sending me the script and tapes of our interview. I am sorry I am so slow returning the script but many things have happened since the middle of April. That is when, after weeks of tests, we found out that my daughter had several malignant tumors, advanced stage, inoperable, and that she only had a few months, maybe weeks. She had great courage and managed to attend the family reunion on Easter Sunday. One of my French nephews had come from Paris for the occasion which should have been a happy one. It was celebrating my 90th, my daughter's 65th, and the 6th birthday of one of my great grandsons. A week later, the University reception for my birthday took place. It is with a heavy heart that I went through it but I couldn't cancel. Too much was involved as it was a fund raiser for two scholarships I sponsor. All this was too much for me and it was discovered through a routine EKG that I had had a heart attack, there was damage to the heart muscle and they wanted me in the hospital immediately. I proceeded to have

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another attack and was in the hospital a week, home two days, back in the hospital, two more attacks. My daughter was getting rapidly worse and passed away while I was in the hospital without my being able to be with her at all. It is a shattering experience and my recovery was slow. I am only now beginning to live an almost normal, but slowed up life. I am afraid my 'corrections' on the script are very scribbled. If you have any difficulty, send them back and I'll try to type this time. I am enclosing a check for \$100 as a contributor to the Association. I hope you get the funding you hope for for this program. It should be interesting.

All the best, Yvonne Jordan

P.S. I have not forgotten that you would like to see my article on 'Life in India.'"

(Beginning of Tape III, Side A)

Q: I'm now taping Mrs. Yvonne Jordan, Mrs. Curtis Jordan, at her home in Santa Barbara. This is my second interview with her. This is January 9, 1989, the first one was in January, 1987.

JORDAN: [We were talking about] the ambassador to Russia (William Bullitt)

Q: He was indeed.

JORDAN: And he was a friend of Franklin Roosevelt . In Russia he was giving a staff dinner party. As he sat at that table and there was not one American woman, so he instigated this move that when they [Foreign Service Officers] married foreign-born wives, they had to submit their resignation and [re]apply [for the Foreign Service]. You submit the resume of your wife and the resignation is not accepted if the resume is acceptable. But you go through the rigmarole. [Mrs. Jordan is referring to William Christian Bullitt, who was appointed Ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1933. Bullitt, a friend of Franklin Roosevelt,

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had sufficient influence to set in motion a ruling which required a Foreign Service Officer to submit his resignation from the Department before marrying a foreign born spouse. The ruling was in effect until the 1950s.]

Q: *The formalities . . .*

JORDAN: Of resigning.

Q: *But you were already married?*

JORDAN: Yes, I didn't go through that.

Q: *There wasn't anything retroactive?*

JORDAN: No, it was not. I inquired immediately. Previously my husband had come home one day, we were in Finland at the time, and he said "Give me your passport." And I said, "What do you mean?" "You are not entitled to an American passport, you're not an American." He was just kidding me and then he explained that it was not retroactive, that I was American by marriage.

Q: *But you see he (Bullitt) was a friend of Franklin Roosevelt.*

JORDAN: Then I'm wrong in the date. I thought it was while [we were in Finland] I can't remember now what he kidded me about when we were in Finland because something certainly happened when we were there.

Q: *Well, would he have teased you about the Rogers Act in any way?*

JORDAN: It's possible. (interruption). These are the pictures of the presentation, I'll show them to you later.

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Q: Let me just put on the tape that we're discussing the medal - give me the name of it again.

JORDAN: It's the Knight of the Palmes Academiques.

Q: And it was for your contribution . . .

JORDAN: For my contribution to the French culture through the American Summer Institute here that I've been working for and getting scholarships for, and for my own scholarship for the Education Abroad Program, sending students to France. I got a Christmas card from one of them a few days ago. She's in Grenoble. She said, "Thank you so much for your generosity which made it possible for me to come to France." Every year we send two. We don't give a full scholarship, but we help them. They would go anyway, but it just makes it a little easier. But the fund now has some \$17,000.

Q: Isn't that wonderful? And this was given to you in 1988, right?

JORDAN: The medal was given to me last year.

Q: Oh, last year! When you were 91?

JORDAN: When I was 90, they gave me a big party. I didn't want a big party, but they insisted and it was just voluntary contributions to the scholarship fund. And do you know how much they gathered from a tea party of voluntary contributions? Over \$8,000. We thought if we'd get \$2,500 it would be wonderful, and we got over \$8,000. It was to be divided between the Education Abroad Program and the French Institute. It was quite a party: so many flowers, a card from the President and Nancy Reagan, greetings from our Congressman, and flowers from the French Consul General.

Q: Well, what a wonderful 90th birthday.

