

Interview with Dorothy Prince

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

DOROTHY PRINCE

Interviewed by: Joan Bartlett

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Q: This is an interview with Dorothy Prince at her house in Tamworth, New Hampshire on April 10, 1991. We've just finished a wonderful lunch and are beginning to talk about a lot of things and we want to put it down on tape before we lose it.

Can you start off by telling us a little bit about your childhood and your growing up?

PRINCE: I grew up in Manchester, New Hampshire. My father was a mill worker, and my mother a secretary in a small business. We were very poor. I was always keen to get out and see the great world, and I got to college through scholarships and work.

Q: You went to college in Maine, didn't you?

PRINCE: I went to Bates College in Maine. I went into the principal's office in my high school one day, and said, "Mr. Morrison, I'd like to go to college. Do you know anyplace that would give me a scholarship?" He was a Bates man, and I was the valedictorian. (I always did everything that was possible to do because I somehow had this urge to get all of the world in that I possibly could.) So he was instrumental in my getting scholarships to Bates, where I also did very well, and joined everything in sight, except the debating team. I was invited to join the team but my guardian angel said, "Dorothy, you already hold forth

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at great length. If this quality in you is nurtured by debating, it will be impossible to live with you." So I said, "No, thank you."

Q: Were your family very supportive that you go off, or did they want you to stay at home?

PRINCE: My mother and I were best friends all our lives, and she was happy that I could go. And my father, poor man, was pleased that somebody in his family could go to college; it was something he could feel good about.

Q: And after college you went to Washington?

PRINCE: Yes. After college I had several job opportunities. This was in 1938, and there weren't all that many jobs around. The ones I had lined up were in executive-training and in publishing houses, which didn't pay much to start. Unbeknownst to me, my mother had written to the Congressman [Arthur Byron Jenks] from our First District, for whom she'd worked when he was a businessman in Manchester, to ask his help in finding me a job. Out of the blue came an offer to work as a secretary in Mr. Jenks's office, at a salary higher than any of the others. I had college loans to repay and wanted to help at home, so I went to Washington and there I worked until I married: for a couple of Congressmen; for *The Foreign Commerce Weekly*; for the Selective Service System during the early days of its formation and operation. Then I decided I wanted to go into the Foreign Service and was preparing to go as a Foreign Service Clerk when I was asked if I would take time out. They were then setting up the arrangements for the oral examination of candidates who'd passed the written exam for FSO's — which had been given for the first time since the U.S. entered World War II. I was asked to serve in that small unit, and it was really interesting — there were just about six of us, working under a bright and very likeable young officer, so we were able to contribute our ideas as things were set up, not just do routine work. Part way along that course I said to myself, "I'd like to take this exam myself." So I enrolled in a history course at American University to fill in a gap in my background, and I planned to stay in Washington for another year and take the written exam when next

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it was given. I never let Edward forget that I'd paid a \$15.00 deposit on that history course, which I couldn't get back.

Q: Was he actually being interviewed when you met him? You saw him there answering questions?

PRINCE: I didn't sit in on the exam. I did the before-and-after bit. It was in Chicago. There were so many candidates to be examined that after a time they split into two boards: one to go to Chicago and St. Louis and the other to the Southwest, to take people from those areas, as well as a board continuing in Washington. It was very funny. I was a motherly type, and it was clear that a lot of these fellows were nervous; so I would try to make them feel at ease when they came in, offering the morning paper or light conversation. Edward came in very jauntily. I thought, well, this guy doesn't need any of my attentions; I didn't pay any further special heed to him at all. A couple of the other fellows did show some response and before I left had taken me out. But when Edward came to Washington and we met on the street, there was a little spark in his eye and he noticed me then! Forty days later we were married.

And a rare thing happened. Remember Mrs. Shipley, the long-time head of the Passport Section? Well, Edward already had his assignment to Budapest and his passport, at the time we decided to marry. Eric Wendelin, my supervisor at the time, sweet-talked Mrs. Shipley into issuing a passport in my married name before I was married; it was to be held at the New York office until we turned up with the marriage certificate to claim it. This enabled me to go with Edward to his post.

Q: Do you think we should censor that?

PRINCE: I think she's probably — God rest her soul — beyond any disciplinary action for this.

Q: Where were you married?

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PRINCE: We were married in Manchester, New Hampshire, in October 1946. I came up here to Tamworth to meet Edward's parents, his father was a retired Episcopal priest from Illinois. They were wonderful people, a real bonus in my marriage to Edward.

After a honeymoon in New York, we boarded the SS Washington for Le Havre. A passenger ship originally, she had been re-fitted for troop transport during the war and, in November 1946, had not yet been reconverted for passenger service. When we were in New York Edward had lunched with an old Navy friend (he had been a Navy flyer in the war); he was bemoaning the fact that as newlyweds he would be bunking in with five other men and I with five other women. Edward's friend said, "Why don't you call U.S. Lines? They do have four cabins, and they might have a cancellation. What do you have to lose?" So Edward, a brand-new, wet-behind-the-ears Foreign Service officer, called U.S. Lines and said, "My wife and I will be traveling to Le Havre on the SS Washington. We are going to assignment in Hungary, and I wanted to ask that, if you should have a cancellation in any of the cabin space, you consider us." The savvy person at the other end of the line said, "What grade Foreign Service officer?" Edward drew himself up to his full five- feet-nine and said with dignity, "I am a Foreign Service officer." Well, it was the pre-spook period, but people were going on sort of informal intelligence missions in the Russian-occupied areas; and perhaps the guy got the impression that Edward was one of these special intelligence people. Well, we sailed, and after supper stayed up on deck until we'd passed the Statue of Liberty, and then retired to our respective six-person cabins. Then there was a knock on the door; the purser was there and said, "Mrs. Prince, will you come with me?" He escorted me to the upper deck, opened the door of a cabin — and there was Edward! Somehow Edward had conveyed the idea we were quite important. I sat at the Captain's right all the way across the Atlantic, and he invited us to drinks in his cabin. There were all sorts of important people aboard who didn't receive these favors! After landing at Le Havre we went to Paris, where we had a couple of days to wait before proceeding to Budapest.

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I still recall with emotion an experience in Paris. We'd become friendly at the Captain's table with a young French woman, a social worker, and with an American officer going to London as Naval Attach#. The parents of our French friend invited us and the Naval Attach# to dinner at their apartment — at a time when food was scarce and rationed!

(And we subsequently learned that the French are slow to invite guests into their homes.) Yvonne's father said to us, "Twice in my lifetime the United States has saved our country, and we are grateful." Then we went by train to Vienna. And aside from getting lost in the Vienna railway station, and looking for Edward through carloads of Russian soldiers (I finally found him), we got to Budapest.

The first person I was introduced to at the legation was the Public Affairs and Cultural Officer. I said, "You're Lew Revey. We were at Bates College together."

Q: Oh, wonderful, an old friend.

PRINCE: Out of that connection came one of my more delightful adventures in the Service. At that time, so soon after the war, things were still so under organized that professorial exchange had not yet been reestablished. The university approached Lew about a course on American literature they wanted to offer; it wasn't possible to get a professor from the United States. So Lew said to me, "Could you give some lectures on American literature?" (I'd been an English major in college.) I said, "If you can get me some books from the library, sure."Q: In English, I hope.

PRINCE: I was received by the faculty before my first lecture. There I was, a youngish woman, not very big, and I wore definitely non-professorial clothes. We took sherry together, and then they escorted me with dignity into the lecture hall — which was sort of like an amphitheater, with raised tiers of seats. The lovely courtesy of the European students! They all rise whenever the professor comes in. So here was this young woman,

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with the perky hat with a red tassel on it, walking down, all the students standing at attention! I lectured at the regular university and also at the technical university.

Q: And these students all spoke English?

PRINCE: Yes, they were college students and they had enough English so they could understand it.

