

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

FANNY S. CHIPMAN

*Interviewed by: Hope Meyers
Initial interview date: July 22, 1987*

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Receptionist, US Embassy, Paris 1958-1968
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INTERVIEW

(Mrs. Chipman has also been known in the Service by her Greek name, Théophanie or Théophania)

Q: You were talking just now about your father and the influence that he had on your life even though he and your mother were divorced rather early in your life.

CHIPMAN: Yes. My father came from a family in Lyon that were dyers of silk. But this did not interest him. He wanted to come to Paris and he wanted to write. So he did what the French call son droit. (I don't know what that corresponds to in America.) And then he started writing and meeting artists and writers. I know he told me that they had a regular lunch with Paul Claudel - you know, a whole group of them. He told me this because Claudel was then the ambassador here. I was in America.

Q: That was when you were in America the first time - about 1928, wasn't it?

CHIPMAN: That's right. Yes.

Q: But this is well before that, of course.

CHIPMAN: Yes. This is when I was a child. I don't know. We were ten, twelve, my brother and myself. And my father was also very much interested in the arts. He wrote criticisms on artists and their works. In fact, that's how he knew Bourdelle. So it had a big impact on our lives later on.

Q: You said that it was really his interest in painting that sparked yours.

CHIPMAN: Yes. When I was a child, I used to see him mostly on Thursdays and Sundays, my brother and myself, that is. He often took us to galleries. Particularly later on, when my brother had finished his studies (I was a bit younger than he was), he went on with me. Every Thursday we used to go and look at galleries. At that point, I got so that I could tell you - oh, this is a Picasso, this is a Matisse. I used to know my painters, which I don't any more for the more modern painters. But it was an education in itself.

Later on I lived a lot with the Bourdelle family due to the war. And we, you know how children are, we used to see Bourdelle draw. He used to get up every morning at about 5 o'clock and go into the dining room, [sit at the] table and draw all these - things like I have here on the walls. And we'd come for breakfast because of course we didn't get up at 5 o'clock (laughs) and we saw dozens of water colors. Either ideas that he had or things that he was thinking of later on turning into sculptures or things that hurt him very much like when the Germans started bombarding Rheims. And he felt so sick about it (you mustn't forget that he was sensitive as an artist) that his wife and, I suppose my mother too, said, "Well, he'd better leave Paris. It's too close [to the war]."

So we went down to Montauban. He was a native of Montauban. And there we got influenced by this uncle and we too started painting and drawing and all that. And later on that's how he told my mother, "Well I think Fanny has a certain talent for color, at any rate." He also said, "You can't teach color. You either have it or you don't. You can teach the rest. Drawing, naturally. But color you can't. So I think she'd better come and study at the studios." That's how I happened to [go there] after my classes were over with and I had my bachot and I was at loose ends, I went and studied in his private studio in Paris.

Q: This was when he was back in Paris after the war?

CHIPMAN: Yes. I was then seventeen. And when I'm telling you about Montauban, it was the war. I was nine when the war broke out, I must have been nine or ten. I don't remember now if my brother was one or two years older. Well, we were monkeys. You know how children are.

Q: Yes, of course. (laughter) But with you the monkey's paws became very talented.

CHIPMAN: Well, I was very influenced by my uncle and aunt because I was very fond of them. And I must truthfully say that perhaps I was fonder of them and closer to them than I was to my own immediate family. My mother was more of a business person. Not that she did so brilliantly in business, but she had more that mind. Her sister, Madame Bourdelle, who was her younger sister, had been brought up by a Greek lady who was very much of an intellectual and made her read Shakespeare [and Scottish] authors when she was very young. And she took to it. The two other sisters, my mother and her second sister [preferred music and singing]. I felt closer to [Madame Bourdelle].

Q: I can understand that very well. Was she also a painter or a sculptor in her own right?

CHIPMAN: Actually, before meeting Bourdelle she had sculpted, but without guidance. As she became Bourdelle's student, she really sculpted seriously. She modeled a head of her father and one of Madame Petrici. They were excellent. Bourdelle said she had great talent and finesse. However, when her daughter was born, she gave up sculpture to take care of her. And when my father - now I'm skipping a little bit. When my father married my mother, since he was very knowledgeable as I told you about artists in Paris he said, "If Cleo wants to sculpt, there's only one person in Paris, it's Bourdelle." And he was the one that introduced them subsequently. My father, since I am on this subject, was that rare specimen in those days, a Frenchman that travels. And he had traveled a good bit. And he was working with Madame Petrici who was not really a regular governess. My grandmother died when Madame Bourdelle was born. You know in those days it unfortunately happened frequently. [Grandfather] wanted somebody with his three daughters who was a lady. He didn't want just anybody. So Madame Petrici (who was of a very good Greek family - she was a Lascaris as it comes back to me now: Her father had been once ambassador to London) was sort of there acting as mother. And she had already worked with my father on the translation of The Story of an African Farm by Olive Schreiner. She wrote in English and it was translated by my father in French. He, like a lot of people in those days, knew certain languages to read them, but he didn't speak English. Just as he knew Greek and Latin - you know, you had to learn that in those days, but he didn't speak it. So he wanted to check on his translation and Madame Petrici was in Asia Minor at that time with my grandfather and the three daughters. And so he traveled there just to do this piece of work.

Q: It was in that fashion that they met?

CHIPMAN: Exactement. My mother was kind of beautiful and he fell in love with her. (laughs) He was a good bit older than she was. That's how they met.

Q: I see.

CHIPMAN: Then my mother came over. . .

Q: Went to Paris.

CHIPMAN: No, not immediately. They were in St. Tropez where my brother was born. And there again he loved that part of France long before it was popular. And of course a lot of artists worked there which was certainly an attraction. And then, perhaps it was because he wanted a transition for my mother in the way of climate from Asia Minor.

Q: From the Mediterranean to a little grayer climate?

CHIPMAN: Yes, yes. And then they went up to Paris. I think he had a place in Asnières. And I was born there. I was born in Asnières.

My grandfather always lived in Athens, but at one point he went and lived in Asia Minor because something happened with the family's fortunes. He wanted to, I think, invest in a bank as I was told. He wanted to create a bank. And he persuaded a number of his friends to join him. And somehow or another, something went wrong; and grandfather was so honest that he decided that he should reimburse all of his friends, not only losing what he put in. The result was, being very proud and of a very ancient Greek family I will say here, he decided he didn't want to stay in Athens.

At that point they had a house [there] near the palace. And a garden that was, you know, what the French call mitoyen. And they had a key. There was a little door in the wall that separated their garden from the royal garden and they had the key and the three daughters used to go and play with the little princes. One of them was Alexander, the one who was bitten by a monkey. He was supposed to be the fiancé' of Madame Bourdelle.

Q: Is that so?

CHIPMAN: Yes, you know, a joke [between] children. But one day the key got lost - I'm saying this to show my mother - the key got lost and my mother picked up her skirts (she was very little in those days) she went around, went to the palace directly, got another key, came back. (laughter)

Q: In other words, an activist.

CHIPMAN: Yes, yes. And yet in other ways. . .

Q: A problem-solver.

CHIPMAN: In other ways I'm told she was very nonchalant. She used to say to her sisters, "Oh Cleo, please, pick up my thimble. I'm. . . ." (laughter) You know. She was the eldest so the others had to serve her. And that's how they went to Asia Minor because my grandfather then felt that he couldn't bring up his daughters the way he wanted in Athens.

Q: When you say "Asia Minor. . . "

CHIPMAN: He went to a place called Aivali where he had a factory that was producing soap and olive oil that was managed by somebody.

Q: And this was in what country then?

CHIPMAN: Well, Aivali is near Smyrna. [now Izmir] And somehow or other the Sevastos family was very well known there. I really don't know exactly why. Except that there's a connection with my mother's family and the Byzantine Empire. It goes way back. I was in fact showing to these two young men the family tree the other day because it interested them. And the second young man that came is the grandson of former President Chamoun of Lebanon. And he was interested and said, "Oh maybe we are related." (laughs) And he found way back in nine hundred something or another that perhaps we were related. Which was rather amusing for all of us. I know that one of the ancestors went to Mecca and he was called Haji Sevastos. And one of the (what was he? There wasn't an emperor in those days in Constantinople) [the sultan] wanted to decorate him. But he was very leery because he knew that people got there and never came out. (laughs)

Q: Yes, I was going to ask you at what time this was because this was in itself an extraordinary experience.

CHIPMAN: I really don't know how far back this goes. Why he went to Mecca I have no idea. But that I know, because I was told this by Madame Bourdelle who knew more about the family. [She] told me this [when] I lived with her. And so he never went, you know, and I forget now if he got the decoration or didn't get it. But it was certainly quite an experience living there.

There's another thing that I'll tell you. You didn't have the right to build a church - at least a Christian church, because they were Orthodox. [The country was under Turkish rule]. But if you put the foundations at night before daylight - it was really very funny - they accepted that you could build the church.

Q: It all had to be done in one night?

CHIPMAN: The foundations. And I know that one of the Sevastos family promoted [the building of] such a church. There were very funny incidents. Obviously, it was kind of a little bit I would say wild. They had a man servant that was sort of a guardian - I forget his name now. My aunt also related this story to me. There were brigands still in those days. And one of them was being pursued by the local Turkish police. And he was going to pass in front of grandfather's house and he saw the guardian there. But grandfather was then naturalized a British subject and so the local police couldn't go in his house. And so he asked as he was running away, "Is the master there?" And the servant said, "No, the master is away and the three young ladies are alone." "Oh," he said, "then I don't go in." There was a certain chivalry, you see. He dashed away. The story doesn't tell me if he

was caught or not, (laughter) but I'm giving you this. Probably not. He was probably more agile than the police. So these were rather unusual times for three young girls, certainly much more unusual than if they had remained in Athens.

Q: But in any case, two of the three ended in Paris.

CHIPMAN: Oh, three.

Q: All three?

CHIPMAN: And grandfather too.

Q: Oh, I didn't realize that.

CHIPMAN: Yes, yes. He lived with us. So he was quite important in our lives because. . . . Well, you know the orientals, it's a little bit different. Family is kind of sacred. Grandfather had probably nowhere to go. I don't know, there was something the matter. Wasn't there something that went on in Asia Minor that the Turks took it over and. . .

Q: Well, there were many changes that went on within Turkey and certainly the time that you speak of was never an easy time.

CHIPMAN: I know that for a long time my mother tried to get an indemnity for this property, (and I don't think she succeeded) on the grounds that naturally the British government would protect my grandfather. Grandfather was a great admirer of the British. He had done part of his education there and he admired them. And he always told me, he said, "You know, in England, you go, you take your paper and your just put your money. And nobody controls if you do it or if you don't, but everybody does it. I mean there's a spirit of honesty that I don't think exists elsewhere." And since he had this mentality himself, he appreciated that in the British.

Well, yes, my mother then came over and then my aunt Cleo, Cleopatra as she was really called, came over and studied with Bourdelle and then my second aunt came over too. She had a love affair that sort of didn't go, didn't end in marriage. Families in those days were very funny. My grandfather couldn't give her a dot anymore and though she was engaged to this gentleman, it didn't work out. So she came also to France and to Paris. So the whole family was there. I don't remember when grandfather came. It seemed to me that he was always with us.

Then my mother after her divorce decided to open a clinic in St. Cloud. She knew some doctors and they all told her, "The patients that we have that are either interesting patients or wealthy patients, they all go off to Switzerland and Germany because the clinics [in Paris] are not good enough. The accommodations are not good enough though we are good doctors. But the food, the accommodations, it's not luxurious enough for wealthy people." So she was encouraged to start a clinic in St. Cloud where I lived a good bit of

my childhood actually, but outside of the clinic. I went to the lycée there. My brother went to the Lycée Hoche in Versailles which was not too far by train. And actually, when did we leave? Oh yes. We went and lived in Versailles before I finished my studies. I think it was mostly a question of schools. Because the lycée at Versailles for girls was an excellent school. They prepared girls who wanted to go to Sèvres to become teachers. And the Lycée Hoche was always a very, very good school. That's where my brother met Raymond Aron with whom I remained friends until recently. I think he's dead now.

Q: Yes. Alas, just quite recently.

CHIPMAN: Well, you know, we were youngsters together. We played tennis together. I think I have some snapshots where Aron is holding a racket. (laughter) So there we were. And Versailles was rather important in my life. It was first in St. Cloud, too, that my mother had big parties which Dr. [Paul-Louis] Couchoud, who came as a resident doctor, encouraged her to organize for the sake of making the clinic known to a public of unusual quality.

Q: I was just going to ask you. Was he associated with the clinic?

CHIPMAN: Yes he was. He was a specialist in psychiatric treatment and he had been for a while in St. Anne which is the hospital in Paris where crazy people are. In this clinic my mother had people recovering from operations and things like that, and she also had people that were a little bit disturbed from nervous breakdowns. We had one, I remember her indeed well. She was a very beautiful young girl. She had taken drugs. My stepfather was very good at all that sort of thing. He knew how to handle it. At one point he had Pierre Loti as a patient. He said to my mother, to promote the clinic, you should on Sundays or every other Sunday, I wouldn't remember now, you should give some sort of a large reception which my mother was quite pleased to do because Greeks like to entertain. (laughs) And I must say she did it very well. And so they started inviting a lot of people that either my mother knew or that he knew like Anatole France [who] used to come frequently, Robert de Montesquiou [The man on whom Marcel Proust based the character Baron Charlus in his Remembrance of Things Past. His portrait by James McNeill Whistler hangs in the National Gallery in Washington] used to come. Madame de Gramont, Miss Barney [Natalie Barney and her sister Laura lived much of their lives in Paris. They were the daughters of Alice Pike Barney who in 1903 built Studio House in Sheridan Circle in Washington, DC where she painted and entertained. The building was eventually given to the Smithsonian Institution by the two sisters] who was an American that lived in Paris.

Q: I want to talk with you a little bit about her in particular at another time.

CHIPMAN: Yes? Well, she was well known because Remy de Gourmont wrote Lettres à L'Amazone [about her] and, oh all sorts of people. Robert Casadesus used to come and play occasionally with his young and very pretty wife. They were both "premiers prix" just out of the conservatory. And so then naturally my brother and I were old enough to

become acquainted with all of these people. But subsequently, my mother decided that some of these people were a little bit too much for a young fifteen-year-old girl. (laughs)

Q: I hope that you were not banished from these gatherings!

CHIPMAN: Well, no, I wasn't banished. She did worse. I was sent to a convent near Lyon.

Q: Good heavens!

CHIPMAN: Yes, good heavens. Which I don't think was a very good idea. My father's family was there, you see. They still had the factory [and were well known]. My father wasn't interested in it, but my uncle took it over and continued the family tradition and did exceedingly well as they always had done. And so I was there. [My uncle] thought it was rather a funny idea, but then it was rather difficult getting me in a convent because my parents were divorced. And [my mother] had quite a time. For one moment, I thought, "Oh goody, goody, they're not going to accept me!" But they did. And I'm only telling you this because while I was there I got a letter from (laughs) Anatole France which was in answer to mine because I knew that he had a lot of influence on my mother and naturally I hated it, you can well imagine. (laughs) I wrote him that I was there and I would really much prefer to come home. And so, being a very kindly man and very nice with children, he wrote me back a letter (laughter) that created a sensation. It was written "Mademoiselle Fanny Bunand. Pension de l' Immaculée Conception." You understand? They used to give us letters during breakfast time. And so the mother superior called you and you went up to the table where she and the sisters were sitting. And she hands this letter to me and says, "Est-ce que c'est du vrai?" The real Anatole France, you see. And I said, "Yes, ma mère." And so I took the letter. And it was very sweet. I still have it actually. He said that my old friends of La Bechellerie, he and Mademoiselle Laprévotte - he hadn't yet married Mademoiselle Laprévotte, but lived with her - were thinking of me and so forth and so forth.

Q: But he did not enter into the. . .

CHIPMAN: I don't know. He may have influenced my mother. Actually, I didn't feel very well after a while because I wasn't accustomed to this regime. No butter, no this, no that, you know.

Q: How long were you there?

CHIPMAN: Six months. And the doctor suggested that it would be best for me to go home. Which I did. (laughs)

Q: With delight.

CHIPMAN: With delight. It was after that that we went to Versailles and I finished my

studies there. France used to come very frequently [to my mother's house]. My mother had taken care of Mademoiselle Laprèvote at the clinic. She had had a breast cancer operation. You know in those days it wasn't like now. And he was exceedingly devoted to her. And my mother said, "Why doesn't she come and recuperate at St. Cloud?" So there we got really very much acquainted with him because he was there all the time.

End Tape 1, Side A

Begin Tape 1, Side B

CHIPMAN: She was the demoiselle de compagnie of Madame de Caillavet who was the one who patronized Anatole France. And made him work because it appears that he was not too inclined to work and she (laughs) used to closet him in a room of her mansion. It was a very wealthy Jewish family. And France sort of - though the husband was there, but he didn't seem to mind it - France lived there. And in fact that's where my stepfather first knew him before he married my mother.

But I'm going back to the account of Mademoiselle Laprèvote. She was really very altered by this operation, very altered. But he was very attached to her and went on having her in his home. She was like the lady of the house, which she was. And in fact, it was my mother later on who told Anatole France ... who prevailed upon him, really, to marry her. Because he, you know, didn't believe in marriage. My mother said, "Look, it's all very well. You are here now. And if anything happens to you. She's not in good health, but you are a good bit older than she is. You know very well how people are. She is not going to be anybody. Nobody is going to pay any attention to her. Perhaps we are going to be the only ones that will.

Q: Look after her?

CHIPMAN: Look after her, consider her friendship. Well, she didn't have to be looked after because France was very wealthy at that time, his books. . .

Q: No, but I mean in a social sense.

CHIPMAN: In a social way. So he married her. I know my mother had something to do with it.

Q: It was about this time that you began to study more seriously with Bourdelle.

CHIPMAN: No, I hadn't yet started because I was still at the lycée and I had to work hard. And we were then in Versailles and it would have been very difficult. I mean we had a car, but it was usually used by my mother. My stepfather used to usually remain at home because he subsequently was not a doctor. He was a writer.