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JORDAN: I was just wonderful except that it was at the time when my daughter was so ill that I could barely walk into that party. It was very hard for me, but it was such a wonderful atmosphere, it was a very informal tea at the University Club, but people came and they contributed beyond all my dreams. There were two \$500 contributions. And they kept coming and coming and we thought if we got \$2,500, that would be wonderful, so that each of the organizations, the French Institute got \$4,000 and the Education Abroad Program got \$4,000 to add to the scholarship which was started for my 85th birthday, then Yvonne Jordan scholarship.

Q: That's marvelous, that's marvelous. And I wanted, just for the tape, to describe the medal which is really beautiful. As you say, most of them are not pretty.

JORDAN: This is artistic.

Q: And it's two little branches ...

JORDAN: Of laurel ...

Q: Of laurel and a nice . . .

JORDAN: A purple ribbon.

Q: A purple, looks like moire#.

JORDAN: That's the lowest grade of the award. . .(laughs)

Q: But that's all right! How many people at 90 receive any kind of decoration at all? It's very tasteful. Have you had occasion to wear it ever?

JORDAN: Oh, no. Here we don't go to anything official. That would be very ostentatious. They give you a little ribbon that you can wear in your lapel.

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Q: *Well, I wish you would come to our annual tea next October and wear it there.*

JORDAN: (Describing photograph) Yes. This is the Director of the Institute.

Q: *And there you are, yes. . .*

JORDAN: That's the one I had reproduced. I have several copies which I sent, modestly, with my Christmas cards, with a few Christmas cards.

Q: *Oh, I think I would have, yes. And who's this?*

JORDAN: Oh that's a good friend of mine that I've known for twenty-five years, a young lawyer, I knew him before he passed his bar examination and he was the first one on the stage after the presentation.

Q: *Oh, how nice. And look at the lovely cake.*

JORDAN: Oh, yes it was a beautiful cake and we had champagne.

Q: *Can you imagine what a marvelous 90th birthday?.*

JORDAN: (Referring to photograph) It was at the opening ceremony of the Institute so that the students were there.

Q: *So where was it held?*

JORDAN: At the university, UCSB. That Institute has worked very well. It was started about ten years ago and we had eight students and now we have forty-five.

Q: *Oh, wonderful, wonderful. And how really marvelous that you've been able to keep up your interest.*

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JORDAN: Yes, I have been very, very fortunate. When it first started I organized the Friends of the Institute to collect money. I even got a full scholarship of \$1,700 for one of the students. I asked for \$1,000, got \$1,700, no, asked for \$700, got \$1,700.

Q: Well, that certainly helped keep you youthful.

JORDAN: Well, yes, but really now I'm at the low ebb, I'm not doing very much. I haven't been very well for the last two years. I've had heart attacks, and . . . After all, what can you expect? The decline has to come.

Q: But as I said, you still look very, very fine to me.

JORDAN: Well, I still have my wits with me.

Q: Very much so, very much so. (laughter). But to go back to the Rogers Act, when they did join the consular and the diplomatic corps, did that make any immediate impact in your life?

JORDAN: The impact it had was a very personal one. I don't know what else it did for the Service, but for us, it allowed us to go from one service to the other because we felt that being in the capital, you don't get much of the local color and you're embroiled in a lot of entertaining and so on. But if you're in the consular service, you get into the heart of the country and also eventually you're going to have your own post. (laughs) And that is fun, quite important, and we had that both in San Luis Potos# and of course in Mozambique which was a semi-diplomatic post so you didn't have to report to Lisbon, you just talked directly with the Department. We enjoyed that post very much.

Q: So you moved back and forth, like they do now?

JORDAN: J.C. White did that, he was Consul General in Calcutta after he had diplomatic posts and then after that he went back into the diplomatic service. All officers had a dual

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commission. That's when I knew Betty. She came down to Madras and visited us. We visited them in Calcutta and they visited us in Madras. She did. He didn't come to Madras. She was active in the YWCA when I was active in the YWCA there, so, she was there in Calcutta and I was active, I was president, in Madras. The first woman Catholic they ever had as a president. The bishop didn't like that at all.

Q: If you were willing to do the work . . .

JORDAN: Well, yes. Because the Roman Catholic Church at that time was not ecumenical at all. You were either a Roman Catholic or you were no good. Since the YWCA was mostly among Protestants, he didn't like that. I went to see him with Betty White. What was it now? She brought down, it was during the War, and she brought down a very pretty prayer for peace and she was hoping that he would instigate its being read in the various churches, but no, at that time again it was the old-fashioned church, all prayers had to be approved by Rome. Oh things have changed tremendously. They're so much more liberal now. They worship in each other's churches. It's a very different affair.

Q: Which is good in a way I think.

JORDAN: Oh, of course it is good, I'm glad you agree. What else did the Rogers Act do?