Q: What was Budapest like at that time?

PRINCE: Budapest had suffered a great deal of damage because there was a sort of siege, when the Russians were pushing back the Germans, who were holding out on the west side of the river (the Danube). Of all the seven bridges, only one was still intact at that time. The Coronation Church had suffered a good deal of damage. That was where the Austro-Hungarian emperor would come to be crowned in Hungary, as he had been in Vienna.

The people had a tremendous vitality. You could see it in the women particularly. They might have a very cheap dress that they'd made up themselves, but they wore it with a 'swish', and they carried themselves with an air. You had this feeling in the air, this is a very vital place. Cultural life was reviving at a good pace, especially the opera — they translated the librettos into Hungarian. Quite a sensation, to hear an Italian opera sung in Hungarian.

The house we got to live in had been a hunting lodge — no crystal chandeliers. But we loved it. It was in an area called the Huvosvolgy, which means “the cool valley”, in the outskirts of the city. At the time it was built it probably was countryside, but the city had grown out to include it.

Q: Was that in fairly good shape? Did the legation own places?

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PRINCE: I guess the legation may have owned the Minister's residence. But no, we had to find our own houses, and mainly through word of mouth — it's remarkable how in a country under occupation, or under an authoritarian government, news of all kind manages to get about in that way. The man who had this house was going to go to the United States. He'd been invited to take a guest professorship at Harvard. He was a professor of psychology. He wanted to let his house to Americans so he could be paid in American currency.

Q: It sounds charming.

PRINCE: It was just great. It was heated with wood in those wonderful tile stoves like they have in Russia. And it was the only place where we ever had a cook, and a maid. I gave two dinner parties a week. I was free as a bird. I was fortunate to be able to take piano lessons with a man who taught the master class at the conservatory, a pupil of Dohnanyi, who was a pupil of Liszt. In all of the upheavals of the immediate postwar years, many things were possible that would not have been possible in normal times. It was like living in an Eric Ambler novel. Russian soldiers were round about, many of them young fellows. When they got drunk they were quite unpredictable. When they were not drunk they were very decent young chaps. I remember we were driving home one night, and there were often roadblocks because people were trying to escape, and we were stopped by a couple of Russian soldiers. We had just got our new Chevrolet. One of the soldiers came over and made to open the front door, and I snatched it out of his hand, and said, "Get out of here!" and put the lock down. Edward stepped on the gas and said, "Put your head down." I said, "Why?" He said, "He's got a gun." I hadn't noticed. Occasionally you would have this kind of experience.

I think the most politically exciting thing that we were involved in personally was at the time that Rakosi, the head of the Communist Party, staged his coup. He was Vice Premier and he did it very cleverly. Premier Nagy, the democratically elected head of government, leader of the Smallholders Party (a moderate, peasant party), was away on holiday in

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Austria; and Rakosi sent word that if he didn't come back, they would bring his family to the border. If he did come back, they would not guarantee what would happen to them. So, he accepted the deal, and Rakosi stepped into the role of Premier. Rakosi gave a farewell luncheon for our Minister, Mr. Schoenfeld, at a local club. While we were at that luncheon we knew that the leader of one of the major opposition parties was being conducted down through our back garden to a back road where he was going to be picked up and smuggled out of the country. And as we sat there listening to compliments being paid, and much bowing being done on both sides between Rakosi and the Minister, we knew what was happening at home. It went off well. He did get away.

All his life, to revert to my music teacher, he was a concert pianist, and he got out to go on tour in Europe for an unlimited period. There was a plan for his family to get out to join him, and by an unforeseen complication at the last moment this failed, and it was too late for him to return. It was years later before his family did in fact get out and joined him in the U.S. All through the years, up until his death, we kept in touch. He ended up at the University of California where he taught, and he also gave concerts, and conducted. I had a reunion with his wife in 1981 — after 33 years! It was three years after Erno's untimely death, and a year after Edward's (also untimely!). I have a Christmas letter from her every year, and an open invitation to her home in Santa Barbara. She had worked with Kodaly in Budapest, and teaches the Kodaly method at various universities, in addition to having a number of private pupils. A wonderful, brave and warm-hearted woman! I think friendships made in such difficult times as those of post-war Budapest have a special staying power.

Q: You went after Budapest to Montreal. That must have been sort of a let down.

PRINCE: It was. Minister Schoenfeld was uneasy because it was the time of the Berlin airlift, and the tension was very high. He was concerned that there might actually be some mishap that would result in conflict between us and the Russians — if they, for instance, shot down one of our planes. So he asked the Department to do something about the wives with young children especially, and perhaps to expedite the transfer of any officers

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whose normal tour of duty was about completed. We had been there just two years, and in December of '48 we were transferred to Montreal.

Q: Did you have children by then?

PRINCE: We had an eight-month-old baby girl, and a year-old dog that we called Boldog, which is Hungarian for “happy”. So we set off by car to Le Havre, to board ship for Christmas in New Hampshire before proceeding to Montreal.

We had an adventure en route. We stopped in Germany at a restaurant in the American zone. It was run by the Army. So, of course, we took the baby in, and Edward took his briefcase, which had our passports, steamship tickets, and all our other valuable papers. When we came out of the restaurant, Edward put his briefcase on top of the car while he put the baby in her basket, and you know what happened. We got a couple of miles down the road, and he said, “Where's my briefcase?” So I got out and walked back along the ditch to look for it, and Edward drove back. We got back to the restaurant, no sign of it. So we called the suitable authorities, and roadblocks were set up to check the papers of travelers, because a lot of people, of course, were wanting to get out to the west. Edward then said sadly to one of the waitresses, “If a message should come through for Edward Prince, we will be at such and such hotel in Munich.” She said, “Prince? There was a message for a Mr. Prince.” And she had the telephone number. So Edward called the number, and it turned out that the people who had come out after us had seen the briefcase fall off, had picked it up and tried in vain to catch up with us. The man was the CARE representative in the area, and he said, “I'm at Rosenhelm, which is just off your route a few miles. I'll meet you at the fountain in the center of the town.” So we went to Rosenhelm and met the CARE man. Edward had a bottle of Hungarian wine in the car, so we uncorked it, and sat around the rim of the fountain toasting each other, and thanking God for the restoration of our valuable papers.

Q: You must have had some moments of big panic.

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PRINCE: I don't know. The Lord sort of took over, I guess. Like many other people, I think, my immediate reaction in a crisis is one of icy calm that lasts for a certain period before I go to pieces.

Montreal was a difficult post because household help was not any more available than in the States. We arrived with a baby of eight months, and two more of our children were born there. We had five children in seven years, so you can see how they came along. We were there from '48 to '51.

Montreal was one of the two busiest consular posts in the world at that time (Mexico City was the other), because so many war-displaced people were seeking entry into the U.S. It was a place that, at a different stage in our career, we could have enjoyed more. But with the natural reserve of the French and Anglo communities, the stress of work, and the family situation, we didn't find it very easy.

Q: So you managed the household, you did everything.

PRINCE: I remember one of Edward's efficiency reports said, "The Princes don't do effective representation entertainment, but in view of the family situation this is understandable." It was in Montreal, early on, that I learned never to drink a martini. (I had never had a cocktail until I was out of college.) At the end of a long day taking care of three babies, to get dressed up, leave the babies with a sitter, take the train into town, and go to an official cocktail party. Well, a martini was served. I took one, and pretty soon, with great dignity, I walked upstairs and lay down on the hostess's bed, where Edward came and collected me when it was time to go home. I said, "This mixture is lethal." And I have never drunk a martini since.

Q: But the cold, all those mittens and snowsuits. I mean, you couldn't even get out, could you, without it being a major production, with three children.

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PRINCE: Yes, that's true. However, we made friendships with two couples that have lasted all through the years. One, an American couple in business, full-time residents there. The other a Canadian-American couple, also in business, whom we met because the wife was the daughter of a clerical friend of Edward's father. (I had a letter just recently from one of them.) We weren't able to take much advantage of the cultural and intellectual life there, of course. We went then to New Zealand.