Q: He worked at home?

CHIPMAN: He worked at home and he was very much encouraged by France who always used to call him "mon fils spirituel." He [France] admired his way of writing. But he wrote on subjects that were not very sellable. He got un succès d'estime, but he didn't get any money. Because he wrote on Jesus Christ. He had a theory that Jesus Christ was a god but had never been a man. And on that he based himself on the Les Evangiles and he, you know...

Q: He had a rather well-constructed theory, perhaps?

CHIPMAN: Oh yes, I think so because he followed Renan, he followed Loisy. I remember him talking about Professor Loisy at the Sorbonne. No, this was not just a whim. I can't tell you much about that because, though I have read some of his books, those books did not particularly interest me.

But he was a highly cultivated man. He came out premier de Normale Sup and as such he was granted a tour du monde by a man who was called [Albert] Cahn and he's well known in Paris because he had gardens in the Bois de Boulogne. Gardens after the English style, Japanese style, the Italian and French styles. They're all very beautifully done. And I suppose he's endowed this display. And people go there and admire these gardens. But he was also interested in promoting young men, obviously, rewarding them. He gave a prix to the one who was first. And he [my stepfather] was in a rather interesting promotion because he was with men like Edouard Herriot and so forth. There was a rather funny story about him. They had rooms they called "des turnes." And he used to lie down. (laughs) One day the man who was overseeing what these young men were doing came by, and he said to my stepfather, "Well, shouldn't you be working?" or words to that effect. And [my stepfather] said, "Well, when I'm this way, I reflect and I do some of my best work." (laughter) And two days later, this man came again and looked at him and said, "Couchoud vous vous surmenez." And he was still there thinking.

This [story] always amused us very much because he kept that habit. He used to, at the drop of a hat, go and lie down on the bed or on the couch and he was thinking. I mean, it's natural. I can really understand it. But when he was a very young student, I suppose (laughs).

Q: It was a little out of character?

CHIPMAN: Yes, the surveillant didn't appreciate his lying on his bed so much.

Well he did this trip and he was very enamored with Japan and he wrote a book about Japan that's called Sages et Poètes d'Asie and it's an interesting book. He was a very interesting man to have in the family. I got along with him rather better than his own daughter and my brother for some reason. He was very helpful. He never told you, "I'm too busy," because you know we had les versions latines and all that and I used to go and say, "Petit Père, I don't understand anything." He'd help me out. He really knew a lot

about everything. I always said, “C’est une encyclopédie sur pattes.” You asked him something and, you know, he could give you the answer. Of course he was very well read.

You know in French society I think it’s a little different than in America. People like my stepfather - “popular” is not the word, but are very well-received by all sorts of people. I mean society in Paris doesn’t consist of - let’s say bankers don’t only see bankers, writers only get together. There’s a great mixture which I think makes society very interesting.

And that was the case in our house. Because in addition to these literary people there were also politicians. Louis Barthou was a constant visitor, Maurice de Rothschild used to come and have lunch at our house with the granddaughter of Madame de Caillavet - Simone de Caillavet who married André Maurois subsequently and whom I had in my little apartment in Neuilly after Norris was dead. I was living there while working in the embassy in Paris. And, who else did we see? André Siegfried who wrote, I think, on the United States. Jules Romains used to come. Also some editors like Bernard Grasset. And naturally Calmann-levy who was France’s editor. M. and Mme. Grenard. He was a French diplomat specializing in the Orient. Mr. and Mrs. Bradley - he was a literary agent. His wife Jenny succeeded him and introduced Norris and myself to Arthur Koestler. Mmes. Grenard and Bradley were sisters from the famous [Flemish] banking family Serruys. So there was a big mixture.

Q: It sounds to me from your description that in addition to everything else, there was a mixture of age. That is to say, you sound as if you were a participant even though you were somewhat younger than those who were also around the table. So this must have been for you and your brother a most extraordinary experience.

CHIPMAN: Oh yes, it was an education in itself. Also very often our young friends attended.

Q: Indeed.

CHIPMAN: Yes, and then you could see also sometimes the differences. One that I was forgetting was Sir James Fraser. Sir James Fraser I remember from a luncheon in Versailles with France who spoke a lot and was very interesting. And for some reason I was seated next to Sir James who was a very nice man. (laughs) [But] I mean, you know, the idea of talking to a youngster or even the idea of talking at all - he wasn’t a conversationalist whereas France was.

During the luncheon at different times, Fraser asked me what I was doing at school. And it was always the same question. (laughter) And yes, you can’t say he was [not] a brilliant man. My uncle did his portrait sort of with his head like that. He had an interesting head. So after they had all gone, my brother and I [agreed it was] better to talk to Anatole France than to Sir James (laughter). Because France, when we were even younger than that, had taken us to the Comédie Française. He was a great classicist. And when it was the entr’acte, he said, “Alors, toi. Qu’est-ce que tu en penses?” You see he’d just treat

you as if you were a grown-up. Which was very nice.

We had another experience with him. When he was writing “Le Petit Pierre” which was his souvenirs as a youngster with his mother and father, he said to my mother, “I’d like to have children around me while I’m writing this book just to get the atmosphere. Won’t you send Jean and Fanny to La Béchellerie?” There he had his beautiful seventeenth century chateau. It [had] quite beautiful proportions and [had dignity and lovely surroundings].

With Madame Emond [who was] a French lady taking care of us, we, therefore, proceeded to La Béchellerie. [The nearby village was called St. Cyr sur Loire.] Part of the [estate] was called “Les Lapins,” which before probably, was a farm and there were rabbits there. He had it fixed up beautifully because he had a lot of taste and a lot of very beautiful 18th century furniture. And I used to fall out of bed regularly. (laughter) That’s my recollection of being there outside of his being exceedingly nice to us. We had all of our meals with him and Mlle Laprévotte.

Q: How old were you then?

CHIPMAN: How old were we? It was during the war of ‘14-‘18 because France had had to leave Paris at the request of the French government because he was rather anti-war and he was very much on the left. I wouldn’t say he had communist leanings because that is a bit exaggerated.

Q: But left of center in any case?

CHIPMAN: Yes, yes. And he was friends with a man called Rappoport who was a well-known communist in those days. Rappoport used to come to our house, too. We were friends with his children. You know, in my opinion, somebody that lives the way he lived, surrounded by beautiful things is deep down inside not a communist! (laughter) And even perhaps not so much on the left as all that. But anyway he had written . . .

Q: Intellectual, in any case, perhaps. Leanings in that direction.

CHIPMAN: Yes. And of course you know people didn’t know very well what was going on in those days. He certainly would not have been a communist now. He would have been horrified. Because he was a gentle man actually. He was gentle. He wasn’t a violent man. So I can tell you why I think it was due to the war he was there. You were asking how old we were. It must have been, let’s see, at the beginning of the war, we were in Montauban with my uncle, then we came back to St. Cloud. We must have been, oh, still fairly young, probably thirteen, fourteen, something like that. And he was really very nice to us the whole time we were there. We spent at least a month at La Béchellerie and he was very nice to our governess. She also wasn’t a regular governess. I was very, very fond of her and we remained friends until her death which was not such a long time ago. Madame Emond was a cultivated person. She was not at all of France’s opinion

concerning the war. She was then in love, it was a second marriage, with a colonel in the French army of whom, incidentally, I became very fond. She thought it was a bit callous of France to talk that way when the country was at war. But she admired him as a writer and [so} she held her peace. He also was what the French call très spirituel and he was also full of humor. [France loved to tease his wife and also my brother and myself. I have a snapshot which shows France and myself thumbing noses at one another.]

Q: But it was rather a jump then in your own terms from sitting at the table with Anatole France from which he drew inspiration for a book of his childhood to transition as a student of your uncle's.

CHIPMAN: Oh yes.

Q: And that took place in a fairly short time.

CHIPMAN: Well, I'll tell you, France died in the interim. And we didn't go to his [bedside at la Bèchellerie] because my grandfather also died at that time. And it was very odd because France always said to grandfather, "Monsieur Sevastos, tenons-nous bien. Because the first one [of us] that goes, the other one will follow." And it was really very odd because one day grandfather, perhaps he had heard us say that France was sick, he must have. And he must not have been very clear in his mind at that point which probably lasted not very long because he was really - I remember him as a very coherent older gentleman. But he took hold of a paper when they brought his breakfast with the paper. And he read, "Monsieur Sevastos et Anatole France sont mourants." Which naturally flabbergasted the whole family. Because we knew it was true. And so my parents couldn't go to La Bèchellerie. They would have wanted to be with France at that moment and to be with Mademoiselle, now Madame France. However, they attended his funeral in Paris. The French Government honored him with "des funérailles Nationales." All of Paris, in particular the working class, was in the streets at the hearse passed on to pay him homage. Subsequently we saw Madame France a number of times and remained very friendly. I'm still friends with France's grandson, Lucien Psichari who is. . . Wait a minute, I've got to get this straight. (laughs) He is the grandson of Anatole France and of Renan. I have to think how it is, but it's a fact. Anatole France had a daughter from his first marriage, Jeanne Anatole France. And Jeanne married Psichari. Therefore the grandson is called Psichari. But in that Psichari family there is a link to Renan. And a close link. I'd have to look it up because it must be somewhere. So we remained friends. In fact, Lucien came to my house as recently as when I lived in Neuilly after Norris's death when I was working in the embassy. I occasionally had some of my old friends and acquaintances like the Maurois, like Lucien, like Aron, etcetera. And my cousin, Bourdelle's daughter, [and her husband] naturally.

Q: But then there came a time finally when, with your bachot behind you, you did actually begin studying with Bourdelle.

CHIPMAN: It was right after that because the story that I'm relating with grandfather was

in a house that we occupied on Boulevard Montmorency. We occupied it temporarily. It belonged to the Révillon family and they were in America or something but they very soon wanted to recuperate the house. I know we didn't stay there terribly long. Long enough to know - now I've got a hole in my head - (laughter) long enough to know one of the best known writers in France who lived in back of us. It will come back to me [Ed.: It was Andre' Gide]. It was while I was there that I started going to the studios. And I don't know, I must have been eighteen because I passed my bachot at seventeen.

Q: Where were the studios located?

CHIPMAN: Oh, where the museum is now. Behind the Gare Montparnasse. It was in those days what they call a cul de sac. And now it's a through street and it's called rue Bourdelle. But in those days it was a cul de sac and we worked in the studios that are no longer in existence. The other studios have been turned into the Musée Bourdelle. And it's very well done. If you should ever go to Paris again, you should really go and see it. It's not because it's my uncle. It's very well done. Besides it's a museum of the city of Paris because [Madame Bourdelle and her daughter] gave it to the city. The French government being the way they are, I don't think wanted it or something. You know, they didn't want Rodins either. He was about to go to England when. . . . So now the Musée Bourdelle belongs to the city of Paris and my cousin is the curator. Her husband was assisting her very ably, but he died at the age of 92 not such a long time ago. He was considerably older than she was. But he knew Bourdelle through my mother, actually. So he was able to help a lot in the museum because he knew what my uncle wanted. But that's how I went back to work with Bourdelle. And he first of all didn't let me paint. He made me draw and draw and draw. He said, "You can only paint when you know how to draw." So I spent probably a year drawing. And sometimes the most forbidding things like a hand that he had done [as] part of his [statue "The Great Warrior of Montauban."'] (laughs). I think it's in the Hirshhorn Museum here. The man that goes out [with his hand] like that.

Then after that he let me paint. And he subsequently told me, "Just the same, I was a little worried the first time you painted (laughs) because I was wondering if you would have conserved, well you can't call it a talent, but this ability that you had when you were a child and this eye for color." And he said, "I was greatly relieved to see that it was so." And from then on he encouraged me to paint. In fact he encouraged me so much that my mother, who was not very sold on the subject, was always saying, "Oh, you encourage her to do this and that because she's your niece and because you like her and because you've always been fond of Fanny," and so forth and so on. He said, "No," he said. He used to get very cross with her. "I have people come from all over the world to ask my opinion and here you are my sister-in-law. And because it's your daughter, you won't take my advice. Leave her alone. Let her paint." He said, "Leave your mother alone. I'll buy your paints, your paintbox." And he did, too. Each time I needed some colors he used to say, "Go ask (he used to call his wife La Mauviette) to give you some money to buy [what you need to paint]." He was really very good to me. In addition to being a good master. But my uncle was that way. He was a very fine human being. He always wanted to help. In

my case, naturally, he was partial. But in other cases, if he saw that young artists had talent, he always pushed them and bought their works and, in fact, sometimes put them in competition. I remember two artists whom he told [to compose a painting on the subject of "Les Disciples d'Emmaüs"]. One was a Yugoslav, Milounovic, and the other was a Swiss, Marcel Poncet. And we discovered them. At least I consider I discovered them at the Salon - it was the Palais de Bois - the first time I exhibited. Later it became Le Salon des Tuileries.

My uncle was president of the section of sculpture. And one day he said, "Come along. Let's see what we can find. The paintings will be on the floor. But we can see and I can see what this sculpture section [consists of]." And my aunt, who was very poetical and didn't like to displace herself, said, "Oh, I don't want to go. You take Fanny." And so I went. It was that way very often. In fact the few times he was invited in embassies where he didn't like to go, he took me along because my aunt didn't want to go. It was simple. So we went there and he said, "Now." They were all against the wall because. . . Not turned the right face, you know, turned. . . "Now," he said, "turn them around. Let's see." And so I turned them around. And then he said, "Oh, that's an interesting painter. (laughs) And then he put his binocle on and he looked at the signature and he said, "Oh, Milounovic. That must be a Yugoslav." And he said, "Now, let's keep that [one] in mind. And then go on." And I went on and on and on. And then we discovered another, a Swiss painter called Marcel Poncet.

Q: This is a painter?

CHIPMAN: The painter.

End Tape I, Side B
Begin Tape II, Side A

CHIPMAN: Poncet's father-in-law was Maurice Denis. Poncet married one of his daughters. And of course [these two] were entirely different. Maurice Denis is a good painter, but he's conservative. Marcel Poncet is a modern painter but very forceful. And I started that story to tell you. [My uncle] put Milounovic and Poncet in competition and he said, "Now I'll give you a subject. Do 'Les Disciples d'Emmaüs'." Which they did and it naturally it was very different because they both had different styles. It was very interesting. And he encouraged them.

He had a friend of ours here in America - the people who first invited me to come over - buy some paintings from Poncet. And he was delighted because now he could tell Maurice Denis, "Well Bourdelle was interested in me." And it was a feather in his cap obviously. Because I suppose perhaps Maurice Denis was not so enthusiastic about his works as was my uncle being of an entirely different style.

So that's Bourdelle. He had a lot of foreign pupils. We met a lot of younger people through him, French and foreigners which became our close friends. And it was really a

great experience being in this studio because, as I always say, “We saw beggars, models, artists. So let’s begin at the top, kings and queens all came together.” The queen of Belgium was a great admirer of my uncle. In fact, she asked him to inaugurate the new Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels. And I think he filled, I can’t remember if it’s eleven or sixteen rooms, but anyway a stupendous number of rooms with his works. I have a painting here that I did. She gave him a rose [as they were walking on the grounds of the Chateau de Laeken] and he brought it back. You know I was young in those days and a rose given by a queen didn’t mean much to me. (laughs) And I said, “Oh, my uncle!” And he said, “Here, paint it.” And I said, “You bring me a rose. What can I do with a rose?” And as I was being very rambunctious about this, the rose fell apart and only what remained was four or five petals. And he said, “There’s your composition.” You see? And it made quite a nice painting. I can show it to you because I have it here. So that too was another sort of education.

Q: Did you live actually in the [Bourdelle] family or did you just go there daily?

CHIPMAN: Oh no. I lived with my family, but we had spent a lot of holidays together and I was very close, as she grew up, to my cousin, his daughter, now Rhodia Dufet Bourdelle who is the curator of the museum. And naturally she sees a lot of very interesting people because she’s in that milieu. Bourdelle is a truly French sculptor. He’s in the tradition of the maitres d’oeuvre who built the cathedrals. The role of the sculptor is mostly to be architectural. The busts and all that, it’s very well, but it’s secondary. And that’s the thing that Bourdelle has that in my opinion even Rodin doesn’t have. Because, if my cousin heard me say this she’d murder me because they were all great admirers of Rodin. But after all I have the right to my own opinion, but I suppose she would really agree with me. If you look at the La Porte de l’Enfer [The Gates of Hell] of Rodin you will see it’s all little pieces. The pieces are beautiful if you look at them individually. But put together, it is not architectural which it should be. So I always thought Bourdelle was a great sculptor on account of that. And if you see his things, like for instance The Dying Centaur...If you look at The Dying Centaur: One leg is bent. The head goes this way. And if you take a rectangle, you will see that the lines go perfectly. It’s all held into a rectangle. There’s not a little that goes here and another little piece that goes there. You see what I mean?

Q: Yes. In another words, there is a firm architectural composition within which the design has been framed.

CHIPMAN: And that, I think, is very, very important because it makes it very agreeable to look at.

Q: And very strong.

CHIPMAN: Yes and very strong. And there are a number of his things that are that way. And I know it was very important to him. And when I go and look at some of the Romanesque churches in particular I see that this is what impressed Bourdelle. A lot of

people say that he was impressed by his wife because she was Greek. It's not so. In fact one of the most beautiful things that Bourdelle did before he even met my aunt was his head of Apollo. And I think that's really a masterpiece. Naturally he listened to her because artists are people [who have doubts regarding their creations]. They doubt if what they have done is good or if it's not good. It's part of their make-up, they can't help it. If they didn't have that, they'd never improve in my opinion.

Q: But every work that is begun is beginning from the beginning in a sense for an artist.

CHIPMAN: Yes, certainly. And there must have been a moment when my uncle felt certain doubts and he said to his wife, "I have seen a beautiful "Tete de Kore". And it's an antique. It was at the time that he bought things occasionally. First of all as he got well known, he was able to do it. At the beginning he was exceedingly poor. And he said, "I want you to come and see it before I buy it." Well, contrary to her habit, (laughs). . .

Q: This time she went.