Q: I think that was the main thing. The one thing that I would be interested in knowing would be the relationship between the former consular corps people and the diplomatic people. I went to the DACOR House and looked up the old, old, old biographic registers from 1915 to 1925 and many of the diplomatic names I recognized, Robert Woods Bliss, Arthur Lane, White, Grew. These people were all very wealthy, and they had their own private incomes

JORDAN: Of course.

Q: And their Foreign Service salaries were a mere bagatelle.

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JORDAN: In the old days that was the prime reason for being appointed. Because at that time, the allowances were nothing.

Q: No, nothing at all.

JORDAN: We went into the Service, if I remember correctly, my husband's salary was \$1,200 plus some allowances.

Q: That sounds about right.

JORDAN: And he was very lucky because he received a promotion very shortly after entering the Service, less than two years, and also he was made *Chargé d'Affaires* so that, it's amazing really, it was very fortunate because he was a young officer and within a year he was *Chargé* of that legation and when you were *chargé* at that time, I don't know what the rule is now, you used to get the difference between your salary and half of the regular chief of mission's salary and it was thought at the time that Bailly Blanchard [Arthur Bailly Blanchard was Minister to Haiti May, 1915 to 1921] who was the Minister was going home on leave and would be back and then he decided not to come back so Curt was really in charge for a long time. A long time, we were only there two years, but still, he was in charge during most of that time and several important cases came up. That's why he got his promotion because he handled those cases well. One American was put in jail for murder and he found a way of getting him out. We were very good friends of the foreign minister there, so that also helped. He had very good relations with the Haitians. You see it was still during the American Occupation so there was a high commission there and Jimmy Dunn is the one who followed us in Haiti.

Q: Since it was such a long time ago, may I ask, did you live on your Foreign Service salary, or did you have help from family?

JORDAN: We had help from family.

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Q: You had to, didn't you?

JORDAN: We had to. But again, you see, he got the promotion and the being Chargé d'Affaires, immediately his salary became very much bigger, so we were very fortunate from the very beginning. And it was fortunate to go into a small post where living was not too expensive. We had dreams of a post in Europe and first they thought of sending him to Belgrade, then Prague, but that didn't happen, and it was lucky for us, because in those European countries, we could not possibly have lived on that salary. And in Haiti we got our horses from the gendarmerie, we had access to the commissary, there were a lot of perks that we wouldn't have had in a European country. And life was simple. Very simple. Our first child was born there.

Q: In Haiti, yes, you did mention that. With a Haitian midwife, you did mention that before.

JORDAN: I'm in the process of writing her life for her children because they don't know at all how her youth was spent and she had an interesting youth, naturally, because she followed us to almost all our posts. Mozambique is the only post she didn't come to.

But it's amazing, as I write, I see what a difficult thing it is for those children of Foreign Service officers to adapt to each post for one thing, and then adapt to life in the States when they come back in school. [My daughter] was almost a foreigner because she'd had no contact with American life. We were nine years without coming to the States, you see.

Q: Not for leave or anything?

JORDAN: Not for leave, for nine years, it was during the Depression and there were no home leaves.

Q: And where were you then?

JORDAN: We were in Spain.

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Q: *In Madrid?*

JORDAN: We were in both Barcelona, and Madrid.

Q: *Barcelona and Madrid, that's right, that's right. And you liked Barcelona better because ...*

JORDAN: Oh much, yes, yes. There again you're closer to the people. In Madrid it's a capital and you don't have the same contacts that you have otherwise.

Q: *Were there other officers and their wives like you who preferred to be out in the provinces?*

JORDAN: I don't know. Some, I know the Whites were very upset at being sent to the Consular Service. They would have preferred to remain in the Diplomatic Service, they were quite upset. But they didn't stay very long in Calcutta. Did she mention that to you?

Q: *She did mention it, and the interviewees usually mention it in the context that, well, although he had a consular position, he reported directly to Washington. I've had a number of people tell me that about Australia in the 30s and 40s, for instance.*

JORDAN: Yes, that's what we had in Mozambique. We dealt directly with Washington.

Q: *Yes, and most of the people of your generation and a bit younger who mention that their husbands did have a consular assignment will very quickly say, "But, of course, he reported directly to Washington. We didn't have an embassy, that was our chief mission in the country". So there was some sensitivity, wasn't there?*

JORDAN: Oh definitely, very definitely.

Q: *And they felt that it was a step down, I suppose, from the diplomatic, strictly diplomatic . . .*

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JORDAN: Yes.

Q: And yet her husband, John White, I believe felt that the Rogers Act — as a matter of fact I think I have this on tape — that the Rogers Act was a very good thing because he felt that one of the important things we did was our consular work, our dealing with people of the country.

JORDAN: Yes, it gave more importance to the consular corps, to the Consular Service.

Q: Which it deserved.