Q: Straight from Montreal to New Zealand?

PRINCE: Yes, and speaking of snowsuits, that was quite a production, because we were going from one climate to another. We left in August; and I carried in my hand luggage the winter things we would need for arriving in the middle of the New Zealand winter; to be sure it's not anything like a New England winter, but it is cold. We had a Pullman accommodation (pre-jet!) on the plane from San Francisco, where for an hour, we lost one of our children in the airport! What happened was that he'd rolled off the cot in the nursery and, still asleep, rolled over again under the cot. So when we went to get our Jonathan, he wasn't there.

Q: Were you panicked?

PRINCE: Of course. It was midnight, and I was going around to all the offices asking, "Have you seen a little two-year-old blonde boy?" Eventually we went back to the nursery and found him sleeping peacefully under the bed! In the Pullman accommodation, Edward and the two little boys, Jonathan and Tony, had one, and Noelle, our three-year-old daughter, and I shared the other. She was so hyped up that she didn't sleep the whole 36 hours, and, of course, neither did I. When we changed planes at Fiji, to go on to Auckland, I got out the snow suits and put them on the kids. At last we arrived at Wellington. We were the last ones off the plane, by the time we'd gathered up the diaper bags, and the food, and the kids, put the harness on number two, and the little one on

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Edward's shoulder. A nice couple came forward as we left the plane and said, "Are you the Princes?" And we said, "Who else?"

Q: You think your reputation preceded you?

PRINCE: I don't know. Anyway, this nice couple, the Whartons, were so kind. They knew how wearied we would all be. So they had found a baby sitter. Our little ones were so tired that after we had fed them at the hotel we put them immediately to bed and they were out like a light. Happily, they seemed to have no sense of strangeness in this unfamiliar place. Then the Whartons took us out to their house for a relaxing evening. We thanked God again for the quality of the people in the Foreign Service. Next morning we made our first acquaintance with the British custom of morning-tea. A brisk knock on the door awakened us; we groggily inquired, "What?" and a cheerful voice said, "Morning tea!" We said something rude like, "Go away," and went back to sleep.

Q: What was it like in Wellington? Some people might say it was dull, a little bit. It's also very beautiful, I hear.

PRINCE: I never found it dull. In Montreal I hadn't been able to undertake any of the usual things Foreign Service wives take on, but in New Zealand, for some reason, I was invited to be on the National Board of the YWCA. It wasn't a very irksome duty, but it brought me in contact with the people. We made friends with some extremely interesting people. I had a contact through a friend who, during the war, had been there cataloguing the National Library, and she gave me the name of a particular friend of hers through whom then we formed a circle of close friends: three of whom, interestingly enough, were psychiatrists, and psycholoanalyst, whom we didn't need to consult professionally(!) but whose wisdom, friendship and support, was something wonderful.

About six months after our arrival I became pregnant again. Again, we discovered that household help was not easy to come by. Our house had a small furnished flat attached to the garage, at the far end of the garden: a bedroom, kitchenette, and sitting-room. We

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advertized, offering the flat free to a couple, of whom the wife would be expected to take part-time employment with us, helping with the children and the work of the house. After some hair-raising experiences with immigrating couples, we ended up with a wonderful Dutch couple. At that time New Zealand was encouraging immigration, especially from Holland, because the Dutch spoke flawless English and had the quality of industriousness New Zealand wanted for their work force. A young man came to our door one day; he said his fiancée was flying over in the London-to-New Zealand air race, that they were to be married and, rental quarters being very hard to find, he was responding to our advertizement. I said, "Why don't you wait until your fiancée arrives and find out whether this would suit her?" So in due course he turned up with this gorgeous girl. (She looked like a brunette Ingrid Bergman.) I invited them in, we had coffee, and I told them I needed a half day's help with the children and the housework five days a week, and baby-sitting in the evenings when required.

This young woman came of a well-off business family and had been accustomed to a very comfortable life. I said, "I know I'd be happy to have you in my house, but are you quite sure that you'd be willing to wash my floors?" And she said, "I will have to wash my own, I do not mind to wash yours." They were married from our house, and their only attendants were our little Noelle (not quite 5) and Jonny (3-1/2). We have not seen each other since we left New Zealand in 1955. Subsequently, because of ill health of their parents, they returned to Holland, and Wim went into business there. We have kept in touch, and I have a standing invitation to visit them — and stay 'as long as I can.'

Q: That's a wonderful story.

PRINCE: One of our most cherished friendships was with Manu and Kaa Bennett. Manu was an Anglican priest, whose father, Bishop Bennett, had translated the Bible into the Maori language. They came and stayed with our children when Edward took me to hospital for the birth of our little Mary, our fourth child, who died at birth. And Manu took Edward to special Maori events at Rotorua and introduced him to people influential in the Maori

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community. Manu himself subsequently became Maori Bishop of New Zealand, and he and Kaa visited us here in Tamworth in 1978 en route to the Lambeth Conference in England. And Manu preached at Edward's little Episcopal church here in Tamworth! I visited them in 1987 in New Zealand. When we left New Zealand Kaa had given me a grass skirt that was part of her dowry (it's hanging upstairs in this house); and when I visited their home I saw in a special niche the silver Crucifixion group we had sent them, which we'd inherited from Edward's father. (It was hand-carried to them by the New Zealand Ambassador to Washington, an old friend from our Wellington days — who was concerned about insuring it until I reminded him that we knew he wouldn't steal it, and that if his plane went down over the Pacific we'd be grieving over him, not the little statues.)

During our time in New Zealand, Hillary climbed Mount Everest — great was the rejoicing there, in which we joined. And Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip visited the country, in the interval between her father's death and her coronation. Our children waved British flags along with their chums. Edward and I went to the royal garden party; and I was able to wave to her as I came out of the butcher shop in our suburb. So casual was the security that she was driving in an open car without a battalion of guards as she passed along our narrow main street en route to more northerly parts! Dull, yet?

Q: I think you loved all your postings. You always made the best of things.

PRINCE: I think for women, as we mentioned earlier, relationships are the important things, and we made friendships with kindred spirits. And among the kindred spirits in New Zealand... I went to a morning coffee early days there, and was introduced to women from the diplomatic group, and from the British High Commissioner's office. Subsequently we went to a dinner party, and I saw a familiar face among the ladies present, I went over to speak to this lady. I didn't quite know what to say to her; I might not have been as talkative at that age. So I said a foolish thing. Looking around the room I saw a man with a rather elfin cast of countenance, and I said, "Who's that funny little man over there?" And she said, "Oh, that's my husband."

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Q: And you became fast friends.

PRINCE: We became fast friends. Nicky and Edward used to play golf together all the time. They were Belfast people, who had gone to Trinity College in Dublin, and they were in the British Commonwealth Service.

Q: So they were in the British High Commission.

PRINCE: Yes. And subsequently, when they were in London and we were in Dublin, we had a holiday in Donegal together. Nicky subsequently became a “Sir”, and he was a High Commissioner in some of the Commonwealth countries. I stayed with them in 1986 in London, and I have a recent letter from them. For me, I guess, the greatest gift the Foreign Service gave was friendships that lasted decades. Decades without seeing each other even.

Q: You must be a good correspondent.

PRINCE: Once a year, usually. But I think with people with whom you have an empathy, you sort of pick up where you left off, and it just goes again. The sad event of our New Zealand time was the death of our little Mary at birth. I went back to New Zealand in '87 and arranged with the man in charge of the cemetery to put the grave in order; he sent me photographs of the grave, and every Christmas we exchange greetings. I arranged through New Zealand friends to give him a check every Christmas in appreciation for his looking after it all the time. So I don't feel it's abandoned.