CHIPMAN: Well she didn't like to go for social things, but otherwise she. . . This was something else. And so she went. And he said, "What do you think of it? I'd like to buy it." And my aunt said, "Yes, you buy it if you want. That's up to you. But I can tell you that your head of Apollo is more beautiful." You see? That's the kind of reassurance that she gave him. Plus tremendous affection. But being a sculptress herself, she felt things. She eventually studied with him, but that's another story. She studied with him and he wasn't very happy with his first wife and he divorced her and married my aunt. And my cousin is of that second marriage.

Q: One of the most important and central accounts and stories of your relationship with your uncle Antoine Bourdelle you have not yet spoken about -- and that was your posing for him for his great statue "La France."

CHIPMAN: He was commissioned to do a statue of "La France" that was supposed to be a part of a lighthouse near Bordeaux. There was an architectural part that was to be done by a man called Ventre. I remember that because I thought that was such a funny name. Bourdelle was to do a statue, and he conceived this statue of France: it was really a salute to the first American soldiers arriving, naturally, by sea. Pointe de Grave, that's what [the site] is called.

Q: This was World War I?

CHIPMAN: This was World War I. Bourdelle conceived this statue -- it is of a woman, her hand is over her forehead, and she is looking into the distance. Somebody asked me recently: How does one become a model to Bourdelle? I said, "Well, one is there." Which was the truth. I happened to be working in the studio, and he wanted somebody with classical features. He emphasized those, because, as you will see from the bust that is in the room next door, which is the head, he gave her a straight nose -- which I don't have.

But all the rest is pretty much, you know, the bony shape of my face ... Of course there are things ... the neck is probably much more powerful than my neck was when I was seventeen. Then the rest that showed ... the arms ... were posed by another American, Miss Colby, who was in my aunt and uncle's home as a sort of governess. She wasn't a regular governess, but she was there to look after my cousin [my uncle's child]. My aunt was always very busy with Bourdelle, and also they wanted her to learn English.

Q: She was older than you, I assume?

CHIPMAN: Oh yes she was. And she had arms that were more appropriate. ... Mine were more what the French would say -- gracile. They were not sufficiently robust. There was a funny story about that. My uncle liked to tease her. In this statue there is a snake. My uncle, to tease her, used to tell her, "The snake is saying to La France, 'Fais attention, fais attention à ces américains.'" And that sort of annoyed her.

Q: But I think it is remarkable that it happened. First you, whose destiny lay in the United States, and then a born American were both part of the statue, the most important parts, perhaps.

CHIPMAN: Yes. It's the parts that show. The rest ... she's garbed in an antique robe.

What happened in the end was that it never went [to Bordeaux], because Ventre evidently wanted to keep whatever there was in the way of money for himself. Bourdelle said, "I'm perfectly willing to work like I did for the statue of Daumier (for that there was no money). But where there is some money, I don't see why the architect should keep everything." There was some dissension -- I can't give you the details of it, because I don't know. I don't even know if the lighthouse is there, or if somebody else did a statue. But "La France" of Bourdelle did not go there. And now it's before the Palais de Tokyo, in Paris, as you probably know. And it's also at Coëtquidan, where one of the French army schools is, in Brittany. She is also in the Brooklyn Museum ... naturally, she's in the [Bourdelle] Museum in Paris.

Q: How long did Bourdelle work on the statue? What did your modeling responsibilities consist of?

CHIPMAN: Well, just to keep quiet, actually. Oh, he worked very quickly. He did a lot of preliminary sketches, and I've put some aside there to show you. Afterward, on the model he worked very quickly. I can't tell you how long I posed, but not very much. The statue of course is in bronze, but he worked in clay. My aunt gave me the head as a wedding present when I married Norris.

Bourdelle was in general, I would say, very much inspired by his family. My aunt is reproduced in a lot of things. His daughter perhaps a little less because she is a good bit younger than I am, but somewhat, too. Some of my friends say, "We find you in other statues," when I didn't pose. He also had models, but not so very often, except when he

was doing somebody's head, naturally. Just as he did Anatole France. He did France in our drawing-room in St. Cloud. It was my mother that brought them together. It was the only bust of himself that [France] wanted in his villa in Paris. He had a very high regard for my uncle, and, as I told you, I think he [France] was supposed to have communist tendencies which I greatly doubt, but he was rather on the left. One day in his presence, somebody was trying to convert Bourdelle to communism. I can't imagine what else would have prompted this answer from him, but France said, "Leave Bourdelle alone. If everybody were like him there would be no need for communism." That's how [France] felt about [Bourdelle]. Besides admiring him as an artist, he admired him as a man.

[France] was right, of course. Bourdelle was a very generous and kindly artist towards his fellow artists, particularly the younger ones, when he felt they had talent. Otherwise, he told them to go and sell chestnuts at the corner. He said, "You mustn't too much encourage les beaux arts because if later on what they do doesn't amount to anything, it's such a deception for them. It's better to tell them the truth right away."

I don't know so much about my father, whom she met in Asia Minor. He was certainly a very good looking man. His bust is in the Metropolitan. It's an early work of Bourdelle. It looks very much like him. I really look like him except for the coloring, which I inherited from the Sevastos. We were rather blonde. My mother was lighter skinned even than I and she had Venetian hair. She was quite beautiful when she was young. There's no doubt about that. Couchoud, her second husband, was not good looking in my opinion, but he had a great deal of charm, which came a little bit from his terrific knowledge on all subjects. Even I as a child felt it. He had the tremendous advantage -- for us as children -- that he never mixed in our affairs. If his opinion was asked, he gave it. But my father was still living, and from that viewpoint, he was extremely delicate.

Later on, we talked a lot about painting. He bought himself some paintings. He went around galleries and was very much interested. I know once we went to see a Surréaliste exhibit where coal was hanging from the ceiling. I laughed my head off. In that exhibit [also] there was a naked woman sitting in a life-size taxi, and it was raining.

Q: It sounds like Paul ... Delvaux.

CHIPMAN: A crazy thing! Well, he introduced me to this. He felt I should see it. He was very helpful when I had to translate James Brown Scott's lectures at The Hague. It was very difficult: it was all very stilted language. We laughed a great deal [when we were doing that]. It wasn't possible to translate it word for word, obviously.

Well, I've gone from Bourdelle to Couchoud ... All I can say about Bourdelle is that I owe a great deal to him, and to my aunt, for their moral support and their affection.

Eventually, I posed for his statue ... but perhaps I shouldn't talk about that because it's in the nude. I suppose it doesn't make any difference because I don't look anything like it now. That I can assure you! Bourdelle was very funny about it. He never wanted me to ...

“You mustn’t tell anyone about this!” He always felt it was going to be detrimental to my getting a husband. So I never told anybody -- until recently my cousin and I started talking about this. I think at eighty-two I can mention this ... it’s part of a frieze inside the Marseille Opera. I’ve never seen it in place, but it is in the [Bourdelle] Museum in the life size. It’s a plaster. I suppose in Marseille it’s a bronze. It’s called “La Naissance de Venus” -- The Birth of Venus. The Venus is a friend of ours -- my mother’s, actually. Again, I couldn’t be the Venus. I was too slender, believe it or not. I am just the nymphs that support the arms of the Venus. I consider it’s a very beautiful relief. All the detail of it is very poetical, and then he put himself and his wife in it.

Q: Was this done at the same time when you were working with him?

CHIPMAN: Yes, more or less at the same time as “La France.” After that, you see, I left for America. But then he was able to do this, which was a tremendous work. When I left definitely for America, he was not well, and in fact I was very sad to leave him in the condition in which he was, but there was nothing really I could do about it. The doctor had said about my cousin who happened to be in America that summer, with Miss Colby, visiting friends, when my aunt had asked, about my uncle’s heart condition, what [my cousin] should do -- should she go to America or should she stay? And the doctor said, “Madame, you can’t tell with what he has. He may last for years. He may go tomorrow. You can’t base your daughter’s life on that. So, naturally, follow your own instincts, but personally I would not prevent her from going to America.”

Actually, my uncle died while we were both away, which in a way was very sad because we would have liked, both, to be next to my aunt, obviously. I remember we met in the Metropolitan Museum. I hadn’t seen her since her father died. We both cried, we fell in each other’s arms, and we cried. But there was nothing that we could do about it. But of course we felt badly that we had both been away. I was like a second daughter. In fact, he wanted to adopt me, but my mother didn’t [agree], so that was that. I think he always felt there was a special rapport between his wife, himself and myself which didn’t so much exist in my own family. That was the truth. But he had the wisdom to see it, which I felt, but, you know, children’s don’t see those things.

Q: The association between yourself and Monsieur and Madame Bourdelle was in a sense, one might say, put into tangible form when they gave you as a wedding gift the version of the head of “La France.” By that time of course, your life had taken a completely different turn. You were long in the States, you had gone to other parts of the world, you had gone to South America as you described -- to the Montevideo Conference in 1933 -- and done various other things.

CHIPMAN: The head of “France” was given to me by my aunt; Bourdelle was dead, having died in 1929.

Q: But how long was it after your beginning with your student days with Antoine Bourdelle - how long was it from that time until you came to the United States?

CHIPMAN: It was quite a while because I think I was twenty-three when I first came here.

Q: That was about 1928?

CHIPMAN: 1928. Doesn't that make me 23? I'm 82 now. I can't calculate. (laughs)

Q: Neither can I, but it can be figured.

CHIPMAN: What happened then was that a great friend of my aunt's and uncle's called Irène married an American. An American banker. Irène also belonged to the same world as we did. She had been engaged to an aristocrat who was killed during the war and she was always sort of thinking of him. It had marked her and I suppose that's why she went and did war work. So they got married, but she was not accustomed to the kind of society that she met in New York with [Stephen] Millett. It was strictly bankers. And I know because when I visited her I saw it. And in fact she got a little cross with me because she invited me and my aunt and uncle said, "Oh you must go. It will be an interesting experience," and so on and so forth. And actually financially they made it possible for me to come over. And as I say, she actually got a little mad with me. She said, "You don't talk enough to these people." If she heard me now! (laughs)

I said, "But Irène. I don't know anything about what these people are talking about. I wasn't brought up in a financial milieu. And furthermore I don't know anything about America. I don't know anything about the theater, I don't know anything about literature, not that they talk much about it. (laughter) I'm not socially connected with them. It's very difficult. And they don't talk to me. In fact, it's the man that talks to me, makes the effort." Well I learned subsequently that other milieux weren't that way. That was strictly, well, you know. . .

Q: New York banking?

CHIPMAN: A New York banking milieu. And the reason she wanted me over was she herself was bored to death. And there I really got a lesson of what. . . It was pre-Depression days. And you know afterwards I understood much better what had happened. Millett had a good bit of money in those days which he subsequently lost. He was really more of a broker, partner of one of these good, big firms. And so she went and got her clothes made, her dresses made, shoes made, she bought paintings and so forth. I used to go with her naturally. And I was absolutely amazed.

And finally one day I couldn't help it. I said, "Irène, you go to have your clothes made here and there, and you talk about nothing but the stock market. All these people sort of ogle you. They know that you are Millett's wife and they pump you all of the time." She said, "I know it." "But what about your clothes? Don't you think that you could look. . . Don't you think of what you're doing?" (laughs) And that's the way it is. You went to the

milliner, you went to. . . They were people of a certain standard, but subsequently I learned that everybody was playing the market in America.

Well I had a very good time because they entertained in a very lavish fashion. We always went to the theater. We went dancing on the St. Regis roof. I tell you when I was twenty-three, this was very interesting. And the thing was that his two daughters by his former marriage were to come to America for sort of a debut. And they were going to have a lot of parties for these girls and I was naturally to be included.

So they were my introduction to America. But I did have some other contacts here. I had known at the seashore a young American called Chandler Bragdon. His father was Claude Bragdon, an architect. He did all the costumes and stage settings for Walter Hampton. And he was a great admirer of "Cyrano de Bergerac". Mr. Bragdon was a very, very interesting man who knew a lot of people [who were creators].. In fact he took me once, and maybe you're going to help me - I can't think of her name which is stupid because I have holes in my memory. He took me to see Stieglitz the photographer who was then married to this woman painter.

Q: Georgia O'Keefe.

CHIPMAN: Georgia O'Keefe, naturally. He really took me to meet Georgia O'Keefe. And they were all living in a hotel where you could meet people like Claude Bragdon and Georgia O'Keefe. You know, they had apartments there. And I was very much interested in her paintings. O'Keefe was a very big painter in America. I always admired her paintings. Claude knew people like that. He was exceedingly nice to me. He realized that his son was kind of taken with me I must say.(laughter)

There was a branch of the Bunand family called "Gréppo" that had emigrated to America. And my father - when I first went to America, my father was still living. (In fact he died while I was over here.) He said, "If you go to New York, look up in the telephone directory the family 'Gréppo.' Because that's our family and he's my first cousin." How I don't know, he didn't know very well. I can't tell you that. So I went and looked them up. I saw Theodore Gréppo. I went and left my cards there. I told them I was part of their family and they were very, very nice. When I was married, he gave me away.

And then Doris Stevens comes in at this point. Oh I forget to tell you that my mother had a magazine ... a woman's magazine. She wasn't Greek for nothing!

Q: What was the name of the magazine?

CHIPMAN: La Revue de la Femme. She wanted a revue for women, not only with fashions but with news about the arts and about what women were doing elsewhere. And so there was this page ... To help her she had a secretary who had been in one of the big colleges in America, (perhaps Radcliffe), and she knew a lot about America. One day she said to my mother ... I remember very well ... she often stayed for lunch ... "Madame

Couchoud, there are two prominent women feminists who are meeting in Paris. One of them is Lady Rhonda of England and another one is Doris Stevens of the United States. I think you really should have them for dinner and talk to them, let us do a page on our [meeting], and analyze.” So Lady Rhonda and Doris Stevens came to dinner.

End Tape 2, Side A

Begin Tape 3, Side A

She was then married to Dudley Field Malone, the Collector of the Port of New York. He was an Irishman, a lawyer. He divorced the Vanderbilts, you know people like that. He was a big international lawyer in Paris who specialized in divorces. And so Doris then was still married to him and they subsequently had lunch with us or dinner and so forth. And we found him very charming. Irish people can when they want. And Doris amused us. We were all taken by her spirits. She wasn't exactly what you would call a beautiful woman by classical canons, you know, canon classique. But she had something more than that. She had, first of all, enormous liveliness. And in her eyes there was something very dashing. Très prenant, you know.

Q: Engaging.

CHIPMAN: Yes, very engaging and forceful. Not only engaging but forceful. And she coined sentences like, “tomber en amour” which we thought was very amusing. It's remained in the family. ‘Ah, so and so has tomber en amour!’ (laughter)

Well then this took place and she went back to America. She used to come periodically back later on. You know certain Americans in those days did frequently. Oh yes she also studied cello at that point with some Belgian cellist. Because she had an artistic streak in her, quite strong, actually. And one day she came and she said, “Anthippe,” (my mother was called Anthippe.) She said, “Anthippe, you must help me. There's going to be the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact and I and my feminist colleagues - I have already arranged this - they are coming from all over Europe. Lady Rhonda will be here from England. So and so will be here from Italy. Maria Vérone (who was a lawyer in Paris) is going to be representing the French and there's going to be a whole international group of feminists. And we want to call the attention of these delegates to the fact that there's no equality for women. You must help me with your magazine.”

Well my mother said, “Yes I can help you with my magazine. Write an article. But I can't do anything else, Doris. I'm too busy.” You know it takes a lot to do a magazine. She was greatly helped by Michel Dufet who was to marry my cousin subsequently. He was the artistic director. He saw that the pages were done artistically and so on. Michel was an exceedingly charming man. I remember him [as a young man] in those days. Because I knew him long before my cousin. And we used to talk about painting together and all that. So my mother said, “No I can't do it, but (disposing of me royally) I'll give you Fanny my daughter. She can help you. Whatever you want.”

I really didn't object and it wasn't going to take a lifetime. So I abandoned painting for about one or two weeks and I helped Doris. They had meetings in a hotel in Paris very close to the rue de Rivoli. And Mrs. Belmont financed the whole thing. This was [Mrs.] O.H.P. Belmont who was Willie K. Vanderbilt's mother. She was a southern belle that had married into two very wealthy families as you realize. She had a beautiful chateau in the neighborhood of Paris. And she used to come [there] periodically. As you know, she was the one that gave Belmont House to the National Woman's Party.

And there was telephoning [to do]. And of course outside of Maria Vérone who didn't come so much, none of these ladies really spoke French. Doris didn't speak so well in those days. And they needed somebody to help with the ordinary things. And then Doris decided that we would have an enormous banner made [which said something like] "We Demand Equal Rights", "The Women of the World Demand. . ." But we were to go to Rambouillet. (I guess they were to go, I wasn't yet so mixed up in it), and unfold this banner. [Ed: Newspaper accounts of the event describe the legend on the banner as follows: We Ask for the Establishment of Equal Rights For Both Sexes Throughout the World."]

Meanwhile, Doris - this is another incident that's amusing. Doris went to see Alexis Leger who was here [as ambassador to the United States] you know, for a long time. He was a poet really. But then I think he was Secrétaire Général of the Quai d'Orsay. And she went to see him about having an interview with some of these ministers. I can't remember exactly, but surely it was something like that since France was the host. And anyway she starts. Alexis Leger, who was very retrograde about women, very backwards that is about women, starts arguing with her, obviously about the vote for women which the French didn't have in those days. (laughs) Doris in one of her typical repartees said, "Well Monsieur, the question of a vote for women was a question of the nineteenth century! We are in the twentieth century." (laughs) When she related that interview, we thought it was screamingly funny. Putting the secretary of the Quai d'Orsay a sa place. He had nothing more to say after that.

But then she said [to me], "Would you like to come to Rambouillet?" I said, "Sure. I mean I think it's an interesting experience. I'd like to come. I think you're right, furthermore. I don't see why women should always be treated that way."

And so off we go. You never saw any such thing in your life. Some of the women. . . Maria Vérone was just a French lawyer, she wasn't all bejeweled ... but some of these women were very elegant. (laughs)

Q: It was characteristic in the United States of the early feminist movement that it was supported by people of considerable means.