JORDAN: Which it deserved because it deals with the people [of the country], the actual problems that come up and unless it was a big diplomatic, political thing that was for the Embassy, but otherwise, all the shipping and all the commercial things were dealt with by the consular.

Q: And the economics of a country are often vastly more important than the politics.

JORDAN: And the reporting was all done by the Consular Service, all the commercial reporting. My husband has many reports that he sent which were graded excellent, he did wonderful reporting. I have some of the letters acknowledging their receipt by the government, the Department, graded excellent.

Q: It seems to me that your husband assessed the situation when the Rogers Act was passed and profited from it whereas others perhaps resented it.

JORDAN: Yes, it depended upon your disposition. We preferred the smaller towns instead of the big ones. We enjoyed it where we were in the diplomatic service. We had Haiti, Finland and Cuba and it was interesting. You were in the swing, but it was nice to be in the consular service, too. Let's see, our first consular post was Barcelona. Of course there we

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had a boss. It was a large office and there was a consul general, but outside of that they were all our own posts.

Q: What was the difference in your activities, - of course as you move up in the Service, your activities are different, too, but what was the difference in your activities as, say, a diplomatic wife in Helsinki, a consular wife in Barcelona? Was there a great deal of difference in your day-to-day activities?

JORDAN: Less social activity, certainly, for the wives it was very, very different as you were not involved in so many social activities.

Q: I get the impression from the interviews that I have done with women who came into the Service in the 20's and 30's that their life was practically social and nothing else.

JORDAN: Oh, definitely.

Q: There weren't very many volunteer activities.

JORDAN: Oh no. Let's see, in Cuba, I began to do social work - Red Cross and things like that.

Q: That would have been late 20's or early 30's?

JORDAN: In Cuba, that was after '24, '24-'26.

Q: Late 20's. And you actually did begin doing volunteer work then?

JORDAN: Yes. But again that was not very much. And, let's see, from there we went to Spain. We didn't do much social work in Spain. There was very little to be done there.

Q: Was that because the church took care of a lot?

JORDAN: It's possible.

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Q: And family, the built in social security of a family.

JORDAN: Yes. But in Mexico I started a Red Cross center at the instigation of the Department. That was very much resented by the American [business community] living there. They didn't want to be bothered.

Q: Oh, not the Mexicans but the Americans who didn't want to be brought in?

JORDAN: Yes, the Americans.

Q: And what year was that? I'm sorry, I don't have your biographical . . .

JORDAN: During World War II. And the State Department issued an order that we should do Red Cross work, but it should not be called the American Red Cross. It was the "Red Cross under the auspices of the Mexican Red Cross", so all we did was to go through Mexico City. All we made was sent to Mexico City and they distributed it as they chose, a mostly Mexican thing, but it was called the Red Cross under the auspices of the Mexican Red Cross.

Q: And this was an aid to the Mexicans and a directive came from the Department asking that that be done.

JORDAN: Yes, so I started that and it was very much resented because they wanted to help directly through the American Red Cross and their way of helping was playing poker and sending part of their earnings from their winnings to Washington, but they didn't want to work. The women over there, the American women over there, were not very community-oriented.

Q: And this was the American business community or the embassy?

JORDAN: It was the American business community in San Luis Potosí#. They were all at the smelter, there was nothing else besides the smelter. They had mining and the smelter,

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and they wanted to do their own business things and if they wanted to contribute, they wanted it to go directly to the American Red Cross, they didn't want to go through the Mexican. There was no love lost between them.

Q: Well, of course their orientation was different from yours, wasn't it?

JORDAN: Yes, that's right. We had to create good relations with Mexico and it didn't bother them at all. In fact, they complained to the Department about my doing it - about doing things for the Mexicans, and they sent the consul general from Mexico City to inquire what was what?

Q: Oh, for heaven's sake. What was the outcome of that?

JORDAN: The outcome was, we closed but he understood the situation. It was creating too much tension, so we closed up. That's one of my sad memories.

Q: Oh, let's not talk about your sad (laughs) . . .

JORDAN: Because I had worked so hard. I went away for a month, and while I was gone, they cut up all the materials that I had bought, finished it very quickly so that when I came back, there was no material to work, and I only had to close.

Q: Which mining company was that?

JORDAN: American Smelting and Refining Company ASARCO. And my daughter married the son of one of the people from ASARCO.

Q: Oh really? (laughter) So it had a happy ending in a way.

JORDAN: Oh yes. (more laughter)

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Q: So after that, rather unhappy volunteer experience, did you ever get any more directives from the Department to volunteer?

JORDAN: No, no more directives from the Department, but in India I did a lot of Red Cross work and other social work.

Q: But that you did on your own initiative?