Q: It must have been terribly hard, but by then you had many friends there to support you through that time.

PRINCE: Yes. I guess it's easier to accept the loss of a child before you have come to know him or her. I think the older a child gets, the more you have in memories. But I can still see that little face. Fortunately, I wasn't doped up during labor so I was able to say,

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"If there's any question that this child will live, I want her baptized." So the nurse in the maternity home flew up to the church, snatched the priest off the altar, and brought him down, and Mary was baptized.

From New Zealand we were fortunate to have one of our occasional boat trips. From Christchurch we went by boat to Philadelphia through the Panama Canal, on a British freighter which plied between London and the Far East, and carried many missionary families. So it was set up for children. There was fencing along the rails, and there were gates for companionways so that you had to reach over to unlatch them. So the children could run freely. There were just two families on board — a young New Zealand couple coming to take up a Nilman fellowship in journalism at Harvard. They had one child, and we had our three and I was pregnant again. That was the whole passenger list so, of course, we all sat with the captain. Our Tony had his third birthday aboard and the captain gave him a birthday party. The cook made a great cake, the ship's whistle blew three times, and there were balloons. And to top it off, Tony's balloon slipped his hand and off it went. But a few minutes later, a sailor came down from the upper deck, and said, "I saw this just floating by, and I reached out and got it." So Tony got his balloon back!

Q: Those are important memories, aren't they? Just little things like that.

PRINCE: Yes. I can just see it.

Q: So this ship went to Philadelphia. Where were you on your way to?

PRINCE: We had home leave in New Hampshire, and thence to Helsinki, Finland. Again we went by boat, to Bremerhaven, then to Copenhagen; and by small boat (the "ferry," as it was called) up the Baltic Sea to Helsinki.

Q: And you were pregnant all this time.

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PRINCE: Yes, I was pregnant. In fact, when we arrived in Helsinki I was eight months pregnant.

Q: You don't get seasick, I gather?

PRINCE: No. When we were crossing the Atlantic it was approaching the time of the winter solstice; and Edward and I were the only two people on board, I believe, who weren't seasick.

Q: What a constitution.

PRINCE: It was one of those seas where you put your hands down to hold the dishes on the table when the ship was pitching, and we got through it. But it was an extremely tiring time, because one of the children was sick on board, and another was sick in Copenhagen. So I arrived very tired.

Q: Was your husband helpful with the children?

PRINCE: Oh, sure. I think in the Foreign Service husbands were particularly helpful if you didn't have full-time servants and nannies. If you had servants that was one thing. But as I said, I cooked all the dinners for official entertainment after we left Budapest in 1948. Sometimes for as many as 32 people. I prepared food for cocktail parties anywhere from 175 to, well, spread over a five hour period once we invited 300, but I think only 200 came. I cooked for ten days beforehand because we didn't have a cook.

Our Philip was born in Helsinki, under the care of a wonderful doctor who saw me initially at 7:00 at night; he was a professor at medical school, and had his private practice, but when he heard we had just arrived and I was just a month from delivery, he saw me then. He spent an hour and a half with me and he said, "Now is there anything else you want to know, because I can stay here as long as you want me to." And when Philip was delivered he was at my side in 15 minutes, and never left me. He told me afterwards, "You were so

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run down when I saw you I wasn't sure that you would survive this." It was wonderful. He made me stay in the hospital for three weeks to get a good rest while Edward was going crazy, of course, at home with the three kids.

Q: Did he find anyone to help?

PRINCE: Well, you know, the Lord does wonderful things. Edward put an advertisement in the paper, and a Finnish woman turned up who had experience with emotionally-disturbed children. She had a special training and she was home after having done this work in Israel for some years. The terms of the advertisement, I guess, must have spoken to her generous heart, because she answered it. She told me afterwards, "When I saw that poor man, and all those little kids..." So she came and was there after I came home from the hospital. We were living in a temporary flat that the embassy owned. The three older kids were all sick, they were all in one room. There was a bad flu going around and the doctor said, "You must take great care that the baby doesn't get in contact with this strain." So the three were in one room, the baby in the second bedroom, and Edward and I were sleeping on a couch in the living room. And then Edward got sick too. Oh, surely, haven't you encountered things like this?

Q: I don't remember it was ever that bad.

PRINCE: Miss Ella was simply wonderful. But then a great blow fell. An uncle of hers, who was a widower, had a stroke and there was no one to care for him. So, much sooner than she had anticipated, she had to leave me. Well, it was a blow particularly to our number-two son, who had been traumatized by being torn up from New Zealand when he was almost three, but he didn't understand why. That was the only place he'd ever known; and he had come to trust at last again this woman, and then she left him. So, that's one of the things the Foreign Service does to kids.

Through various contacts we got a house on the shores of the Gulf of Finland. The best party we ever gave, in my opinion, was a Midsummer Eve party, down on the shore. It's

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traditional in the North countries, dating from pre-Christian times. A bonfire by the water is an essential part of it. We could see the fires all around the bay, as we sat along the shore, singing. The Finnish guests would sing some of their songs, alternating with others of us singing the songs of our respective countries. (The last guests left at 5:00 a.m.! It has the longest daylight of the year; the sun dips below the horizon for only about half an hour, around midnight, then it's back and the birds start singing again.) Although we didn't have a cook or maid there, we were very fortunate to have the help of a splendid girl, trained in child care, to live in and care for the baby and for the other children when we went out.

In Finland our principal friendships were formed through two English-language conversation groups; we met with each one once a week. We had loads of fun and they included some very interesting people, including among others the sister of the president; a wonderful woman scientist who was also an artist; a man who was head of the health services in Finland (which certainly could be a model for us); and a man who was sort of a great entrepreneur in the theatrical field. It was a very diverse group; we formed wonderful friendships, and we did things together. We would go to literary festivals in the country, and that kind of thing.

Q: You had a very full and wonderful life in Helsinki.

PRINCE: Yes, it was very rewarding, and the Finns are the staunchest of friends. After that Edward had a year of a special course in economics at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology]. While we were there we had a visit from Toini, the scientist/artist, who'd come to Cambridge for a conference. While she was with us Edward was reading in the evenings to the children from the Moomin stories (a well-known Finnish series for children). I'd mentioned to Toini I hadn't a tea cozy, and she said to me, "Do you have a scrap bag?" So from the scraps she made me a tea cozy, decorated with figures she made of the characters in the Moomin stories — you see, she even had the little string of pearls for Moomin Maiden. We never saw each other again after 1956, but we corresponded until her death in 1983.

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Q: Did you live there at MIT? Was it a whole year?

PRINCE: That was a whole academic year. We lived in Norwood, which was an easy train commute to Cambridge. I would take Edward down to the station every morning and meet him in the evening.

Q: How was life for you there? Could you get out?

PRINCE: We had four little ones, so we didn't have any social life. But we were contented.

Q: You didn't feel isolated?

PRINCE: No. We were busy. We went about in the town; the two older children, Noelle and Jonny, went to the elementary school, and the children had friends down the road. It was near New Hampshire; and a few Massachusetts friends came to visit us, including Edward's sister, whose husband taught at Mt. Holyoke. We had a big rambling house with fields of daffodils back of it, where the kids had a wonderful place to play.

Q: Oh, wonderful that you could find such a place.

PRINCE: It belonged to a rich family next door, who were friends of a friend of Edward's parents. They had bought this small estate when the owner died because they didn't want it to be sold for development, and they were willing to let it to us on the say-so of Mother and Dad Prince's friend. We came on friendly terms with them and a son of theirs, through whom we later made friends in other places.