CHIPMAN: Well that was it. And so we arrive there at the gates of the Rambouillet Chateau where they were meeting. And we unfold our banner. (laughs)

Q: How many were you, do you think?

CHIPMAN: Perhaps twelve or fifteen. We weren't a tremendous amount. Because they were all prominent friends and I was just a little mouse, you understand. And of course Doris was past master at that sort of thing as I discovered later on. It was a coup de publicité fantastique, you know. Because what happened was that we got arrested. And naturally the American press was there, the British press was there, the Italian press, the French press. There was a big business about this in all the newspapers, particularly America and England. The French were ashamed of their behavior and they were given orders not to say anything much about this.

We were taken to the Commissariat de Police after an argument with the police. "Come on, you have no right being there. You're disturbing public order," and so forth. And then we were hauled over to the Commissariat of Police. We were on the first floor and the window was open.

And under the window there were wooden pieces for the fire - all piled up. Logs all piled up. And you know the American press, always very enterprising, climbed themselves up on these logs and said, "Hey, what are you up to, you girls?" in this inimitable and familiar way of theirs. And so Doris, this was just her cup of tea, starts telling them all about it. And so on and so forth. And they say, "Oh, are you hungry?" And they start hauling up beer cans and sandwiches. Then the police get mad and say, "But this is not a picnic party," and they closed the window. But nevertheless this thing was done. It's gone over.

Well, subsequently they released us and we went back to Paris. What could they do? And they may even have called some of the embassies, I really don't know, but they released us. We weren't there more than two hours, something like that. And well that was the end of that and Doris went back to America. (laughs) And I went back to my painting. It appears that Mrs. Belmont had then told her, "If you ever want to use Fanny Bunand-Sevastos, you can do so. I will pay her first year's salary." For some reason, I don't know why. I was doing nothing that could impress her. I don't know.

Q: Obviously it did, whatever.

CHIPMAN: Whatever. Well then after that I went to America. I'm invited by the Milletts. And I stay with the Milletts about - oh I stayed long. I arrived I think in October or November, I was there for Christmas. I stayed there until I came down to Washington and spent two weeks with my friend Anne Kondrup Gray whom I had met on that same beach in Brittany with Bragdon. And we remained friends ever since.

Well then I went down to New Orleans for Carnival. [I was] invited by a pupil of my uncle's, Angela Gregory, who had studied in his private studio exceptionally because she wanted to do what is called in French de la taille directe. Sculpt stone or marble. It's rather difficult. In a way she was really very lucky because she came one day trembling

and sort of asked my uncle where she could go if she wanted to do that. She said she had already picked the head of a Christ at the Cathedral of Beauvais which she wanted to do. And so I think my uncle was rather touched that a girl - she was a slip of a girl in those days, about my age - wanted to do this. And he generously said, "Well, come to my studios because I have a Swiss sculptor called Banninger. (He became a very good, very well known sculptor in Switzerland.) He's doing a statue of the Virgin for me." You know that well-known sculptors, that's what they do. And in fact Bourdelle was Rodin's praticien, not really Rodin's pupil. He worked by Rodin's side in his studios. And he did Rodin's marbles and Rodin never retouched them. Bourdelle did retouch his praticien's marbles, as perfect as they were.

So Banninger was working on this statue of La Vierge d'Alsace. It was about the size of the one that's in the Phillips Gallery here which landed in a dust bin not such a long time ago. I don't know if you read about it.

Q: Yes.

CHIPMAN: I must go and see it because they say something is broken in the hand and I don't know how they can repair a marble.

So I went to New Orleans for Carnival and had a wonderful time because in those days Carnival in New Orleans was really something lavish. I had never seen anything like it. Costumes coming from France. [The theme of the ball was] the Court of France and the Court of Scotland meeting. I had no idea the costumes [would be so magnificent] so I was sort of goggle-eyed about this. Angela's father was an engineer that had to do with the levee in New Orleans. They were well-connected - they weren't wealthy, but they were well-connected. I got invited to all these balls - Momus and Comus and what not. The [men who danced with you] gave you beautiful favors, silver boxes and vanity cases, etc. I had a wonderful time.

Then I was to come back to Washington and visit Doris at Croton-on-Hudson where she had a house. When I arrived - she had a little pied-à-terre here in Washington and I stayed with her, she said, "Look Fanny, I'm terribly sorry. I really wanted to have you in Croton and have you meet my friends and really entertain for you which is the least I could do after your help in Paris and your mother's help and so forth. But I have just been made Representative of the United States to the Inter-American Commission of Women." Later on, she was elected chairman of the IACW by its twenty other Latin American representatives. It was an official organization created by the Fifth Pan American Conference in 1928.

Again, Doris had engineered this. She had gone down there and persuaded the men who were assembled at this conference that they should have a commission exclusively devoted to women, to study their political and civil rights in the American countries. That is twenty-one countries. And that [their governments] should appoint an official delegate from each one of these countries.

Well, she succeeded and, since she had had this idea, she was made the chairman. And she said, "I have to be in Washington. Right now it's the beginning of this thing. I've got to get it started. We have headquarters in the Pan American Union." But clever as Doris was, she asked for no financial help which gave her a tremendous independence, needless to say. She knew perfectly well she could get all of these wealthy women, including Mrs. Belmont, to give money to the commission.

And actually as an operating thing, we were small. When I first arrived here in Washington, Doris had just one secretary and Elsie Shields who was the daughter of a British Foreign Service clerical [officer]. And this girl had a gift for languages. She spoke, outside of naturally French and English, German, Spanish, Greek, (they had been in Greece,) and I think also Portuguese. And they were operating, the two of them. And then of course they had the support of the National Woman's Party because it was the National Woman's Party that supported Doris down there in Havana in the first place and since they represented as far as the Americans went a lot of votes - they were very well organized by then - she meant something.

So she said, "I can't entertain you, but will you accept a job?" So I said, "Doris, what do you want me to do? Paint your commissioners?" (laughter) "I don't think I'm capable enough to begin with to do that. I mean I have only worked that many years. Yes, I've done portraits." "Oh no," she said. "You can do a lot of work for us here because," she said, "we're going to study the laws of the twenty-one countries. Well, the American [laws] are going to be done by American lawyers, the collation of it. But the Latin American countries: we must go to the Latin American embassies and legations. And somebody's got to go there. You can go and speak to these people, go and ask their help. Of course you realize that it is not really such an easy job as all that because they're not at all obliged to do this. We are an official commission. But it's up to their goodwill."

And I said, "But you've got Elsie Shields. She speaks all these languages." And she said, "Yes, it is true." These were her words, I mean they're not very modest [but] I must use them. She said, "Elsie will go through the servants' staircase and I know you won't. And in order to get the cooperation of these countries, you've got to speak either to the counselor or the ambassador or the minister." I said, "You have great confidence in my ability. I'm not so sure I'm going to succeed, but anyway I'll try." And then you see I had a six months visa in those days. But since the Inter-American Commission was a non-profit-making organization, I would not be considered a salaried worker.

Besides she said, "I'm going to pay you." That was a factor. I said, "I don't have any more money and I really can't ask any of my aunt and uncle who have so far helped me with this trip." And she said, "Well, that will just pay for your staying here. You can live with me all right and we can work better because we can have our meals together," which were all out because what she had was just a pied-à-terre here.

So I did and it happened to work out. I made very good friends in fact at the embassies.

At the end of my time, I wanted to go back because I had been invited by this Bragdon boy to May Week in Cambridge. For a young girl, that was really an event.

Doris said, “All right. Would you like to come back?” “Yes,” I said, “but if I come back I have to have a permanent visa and I know it’s difficult to get, Doris. I mean how am I going to get this?” And she said, “Well, I’m a great friend of Dr. James Brown Scott as you know. And he is secretary of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and he’s gone to all sorts of international conferences.” In fact it was in Cuba that she had met him and impressed him so much with her personality that he was always willing to help her. “And I think I can ask him, he knows everybody in the State Department. I can ask him to write a letter saying, which is true, that you are not taking the place of an American because you have to be absolutely bilingual to do what you are going to do. And there are few Americans of your age that are.”

Q: I must interrupt you because I have wondered when in all of this time you learned to speak English so well.

CHIPMAN: Oh well, my mother being Greek, I mean, she believed in our learning languages. We had English governesses. I can’t remember learning English. I really have no merit in this. I can’t actually remember. My brother and I were bilingual when we were very little.

So we were launched on an immense subject: the nationality of women of all the countries of the world. In which this was not just confined to the twenty-one [American] republics. Because there was going to be a codification conference in the Hague on that subject and therefore [it was necessary we present a report on the nationality of women of all the countries of the world].

Q: And you went with her obviously.

CHIPMAN: Oh yes, I went with her. [A number of us went to The Hague and lobbied our delegates, among them Manley O. Hudson (later on judge on the World Court) and jurists from many countries, like Gilbert Gidel from France, etc.] The conference ended and a treaty was signed and we came back to America and the thing was to prevent the ratification of this treaty. And that to me was quite an experience because the National Woman’s Party practically turned the whole thing over to me. They said, “We are going to help you, but you are going to be the main person to go and lobby Congress about this.”

So I said [I would do it] and I went to see Senator Cooper who was, I think, the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. He was an older man, exceedingly nice and friendly. I told him what I had to tell him: We don’t understand - we, the women - why you want to ratify this treaty which is not at all favorable to women, and American laws are much more favorable, so why are you signing something that is less favorable ...

Q: Than our own statutes.

CHIPMAN: Eventually, as you know, it got into the press. Doris was naturally in the act, with her usual talent for publicity. Cooper got up a meeting of a number of senators. He said, "You've convinced me, but you've got to talk to my colleagues." I said to him, "Yes, I'll come and talk to them in general, but I'll bring with me Burnita Matthews who is a lawyer for the National Woman's Party and she is going to ... I will give you the human side and she will give you the legal side." [Burnita Matthews was subsequently appointed a judge by President Truman]

End Tape 3, Side A
Begin Tape 3, Side B

CHIPMAN: [After the meeting, as we were going away,] Senator Cooper put his arm around my shoulder and he said, "My dear. I really don't understand my colleagues. But they were mostly interested in knowing what was your nationality." (laughter)

Q: Interested, in other words, in you, and not in the subject.

CHIPMAN: We both giggled, you see, and off I went. But the treaty was never ratified. Of course there was considerable agitation, as you can well imagine. I don't know how they are now, but the National Woman's Party was very well organized in those days and this was not a purely Latin American affair. It was because we were part of the Inter-American Commission of Women. And it couldn't harm the other countries, on the contrary. Then the National Woman's Party took over and they did all the lobbying that was necessary in all of the states and the ratification was voted down. Of course we considered it was quite a feather in our cap because we had started this.

So that was for nationality, and then, well, we had to do this study of the twenty-one republics which make up the Pan-American Union. There were lawyers working on the American [report] - Burnita was one of them because she was very much a National Woman's Party woman and she was a good lawyer, etc. But there were others, she wasn't the only one. And then we started working on the other American countries. That's where I came in, to go and see all these diplomats. And very often in some of these countries, the law was not written. It was a law based on custom.

Now for Haiti, I did a lot of the translating of the code as it affects women. And the minister was kind enough to check the whole thing with me. He was a graduate of La Sorbonne, the law school there I suppose. Spoke French perfectly and he was really very nice. I mean he devoted some time to me and it was naturally not very brilliant, as you can well imagine, the position of women in Haiti in those days. I don't know what it's like now.

And so it went on. We had commissioners as I've told you, appointed in those countries, and we got them to work, send us reports. We sent them questionnaires, and then we got

these reports. And all of this was put together in twenty-one volumes which we took down to the Montevideo conference which was [held in 1933].

In those days you didn't go by plane, you went by boat. Doris saw to it that we got on a boat in New York. Jimmy Dunn, who was then chief of protocol and Mrs. Dunn accompanied the Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Mrs. Hull; all the press, among others Harold B. Hinton of the New York Times, etc. and the delegates from Haiti in particular I remember were on this ship. And you know, it was fun. We passed the equator. Everybody sort of played together. Doris had rotten eggs thrown at her. I don't know what - they threw me in the pool, I think. The only one that didn't really get it was Cordell Hull. (laughter) Naturally they didn't dare go that far.

But we danced together and we spent a lot of time talking to [delegates]. So that by the time we got down to Montevideo, because we had stopovers at Rio, Sao Paulo and so forth, we were really friendly with all these people on board. And Cordell Hull was certainly not hostile to us. Mrs. Hull was very agreeable. And in fact when I met her years later at some cocktail party in Washington. "Oh," she said. (I was still not married.) She said, "Oh Miss Sevastos, it's like meeting someone of one's family." It was a sort of a family style thing on the ship and in Montevideo.

But then when we got down there, the trouble started because Mrs. Roosevelt - I don't know that I should say - was against us.

Q: Is that so?

CHIPMAN: Yes. Mrs. Roosevelt was against us and she sent to fight us a Miss Breckinridge who was a very old lady. And quite frankly, not being very modest at this point, I would say she was no match against Doris [and] the other Latin American delegates who were there for the Commission or even myself. Because the Haitians made me a delegate for Haiti.

Q: I see.

CHIPMAN: Which caused the French minister in Montevideo to send a cable to the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères [in Paris]. He invited me to lunch and he told me so. He said, "Well you know it's not often that a French person is chosen, but it's on account of the rapport of France with Haiti in the past they chose you." And then also I had met them on the ship.

Q: Why do you think Mrs. Roosevelt was so hostile?

CHIPMAN: I'll tell you why. It's a thing that went way back. Mrs. Roosevelt was a very active member of the League of Women Voters. The League of Women Voters wanted to get the vote for the American women by getting it state by state. And the National Woman's Party with Alice Paul and Doris Stevens. . . in the history books I think that

Alice Paul gets all the credit, but I know that Doris had a lot to do with this ... they decided that they would never get the vote that way, that it would take ages. And that they needed an amendment to the Constitution. And as you know, that's the way the vote eventually came about. And I think the League of Women Voters never got over it. After all, it was a very important step for women certainly, and I venture to say, for the country.

So there was that. And also Mrs. Roosevelt was for protective legislation for women and we were against it. Because our argument was: it protects women out of jobs, that's all it does. Special legislation, yes. Men can't have babies so there's no question of equality there. A certain amount of special legislation for women, but not protection.

Q: Well of course this is an argument and an issue that is still being debated to this very day.

CHIPMAN: Because they don't have equal rights yet, you see. Which is incredible as far as I'm concerned. Sometimes I wonder what the devil the Woman's Party is doing, what they've become. I haven't gone up there and I don't suppose I know anybody there now. Because, after all, I was very young when I collaborated with them and most of them were middle-aged women. I suppose a lot of them are dead.

They were a very remarkable bunch of women at the beginning there in the Woman's Party and very active. And of course Mrs. Belmont supported them financially. And I think that by then also there were contributions. It was really a very well organized organization, with branches in all of the states. I told you for the ratification, when we wanted something done, one immediately got in touch with the branch in Kansas, in California, in here and there, and they set to work. Obviously we couldn't handle the whole country from Washington at any rate.

I don't know if they had anything against Doris personally. I don't think so. I think it was that she really was affiliated with the National Woman's Party and of course also perhaps jealousy that she had created the Inter-American Commission of Women which in those days was [something important].

Q: I am fascinated by your account because I had not been aware that it had accomplished what it did.

CHIPMAN: Well we did have some impact and I think we would have if it had lasted longer by getting the vote, partial vote in some countries. You know, the municipal vote. We had some members that were very active. In Brazil we had a very young and very beautiful lawyer who did a lot of things. Madame da Silva was the regular commissioner, but this young woman helped a great deal. She must have been on some committee. And I got rather friendly with her when we went through Buenos Aires. She was my age.

Then in Montevideo started the battle. And, you know, in those days - I don't know very well how it is now because I haven't followed at all Latin American politics versus the

United States so much, you know, what you read in the papers. In those days if the United States was against you, the Latin Americans were for you. (laughs) And in fact that's where I think I did my most interesting work with Doris. Because you mustn't forget that I was French. I was not an American citizen in those days. And I could go and talk to these people and say things to them that Doris decently couldn't say. She was an American citizen. And I loved it.

A number of the delegates met. First of all, I was a delegate of Haiti which gave me a certain status to go and talk to them. And also the press - they're not fools - they pretty soon wondered why the American delegation was so consistently opposing what we wanted. And it was Harold Hinton who represented the New York Times from Washington and John White who was the representative of the [New York Times, from Buenos Aires.] Frankly, we told them. It's just in opposition, it's not justified at all by the feeling of women in the United States. This is just a personal thing.

And I know Mrs. Roosevelt wanted the Commission eradicated completely. She didn't succeed. She did finally succeed in getting Doris out later on at the conference in Lima, Peru. And I don't know that I could have helped so much, but [by then] I was in Moscow with Norris. She wrote me a long letter and she said, "Won't you come and help at this conference?" And, broken-hearted, I had to write her back, "No Doris, I can't. I'm now the wife of a Foreign Service officer. And I can't be of any use to you. You must know that."

Well, deep down she knew it because Doris was certainly much more knowledgeable than I ever was or ever will be and she knew that. So I didn't go. I could have probably helped her a little, but certainly not prevented Mrs. Roosevelt from ousting her from the Commission which I thought was terrible. Which personally I think had a very unfortunate effect on Doris because it broke her heart. She had given years and years of her life to this without pay, you've got to realize. All this was just given out. I was paid, she wasn't. All she wanted really was to help women. It shouldn't have been a war between women. It should have been a cooperation which it was not.

How it happened in Lima. . . She once wrote me a very long letter which unfortunately went down at the bottom of the sea with a lot of my affairs when we came back from Egypt. And she wrote in that letter, which was pages and pages long, "Don't throw this away because I shall never have the strength to write this again." When I left Cairo in a hurry, I should have taken that out of my papers, but you know how it is. I was given a few hours to get ready. But I've regretted it a lot because it said a lot of things which. . . It was so interesting that I'll tell you ... I got it from the Embassy. The pouch arrived as I was going out to paint something. And when I saw it was from Doris, I sat sur le talus.