JORDAN: Oh, on my own without being instructed by the Department. In fact, we were not supposed to be engaging in anything to raise war funds because, you see, America was not in the War yet, and I remember one man following me at the grocery store, and saying, "When is America going to come and be with us". I said, "Young man, you better hope they never come in, because when they come in, we won't be able to supply you with all the supplies we can now let you have." I also took the examination for the St. John's Ambulance Corps and came out first. I thought it was rather fair of the British judges. The first place came to me, the second one went to a Danish woman. The two foreigners in the group got the first two places. I think we probably had studied a little harder than the others. I hate failure.

Q: I remember you telling me that at your first post, Haiti, I believe you went to a reception or a dinner or something and there were predominantly, if not solely Americans. . .

JORDAN: There were all Americans.

Q: After that you and you went home and told your husband no more French magazines, no more . . .

JORDAN: That's right, no more.

(Tape III, end side A; begin side B)

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JORDAN: It was on board a war ship calling at Port au Prince. The women were seated in one small cabin, and I could understand all they were saying, but I didn't know what they were talking about because I had had 5 days in New York and that's all, in a hotel in New York, so I knew nothing about American life or American politics or anything.

Q: You had no reference point.

JORDAN: No, absolutely not, so I listened, but I decided I was going to get acquainted with America, and I've become a very good American.

Q: You certainly have, and you must have been very young at that time, what, 22?

JORDAN: I was 24 when I was married. Yes, this was shortly afterwards - I must have been 25 because it was during the second year he was there. My husband was in Haiti two years, I was there only one year.

Q: But, other than that, in your relationships with someone like Betty White, for instance, were you made aware that you were originally French.

JORDAN: No. I was accepted very, very beautifully by all. I absorbed American life so thoroughly that they had no reason - I followed all the rules of etiquette of the American - I didn't push my French background at all, I was American and that was that. If you see Betty, tell her how fondly I remember her. She was a lovely, lovely lady.

Q: She still is. She still has a very keen, keenly disciplined mind.

JORDAN: Oh she is. She was interested in dancing at the time, and you could see her body just float. I admired her tremendously. We were on the ship with her coming home one time, and it was a very pleasant relationship on board. We saw quite a bit of her. She wasn't hoity-toity at all. She was just a very friendly person.

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Q: But some people are rather formal and impressed with their positions

JORDAN: I didn't have that. Of course, I didn't have many wives to deal with. Our first Minister in Haiti was not married, so I immediately became his hostess and he accepted me and was very kind. In Finland, our minister was married, but his wife did not want to live abroad, so she didn't go, so again I was his hostess and, if anybody resented my being French, he was the one. He was a small town lawyer from Beloit, Kansas and he hadn't traveled much himself and there was definitely some irritation - my not being American.

Q: What was his name again?

JORDAN: Kagey, Charles Kagey [Charles Lemuel Kagey was appointed Minister to Finland in 1921]. He had never before had tails and white tie, and when he wore it the first time he said, "If the Beloit boys could see me now!" (laughter) No, he knew nothing about etiquette, absolutely nothing, and he didn't know anything about diplomatic life either, so my husband had a great deal to do with the running of the legation.

Q: Which was good experience for him.

JORDAN: It was, it was wonderful.

Q: If Kagey was willing to turn everything over to him saying, "I really don't know how this is done." Is that what he did?

JORDAN: Well, no. It had to be sub rosa.

Q: Oh, I see, behind the scene.

JORDAN: You couldn't tell him, "You don't know, I'll do it." You just had to be very diplomatic about it. I did all his entertaining, I was the one arranging all his dinner parties.

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Q: Did you do the guest lists?

JORDAN: Yes, the seating, the ordering of the meal and everything.

Q: But he had a cook. You directed his staff?

JORDAN: Oh, yes. And one time (laughs), it was funny, his cook had been ill and he had arranged to have a dinner party, so we engaged another cook to cook the dinner. And his cook was furious, and got up and cooked a dinner. We had double courses, double everything and the Danish minister, who was a great big fellow with a ruddy face, just loved it. We had double fish course, double meat course, two desserts, it was absolutely hilarious. And there I sat not having ordered that, one thing and another, and another thing had come and I finally caught on that both cooks had cooked! (more laughter)

Q: And what dinner was this?

JORDAN: One of the big diplomatic dinners that he gave with the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps that day, that was a big shot, and that's when it happened!

Q: And there were two cooks. And so each cook, wanted to be the prima donna.

JORDAN: Of course.

Q: Oh, I think that's wonderful.