From there we went on to Washington, where Edward served mostly on Australian-New Zealand affairs. Those three years were reasonably uneventful professionally. We did a modest amount of entertaining, but not so much was expected of one in that area in Washington except of quite senior people. We did make some congenial acquaintance with Australian Embassy folk and found some old New Zealand friends in their Washington

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embassy. The children settled into school and neighborhood friendships, and Edward and I were glad to renew contact with some old friends from pre-marital days. We didn't have much opportunity to take advantage of cultural activities — I remember we bought one concert series ticket and took turns going to the performances (I had the joy of hearing the incomparable Glenn Gould at one of them). We took the kids to some museums — I guess their favorite trips were to the Smithsonian to see the dinosaurs.

Q: Did you join in on the decisions on where your assignments were? Or mostly did the assignments come as a surprise?

PRINCE: The only time we had any input that I am aware of was when we went to Ankara, later on. At that time we were in the Northern Europe - British Commonwealth division of the Department. (I don't know whether the Department is now organized into the same geographical divisions.) Our assignments after Budapest — to Montreal, New Zealand, and Helsinki — placed us in that area, so it was understandable that our next assignment was to Dublin.

Since I was a child there were two places I wanted to go. One was Ireland; I came of Irish stock and loved Irish poetry and songs. The other place I wanted to go was Vienna, where I expected to find Beethoven and Mozart walking around; I thought of it as the city of music. It seemed a dream come true, to have been in Vienna during our Budapest days and now to be going to Ireland. I shall never forget my first sight of Ireland. I didn't go to bed that night, because we were going to come into Cobh, the port of Cork, about midnight. For a wonder there was a moon — it wasn't raining! And there in the moonlight I saw the hills of Ireland for the first time. I felt this atavistic surge all through me.

Q: So you really felt at home there.

PRINCE: It's still the home of my heart. After a time my mind became attuned to the Irish way of thinking (quite different from the Anglo-Saxon), and I began taking on the Irish way of speech. (I guess this happens for many of us when we've lived in a country for a while.)

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After a stay in a family hotel we were fortunate to find a large and handsome house on Ailesbury Road, the 'embassy row' of Dublin. It was owned by the newspaper, the Cork Examiner, whose representative had used it for a time, then it was let out to a diplomatic family, who was transferring. Though furnished, it was so large that we could tuck our modest effects into the nooks and crannies. It had six levels; and I used to go up the stairs two at a time because it was so big and there was so much work I hadn't time to go up one at a time. It was very difficult until our kindly neighbor, the Spanish ambassadress, sent a wonderful Spanish girl, Carmela, to live with us. After a time she went back to Spain to get married, and I was back to cleaning ladies again. Then I had word that she and her husband, Floris, would like to return to Ireland if they could find a place together. So Edward and I did a quick budget calculation and figured out the maximum we could offer them: it suited, and they both came — and that made all the difference in our lives. She didn't do the cooking for our official dinner parties, but she helped me; and she could do the family cooking and take care of the children. And she and Floris together could handle the major cleaning. And the Spanish ambassadress, dear lady (she was sort of a surrogate mother to me) sent her butler over to teach Floris how to serve at parties. Edward was political officer, and made very effective political contacts, which we could now follow up with entertaining.

And that was where we met Tibor Paul again. Have I told you about meeting the conductor we had known in Budapest?

Q: *No.*

PRINCE: He had been conductor of the Radio Budapest Symphony in Hungary, and we were acquainted with him, though not intimately. We heard that he was the conductor of the Irish National Symphony. He was in the phone book, so I rang him up. I said, "Do you remember us from Budapest?" "Mrs. Prince! Everywhere I've gone I've inquired do they know where the Princes are! You must come tonight. I have a place for you in my box. I will hold the concert until you arrive."

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So in short notice we got a baby sitter and rushed there; someone was waiting at the door; “Come quick! It's time for the concert to start.” And we were whisked up to the conductor's box. It turned out the family had got out of Hungary, and Tibor was full-time music director for Australian National Radio Symphony, but also permanent conductor in Dublin. He had a flat in Dublin, but the family was in Sydney, since the two boys were at school. The natural thing was that we became sort of his musical host and hostess and gave after-concert parties. How exciting it was to meet these great musical artists — like Paul Badura-Skoda, Hephzibah Menuhin, Rosalyn Tureck, Julius Katchen, among others. The artists always had a big bowl of my home-made soup before joining the guests, since musicians eat very lightly, if at all, before a performance. And we went to Julius Katchen's birthday party. We became the 'artistic and musical Americans' because, for some years before, the previous Ambassador and most of his staff were not particularly interested in artistic and intellectual activities; they were more involved with that very important aspect of Irish life, horses and racing, and the social life connected with it. So when Dublin's artistic community found some American Embassy people who really shared their interests, we had access to all these distinguished people and wonderful events that ordinarily would have been available only to higher-ranking people in the embassy.

A great friendship I developed in Ireland was with Mary Lavin, the writer, whom we got to know because of a Norwood connection. The people who owned the house we lived in in Norwood had a farm in County Meath, in Ireland; it was managed for them by Tom Lavin, Mary's father. So the Norwood folk, when they knew we were going to Dublin, gave us her address and said, “You must be in touch with Mary.”

So when we got to Dublin I sent a note telling her I'd like to call on her, and I got back Mary's reply. (You know how genius's handwriting is indecipherable.) It appeared to be an invitation to a 'liver and cheese party'! I said to Edward, “What's a liver and cheese party?” We discovered it was wine and cheese. Mary had been widowed at age 39. “It was one of those bloody Irish funerals where you stand around the grave in the rain. And William got

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pneumonia.” She had three girls, one of whom was the same age as our Noelle (twelve or thirteen). So the girls became friends, and I became great friends with Mary. We used to go down to the country, where she had a farm beside Bective Abbey, in County Meath. It was a wonderful friendship. And through her we got to know people like Frank O'Connor and other authors and poets and actors. Mary used to phone me up and say, “I've got this story all written except for the opening sentence, and the opening sentence is critical.” So she would try different ones out on me, until one seemed right.

I think my most beloved friends in Ireland were Terry and Nancy O'Rafferty. Terry was Permanent Secretary of Education under several Presidents and Prime Ministers. He was also a distinguished scholar and active internationally, in the Council of Europe and such — but the most modest of men, and filled with a matchless Christian charity. Their home was always my base on subsequent visits to Ireland. I remember he used to say when I came, “You are at home, Dorothy.” I used to go back to Ireland every two years after we were transferred — when on home leave or transfer — to keep in touch with the dear place and friends.

Q: Were your children in the public schools there?

PRINCE: Yes. Though really it's not a public-school system in our sense. All the schools were run by the various denominations — mainly Catholic, of course, but there were others. (The mayor of Dublin in our time was Jewish.) Noelle went to the Sacred Heart nuns, the female Jesuits, you could say, in the Catholic Church, the intellectuals. Jonny and Tony went to Blackrock, with the Holy Ghost Fathers. And little Phil went to Montessori school, with the nuns — a wonderful schooling. They had great friends and a happy life.

Edward was able to be very effective there. A political ambassador was appointed whom the DCM had the great misfortune to put a foot wrong with, and the ambassador sent him home. So there he was, a green political ambassador, without a DCM, and

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he liked Edward and Edward was able to guide him tactfully in an acceptable way. The ambassador wanted Edward to be DCM, but the Department had a man who needed a final post before retirement.

Q: Was your husband disappointed?

PRINCE: Naturally he was disappointed. He was quite junior to be a DCM, of course, but he had established wonderful relationships with Irish officialdom and was much respected in Dublin. In any case, he had the satisfaction of being able to hold the embassy staff together when they were quite demoralized by the sudden eviction of the DCM; he undertook their reassurance and pulled them back together again. And the ambassador continued to rely on him a good deal.

Q: What was his position?

PRINCE: He was a political officer.

Q: Head of a section?

PRINCE: I think he constituted the section. It was not a very big staff.

Q: In addition to doing a lot of musical and artistic entertaining...

PRINCE: We did some volunteer work for hospitals.

Q: The embassy wives?

PRINCE: Embassy wives.

Q: Was there a group of embassy wives?