I was doing a painting of the Nuovo de Vichi Monastery. And I started reading the letter and I never did my painting. All afternoon I read and read and read this letter. And I was naturally indignant. I thought, really, all the work that Doris did. You know they went to the length - and this is not, I'm afraid, to the honor of the State Department - to say that

she had never been the United States delegate. Which is incredible. And I think Green Hackworth was then the legal man in the State Department.

Q: Yes, legal advisor.

CHIPMAN: And when Doris went to see him, he said, “Doris, there’s never been a doubt in my mind that you were. . .” She had letters appointing her. You know, when you are the wife of the president you can do a lot of things. No, I was kind of sad because I admired Roosevelt very much for what he had done otherwise. I had been here at the beginning of the depression and all that. So it really upset me very much.

Q: I can see that it would.

CHIPMAN: And of course I had really given a lot of myself to [the commission]. I was paid, but I wasn’t paid millions obviously because there wasn’t the money, you know. We spent a lot of money on traveling because every year we went to the League of Nations, for instance. I was never here in summer. There was the Women’s Consultative Committee in the League. And we used to go and consult with them. That is, Doris did. I didn’t, naturally, I was there to help her.

Q: During this time were you able to continue with any painting at all?

CHIPMAN: Yes I did, but you know, in a very desultory fashion because you can’t do two things. . .

Q: That’s why I was asking you because my recollection is that you had several exhibitions of paintings here.

CHIPMAN: Yes I did. I had one at the Arts Club and then one in Baltimore, the two simultaneous. I had them with Angela Gregory who was that pupil of my uncle’s who learned *la taille directe* and who invited me in New Orleans. She sent up some sculpture and I had my paintings. I had some from here, but a lot of them from Paris, from the old days. And then I participated in an exhibit here. They had an exhibit of artists living in Washington in the various stores and I participated. That was about the time I was engaged to Norris.

Well, of course a lot of things changed after I married Norris because, as you know, your hands are no longer that free and you have to do a lot of things. You have to go and give a lot of parties (laughs). That’s not always terribly interesting, but you just have to do it. Norris was always the one who said, “Oh, let it go. You are too much of a perfectionist. What difference does it make?. Why don’t you do your painting?” For instance in Germany he said, “Oh don’t learn German, Fanny, it’s much too difficult. (laughs) Here you don’t have so much entertaining (because it was a High Commission) and you just go and do your painting.”

And I did do some painting in Germany, more than I did elsewhere because I was freer and I got this very good German woman, Frau Conrad, who took care of Claudette. We were very lucky because she actually again wasn't a real governess, we have the knack of that. (laughs) But she was widowed during the war, unfortunately for her, and she lost also a son and she was looking for a job. And her aunt was my husband's German teacher. And he said, "Do you know anybody that could help because we have to be out a lot at night, and both my wife and I, we don't like to leave our daughter just to one servant after another. And we'd like to have somebody look after her."

And so Frau Conrad came to us and she stayed with us even a year after Norris died. She was with us seven years. I was able to ask her to come over to America while I was settling my affairs with the State Department. And I must say we missed her sorely [after] she died. She was a wonderful person. She helped me a lot. She was a second mother to Claudette. We were out so much, even in Germany, we were out a lot.

Q: I want to ask you when it was that you did meet Norris Chipman. Was this during the time that you were working with Doris Stevens?

CHIPMAN: Oh yes, yes. I was working. I went on working despite my father-in-law (laughs) who was very conservative and didn't want his daughter-in-law to work. And in fact I must say I was a little bit on the cheat side with him because he didn't seem to understand that I couldn't stop from one day to the other. You see I was born practically with the Commission. I mean my work with it. I knew where all the files were, I knew what was this, what was that. Because eventually Elsie Shields left the Commission and I got a stenographer, and a lot of the time I was alone in Washington with Miss Colomo [who was Mexican].

Naturally on very important things I used to go up to New York and consult Doris because Doris, being also a perfectionist - perhaps that's why we got along so well - decided that she didn't know about international law and studied at Columbia University. And she studied with Phil Jessup. And we became great friends. At least Doris became a great friend of Jessup's. So when there was something important coming up and she couldn't come down to Washington, I used to go up to Croton-on-Hudson and bring her the letters to sign.

And if I had to go and talk right and left (which unfortunately I had to do because I didn't particularly enjoy it,) (laughs) I would show her what I had drafted and she would say, "You say this, you don't say that," and so forth. I remember when we came back from Montevideo, I had to make a very big speech in New York before about five hundred people. I was terrified. (laughs) Not being accustomed to that. And of course I didn't know really English well enough to draft a thing like that by myself and make it humorous.

Well, Norris was not ... as I think of him when we were young, he was handsome, yes, but he had more charm. He had very beautiful eyes. And you could see a very kind, nice

person. And I think that's because you know when you're a girl alone in a foreign country as I was, it's not always very easy, with men in particular! And I appreciated his being so gentle and so kind and no strings attached, you know. Obviously very much of a gentleman. And we had a good time together. He used to go to Europe with his parents. . .

[Break]

CHIPMAN: . . . [often] practically all summer.

Q: This is when he was younger.

CHIPMAN: Yes. So we used to joke together, oh, he probably looked at Guignol along the Champs Elysees at the same time as I did. And his mother told me he used to pretend to talk French and used to rattle. (laugh) He used to imitate you know, Guignol. Well in a way for a girl like myself, Norris in his background was almost ideal because he was an American, but he also knew all the European side which he acquired on his various trips with his parents. And then he had been in Riga for some time where the Foreign Service officers were sent [as the United States] hadn't recognized Russia.

Q: Yes he had already been to the School for Oriental Languages in Paris.

CHIPMAN: Yes, because he went to the School for Oriental Languages before he went to Riga. He had already been - he was thirty-five, he had already been in the Service for some time. But he entered the Service - you probably know - at this very bad moment when there was the depression and no promotions. Norris [was] not particularly worried about that somehow. I mean he was very much interested in his work. He was not ambitious for promotions or for financial benefits. It was not his nature. In that respect he would never have lifted a finger.

I was a little more aggressive than he was. (laughter) Well, because I thought he was a bit too easy-going when certain things happened, you know. Certain things which he should have gotten credit for and that he didn't. In which he was right. I'll say this now: that Norris was very often right and Chip [Bohlen] was of a different opinion. And they fought like cats and dogs over these Russian events. Even Crawford [Honorable William A. Crawford, a long-time friend of Norris and Fanny Chipman] the other day. . .

Q: Spoke about it?

CHIPMAN: Yes, he remembered this. And it was such an extent that when we were in Moscow - we had this dacha together. Sundays, when they would start on their Russian disagreements, we said, "Now boys, you keep quiet. This is a holiday and this is no time to be discussing politics. Let's talk about something else." But I have to admit - I mean it's not because Norris was my husband - that he was right.

And one thing - he was absolutely right concerning the German-Russian Pact. Norris was

the first one that saw it. And it must be in the files of the State Department because fortunately Kirk was our charge' d'affaires at the time. And he signed the cable and let it go. Chip at first told us, "Oh Norris, you know, I don't see that." You see, Norris was doing the economic work in the embassy. Therefore we saw all the businessmen that came, bored to death, and they weren't getting their contracts. We, naturally, to relieve their tedium had them to lunch or to dinner and Norris was saying, "Who's getting these contracts? They need these trucks, they need the gold mining engineers. Who's getting these contracts?" And invariably the answer was, the Germans.

So Norris, knowing that economics and politics in the Soviet Union were just like that [i.e., closely connected], started wondering. And he wrote a cable to that effect, that something serious was going on between the Germans and the Soviets. And he sent the cable to Kirk. And my recollection is that Chip was not in accord. But the cable went off. Then, subsequently, Johnnie von Herwarth who was a second secretary in the German Embassy, and though he was only the second secretary, he was the right arm of von Schulenburg and was a great friend of the Bohlens. [Ambassador von Schulenburg attempted while he was in Moscow to influence Hitler not to invade the Soviet Union. Subsequently, Hitler had him hanged.] He was also friendly with us, obviously, because there was this community [spirit in Moscow]. He was an experienced diplomat and we were very fond of him. But Johnnie came and saw Bohlen and he told him, "We are having an accord with the Russians." And of course this puzzled us. Then there was a cable sent to the department and I remember very well ... that was one of the things that Norris told me ... that the department cabled back with what the French would say, vous tricotez du chapeau, you know that expression?

Q: Yes, yes.

CHIPMAN: "We have called on the French Ambassador and the British Ambassador and nobody has any knowledge of what you are informing us. And what's your source?" If you had a source you couldn't give it. If you gave it, then you never knew if the Russians hadn't broken our code. So the source wasn't given and, well afterwards, they saw what they saw, you see? But it would have been well if they had known it a little bit ahead of time.

Johnnie fortunately escaped to [Roumania]. He's written a rather interesting book. It's called Against Two Evils. An American living in Switzerland called our attention to it because Norris and I are mentioned in it. I'd like to get it. I think it was published in England. I think he wrote it in English. He speaks English very well. He came subsequently to England as ambassador - he was really the first [German] ambassador to London after the war.

He was a very good friend. We got along with the Germans. Even I, who probably at the time [in Moscow] should not have gotten so friendly with them. Johnnie's wife was very nice - Pussy - she was called Pussy. (laughs) She was one of the young people that were there. And the Italians. We had great friendships with the Italians. Also Ambassador

Rosso was married to an American who had gone to the same dancing school as Norris so naturally we were very friendly with them. And, in fact I visited them after Norris's death. I took Claudette to Italy and we stopped over near Florence. They are both dead now.

So many of the people I have known that have meant so much to me are dead. I think Pussy von Herwarth is dead, too. I'm not sure of that. We were really very great friends. With the Bohlens they were more so because after all, you can say what you want, but von Bohlen meant something to the Germans. And Chip, as you know, was a very agreeable person. He was very good-looking, he was a good conversationalist. Avis was a charming person as you know. And they also had the advantage over Norris and myself that they were very sportif which neither Norris nor I were. Norris had been a tennis player and a swimmer when he was younger, but he had very bad typhoid fever when he was at Dartmouth and he had a slight limp. You didn't really notice it too much, but it was there. And he didn't like to stand up very much. So to a lady he knew well enough [he] could induce to sit down at parties he said, "Come on dearie, let's sit down." But I didn't blame him for doing that, he couldn't stand up.

[Ed.: Remainder of tape impossible to transcribe because of interference.]

End Tape 3, Side B
Begin Tape 4, Side A

Q: I would like very much to have your account of how you met Norris Chipman, where you met, and perhaps a little bit about him in his persona as you saw him by the time you met. After all, he was, as I think you said, perhaps 35?

CHIPMAN: Yes; he was 35. I was 29.

[The following is a written account by Fanny Chipman]. I wish to say a few words about Norris. He was not exactly what you call handsome. Due to an illness when he was in college, he developed a slight limp. But he was a charmer. His face had character and his blue eyes had such a kindly expression. His sympathy was always with the underdog. I am sure he felt deeply the Russian people had been badly treated through the centuries and this was part of his interest in the Soviet Union.

He understood women and their aspirations. This was perhaps due to his great feeling for his mother. As far as I was concerned, he was most encouraging regarding my feminist activities and my painting. He thought I was too conscientious concerning my duties as a diplomat's wife and should give more time to improving my painting.

He was courteous and extremely well educated. He was well read not only in American and English literature, but French and Russian authors were well known to him. In fact, he spoke Russian and French fluently. In addition to his natural interests in politics and history, he had a keen appreciation of music and the arts in general. Some of his conversations with our friends as the unforgettable meeting at our house in London

between Rebecca West and Arthur Koestler would have been worth recording. It was also most unusual when Dora Gaitskell, [Lady Gaitskell made member of the House of Lords, after her husband's death, by the Queen. She was Russian born] wife of the Labour Party Leader Hugh Gaitskell, on various occasions called Norris to the rescue when she found Hugh was getting a little overboard on the left.

I am saying this to point out that Norris was not only liked, but he inspired confidence as he was truthful. and always stated his opinion squarely regardless of what the other fellow thought -- an admirable quality which got him sometimes in trouble.

So I came definitely to America in 1929. I worked for Doris for six years, plus one year after I married, until we left for Russia. I met Norris through [our] common friend Warwick Keegin, who had been to Dartmouth with Norris and Andy Foster. The three of them were inseparable -- I don't know if they were roommates but they were great friends. I think that it was Norris's going into the Service that interested Andy Foster to do the same thing. Again, I think it was the intellectual aspect of the Service that attracted Andy [as it had Norris].

Norris started Russian at Dartmouth and it meant a lot to him. He took me there to see his college, and I have kept sort of contact with them: they always keep writing the widows and, when I can, I send them a little money. I went to the 25th anniversary of Norris's class and met some of his older pals. It was very interesting. Mrs. Foster was then living in Hanover and I stayed with her, because over the years we became very friendly; we still correspond.

Norris was introduced to me by Warwick, who was always talking about Norris. "I have this friend, I know you would like him," etc. Warwick wasn't actually what I would call a boy friend. We enjoyed each other's company, went out together, he took me to horse shows in Virginia . [laughs]. One time [Warwick and I] ended up at the Chevy Chase Club and there I met Norris. He was a budding diplomat. I kept circulating in all the embassies here because I had to have dealings with them. They occasionally invited me to their parties. I was invited to some such party in a Latin American embassy, and as you know it's not always fun to go to these big things by yourself -- whereas you know a lot of people, there are moments when you're left high and dry. So I thought, "Oh, I'll ask Norris Chipman to go with me."

I called him up at his home and (laughing) I remember my introduction to my future father-in-law. I said I'd like to talk to Norris, and his father said, "He's lying down but it's time for him to get up anyway." I got him on the line and told him what it was about. He said, "Oh, I'd like very much to see you again but I'm not interested in going to parties like that." He was kind of rough about it, in fact. So I hung up and thought to myself, "Well, that's that, I won't ask him again to be my cavalier."

Time passed. Warwick again got us together and one evening we went dancing, the three of us -- which doesn't work very well for dancing. It ended up that I danced mostly with

Norris and Warwick was the wallflower. This was February 1935, and we were married in June. It was rather quick. But we had had dinner together practically every evening after that February dance.

Q: You were still working, of course?

CHIPMAN: Oh yes, very much so. Well, we got married here. You know how it is in Washington -- the Chipmans were well-known, there was a big "hoopla" in the newspapers. I've kept the clippings. The Chipman family were Washington "cave dwellers" -- that description of families who'd lived here a long time. Mrs. Chipman was a Norris from Virginia; Mr. Chipman had been here always, it seems to me. I think his father had worked for the State Department but in a minor capacity. He worked his way up, his widowed mother having been left with four children to bring up. Norris's father was an energetic young man and in those days, if you were energetic -- he ended up by being, I was told, a partner in Harriman & Co. But he didn't like what Harriman was doing (you may recall he ended up in jail), so the young man ended his partnership before anything happened.

He was the manager of Laidlaw & Co when I married Norris. Washington was a small town, really, then, and his father seemed to know everybody. He was a great friend of Sen. Burton Wheeler, of the Chinese ambassador -- he had a variety of friends in business, diplomacy, politics.

Q: Where did they live?

CHIPMAN: When I married Norris, they lived on Woodland Drive. The house is now a legation, I think; at 2879, something like that, Woodland Drive. I've taken Claudette to look at it: a lovely house on a bit of high ground You looked down on Rock Creek Park. The houses nearby are very nice, built in that stone that I like so much -- between gray and beige. We were married from there, in St. Thomas's Church. I'm a Catholic. Mrs. Chipman was very religious, and since neither Norris nor I were, I said I wouldn't object to being married in an Episcopal church. He continued working in the State Department, I went on working for Doris. The Chipmans left for Europe as was their custom and turned Woodland Drive over to us until we found a place at the Westchester apartments, where we lived until we left for Russia.

When Mr. Chipman returned from Europe, he wanted me to stop working. He was very conservative about that sort of thing -- you know, women who were married should stay at home. There was nothing for me to do: we had a two-room apartment. I argued with him. "First of all," I said, "we need the money." Norris was a third secretary. "Secondly, I can't quit that way. I know all about this commission. I have to pass all I know to somebody else." We agreed that I would work only part-time. I was able to train someone to take my place. Then we went to Russia.

Q: Before that, Norris Chipman had spent considerable time close to Russia, at least.

He'd been to Riga, an assignment customary, I think, for FSOs who were being trained in Russian to continue their studies.

CHIPMAN: That is so. When he passed the Foreign Service exam, I think his first assignment was Paris to attend the School of Oriental Languages to perfect his Russian, and that took three years, I believe. He was attached to the consulate but had no duties in the embassy. Bohlen was there at the same time, so was [Edward] Page. Their friendship began there. [They studied with the eminent Professor Boyer.] There was also a language school in Berlin; Kennan went there, and there he met Annelise. We hadn't recognized Russia yet, and young FSOs were sent to Riga where they were close to Russia; I think they were attached to Lithuania [and Estonia as well].

Q: I've read only about officers being sent to Riga. Kennan actually went to Tallinn, did he not?

CHIPMAN: Kennan was in Riga with Norris. I think both were living in Riga but had assignments in Tallinn. Loy Henderson, Bernard Gufler and Landreth Harrison were there then, too. Norris became friendly with the whole group. From Riga he was transferred to the department, and that's when we met.

Q: I think you told me that from the beginning he was intensely interested in Russia.

CHIPMAN: Oh yes. "I used to go to the border," he told me, "and longed to get into the Soviet Union. I used to look (laughs) at that far-off land and say to myself, 'When am I going to be able to go there?' " We recognized the USSR in 1932, after Roosevelt was elected, and he appointed our first Ambassador, [William] Bullitt. Norris was transferred to Washington in 1934. We married in 1935. The next year we went to Russia. The embassy was well established. Bullitt had gone on to Paris.

Loy Henderson was charge' d'affaires when we arrived. Later, Davies came. And when he [Davies] was moved to Brussels, Kirk [took his place]. After Kirk left for Berlin, Laurence Steinhardt came. We were there from 1936 to '39, so we were there when the purges were going on. I know Norris went several times with Ambassador Davies, who was attending some of the trials, and wanted another officer with him; Bohlen and Norris went with him as translators.