JORDAN: I never heard of such a case! (more laughter) And after that, you see, in Madrid, the ambassador had a wife, of course, the first one was Laughlin [Irwin Boyle Laughlin]. He was a very wealthy man and ran the embassy with footmen and so on. And then the Department sent to replace him, Claude Bowers [Claude Gernade Bowers was appointed Ambassador to Spain in 1933], the writer. Poor Claude Bowers had no idea of the Foreign Service life and his wife didn't either. She said, "The most I ever entertained was eight people in my small dining room," so she was completely at a loss and the servants were

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so mean to her - the servants who had been working for the Laughlins, you see - used to silver platters, etc. At that time, the State Department didn't supply all those things, so when Mrs. Bowers came in, there was no china, she had to go out and buy china for the embassy and silver platters, there was nothing, so the servants were quick to - you know how they are. They treated her very meanly. I was sorry for her. She was in tears - she was very unhappy there at first.

Q: Well, it sounds like she was given a job to do without the wherewithal to do it.

JORDAN: Absolutely. And of course things improved, but when she first came there, it was terrible.

Q: Now what year was that, was that in the 30's?

JORDAN: Yes, I think '33 or 4. Of course Charles Kagey was also a political appointee. He had worked for Harding and that's how he got to be minister to Finland.

Q: Now we just sweep into an embassy and everything is there.

JORDAN: Oh, things are very different from what they were. The allowances are so much larger that people without means can be ambassador. Mills, for instance, was one of them - did you meet them?

Q: Sheldon Mills [Sheldon T. Mills, retired to Santa Barbara, Calif., and until his death in 1988 was a friend of Mrs. Jordan's. He served as Ambassador tEcuador, Afghanistan and Jordan. See the Francesca and Sheldon Mills transcript], yes, I talked to Francesca just the other day. We dropped by to talk to her.

JORDAN: Oh, did you? Was she able to talk to you?

Q: Yes, I talked - she recorded before when I was here two years ago.

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JORDAN: Oh, did she?

Q: Yes, not very well because she had had her stroke and Sheldon kept interrupting.

JORDAN: Yes, he would.

Q: And this time, she really didn't have anything more to tell me. I thought it might upset her if I wanted to record.

JORDAN: Oh, I should think so.

Q: Because she gets tired and then she has to stop and think, and I thought it might be too taxing.

JORDAN: Yes, I think so.

Q: But no, Sheldon, didn't have any money at all, did he?

JORDAN: No, that's just what I started to say. Sheldon had no money. He sort of was taken out of the run of the mill and made ambassador.

Q: Let me look at this, this chronology of things that happened when you were in the Service. The first was, I keep coming back to the Rogers Act and then women's suffrage which probably didn't . . .

JORDAN: Didn't affect me at all.

Q: Affect you. Did you have any [diplomatic] training as a young wife?

JORDAN: No. I had my French upbringing, had lived in England, spoke English fluently and was very adaptable.

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Q: See, and here it says that one of the other results of the Rogers Act was that foreign personnel formerly had been assigned only abroad, but after 1924, they were assigned both in Washington and in the field.

JORDAN: Oh, yes, that's right.

Q: So you must have had a Washington assignment?

JORDAN: Yes, we had a Washington assignment between posts. Curt was in the Eastern Europe Division with Loy Henderson. I was very fond of Loy Henderson. That was after Cuba, 1926 I think.

Q: Many people were. Then there was the Depression and of course that was . . .

JORDAN: That's when we stayed in Spain for nine years. You see when we went off the gold standard our salaries were pegged.

Q: Yes, here it says, "General lack of funds in Foreign Service." Then it says "the educated elite" as opposed to the financially elite enter the Service in greater numbers but retain, and this is in quotes, the "striped pants image." Now that would be someone like Sheldon Mills who was very well educated . . .

JORDAN: That's right.

Q: And came into the Service without any independent financial backing. Do you think Francesca's family helped them a bit?

JORDAN: Whether they helped him go in, I don't know, because he must have been in the consular corps and then was made ambassador.

Q: I'll have to look that up.

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JORDAN: I think so. Yes, because they had posts in South America and it seems to me that he was in the consular corps and then went into the diplomatic . . .

Q: Diplomatic corps. Then it says here "spouses were", and again in quotes, "were evaluated on entry into the Foreign Service." Did you ever go into the Personnel Department?

JORDAN: No.

Q: Well, you came in before that and I guess they had that evaluation - no, but Elizabeth Cabot, who is in her 80's now, said that in the early 1930's, she was evaluated when she got back to Washington.

JORDAN: Oh, is that so?

Q: Yes.

JORDAN: No, I never had that.

Q: And here was Peggy Morgan [Late wife of George Morgan, former Ambassador to the Ivory Coast and Director of the Foreign Service Institute] who was a friend of [Retired FSO] Bob Wilson's, they went to the University of Arizona together. She was told in 1937 that the only way she could enter the Foreign Service was to marry a FSO because she was interested in being a Foreign Service officer.

JORDAN: Oh, I see, The first woman Foreign Service officer came in when we were in Cuba. She was a friend of General Enoch Crowder, the Ambassador to Cuba [1923-27], and that was the first time a woman was made a formal member of the diplomatic service. That was in '25 or '26, probably.