PRINCE: Yes. The new DCM's wife asked me to look into possibilities for a wives' group activity, and I turned up the hospital opportunity. The wives' group was not a very big

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operation, however, and mostly we were left to 'do our own thing.' Because there wasn't any Cultural Affairs Officer in Dublin at that time, we did that aspect of entertaining, as you mentioned. But Edward had developed some really wonderful contacts among Irish government and media people, so much of our entertaining was politically-oriented, too.

(What was fun, after the majority of officialdom had gone, we might gather around the piano for a sing-along, or kick off our shoes and put some dance music on the record player. We did that in other posts as well.) It was such a congenial post, and Edward had established such splendid contacts, he was prepared to ask for an extension of our posting there. However, there was a personnel change in the staff about that time that made Edward's working conditions very disagreeable. So we decided it was best to let the system take its course and be prepared for transfer when the appropriate time came.

Q: That must have been sad.

PRINCE: Yes, it was. We were fortunate, however, to have few such experiences in the course of our career; others have had quite a few, and I guess no one escapes them entirely. So, anyway, we got an assignment to someplace like the Ivory Coast. But by that time Philip, our seven-year-old, had developed a severe case of psoriasis (an inheritable chronic skin disease, a 'gift' from my father's family). The embassy physician said it needed specialist attention, and the dermatologist who saw it said it was the most severe case he had ever seen in a child.

Q: What happened with your son?

PRINCE: The dermatologist had worked in Africa, and he said, "This child cannot go to that climate." So Edward flew to Washington with the dermatologist's report, endorsed by the embassy physician, and the Department said, "Okay. We'll wipe that assignment off. Where do you want to go?" (This was the only time we had a choice in our assignments, which you asked about earlier.) We'd long had an interest in Athens; and when we were in New Zealand a previous superior had requested Edward for an assignment there,

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where he was DCM; but we'd already been assigned to Helsinki, where they needed to fill a vacancy, and Edward didn't think it fair, when things had gone so far, to ask for a cancellation of that assignment, so we went to Helsinki then. At this point, however, Edward was still thinking about that Middle East area. It turned out there was a vacancy in the economic section in Ankara. So he phoned me up from Washington and said, "What about Ankara?" and I said, "It's okay with me." And so it turned out. It happened I had to have an operation just as it was time to pack up, so we got the packing done, and then I had the operation but the doctor said, "You've got to wait three weeks before you travel." So Edward and the children went ahead; they went by boat to Istanbul and thence by train to Ankara. I subsequently flew to join them in Ankara, receiving the red-carpet treatment, since Pan Am's Dublin representative was a poker partner of Edward's. Philip was immediately put into the American Air Force hospital, where the psoriasis was expertly treated and cleared up, much to the pride and satisfaction of the Army dermatologist. Then to find a house. As I mentioned, the only place that we had an embassy-owned house was in New Zealand. In other places we found our own, and we would get it by word of mouth very often. We were in a temporary flat for a while, and then we got a house. At that time, Philip went to an American school for military dependents, which was available to all Americans. He'd just turned eight. He came home from school after a few days and said, "Mom, we already finished in Ireland what they'll still be doing at the end of our book here; it's so boring." Friends at the embassy said, "Why don't you think about sending him either to the French, or the German schools?" Both were there under the sponsorship of their respective governments, and several embassy kids went there. We investigated, and the German school said, "He's already ahead of his age group; we will take him but we won't grade him for the first year, and we will find you one of the teachers to tutor him. He can attend the classes, have the tutoring, and then by the end of the year he should be able to get into the substance of it." I didn't know a word of German, neither did Edward. But Edward, being the sort of person he was, had a fat German dictionary. I trotted down to the book store and got a pocket dictionary for Phil. I said, "I'll tell you what, Phil; give it a try 'til Christmas and then if you find it's just too much, you can go back to the American

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school; but you're bored there now, so why not give it a try." Night after night he would bring home his homework, and we'd be looking up things in the dictionary. But they were wonderful at the school, and it was just a five-minute walk from our house. It was on the German embassy grounds; they had playing fields. It was just great. And down the road from us was the German Political Counselor whose youngest son became Phil's best friend, and for whose wedding Phil was best man three years ago, right here in New Hampshire; a German-American couple, they had one wedding here.

Q: Really. You are steadfast with your friendships.

PRINCE: Anyway, at Christmas time, after Phil had struggled through, and there were some tears, I still held the promise for him that he could do what he wanted. After the school's Christmas party in the German embassy, where they had a tall tree in the great hall, lots of chocolate bars for everybody, a gift for everybody, singing, and general jollity, Phil came home and said, "Gee Mom, this is the best school I ever saw." So from that time onward, until he entered college, Phil went to German schools, in German language, for all except one year. He continued in Tehran, and subsequently in Potomac, outside Washington.

We lived in three countries of the Finno-Ugric language group: Hungary, Finland, and Turkey. And while there was only one word that they all had in common that I could identify (the word for "water," *su*) they were structured similarly with suffixes added onto the root word — agglutinative, I believe such languages are called.

Q: Is that right? Because you always think of Hungarian as like nothing else at all.

PRINCE: They all had a common origin, I think, in the wilds of Central Asia. I studied the Turkish language. I loved it. It was so easy to construct because it was so regular. For three years I went to classes, and eventually was able to conduct non-technical conversations. The Turkish people, I just love. Next to Dublin... well, it's hard to choose favorites, but I think Turkey was the second favorite. The character of the people is so fine.

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They're so staunch, they're the truest of friends. I had ten Turkish lady friends. It fell to me to organize English-Conversation groups for 200 Turkish ladies, and to recruit American women to lead them. I myself had a group of ten, who came to my house for three years every Wednesday morning — except during summer holidays. Not only did they make real progress in speaking English but we became the warmest of friends. We did such fun things.

I'll always have the mental picture of one particular event. I had an evening dress I'd got in London, a sheer chiffon with a silk slip of the same style; it had a skirt (double!) yea wide, and it was too long. I couldn't get anyone in Dublin to shorten it. "Mrs. Prince, I'd have to charge you ten pounds to do that." "I'm sorry, I just haven't the time." And so on. I thought, "What am I going to do with this thing?" So I said to my ladies, "Do you know a seamstress who would shorten this for me?" The next week two of the women came early, and they said, "Put on that dress and stand up on the dining room table." They pinned up the hem and that of the underskirt. Then the rest of the ladies came, with needles and thread. They said, "Let's put two card tables together." Then we spread out the skirt and all of us sat around and took a section — and we hemmed that dress!

We used to go to the bazaar, and to interesting places in the old quarter of Ankara. As my departure day approached they said, "We're going to have a party." On the day they arrived with all sorts of delicacies. We lit up the grill, made shish kabob, and sat around and ate and talked until late afternoon. We all felt so sad. I just loved them so much. I left Ankara before the rest of the family, going ahead to spend my usual two or three weeks in Ireland before joining the others on home leave. My plane was due to leave at 7:30 a.m., and the airport was 18 miles from the city. Five minutes after Edward and I arrived at the airport, up drove a minibus with my ten Turkish lady friends, to bid me farewell and give me one final gift. They said, "You must come back and spend two weeks with Mebrure, two weeks with Sevinc, two weeks with Ayfer, two with Durdane, and so on with the whole group. I really feel I'll love them as long as I live, and they will love me. I've tried a few times to be in touch with them, but street addresses are no good, and I didn't know their

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post office box numbers; I tried ringing one or another of them when I was on a plane that touched down at Ankara airport. But no success. And the only friend who was there in my time had left by the time I sent her a letter to deliver. So I just hold them in my heart.

Q: Sure. They know that.