It was a little difficult with Davies. I got along exceedingly well with Mrs. Davies (Marjorie Merriweather Post as she is known). I was delegated to go with her when she made official calls. She didn't speak French, so I went with her and became very fond of her. This was not everyone's experience, but for one thing, I appreciated her honesty. Davies rather played games with his staff. His idea of how to be a good ambassador was not the same as "the boys" who were with him. He wrote the book, Mission to Moscow. As you know; it's full of errors. I don't know what his idea was. Perhaps that you have to play up to the people to whose country you're accredited. Which is not, after all, an ambassador's role, which is to report accurately what he thinks is going on.

I was sorry to see Marjorie leave, but I think the rest of the staff were much relieved to see a man like Kirk arrive whose attitude was, let's say, thoroughly professional. This practice of appointing political figures as ambassadors -- sometimes it works out very well but sometimes (laughs) as you know, it doesn't.

Q: Could you think back to those three years in Russia to the kind of life you lived day by day? I'm thinking, for example, of the comments that Mrs. Bohlen's brother, Charles Thayer, made in his book called Diplomat. Have you read it?

CHIPMAN: No. I read Bears in the Caviar but not Diplomat. What does he say?

Q: In it he says, referring particularly to his years in Moscow between the two wars, since few officials came from abroad and required entertainment, and as he puts it "neither Moscow's business nor pleasure attracted foreign firemen, bored embassy wives made up for the lack by constantly giving dinners, dances, receptions and cocktail parties, each one of which created a dozen more obligations on her guests to return the hospitality. Thus the breeding of social events became as prolific and as incestuous as that of rabbits." (Chipman laughs heartily) Do you remember your life in Moscow during 1936-39 as being (laughing) incestuous in terms of the kind of entertaining you were forced to do because you were "bored"?

CHIPMAN: No, I don't think it's so much that we were bored. There was a lot of entertaining and it was partly to counteract the lack of a relationship with the natives, you see. Bullitt had accomplished a little bit of contact with ballerinas, intellectuals, and so forth. But when we arrived, the atmosphere was completely different. It was very, very sick, I would say, and very tense. I think that as a reaction the diplomatic corps entertained one another. I've never worn so many low-cut evening dresses as I did in Moscow; that's the truth! (Even in Cairo, where on account of the court, we got dressed up.) White ties for the men. At one time there was (laughing) a shortage of starched shirts because the laundry that did them disappeared for some reason, [and] the shirts had to be sent to Riga to be done. It was a regular joke.

But the thing is, we knew our colleagues to an extent we never knew them at any other post. That was a charming part of our life there, that rank didn't exist. Ambassadors came to you -- you naturally went to them, but they came to you, to the dacha. The Rossos came and had dinner with us -- she was American. It was a reaction against being so closed in all the time. I wouldn't have put it quite the way Thayer did. Davies had his daughter there and he gave a big masquerade ball to which we all went, naturally. There was tennis competition at which the Bohlens shone, both being très sportifs; Norris and I were not. There was a camaraderie, with no consciousness of rank, that I haven't found at any other post.

That was the agreeable side of Moscow -- there was enough [of the] disagreeable side, because there was this constant terror: you couldn't help but feel it. I felt it so strongly

that I had to go away after a while -- the unhappiness, the people who had no shoes, their feet wrapped in newspaper. The only well-dressed people were the army wives, who had warm clothes, boots, berets. The others lacked food, lacked everything. Somebody like myself who had lived only in Paris and Washington was profoundly shocked by this state of affairs.

Q: In addition to all of that, there must have been the ever-present awareness that you were under surveillance --

CHIPMAN: Oh, all the time. You couldn't talk, really, except outside. I know the Davies talked when they walked around the Kremlin, Red Square. We knew there were devices all over the place. One Marine guard did nothing else but monitor what was happening with the telephones, etc. That's why I don't understand at all what went on lately in the Embassy, because we were well aware that we were watched, our servants had to report on us. For example, we had the Rossos to dinner one evening. We had a little elevator in our area of the Embassy. The Soviet elevator woman operator usually left around eight o'clock. That night, to our horror, when we rang the elevator, she came up with it. Mrs. Rosso was a young, fun-loving woman who'd gone to dancing school with Norris in Washington, so we were having a delightful, informal dinner, and they didn't leave early. When we took them to the elevator, both my husband and I were astounded to see this woman. She had stayed there in order to report that at such-and-such times Ambassador and Mrs. Rosso came and left.

It was very annoying, I must say, the feeling that you had no privacy. When I had to leave, Walter Duranty made a comment more or less like Mrs. Chipman had not an aesthetic shock but similar words. I was shocked by all I had seen and heard. I felt it was inhuman, and I was used to going where I wished, doing what I wanted. And there was nothing. You couldn't buy anything. We were eating out of cans most of the time. Later on one of the big shops in Stockholm began sending things by plane. Stockmans I think it was. Then it was easier, because up to then we had to rely on the courier going to Riga. Can you imagine the courier bringing back meat and supplies that were supposed to last for fifteen days? One of the newspapermen came to lunch and said, "Now, the latest story is that the director of the zoo has been arrested. The reason is that he's been feeding nails to the animals." He'd barely said this when I burst in, "Where did he get them?" And he burst out laughing. "I'm going to write this up," he said. "Exactly where did he get them?" You see, there were no nails, and this was my cri du coeur. They couldn't get needles, they couldn't get bread. You saw things in the shops: that happened typically. They had some rather nice embroidered tablecloths, but they weren't for sale, it was just a show. In the shops there was nothing.

In fact, when, later on, I had the privilege of taking Mrs. Lindbergh around, (because Avis was not there that summer, having gone on holiday with her mother, and Kirk asked me to take Mrs. Lindbergh around), when I took her to one of these big mostorgs [government stores], her first remark was, "It's strange; it's full of things that you don't need in daily life. Shoes, clothes, coats -- all those sorts of things are lacking." Of course,

she was a very astute woman, she saw it immediately. I enjoyed her very much. She was a very, very charming woman.

Q: Was this on the occasion of their European tour? I'd forgotten that they went to Russia as well.

CHIPMAN: She describes this in her book [The Flower and the Nettle: Diaries and Letters, 1936-1939] and very kindly talks about me. Years later after reading her book I wrote to thank her for being so complimentary. You know, she came to see me in Gstaad. She took the trouble and -- she talked to me a lot about her husband. I think she felt very badly about the way he'd been treated. One thing she told me was that the decoration given him by the Nazis for which he was so criticized was sprung on him -- he was not informed beforehand at that luncheon or dinner with von Ribbentrop and the other high-ranking officials. Of course, in a way, I understand Lindbergh. He was, after all, an aviator. When he came back and said that the Germans were highly prepared, and that the others were not, it was only too true. I think that got him in bad, to begin with. We enjoyed her very much. Claudette was there. I didn't invite anybody because I knew she was a rather shy person and she wouldn't have liked it. I know the Villards were in Gstaad. Harry was a great friend of Norris's, and I got to know Tamara. But I thought it would be all over the village that she was there and that's not what she'd want. So she came incognito with her dog and we enjoyed her very much.

Q: Were there many Americans who visited Moscow, apart from people like the Lindberghs, for example?

CHIPMAN: Norman Thomas, the Socialist leader, head of the party, candidate a number of times for President. He was important, and a very delightful person. And then there was a visit by Mlle. Bourdelle while Kirk was there. She had a very good time partly thanks to him because he was always entertaining. He used to call her "toi," having heard me while I was "placing" people for a meal and I said "toi" for her.

We went to meet Howard Hughes and (laughing) he descended from his airplane looking as shabby as you could look and (laughing heartily) Alexander looking so elegant. It was so funny to see the heads of all the Russians looking at this millionnaire Américain stepping down from the plane! We laughed about it once more a few months ago. I don't know if he came out of curiosity or what. And Mary Pickford came. We had her at the dacha with her second husband, Charles ("Buddy") Rogers, a young good-looking man; and (laughing) she had her eye on him, I can tell you. And Noel Coward, the British playwright, came...they were at the dacha at the same time. (See Narrator's note, pg. 102.)

Q: I wish you would talk a little bit about the dacha. It must have provided relief and a place of amusement that was sadly lacking elsewhere.

CHIPMAN: It was sadly lacking, as you say, so it was very nice that we had this because we could also, occasionally, have our clerks out there.

Q: How did this come about? Did the embassy own it, or was it privately owned?

CHIPMAN: Previously, I think, Charlie Thayer and Durbrow ran it. We didn't serve very long with Charlie --

Q: He was on the staff of the Military Attaché.

CHIPMAN: I don't remember that. [Frank] Hayne and the Bohlens and Norris and I took over the dacha. At first I was rather opposed to it because I thought, "Well, this is one more expense." Norris's salary was not large and I wasn't working any more. But they all persuaded me that it wouldn't be such a big expense, and in fact it was not. All our colleagues were very generous. I remember von Herwarth bringing a whole case of vin du Rhin. Everybody sort of contributed a little. Liquor of course was the most costly item, as usual.

Q: Where was the dacha?

CHIPMAN: Not at a great distance -- we were there in half an hour. I can't tell you in what direction, it was way in the country [near the village of Nemchinovka.]. You've seen the pictures -- it was just a little shack -- a "Russian bungalow". The Bohlens I think slept there now and then; we didn't.

Q: There were horses, were there not?

CHIPMAN: Yes, (laughing) I'll tell you: it was a communistic organization. Fitzroy Maclean of the British Embassy maintained horses. He later became a Member of Parliament and a Minister.....

End Tape 4, Side B4
Begin Tape 5, Side A

and von Walther, a secretary at the German Embassy with whom we were friendly, kept two horses. We had this very old Soviet man, George -- probably in Thayer's book -- who looked after the dacha and lived there. So there was always someone to look after the horses. There was a tennis court, which was flooded in winter and used for skating. One day (laughs) the counselor of the Italian Embassy, Berardis, seeing me making an effort, said "Oh Madame Cheep-mahn, patine en por-ce-laine." I was obviously scared to death I'd break my neck, and Moscow was not exactly the best place for that.

Avis, who loved flowers, kept a garden going. I took care of providing food when people came out there. Everybody came: the German ambassador von Schulenburg, the von Herwarths, Rosso with his wife, the Belgians, the French, the British -- everybody came because there were so few places for relaxation. I think that later, after we left, there was a diplomatic dacha; not in our day. But life there was very gay, and very informal; and

very relaxing, which we all needed. I don't think (laughs) there were microphones there, I don't know. They must have heard plenty if there were.

Q: Did you speak Russian?

CHIPMAN: Oh, I tried to learn Russian -- my teacher, Nicolai — something like that -- was arrested and, we were told, sent somewhere on the White Sea. I was so distressed by this that I told Norris, "I don't want another Russian teacher." Of course, in a way, the man was very unwise. We used to get the Sunday New York Times. He wanted to take home some sections of it. I used to tell him, "No! You stay here, you can stay here and read it." I had an upstairs room in that apartment where I usually painted and he could go up there --

Q: [If I may interrupt a moment] Did not most if not all of the staff actually live in Spaso House?

CHIPMAN: [No,] we all lived [in the Mokhovaya]. Not the newspaper people, naturally, but all the embassy staff. We weren't so very numerous, in those days. There was a military attaché, Faymonville, who was suspected of leaning toward the Russians, the men were a little leery of him; Hayne, his assistant, who was from New Orleans, was a widower and a marvelous dancer. He was no longer young but he could do those Russian dances where they crouch down and jump on alternate legs. Then the rest of us -- Kennans, Bohlen, Durbrow, Hendersons, Wards, Grummon, ourselves and the staff -- Henry Antheil, our code clerk, who was young and very funny. He used to say, "Fanny, come and get this box, it stinks!" I used to have cheese sent from Paris by one of the houses near St. Lazare. Bullitt was very lenient about things going through the pouch to Moscow because having been there he knew -- barring a grand piano, I think we could almost get anything that way while he was ambassador to France -- all the pouches for Europe went out from Paris.

Q: Your association, I can imagine, with Mrs. Bohlen -- was she the only other woman there?

CHIPMAN: Oh no. Annelise Kennan was there and Mrs. Stuart Grummon, and the wife of our consul general, who was from Finland, and Elise Henderson. When Bullitt said (laughs) he had "the Tour de Babel" in his embassy in Moscow, he wasn't far from the truth. Annelise is Norwegian. Mrs. Henderson, Latvian. Mrs. Wiley was Polish, a highly cultivated woman, very good artist. I think the closest to an American was Mrs. Kuniholm whose parents were French who had emigrated to the U.S. These were all there in Bullitt's time, but in my days I think Avis and Mrs. Grummon were the [only] two American-born.

Q: It's been said, though I'm not sure accurately, that one of the reasons that a regulation stipulating that a Foreign Service officer who planned to marry a non-American had to obtain permission, stemmed from that period when Bullitt was in

Moscow.

CHIPMAN: It's quite possible, because in those days Bullitt had a lot of drive, influence, pull -- because he was so close to Roosevelt. That ended when Roosevelt, I feel sure, failed to listen to Bullitt about the U.S.S.R. And Bullitt was proved right.

Q: Did Mrs. Bohlen speak Russian?

CHIPMAN: She learned it, yes. She was studying it when I left. The Bohlens stayed longer than we did. Then she left because she was pregnant with Avis and Chip foresaw that there might be events not so pleasant, so he absolutely insisted that she return to the U.S. You see, when we left, the Germans and Russians had already entered Poland. Events were moving rapidly. Avis was not in Moscow when the Americans all had to go to Kubichev. When she returned there with Chip as ambassador, I think she perfected her command of the language.

Q: She had been studying -- perhaps one should say informally -- Russian literature, history, and so on; to some extent she was already very well informed when she came to Russia the first time, I think.

CHIPMAN: Well, the whole family -- Charlie as well as Avis -- had had an interest in Russia because their father used to go there in the days of the Czar and had talked a lot about Russia, which obviously was a very, very different country. He brought tales and gifts back, probably, and naturally these influenced the children, intrigued them. You know, in those days, people were -- I don't know if one should say "Russophile," but look at my father: reading Dostoevsky to us when we were children. Russian literature had influenced a lot of literary people --

Q: Katherine Mansfield, for example. Her stories were very much influenced by Russian short story-writers -- Chekhov and others.

CHIPMAN: So it was natural that -- I don't know, probably Avis had read up, maybe Chip influenced her too. We went to Russia very shortly after we were married. I was working, I had had no time to develop any particular interest until I went there. The Bohlens were married at about the same time [as ourselves], and arrived in Moscow the year after we did. So they must have had about two years in the U.S. before U.S.S.R., but she ended up by speaking the language very well. As you know, not long ago the [U.S.] Government sent her there with a group of women -- [this was when] I stayed with her about seven years ago.

She, I think, had much more of an interest in Russia than I had. I was rather distressed by it. Outside of great friendships that we formed there, I was actually very glad to leave. I felt life was "abnormal" there. I understood Norris's interest. And after we had been sent to Egypt, I knew we would be going to some communist country at some point. But as it turned out, the return was not as difficult. There was absolutely no comparison between

Belgrade and Moscow. Life was much more agreeable. You didn't have the feeling that you were followed. Of course, I know there were arrests, and trials, in Yugoslavia. But they didn't make such a "big noise," so to speak.

Q: They didn't impinge on your consciousness to the extent that it could not have been otherwise.

CHIPMAN: You see, let's take Tukhachevsky, for instance. Davies gave a big dinner for him -- it was for the Red Army, which he commanded. Later you learn that he's supposed to be a traitor. Baron Steiger was a go-between between the Kremlin and the Dip. Corps. When you wanted something to go back without all the official rigamarole, you asked Steiger to come in for lunch or dinner and talked to him. Whatever "it" was, he was supposed to fix it. At one time I wanted to go on painting, thinking it would relieve the tedious life there, for a woman. So, it was suggested: invite Steiger and serve him the vodka he likes -- the best, from Riga.

So we invited him. He said, "It's absolutely impossible for you to work in a studio here, Mrs. Chipman, you don't realize what it's like." I said, "I was told so by your embassy in Washington." In fact they told me, "You're not going to be a diplomat's wife like the others (because they'd followed the feminist thing) and of course you'll be able to paint there." And then it turned out to be impossible -- even to get permission to copy the Van Gogh which is behind you, now.

You understand, I would never have got permission except that Norris had under him besides the economic work, the library. There were Russian girls in the library, who had met me, naturally. They thought it was so ridiculous that I couldn't get permission to copy the Van Gogh. Without even telling Norris they took it on themselves to call the Museum every day. Mind you, the director was an ex-pupil of my uncle, and my aunt had given me a letter to him. Impossible to talk to him. It was "his day off" or "he is sick." Always an excuse! This went on for three weeks -- you can imagine my doing this. (laughing) Naturally I would have given up. But the girls persisted. Eventually they got me an appointment with the museum's director. He was very charming and said yes, he had the best recollections of Mtre. Bourdelle, et cetera, and I got permission. But do you know that while I was copying the painting, I discovered why they were so reluctant to let me in. They had adult pupils coming in and they were getting a "double" lecture in art -- in Russian, and in English as well, which was how I could understand what went on. While I painted, I heard the teacher say, "Well, you see this is typical of bourgeois art. This is a woman taking care of her child." He went on and on that way, and I thought, "This is a funny way of teaching art." But clearly, they didn't want a foreigner sitting there. It was from that angle difficult, obviously. You felt you weren't especially welcome.

Now, referring to Baron Steiger: one day we were invited to lunch at the Belgian Embassy. The Belgians were great friends of ours. Mrs. Hendryx was much younger than her husband, and he painted, and occasionally if he lacked materials, I gave him whatever he needed. So, we arrived for lunch, and after three-quarters of an hour, we had still not

been seated, no luncheon announced. Suddenly, Yvonne Hendryx came to me and said, "Fanny, I'm very annoyed, we've invited Baron Steiger and he hasn't shown up. I should tell you that we saw him at the Bolshoi two or three nights ago and he was as white as a piece of linen. I'm afraid that something's going on." And she asked me, "What should I do?" I replied, "I really don't know. But if you don't want your lunch completely spoiled, you'll have to go ahead with it." "All right," she said, "we'll have lunch, but if I hear anything, I'll call you up." As it happened, he was shot: that's why he didn't come to the luncheon.