Q: I'll look that up. And then in the 1940's with World War II, I don't know much about the Foreign Service Act of 1946, I have to do more research on that, but I think it made the

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Service even more egalitarian, I think that was the purpose of it. To have a broader base - to draw from a broader base.

JORDAN: Yes, certainly, they got more people into the Service. For instance, people from the Commerce Department came in and were made members of the diplomatic service.

Q: And, how did that, what affect did that have? Those people really didn't have a diplomatic role.

JORDAN: It was resented for a while. They said, "Well, they haven't gone through the mill." But it worked out all right in the end.

Q: Worked out all right. Let's see, some of the things are World War II, the Cold War, the Foreign Service Act and the proliferating agencies like AID and USIA.

JORDAN: Yes, you see we were out of that.

Q: You were out at that time. So there was an expansion in the Service after your day?

JORDAN: You can tell from the people who are being made ambassadors now, the expansion that has been, it's so different. The type of people before that, they were, well, what you'd call the nobility, almost. People who had very solid backgrounds and always very high financial status.

Q: And it's interesting. I think those people went abroad as diplomats and met people of that same economic and social stature in Europe in the early days, most of our posts were in Europe.

JORDAN: Yes.

Q: And the perception of America must have been, to a lot of Europeans, a very wealthy, social people.

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JORDAN: Yes, of course. Because even the secretaries of embassies, the chancellors and so on, they were all of the upper crust, definitely. When my husband went in, he took the examination in 1919, yes, he took it in the spring of 1919, and that's the first time they had the Foreign Service examination abroad. He took the Foreign Service examination in Paris so that it let in a lot of GIs. Eighty took the examination, 15 succeeded.

Q: Was he a young officer at the time?

JORDAN: Yes, he was a lieutenant in the Army and he came and announced, "I'm going to Paris next weekend." I said, "Well, what are you going to do in Paris?" Usually we tried to have the weekends together if we could. He said, "I'm going to take the Foreign Service examination. Then I can get a post in France and you'll accept to marry me!" I said, "Well, what do you know, you're not ready." "Oh yes." He was very well read and he was a very intelligent guy, quiet, and very intelligent and very well informed and well read, and he went into the National Library in Paris and read for an hour on international law and then took the exam. And he said, "I saw people writing, writing, writing," and he said "I got finished in no time. And surely I won't make it because the others have so much more to say", but he passed very well.

Q: Did he have a chance to finish university before he went into World War I?

JORDAN: No, he didn't. He got his law degree afterwards. He didn't have to go back. They gave it to him afterwards. His grades were excellent. They called it a de juris doctorate.

Q: Which school?

JORDAN: USC, Southern California.

Q: And I suppose they gave him some credit for his work in the Service too?

JORDAN: Oh yes, and he was awarded a Doctor of Jurisprudence.

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Q: Well, he must have done an exam or something.

JORDAN: He had very high grades.

Q: So was he from California originally?

JORDAN: Yes, he was living in Los Angeles when he went into the war.

Q: Into World War I. And then you met him in Brittany? In the jewelry store. I remember that story.

JORDAN: That's right. And then he was discharged in October. He took the examination in March, I believe. He was still in Rennes at that time, then he was sent to Brest, waiting to return home. And he got word before he left that he had passed the examination successfully. He left in October. We were engaged on September 14th. I never saw him again for two years, practically two years. We had hoped for Europe and didn't get Europe, so . . .

Q: And I'm sure your mother was hoping for Europe, too (laughs).

JORDAN: Oh, I hated to tell her when the word "Haiti" came and she said, "Of course you're not going." I said, "Mother, I've been waiting for that guy. We're very much in love". And my mother had had one afternoon with him, that's all. He wanted me to go to the States, of course. He would have liked me to come straight to Haiti and be married there. He said, "Well at least as a compromise, come to New York and I'll be able to get a short leave. Have your mother or father, or both, come with you to New York and we'll be married in New York," and I said, "No, I don't go after a husband. A husband comes after me." He said there was a French girl who had gone there and was married, "Are you less brave than she?", and I said, "It's not a question of being less brave, but this girl does not go after a husband, a husband comes for her." So he was very fortunate in being given leave less than a year at the post, you know. It's incredible that he was given the leave!

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Q: *Oh, so he was already in Haiti?*

JORDAN: Yes, yes.

Q: *So he came from Haiti to France to be married . . .*

JORDAN: He had to go to Haiti because there was no first secretary, and the clerk hadn't had leave for years, so the minister said, yes, he must come now. So he went to Haiti and stayed there. He went there in June of 1920, and was granted leave for the first of April, 1921. When the leave was granted, the minister said, "You must have somebody pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for you in Washington because I've never heard of such a thing. An officer who has been there less than two years". My mother wanted me to be happy, so she left no stone unturned. She wrote to the Minister in Haiti and she wrote to the Secretary of State telling them that we were engaged and anxious to be together.