PRINCE: My organizational talents were really used to the full in Ankara. I had a call from the president of the American Women's Club one morning saying, "Could you possibly take charge of our fair this year?" They had a fair every year which raised money for local charitable projects. Somebody else was going to do it and got transferred, or sick, or something. So, anyway, this project ended up involving 200 people — I got something for everybody — a folk dance group, music, food, raffles, games, everything. We even had on hand a couple of medical corpsmen and an ambulance in case anybody was taken ill. I spent six weeks getting it together; and without the help of a wonderful woman, whose husband was with AID and who had been in public relations, I just couldn't have managed it. We conferred on the phone every morning during those six weeks, and we made \$4,000. Also, occasionally the ambassador's wife got me to organize teas for Turkish government ladies, and that kind of thing.

Q: How did you like doing all that kind of thing?

PRINCE: The ambassador's wife's things?

Q: Yes.

PRINCE: Fortunately, that was the only place where I had to do much of that. You know you always have to turn up at the cocktail parties; but that was really the only place I had to do much of the extras. And as it happened, the wife for whom I mostly did it, I liked very much indeed. But, if I'd had to do a lot of it, I would have hated it. I like to do things with the people of the country.

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Q: But also, I was wondering since you were yourself about to become a Foreign Service Officer, did you ever have moments of thinking, "I wish it was I that was doing the substantive stuff."

PRINCE: Yes, but fleetingly, because we had contacts with people of considerable intellectual quality, and I was never relegated to the corner to talk about babies and cookery with the women. I had the stimulation of being accepted in political and cultural conversations and contacts. I think if I hadn't had some of the opportunities that I had to do satisfying work, from a personal, emotional, and intellectual standpoint, that I would have been dissatisfied.

Q: But what interests me is that you say you had the opportunities; but everyone has the opportunities yet some people don't grab them as well as I think you did. I wonder why that was.

PRINCE: Well, I think it was because I needed to use my own creativity. I had an active head, and I needed to use it; and there were things to be done.

Q: You threw yourself into it, and had a wonderful time! Did you ever feel anything about that 1972 Directive. At one point the wives were part of the team, and written up on the husband's efficiency report, as you mentioned in Montreal; and then in 1972 it was decided to not mention them.

PRINCE: I remember that.

Q: You were back in Washington by then, weren't you?

PRINCE: Yes, we were back in the States. Although I think it must be clear to you that I'm a strong-minded woman, I felt it was a great mistake. I think that the Foreign Service used to get two for the price of one, and the women did things that the men couldn't do. The women were instrumental often in creating the bonds of familiarity through the friendships

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with the wives that then would bring the husbands together. And I think that a man who was at post without his wife, didn't begin to get the same depth of contact. I suppose it was considered by the nascent feminist revolution that it was important to distinguish between the two, but I think the Foreign Service lost. I don't know whether you had the experience of the before-and-after yourself. Did you?

Q: Yes, we did.

PRINCE: Did you have any sense of that?

Q: I did in a way. In retrospect anyway, I agree with you that it was a wrong thing to do. But at the time I think you're swept up in it, and we thought, "Oh, yes. We should maybe be paid, or be recognized, or something."

PRINCE: Yes. You know, it would say on the efficiency report, his wife is a great asset. Well, that was okay because you knew what you were doing, and you saw the benefits. You knew what it was giving you. If I'd been 30 years younger and had come in at a time when the women's movement was swinging, I might have been all for separate recognition. You know, all great social movements at their beginnings, swing to the far extreme; and then they gradually come to a reasonable mid-point. But, I think, as a team, as in our day, we were more effective.

Q: You didn't have the feeling ever that you resented being the "wife of?"

PRINCE: Oh, I was never taken that way. I was always me. I was always as talkative, and jumping in all over, as you see me. Our ambassadors were all pretty nice men. And I was spared much contact with difficult wives, and there were only a couple of them.

Q: Dragon ladies?

PRINCE: Yes, as I said, there were a couple of those. If we had been more senior at one of those posts, I might have "got hit." The DCM's wife at one post, a lovely lady, really had

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kind of a bad time. The ambassador's wife was very demanding, and made life difficult for her. If I had had experience like that, my view might be different.

Q: On the other hand, it might not have happened to you. You might have been able to cut it off at the beginning.

PRINCE: The ambassador's position, I think, is like an absolute monarchy; oddly enough, I think it tends to affect the wives more than the ambassadors. One ambassador's wife drank nothing but champagne and was so insensitive as not only to expect junior staff to have it on hand when she came to their houses, but to request it at cocktail parties given by people of the host country, putting them to great embarrassment if they couldn't provide it, because they had a tradition of hospitality which was a matter of honor. Another ambassador's wife held regular wives' meetings; I was newly arrived and close to time of having a baby; I told the secretary who phoned me that I had a doctor's appointment that morning and she said, "Shall I tell Mrs. so-and-so you're unable to cancel?" So I canceled, having been warned of the lady's temperament.

Q: But you rode through those things with a great deal of grace.

PRINCE: Actually I had very, very little of it. Some people really did have hard times. We've rather got away from Ankara, haven't we? Let's see, what else happened there? Well, we traveled a lot; whenever the children had a school vacation we took a trip — the country is so beautiful and diverse, there are marvelous archeological sites, and the people were always so warm and welcoming. And I was involved in church things, women's organizations, singing in choir, etc. Altogether, I loved Turkey.

Q: I think your religion has been very important for you.

PRINCE: Oh, yes, it has. How do you know that?

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Q: It shines out from you. That also must be a great help as you move around. I mean, it must be hard for people who don't have that sense that you do.

PRINCE: Life is difficult anyway, perhaps a bit more so in the Foreign Service. I think it must be harder for people who don't have some concept of a spiritual meaning to it. And some religious practice, not necessarily orthodox, is an important support, I believe.

Q: You've had it right from the beginning.

PRINCE: It's interesting you should mention that, because the most important decision I guess I ever had to face hinged upon my discovering how important that was, after I'd thought it through in my adulthood. Our children all had a church-related upbringing, and it left them with a sense of the importance of a spiritual life. In adulthood they found their own paths — Buddhism, born-again Christianity, committed Socialism. I respect the integrity of their choices and pray that the Lord will lead them to their destined ends.

From Ankara we went to Tehran. Iran was a wonderful experience, but it was the one place where I think most of us at the embassy felt, and regretted, that it was very difficult to make more than surface friendships, because of the character of Iranian life: the demands of the Iranian family were such that there really wasn't time for Iranians to spend with foreigners to the extent that real friendships could develop. (Some missionaries who'd been there for 20 or more years had formed friendships, but mainly with Persian Christians.) I took courses for a couple of years at university there. There was a center for Middle Eastern and Islamic studies, conducted by a brilliant professor (who spoke better English than me); he taught at Harvard, at Oxford, as well as in Persia and many other countries. A devout man as well as a great scholar, he wanted to explain Islam and the history and culture of the Middle East to interested and respectful foreigners. It was a great privilege to study under him.

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Though an amateur, I played the organ and led a small choir at the English-speaking Catholic chapel attended by a large part of the foreign Catholic residents in Tehran as well as the few Iranian Catholics. One Christmas it was a lot of fun for our choir to do a program of songs from all the nationalities represented in the congregation. Our pastor was an American priest who had served as a missionary abroad since 1929. He regretted when the liturgy was changed to be said in the vernacular; he said his Brooklyn accent became evident when he spoke English — but I reminded him he spoke Latin with a Brooklyn accent also!