You know, things like that don't make a country very likable. I found it was extremely difficult. As I said earlier, I had to get away at one point, I couldn't stand it any longer. Norris insisted that I come here, it was winter. "America is sunnier, if you go to Paris it will be raining, more terrible weather like we have here. Why don't you go and stay with my parents?" Which I did. When I felt better I went back, by which time the Bohlens were quite settled in and I felt I had a friend in Avis. And Kirk was there -- we first met in an Embassy corridor. Norris had intended to introduce me properly, but we met on the staircase. Taken unawares, I made the silly remark, "I hope you like it here." (laughs) He drew himself up to his full height, looking down at me, and said, "Must I??" (both laugh heartily) Typical of Kirk, as I found him to be later on.

But he didn't find Moscow much more palatable as far as I was concerned. He was so amusing, so sarcastic, and very friendly. We had what the French call "des atomes crochus" and he often said, "Come and shop with me," at the end of the day. And I used to go in the Commissione shops with him and he used to buy all sorts of things that he gave to people -- he gave more things away. . And of course he entertained a lot. There were always very funny repartees, which I enjoyed. I found him naturally rather eccentric, but I was accustomed to that sort of person. And he seemed no more eccentric than Robert de Montesquiou, for instance. His remarks were so wise, pretty soon I realized that all this talk of his was just a cover-up and that he was really an exceedingly brilliant man. I think the government must at last have recognized this or they wouldn't have posted him to Berlin when they sent him, from 1939 to 1941, when it was a very, very tough post, as you know, and where I think he probably did as well as he could.

We visited him on our way to our next assignment, Egypt. We thought we wouldn't get there, really. Steinhardt said, "You'd better accept Kirk's invitation to see him in Berlin because you may have to stay here for the duration." Which we did, and had a most extraordinary trip -- if you want me to tell you about it. After a certain while we traveled with the German army [returning from Poland]. Did it smell bad! It was something awful. Then we arrived at the Vistula and had to cross. There the German officials told us -- the Germans had already invaded [Poland] -- that we had to get off the train and cross the Vistula on a barge. I said, "Oh, my luggage, goodbye, finished." Norris said, "Well, there's nothing we can do about it. They say they'll look after the luggage." So we crossed the Vistula, and -- trust German efficiency! -- we found our luggage on the other side.

We arrived at the embassy and stayed with Alexander. At one of his famous luncheons, on Sunday, I sat next to the Belgian ambassador. Norris had asked me, meanwhile, "Why don't you go to France while you're here? If you're going to be in Russia 'for the duration,' go and see your family." I said, "Norris, really.... How am I going to get there?" He replied, "Well, you have an American diplomatic passport." So, as I was seated beside the Belgian ambassador, I said, "Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, would you give me a visa if I wanted to transit your country to go and see my relatives in Paris?" He said, "Certainly, send your passport over tomorrow." So I did. And went down to France that way.

I remember George Kennan was in an awful state about it. He kept saying, "Fanny, you're taking your life in your hands, you shouldn't do that, you should go back to Russia --" So Norris, always very wise, said, "Look, you're going to talk to Blackie." He was our military attaché. "He's very knowledgeable." Blackie said, "Yes, you can go to France but come back within three weeks." His explanation was plausible: "By then," he said, "the Germans will have overhauled their motorized forces, repaired them, and will be ready to launch their offensive on the other side. You should come back, definitely, before that. Meanwhile, my opinion is: you can go." And so I went. This was in the fall of 1939.

Q: The invasion of Poland had already taken place --

CHIPMAN: Oh yes. That's why we were coming back with the German army. Part of the army was probably being repatriated to Germany for rehabilitation. It was very amusing, because they heard us speak English and were very friendly to us on the train. Norris and I were aware of that. Its origin, I think, was their hope that America was not going to join the Allies.

Q: This was the beginning of the period of what was called later "the phony war?"

CHIPMAN: That's right. Well, it was in full swing when I got to Paris -

Q: Yes -- that's why I wanted to make this time clear.

CHIPMAN: It was the phony war when I visited my mother, staying with her. I arrived in a hotel late one day. My mother was living in St. Cloud, where she had that clinic, and I thought I'd call her up. You know, I really was innocent in those days (laughing). Mother said, "WHAT? Where are you?" "Well," I said, "I'm in Paris." "How did you come??" "I crossed Germany." *Click* the phone shut off. You see? They were listening in, I was cut off. So I thought to myself, "You idiot, you'd better get yourself out of here, you'll have the French on your neck." It was now early morning. I packed my things, left the hotel, took a taxi, and went to St. Cloud.

Those were very unusual times, I must say. My way back to Russia was an epic. The embassy in Paris asked, "Would you take a pouch back to Moscow?" I was not very keen on this, naturally. "The only thing is," they said, "you can't leave it, you must hold it the whole time, nobody can carry it for you. We'll try not to make it heavy for you. But since

you're returning, and since it's so difficult now, . . . " So, I take my pouch and go back.

End Tape 5, Side A
Begin Tape 5, Side B

CHIPMAN: They knew I was pretty heartbroken, because my brother, unfortunately, died very quickly of an infection, while I was visiting. In a way I was glad I'd gone to Paris because I was there with my mother. But my aunt in Paris, Mme. Bourdelle, said, "Now look: Don't let your family feelings interfere. You've got to get back. You were told that in three weeks you must return to Russia." So, I went, with my pouch and a few knickknacks I was bringing back for friends. At Cologne we had to change trains, which I had done on the way down. I don't speak German -- perhaps now I would understand simple phrases but I didn't, then. A rather charming young man came forward as I was stepping off the train, looking rather bewildered, I suppose. He said, in perfect English, "Can I be of any help to you?" I said, "Yes, I must change trains and I don't know what to do or where to get a ticket, because I don't speak German."

"Well," he said, "I'll help you. Can I take this?" -- indicating the pouch, which I was holding. "Oh no," I said, "you can't take this, this is a pouch that's going to Berlin. I have to hold it. I'm sorry, these are my instructions." Oh, he understood perfectly. There was some time lapse between my arriving train and the one for Berlin, during which he helped me get my ticket. Then he said, "There's a hotel, let's go, meanwhile, and have a drink." So I said, "Yes," hugging always the pouch -- the luggage had probably been taken care of. We were sitting there, and occasionally a word of French sort of dropped into the conversation. He looked at me, "But," he said, "you have a very good accent." "Why yes," I said, "I'm of French origin." (laughs) I thought he would fall off his stool. He laughed, he laughed so much. It was what the French call une situation très cocasse. Here I was, an American, of French origin, carrying a pouch, (laughing again) Germany at war, and here was this German helping me out. I must say, I laughed too, it was such a funny situation.

Then we went back to the train. He was also going to Berlin. Somehow our embassy there had not received the message that I was arriving. So the young German propelled me into a taxi and came along with me and deposited me with my pouch and luggage in the embassy. I wanted to know who he was and he gave me his card. When I related this story to Kirk, he said, "Fine! I think we can let you travel alone." George Kennan, I know, took care of thanking the young German for his kindness. I never knew if the Germans had people like him on trains to look out for foreigners, or whether it was simply that he saw I was lost.

Anyway, a few days later I went on to Moscow, a very difficult journey. They claimed they had no reservation, they put me in an awful compartment full of bugs. I locked it and during some of the stops they tried to enter it. The handle was spinning around and I thought, "My God, they'll break it and someone will come in and stay with me." The pouch, fortunately, stayed in Berlin. But I had a lot of things that Alexander was sending

to various ladies. I think it was that time that he gave me a whole stack of orchids to give to Mrs. So-and-So, etc. Anyway, I was glad to see Norris and the embassy functionary who met trains.

Q: How long did that journey take?

CHIPMAN: Oh, it was long. On that train were nieces of Emil Jannings, the eminent actor and movie star. They had no trouble. But I had trouble. They had reservations and space was given to them but mine was not. So, life in Moscow wasn't easy, but it was eventful, to say the least. There were plenty of events.

Q: One last question: Did you ever get to know any Russians at all?

CHIPMAN: Oh yes.

Q: How did that come about?

CHIPMAN: I'll tell you how: because my aunt and Miss Colby were very friendly with the Prokofievs. Mrs. Prokofiev and Miss Colby went to the same Christian Science church. And Prokofiev was friendly with the Bourdelles, and my aunt Bourdelle gave me a letter to the Prokofievs. This brings to mind an interesting incident, because we saw a lot of them. Mrs. Prokofiev, who now lives in Paris and is very aged -- she's my senior by a number of years -- was partly Spanish, partly Lithuanian, through her father and mother, respectively. We became very friendly with both of them. They liked American movies and we occasionally -- Bullitt had installed this -- showed movies. Some of the excellent ones were shown to the diplomatic corps, those that Kirk thought not so excellent were shown only to the staff. But the Prokofievs said they loved American movies and would like to come even to the not-so-good ones. So I said to Kirk, "Lina and Sergei would like to come. Can't we invite them?" And he said, "Yes, why not." And we invited them up to a certain point.

One day Lina came to me and said, "Let's go for a walk in such-and-such a park," meaning of course so we could talk, which we couldn't do within the embassy. She said to me, "Look, Fanny, I'm very sorry but we can't come any more to your movies." I asked, "Why?" "Well, it's been intimated to us that we're the only Russians at these parties and it's not advisable for us to go." You know, this business always of someone's watching what another one is doing. I told Kirk about this and naturally he said, "We can't invite any other Russians because we're not inviting anybody else. This is a private party for the staff, and if we start inviting this one, and that one --" So the Prokofievs couldn't come any longer. We remained friends, however. Then I was saddened to learn [long after we left Moscow] that the Russians had arrested her, sent her to Siberia, put a young *komsomolka* on Prokofiev's back on the pretext that his music was not at all what they wanted -- he was too modern, too this, too that.

I must say that Sergei at times was quite outspoken. One time when I was in their

apartment, Lina said she would take me to see some “painters who really painted,” because otherwise you couldn’t see them because their work wasn’t shown. While I was waiting for her I heard Sergei on the telephone. (laughs) He was saying the names of capitals, so I could understand what he was saying -- he was mad because they had displaced a rehearsal. [imitating angry tone of voice] “Why you do things like that here? In London, Paris, New York no such thing takes place. Rehearsals were for that day,” -- and so on. He was mad as a hatter and yelling over the telephone. To such an extent that when Lina came into the room to fetch me, I said, “Look, it’s none of my business but can Sergei talk that way over the telephone? Isn’t he going to get into awful trouble?” “Ah,” she said, “There’s nothing doing. When it’s music, he just will not accept anything.” Well, later, as I say, they sent her to Siberia. As well as she knows me, she would never talk about it. I said, “What happened to you there?” “I can’t talk about it,” she said. “I was sick the whole time.” And she was there quite a while -- it was only in the Khrushchev days that she was allowed to leave. And Prokofiev had been told -- that she told me -- “Don’t do anything about trying to get her out of there because the treatment of her would be worse and you couldn’t help her.”

Meanwhile, there was this girl -- I thought he had married her but Lina told me not so long ago, “No, there is only one Mrs. Prokofiev and I am it.”

So those were the Russians whom we knew, mostly. Well, we knew the ones who worked in the embassy. A lot of them were really terrified most of the time, not knowing when they or their relatives would be arrested. There was one painter whom we met at parties -- I’ve forgotten his name but he’s well-known. But when we were there, the sort of honeymoon that had existed in the Bullitt days was over. There was no effort to have us meet Russians. We did go, once, to the writers’ club; I can’t recall who invited us there. But you can’t make friends by going just once, you know.

Q: Were there any political entertainments?

CHIPMAN: Oh yes, there were big receptions given by the Russians, to which we all went, where food -- lacking everywhere else -- was just lavish. But at these receptions, first of all, the Russian women were in decided minority, stayed among themselves, didn’t mix with us. And we figured out it was probably because they didn’t have the clothes to wear. This was easier for the men.

Q: Did many of the diplomatic wives other than Americans speak Russian? Would language have presented a difficulty in the mere matter of communicating?

CHIPMAN: The wife of the Roumanian counselor was a Yugoslav. It was very easy for her to learn Russian because it’s very similar. She spoke perfect Russian. Everyone always teased him, saying she was the “real” counselor of their embassy. Perhaps it was -- yes, I believe it was the Lithuanians who were there for many years, and they and their daughter spoke Russian. But apart from them, I can’t recall others. Of course, in the corps, if people didn’t speak English, they spoke French but that didn’t extend to the

Russians of our day.

I did have some rapport with a Mme. Budnov, who had something to do with the arts. She took me around to some galleries. Obviously I was not very diplomatic and showed that I was rather disappointed in what I was shown. I heard her say in Russian -- by then I knew enough to put things together -- "She is very disappointed in what I've shown her." I think it was after that when I talked to Lina that she immediately offered to take me. But she said, "Oh, now, you mustn't dress well--" but I never did, when I went in the streets. We had fur hats that fell down on our noses, fur coats that weren't exactly glamorous, and boots against the cold. But she took me, and I saw there were painters who really painted well. There was one who painted for the government and for himself. When he painted for the government, he painted these big socialist propaganda realist things that one knows about. When he painted for himself, he painted his dreams. And that was rather interesting. There was another one, also a very good painter, but he could never show anything and was literally dying of hunger.

Q: Was it possible at that time to see anything at the Hermitage? Did you get to Leningrad at all?

CHIPMAN: Yes, we went to the Hermitage, with Kirk in fact, who had as guest Mary Rogers of the famous Rogers family -- before she arrived, Kirk said, "When her husband was living, the sky was the limit in regard to finances." He was a big magnate - was it steel? Mary Rogers painted too, and not badly, and was interested in visiting the Hermitage. So Kirk arranged for her to go there. He took Norris and me. We were followed the whole time. We went to the Kirov Ballet, which was beautiful, then to the Hermitage, and were shown a collection of Scythian art in gold -- an exhibit of it was shown not long ago in New York. Most extraordinary things -- tiny chariots with tiny horses, all beautifully done. But that was in the basement and not shown to visitors in general. Seeing it was a privilege.

I also went with Mrs. Merriweather Post to view the crown jewels.

Q: That was the kind of thing that would interest her, I'm sure.

CHIPMAN: Yes, naturally, and she had asked to see them. She took several embassy people along, including me.

Q: But the great Modernist paintings were not then to be seen in the Russian collection? People like Chagall, Matisse, Picasso, whose works were bought --

CHIPMAN: Oh no, no. I'll tell you what was shown -- not at the Hermitage but in Moscow -- that's where I copied this van Gogh. There was a museum -- they called it Zapadnoe Iskustva -- "Work of Occidental Art," I think it means. These were the collections of two very wealthy merchants -- there were some in Moscow, because Spaso House, our ambassador's residence, belonged to one of them. These collectors must have

been given professional advice, because they had the most wonderful collections. The most beautiful Degas, the most beautiful Picassos — all his periods: the Pink, and the Blue. There was a whole room of van Goghs. There was a marble bust that my uncle, Antoine Bourdelle, had done, of a Mme. Zetlin that was part of the collection, formerly hers, which the government had appropriated along with all these paintings. Oh, there were wonderful collections. But I was told that subsequently all this was transferred to Leningrad.

Q: Yes, that's where it is now. I'm interested that you say these collections were shown in Moscow -- I didn't realize it was even possible to see them at the time you were there.

CHIPMAN: Well, yes, I could go to the Zapadnoe Iskustva Museum but I couldn't copy anything. I couldn't remain there to do so at first. Eventually, due to the insistence of two Russian employees working in the Embassy Library (which was supervised by Norris), I obtained permission to copy the Van Gogh of my choice. But it took several weeks of daily talks with the Museum authorities.

I'm trying, once more, to remember what rapports we had with Russians. For me it was difficult to work there, because once I tried to paint in the streets and oddly enough it wasn't the police who came. I was denounced by passersby. Not because of my style of painting but because I was painting a church. You know, they used their churches as repositories for lots of things in those days, they weren't used as churches. Maybe there was something in that church; I don't know. We had a chauffeur in Moscow, since in wintertime you couldn't very well go to a party and leave your car outside. The car was ours but we shared it and the expense of the chauffeur, Baslov, with the Bohlens. That afternoon I had Baslov. I was sitting on the sidewalk, actually, and he was not far away. He went up to the protesters and asked, "Why are you bothering this lady? She's just painting." They said, "Yes, but she's not supposed to do that." They walked off, and about ten minutes later, the police came. This repeated itself a second time. By now I was fed up, and being almost finished, walked off. From that standpoint, it was not easy, living in Russia. Well, no freedom, you know.

Q: Of course.

CHIPMAN: Most of our friends were, naturally, in the dip. corps. They were friends that you kept, I would say almost forever. [I remember one time after the war] Bohlen was in Paris, von Walther was also there, von Herwarth was there. I think it must have been some peace conference. And we invited them to lunch. Then we started teasing them. For instance, somebody said to von Walther, "Why, we were expecting you in Cairo" -- he was with Rommel's army -- "and you never showed up!" Just teasing, back and forth. Then -- I don't know if it was Chip or Norris -- said, "And by the way, Johnnie" -- this to von Herwarth -- "why did you come and tell us this at the embassy [in Moscow]?" -- referring to the German/Russian rapprochement. He replied, "Well, we thought it would influence the Americans not to enter the war." It had always puzzled us -- obviously, he had his ambassador's permission. Friendly as he was with us, he wouldn't have come

otherwise; the sort of thing you don't do when you're a diplomat. It was a bit shortsighted on the Germans' part, I must say. They should have known the Americans a little better than that. But that was the reason.

Q: You said that Norris Chipman himself was uneasy about the rapprochement that was taking place at a commercial level, perhaps, and that he had observed this long before the early contact [through von Herwarth] that provided the possibility of informing the United States of this situation.