Q: *Do you by any chance have a copy of that letter?*

JORDAN: No, I don't. Of course that went to Washington.

Q: *Do you remember who was Secretary of State then?*

JORDAN: I have no idea. I would have to look through his diplomas, all these papers, you see I have them somewhere, and then I could find out who was Secretary of State then. [Mrs. Jordan writes: "According to the [Department of State Biographic] Register, Bainbridge Colby was Secretary of State when my husband was sworn in. He retired March 1921, so he is probably the one who signed Curt's leave of absence to take effect April 1, 1921. He was followed by Charles Evans Hughes who retired March 1925."]

Q: *Did your husband, like John Campbell White, ever have a consular uniform?*

JORDAN: No, no.

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Q: John Campbell White, I believe it was in Czarist Russia, said he had no credibility in a tuxedo because he didn't have any braid and ribbons, so he had a consular uniform tailored.

JORDAN: Oh he did?

Q: With gold braid and I think a tri-cornered hat.

JORDAN: Did the State Department like that?

Q: Well, apparently, they gave him permission to do it because he said that he wasn't receiving the proper recognition because he was so drab.

JORDAN: Well, that's right, too.

Q: And Betty still has that uniform.

JORDAN: Is that so?

Q: And she's going to donate that to our organization.

JORDAN: Talking about donations, I have something which I wonder if they would be interested [in]. I have the first page of an atlas which is one of the Blauw atlases and it's a frontispiece

Q: The Dutch?

JORDAN: Yes, the Dutch. And it's very beautiful. I had the double page map and I foolishly sold that, but I still have the frontispiece and it's a very beautiful thing and I was wondering whether DACOR would like to have that.

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Q: Well, see, our organization does not display in DACOR, but it would go into the new Foreign Service Institute, when it is finished.

JORDAN: When you come back, I'll get it down and I'll show it to [you] and you tell me what you think of it.

Q: Well, I know, I can tell you without even looking at it that Richard Parker, the Director of - see, our organization is called the Foreign Service Family Oral History Project. There's a senior Foreign Service oral history project and a man named Stuart Kennedy who used to be Consul General in Naples is in charge of that and he actually has an office in Georgetown University and he's collecting things just exactly like this.

JORDAN: But that has no connection with the Foreign Service.

Q: No, but maps have a connection with the type of life that we led. I mean maps were very important to us.

JORDAN: When you come back, I'll get it down and show it to you, but it is not a map.

Q: I'm quite sure that they'd be just delighted. They're just like Betty's husband's consular uniform.

JORDAN: Yes.

Q: Her husband's uniform, isn't that extraordinary that she still has it?

JORDAN: That is interesting.

JORDAN: I have some hats with aigrettes that came from Haiti.

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Q: This is just exactly what I was going to ask you, if you had something like that. And I wondered if you had anything from your days in India or Haiti or Finland that we could borrow and display?

JORDAN: Oh, I don't think so, I don't think so. Too much traveling done. My wedding dress went to pieces in Haiti with the heat and humidity. I have it, but it's just falling apart, because the heat in Haiti just ruined it. Just like India ruined my fur coat.

Q: Yes, yes. Well, the tropics did that.

BIOGRAPHIC DATA

Spouse: Curtis C. Jordan

Status: Widow of Consul General

Entered Service: 1920Left Service: 1950

Posts: 1920-1922Port au Prince, Haiti 1922-1924Helsinki, Finland 1924-1926Havana, Cuba 1926-1931Barcelona, Spain 1929-1930Washington, DC 1931-1935Madrid, Spain 1935-1942Madras, India 1942-1946San Luis Potos#, Mexico 1946-1950Louren#o Marques, Mozambique 1950Washington, DC

Date/place of birth: April 28, 1897 in Vitr#, Brittany, FranceDate/place of death: December 12, 1989, Santa Barbara, California

Maiden name: Yvonne des Landelles L#v#que

Parents:

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Theodore Leveque

Felicite des Landelles Leveque

Schools: College Savenay, Vitré, Brittany, France Summer school, England

Date/Place of marriage: May 12, 1921, in Vitré, Brittany, France

Positions held at post:

Member of St. John's Ambulance Corps, Madras

President, YWCA, Madras

President, Red Cross Chapter (under auspices of Mexican Red Cross), San Luis Potosí.

Positions held in Washington:

UC Santa Barbara, American Summer Institute Education Abroad Program (cultural exchange); United Nations

Honors:

Santa Barbara, California, Woman of the Year, 1971

Knight of the Palmes Academiques (French culture)

End of interview