One of the most rewarding experiences I was ever involved in was the attempt to establish a YWCA in Tehran — at the request of the Government. (In retrospect I'm inclined to believe they wanted a YWCA hostel, as a tourist amenity, and hadn't considered it would involve program.) The President of Damavand College for women asked me if I'd like to help in the effort. (This was an American woman educator; the college, established by Presbyterian missionaries, had subsequently been given over to Persian administration, but they still usually filled its presidency with a professional from abroad. Many women in professional life in Iran had attended Damavand, including Empress Farah.) I should mention that foreign missionaries were welcome as teachers, doctors, etc., but not allowed actively to proselytize. Their converts I think were attracted by their good works. I had wonderful opportunities to work and become friends with Persian Christian women (Presbyterian, Anglican, Orthodox, Chaldean) as well as German, French, British and other foreign Christian women resident in Iran. The woman who'd been head of women's activities for the Presbyterian Mission for 23 years and I mostly wrote the constitution, got it accepted by the International headquarters in Switzerland, persuaded the U.S. YWCA to fund an executive secretary for three years — all set up then to be what the government had asked for. But what they hadn't counted on was that, of course, there's more than a hostel. There's a program. And a provision was that, as associates, Moslem young women could take advantage of the programs. They didn't have to be Christians. And secondly,

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there was the provision that if the association dissolved, its assets would revert to the international YWCA.

Well, this constitution shuttled back and forth among offices in the Iranian government seeking official approval. I think it's generally true in the Middle East (where they used to chop your head off if you made a wrong official decision) that in any tricky situation, nobody wanted to be the one to put the okay on it. Eventually the executive secretary arrived from New York, all ready to get going, and the constitution was still floating around. We finally recognized that nobody was going to sign it because it could be controversial. They hadn't realized it was going to be anything more than an amenity that would be an asset to the tourist business. After some months of waiting around, the executive secretary returned to New York, and we dismantled the operation — and dissolved ourselves as officers and board. But the experience had provided me some wonderful associations with Christian women of various churches and nationalities. I didn't begrudge the time and effort I'd expended. I did deeply regret that it came to naught.

The missionaries had done splendid work in Iran, building hospitals and schools. The northern and northeastern areas of the country were mostly served by the Presbyterians, with a few Evangelical enclaves. From Tehran south to Isfahan and thereabout was Anglican territory. The German Lutherans also were active there. Gradually they involved and in some cases eventually turned over the administration of their facilities to Iranian auspices.

Q: What were your children up to? When you were in Iran they must have been teenagers.

PRINCE: Noelle was at Manhattanville College, where she graduated in 1969. Jonny had gone to Mount Hermon prep school, in Massachusetts, and then on to Antioch College. Tony graduated from Community School, in Tehran (established by the Presbyterian mission group but by that time under Persian administration); the teachers were mostly British or American, and instruction was in English. He went then to Lake Forest College,

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in Illinois. So by 1968 only Phil was still with us in Tehran; he was able to go into German secondary school there — just a five-minute bike ride from home. He had a very happy time there, with a congenial school atmosphere and lots of friends who lived nearby. I remember, at a parent-teacher meeting at the school there, asking his home-room teacher how Phil was doing, and he replied, “Like a fish in water!”

Q: So the other children went to school in mostly American schools, or international in English?

PRINCE: Except for Phil they all went to school in English, yes.

Q: And, over all, some of your children, would you say, enjoyed the Foreign Service growing up — your daughter more than your sons, perhaps?

PRINCE: Yes, because she was in English-speaking countries, or with an English-speaking community until she entered college. She went to the American School in Ankara and formed some long-lasting friendships there. For her I would say it was pretty comfortable. For Philip, in the German school, I can say the same. For Tony, the uprootings were more traumatic. He had a couple of good friends in Ankara, with whom he made back-packing bus trips around the country. They had some great experiences with the local Turkish people. They were allowed to use the room at a mosque which was kept for travelers, and they spread their sleeping bags there. They bought freshly-caught fish from fishermen and cooked them on a fire on the beach. At an Army post they were taken in and fed and given sleeping quarters by the soldiers; Tony took some photos of some of these young fellows and sent them to them. He hated leaving Ankara. Tehran is a huge city, and students lived at such distances from each other that it was difficult to get together frequently and form intimate relationships.

Q: Were they close to each other, your children?

PRINCE: You mean, were they intimate with each other?

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Q: Intimate, yes.

PRINCE: While we were all together, I guess they were, though each had his or her own circles of friends.

Q: Are they now? Do they keep in touch closely?

PRINCE: One is in California, one in North Carolina, one in Virginia, and one (Phil) completing graduate school in Massachusetts — after which he will take a job in Japan. Jonny works for the State, in Sacramento; Tony, a Socialist, has an industrial job in North Carolina; Noelle, the wife of a professor at Hampden-Sydney College, in Virginia, has her master's degree in dance, and teaches, performs, and choreographs — while not neglecting a four-year old son; and Philip will be a landscape architect. But they do all maintain a feeling of loyalty to each other, yes, they do. When Noelle was married, Jonny came from California to give her away. When Jonny was married, in California, Phil couldn't come, from Georgia, but flowers from him arrived on the wedding morning. And when Edward died, all, of course, came — Jonny from California, Tony from Texas, Phil from Georgia, Noelle from Ohio. They all gathered here, and Jonny spoke at Edward's funeral. (Someone said to me afterwards, "That was the only joyful funeral I ever attended." And, although I didn't feel very joyful, leaving the service with tears running down my face, I joined in singing a happy hymn of praise that was Edward's favorite. It was a celebration of his life, I guess.) Two years later, when I was selling the house, I wanted us all to have one last Christmas together, in the home Edward and I had made; so all of them came, along with Jonny's wife and Noelle's husband. So they do have a feeling of loyalty and family feeling, but they don't see each other much, and I don't see much of them either.

Q: How long ago did he die?

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PRINCE: He died in 1980, after just six and a half years of retirement. His last assignment, following Iran, had been in the Department, where he was in the section on Refugee Affairs. He had an occasional field trip, like to the Sudan, but mostly was in Washington, from 1970 to 1973. By that time he had decided to retire. Because of his five years of service as a Navy flyer in World War II he was able to take early retirement. He was eager to build his own house and be part of a community; all the children were in this country and his widowed elderly mother needed care. Since his death it's too lonely a situation for me here, despite involvement in community activities. Our choice of location wasn't thought out for the long run, when one of us would be alone. Attending events and visiting friends involves a lot of driving and time, and weather sometimes frustrates plans. I'd advise retiring couples to choose a larger town, where people live closer together. I miss seeing my little California granddaughters and Virginia grandson very often. But I guess a lot of people have widely scattered families.

Looking back, though, on our Foreign Service years, I am grateful we were able to spend our working lives in such worthwhile work, in which I served with Edward as part of a 'team'. And for the privilege of living with people of other countries and cultures as a neighbor, not a tourist. But especially for the strong, deep friendships we made, which endure to this day, despite the separation of time and distance.

BIOGRAPHIC DATA

Spouse: Edward R Prince

Spouse's Position: Political Officer

Spouse Entered Service: 1946 Left Service: 1973 You Entered Service: Same Left Service:

Status: Spouse

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Posts: 1946-48Budapest, Hungary 1949-51Montreal, Canada 1951-54Washington, DC
1954-56Helsinki, Finland 1956-57MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1957-60Washington,
DC 1960-63Dublin, Ireland 1963-66Ankara, Turkey 1966-70Tehran, Iran
1970-73Washington, DC

Place/Date of birth: Manchester, New Hampshire

Maiden Name: Kennedy

Parents (Name, Profession):

Arthur Kennedy, Millworker

Ann White, Secretary

Schools (Prep, University): Bates College, Lewiston, Maine

Date/Place of Marriage: October 28, 1946, Manchester, New Hampshire

Children:

Noelle

Jonathan

Anthony

Philip

Volunteer and Paid Positions held:A. At Post: Budapest - University lecturer. Helsinki -
English language instructor. Dublin Organized Embassy wives for hospital volunteers;
unofficial cultural affairs representative at Embassy because of friendship with
distinguished folk in music and literary world. Ankara English conversation classes; Chair,

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American Women's Club fair; Chair, Embassy Tea for Turkish American Women's Club; work with Catholic Church; organized an international choir. Tehran Wrote constitution for the YWCA

B. In Washington, DC: National Board of YWCA

End of interview