CHIPMAN: Well, Norris knew that the Russians would never make an economic agreement that had no political connection, you know; that this was just the beginning. And that's why he asked Kirk to send that message back to the Department. In those days, as I think I've mentioned earlier, Chip was not d'accord, but the message went out. Yes, he was very uneasy about it. He thought that this was the beginning of something very important --

Q: These pieces of information that he was able to give to Alexander Kirk were observations that he had made gained from his own contacts with businessmen and so on who were coming to the U.S.S.R. or trying to get contracts?

CHIPMAN: Yes, they were trying to get contracts. There was, I recall, a gold mining engineer who had come over to impart some of his knowledge to the Russians. Well, they needed trucks, and this and that, but it was obvious that if they were not getting these from the Americans, they were getting them from somewhere else. When Norris questioned the businessmen, they said, "Well, the Germans seem to be getting the contracts," because Norris asked, "Isn't anybody getting these contracts?" "Yes," was the reply, but it was always "the Germans." So naturally, he thought, this is very, very bizarre. It signifies something much more than just business agreements. You see, he was in charge of the embassy's economic work then, so he naturally had contacts with these men -- who always contacted the embassy when they came. I think this was part of his knowledge of what went on in Russia that eventually had meaning for him -- he knew how the Soviets operated. He was a great student of Russian affairs, not only of politics but of literature and history. I used to tease him because he always had a Russian dictionary (laughing) on his stomach when he read in bed! There would be words that he didn't know or knew imperfectly and he was checking. Yes, it was really his great interest in life.

Q: But his sense of the trend in the development of the economic rapport preceded by a good deal any knowledge or hint of political rapport?

CHIPMAN: Yes, I think it did. Because it was the first step . . .

End Tape 5, Side B
Begin Tape 6, Side A

CHIPMAN: That was the moment when the British and French [military] delegations were leaving Moscow, and they were accompanied to the station by the Russians.

Q: Other officials who had been dealing with them?

CHIPMAN: [Yes]. Our friend Caroline Williams was the wife of Spencer Williams . . . the head of the Russian-American Chamber of Commerce in Moscow, and a press photographer. She also painted. We had a very good friendship, she and I. Suddenly, I hear a knock on the door, and here was Caroline. And she said, "Fanny, where is Norris?" "Well," I said, "he's still in the office, but it's almost lunch time. He'll probably be coming very soon. Is there anything you wanted?" "Oh, yes," she said, "I want to tell him about the departure of the British and French delegations because the Russians who accompanied them were laughing. Really almost out loud. There is something very fishy about this whole thing, and I want to tell Norris about it." Well, she waited and when Norris came, she told him about it. Naturally, he found it very interesting. It was just before . . . I think . . . the Russian-German agreement.

Q: Yes, you had indicated that as being a very subtle indication, but one of meaning to Norris Chipman, of what was to come.

CHIPMAN: I can't remember if it was before that, or after that, that Norris had all these talks with the American business people, who told him that the Germans were getting all the orders, and they . . . were cooling their feet much longer than usual, but were not getting anything. When Norris questioned them, they said the Germans were getting the orders. And whether they were businessmen or engineers . . . This was what worried Norris . . . so much that he sent the telegram that I told you about.

Our great friendship was with the Prokofievs. I believe I mentioned earlier that at these big dip. corps affairs, the Russian women kept apart from the foreigners, not merely from Americans. But there was one particular dinner that Ambassador Davies wanted to give for the Red Army. Here was Tukhachevsky with -- as I was told later -- one of his wives, this one happened to be the brunette. At the last minute, typically, the Russians would inform you that so-and-so and such-and-such weren't coming. And on this night it happened to be the wives of these high-ranking army people.

Q: How many wives was Tukhachevsky supposed to have had?

CHIPMAN: Two. But the husbands of these wives who were not coming were coming, which meant that the table seating, as you can well believe, was completely upset -- and this at the last minute when we were already there. We had all been briefed beforehand, of course, "you'll sit next to Mr. So-and-so" etc. etc. OK: all that was now changed. I happened to sit next to a little man, sort of pudgy, with eyes -- I can only compare them to an elephant's: you know, little eyes in a big body? But in those days I spoke no Russian, not even two words, nor any German. And he kept talking to me, going from one language to the other, to make things "a little simpler" for me. I thought, "Well, he's a

pretty horrible little man.” I think, though I’m not sure, that George Kennan was seated on my other side; anyhow, it was not a Russian.

The dinner concluded, we were going home, and in the car I asked Norris, “Who was this awful man I sat next to at the table?” The seating having been all switched around, I didn’t know -- and Norris laughed and laughed. “Well,” he said, (laughs) “you’re quite right when you say ‘this awful man’. He’s ‘le Procureur Général’ that condemns them all to death.” At the infamous trials, he was ‘le Procureur Général.’ “So,” Norris said, “your instinct was certainly right.” I said, “He was perfectly awful!”

So, that was one of the rather forbidding experiences I had in Moscow. Well, it was really -- in retrospect, it was a very interesting experience. But at the time it took place (laughing) it was not always very pleasant. And I think it was less pleasant for women --

Q: Because after all, the men were undoubtedly wholly occupied --

CHIPMAN: -- and fascinated --

Q: -- from minute to minute, given the circumstances of the time -- those three years that you were there, for example -- all that was going on, considering that this was what they had prepared themselves for, how could they have been otherwise?

CHIPMAN: Yes, sure. Men like Kennan, Bohlen, my husband were naturally fascinated by what was going on and fully realized that this was a unique experience -- as I don’t think I quite did.

Q: One of the episodes that you spoke about was the one that brought you to Washington when you had an opportunity to talk with officials in the State Department -- an official, at any rate -- about life in Moscow. You said at that time that you had come especially to get permission to publish an article that you had written and illustrated for Vogue magazine. Would you mind talking a bit more about that?

CHIPMAN: No, certainly. I think I told you I had written a letter to Norris’s aunt Marion Chipman who was merchandise editor of Vogue and a great friend of Condé Nast. She happened to have my letter in her bag when she went to a cocktail party and met Condé Nast [to whom she said] “I have a nephew and niece who are in Moscow. Read this letter she just wrote me.” When he finished the letter, he said, “Well, that’s very interesting. Would she do anything for Vogue?” I’m not sure he said, “Could she illustrate it?” or if it was Marion who said, “She’s also a painter and could illustrate it.” Anyway, he said, “Fine, fine. Why don’t you ask her to do something.”

Marion wrote me immediately, and Norris said, “You know, you can’t publish anything without the State Department’s permission.” I said, “Well, it’s not going to be anything about politics. It’s just about everyday life -- my life as a housekeeper.” So he said, “All right, but you’ll have to get permission.”

As I was coming back to Washington anyway, I went to see . . . he was head of personnel . . . I've forgotten his name . . . he was a very nice man. I went to see him in the State Department, and the minute I entered his office, he said, "Oh Mrs. Chipman, I think you are coming to ask for a transfer for your husband." I was absolutely astounded, and it must have shown on my face. I said, "Oh, certainly not. This is none of my business. That is my husband's." "Oh," he said, "then what can I do for you? What can I do to help you?" So I explained the situation [about the article]. After a little while, he said, "Now that you are here, perhaps you can tell me why is it that women in general object so much to Moscow?" And so I told him that life [there] was very different from elsewhere -- not only different but very difficult. "The food situation is awful: we have to buy things from abroad -- in cans -- and very expensive as you know." [This should be corrected. We bought canned food from the embassy commissary (I think it was the first in existence in the U.S. Foreign Service), but fresh food came from abroad - Riga, Paris and, subsequently, Stockholm - but it was expensive.] [I am sure I also mentioned how shocked I was by the extreme poverty. It was not unusual to see women whose feet were wrapped in newspaper in winter. They had no boots or shoes.]

"As far as I'm concerned, [I said], I object to the climate. There are no in-between seasons. It goes from cold to very hot. It's what one calls a continental climate, and there's really not very much sun." After a few more such sentences, that was the end of the interview. He was a very well-known chief of personnel; he was interested in -- I think -- a reformatory for boys and doing things for boys. [Ed.: It was G. Howland Shaw.]

Q: Did you publish the article? Was it published?

CHIPMAN: Oh, well, something happened. I got permission; I sent it to Marion with the illustrations. But while I was in New York visiting her, she said, "Oh, I'm going to introduce you to one of our editors -- probably the one that will take care of your article." [When we met] he immediately was . . . on the defensive, and I was rather astounded by this. He was Russian . . . of Russian origin. He was not an American [although] he may have been an American citizen. Then, when I got the copy of Vogue, with Marion's apologies, [I found] it was put in the back pages, and the illustrations were so small you could hardly see them. I don't have [any copies]. [Returning from Egypt, the boat carrying our effects was sunk by the Japanese off Cape Town. We lost everything except two small suitcases.]

Q: What actually did come to pass in Cairo when you were there? What was Norris Chipman's position in the embassy and how did it come about that he was indeed -- apart your explanation -- transferred to Cairo?

CHIPMAN: Well, we were sent there -- it was a legation in those days and Minister Fish wasn't getting along with our predecessor and was asking forcefully for a replacement. So we weren't allowed to go on home leave, as is usual between posts when you are due for home leave, but were told to proceed to Cairo, which we did. We would go from Cairo on

home leave afterwards.

So Norris was assigned to the predecessor's job in the consulate. He didn't particularly enjoy it, after Moscow -- you know, routine work: visas, etc. Then we went home, and while we were aboard ship, the Germans started coming down through Holland, Belgium and France. Naturally we were very distressed, particularly me on account of my family. Then when we got to Washington we talked it over and decided that this was no time to take a holiday, that it seemed a little callous with all that was going on. So Norris went to the department and offered his services while on leave. They said they wanted him to go up to Kingston to open a consulate there because we'd decided to ask the Canadians for visas to come into the U.S. "It's a job that's rather delicate," it was explained to him, "because they've never had to do this before. But there are a lot of people infiltrating from Mexico and we cannot just apply this to the Mexican border and not to our other border because of Roosevelt's Good Neighbor policy; etc."

So we went to Kingston, which was very pleasant in the summertime. We made friends with local people and then Norris was told to return to Cairo. So he went back but Mrs. Shipley [autocrat of the passport office] wouldn't let me go back because there was this to-and-fro going on in the [North African] desert. I argued that this wasn't fair because the other women were there. I had gone there to accommodate the department, settled an apartment, taken servants, and now my husband would be going home to a household that he couldn't very well manage by himself. Then Bill Bullitt (laughs) got into the act. In those days he was pretty powerful at the White House. He went to Mrs. Shipley, and I thought after that visit she would never talk to me again. He told her that of course she didn't realize "what the company of the other sex meant!"

Q: (laughing) Good for him.

CHIPMAN: Oh yes -- you know Bill Bullitt said anything he chose to say. So I was allowed to go back to Cairo but I couldn't go -- as Norris hadn't either -- across the Atlantic. I had to cross the U.S. and go through the Pacific. It took a long time. There were stopovers in Hawaii, the Philippines -- it wasn't at all disagreeable but I would have preferred taking that trip with my husband.

Q: With whom did you travel?

CHIPMAN: By myself. There were a lot of business people on the ship. Some were going back to Bombay. There were students, an American girl from California who had married an Egyptian -- both were very young, bound for Egypt.

Q: Did you have Claudette with you?

CHIPMAN: She wasn't born then, she was born in Paris. It was in Bombay that the consul general had me met at the ship and took me over, so to speak. I stayed in a hotel there. He asked, "Do you know who your next chief is going to be?" I said, "No, I don't

know anything. Is Mr. Fish leaving?" "Yes. It's Alexander Kirk." Naturally that was good news to me, as you would know by now. From Bombay I flew back to Cairo, not even wanting to stop in Jerusalem, I just wanted to get there -- which later on I regretted because I've never had the opportunity to see Jerusalem. But then, my husband had been without me for quite a while and I felt I had to get back as soon as possible.

Then began the Cairo assignment. I don't know if it was Kirk or Fish that had already transferred Norris to the political section. Ray Hare was there, and he and Norris worked well together. It was what goes on usually in an embassy, except that we made a lot of friends among the local population, particularly with the Copts. We got to know some of the important business people, like Aboud Pasha, who was married to a Scottish woman, very intelligent. He was about the only businessman who had made "his own money," up from practically nothing, and was exceptionally wealthy. The King used to chipper ["borrow"] his airplanes when they came down from America (laughs). That I have from Maima Aboud herself.

I became very friendly with the British, I always get along with them. And I worked in Lady Wavell's canteen, with the wife of Gen. Stone; I became warm friends with both of them. Then I worked a little bit with the Free French. Alexander teased me to death about that but Mme. Catroux wanted the help of the American Red Cross for some of the French flyers in Syria and I engineered that via the head of the American Red Cross in Cairo. It was very interesting. There was a very big party given by the British High Commissioner for de Gaulle, who came there during our tour. General Catroux very nicely came over to me and asked, "Would you like to be presented to the General?" I said, "That's very kind of you but since there's no time to talk to him, I don't see why he should be bothered to shake one more hand. I think just let it go." I think he was rather relieved -- not one more bother for the poor General, who was young in those days, a towering figure.

It was all very interesting until my poor Norris got kidney stones. Apparently the climate fosters them if you have a predisposition toward them. He and Kirk decided he had better go home to be operated on. So he did, with our friend Eddie Page, who was with the British army. We were then sending empty planes back to the U.S. for repair, so Norris got Eddie on a plane and both went back to the U.S. Then there was El Alamein, and Alexander decided to evacuate the women and children and the OSS men to Gura camp in Eritrea. Since I was alone and we were going to the airport in the early morning hours, he didn't particularly want this to be known, which of course it was, in no time, but sent word that he would come fetch me at 2 or 3 a.m., something like that, and to be ready.

En route to the airport I was, naturally, befuddled and worried. I said to him, "Alexander, it's not possible, we haven't lost the war, have we?" He waited a moment and then said these really prophetic words: "No, Théophania, we haven't lost the war but we've lost the peace." And you know, I think of that so often when I see all the trouble we've had. It seems to me that he had really a lot of foresight.

Then I was in Gura camp for a while. It was obvious Norris wasn't coming back because the climate was bad for what he had. Meanwhile, I had a letter from Kirk that I found recently and re-read, in which he said he'd ascertained that the climate was not good and the water was not good either. Besides, I was told while I was there that the British had sent their best doctors for that kind of thing to Egypt. So, I came home.

Q: Before we continue, it must have been a great pleasure for you to find, again, Alexander Kirk whom you and Norris Chipman admired so much and with whom you'd had such a close friendship for a long time.

CHIPMAN: Yes, it was, very much so. But, I don't know why, somehow I think it was a little disappointing. I'll say this: Alexander, while he was in Germany, acquired this private secretary, called Horn. Horn seemed to be quite jealous of any former associations that Kirk had. That was one thing that both Norris and I were aware of. We didn't like to criticize our chief, naturally, but we felt that he allowed Horn to do things that -- well, we weren't in agreement with. For instance, you know, Kirk dressed in a certain manner. He never had buttons on his clothes like you or I. (laughs) They were always covered with the same material as his suit. He was very elegant, all his clothes were made in Italy, perfectly tailored, and since he was tall and slender they looked very good on him. Then he had shoes, I think suede, always. And he started smoking a pipe. And Horn did all these things. We thought Alexander shouldn't have allowed the man, even if it was only sheer admiration, to mimic him to that extent. It would lead to unpleasant gossip, which it did. In fact, once at a luncheon I was very embarrassed, because Kirk was there and some man, some pasha who was very badly brought up, made some remark, which I wouldn't repeat because I don't remember it, but it was obvious that it concerned that situation. It embarrassed me, though I don't think I'm easily embarrassed. I was speechless. The remark was to the whole luncheon table, it wasn't a private affair.

When we left the luncheon -- I don't even recall if Norris was there or not -- I discussed this with him. I said, "Look, really this is embarrassing." You know, there were criticisms of him, always, everywhere where he went on account of his definite personality and his eccentricities, all of that. And we always defended him. We felt that it was getting a bit difficult to defend him under those circumstances. Naturally, he still had our friendship, we didn't care what he did, we felt he was a brilliant man. But he wasn't a private person. It bothered us a little. We still maintained the friendship and I still have all sorts of notes that I found in looking through a box of such things.

But it wasn't the same as in Moscow. Moscow was a very special place for that, you know. You had friendships -- let's say that Moscow was a place that called for no nonsense. It was tough going, everybody was (laughs) down to the essentials. Whereas Cairo was more opera bouffe, you know? Kirk with his gift for sarcasm probably played into that, you see? But he perhaps he shouldn't have, that's what I'm trying to say. After all, he was the American minister. And though he kept saying "I don't like that title" Norris and I used to laugh because we'd say to ourselves, (laughing) "Well, he wants to be an ambassador, naturally!" I can just hear him. "I don't like the title."

Q: Nonetheless you had a great admiration for him as intellect, as diplomat. Certainly Bohlen in his memoirs called him "a superb diplomat."

CHIPMAN: Oh yes, it's true.

Q: And said he learned an enormous amount from him.

CHIPMAN: Yes, though I must say I think at first in Moscow Bohlen didn't get along so very well with Kirk. At first. Then, after all, Bohlen was no dummy, he realized that a lot in Kirk was show and that deep down he wasn't that at all if you saw a lot of him. I don't know what it was, in one of his letters he said "you both realize that it was a deep hurt." I had a lot of letters from him when he was in Germany. He explained himself why he behaved the way he behaved at times. Well, I think in our sympathy for Kirk there was -- it seems ridiculous to say such a thing about a man who had everything: looks, wealth, position -- there was a certain amount of pity that he called forth. He had everything. But in my opinion, he didn't have the essentials in life: he didn't have the love of anybody by his side every day. Of course he loved his mother a la folie, presque. You know how it was in Rome -- I was told, I never saw it. He had a big portrait of her, it appears, with I don't know if it was candelabra on either side but you had the impression you were going into a holy place. So I was told by people who had served with him there. Oh yes, there was admiration for him that remained. He had a very tough job in Egypt.

End Tape 6, Side A
Begin Tape 6, Side B

CHIPMAN: There remained admiration for his way of sizing up situations and of practically seeing into the future. Because he probably knew the political setup so well that he was able to -- I don't know what he thought about Yalta. I think the President stopped in Cairo?

Q: There was a Cairo conference, yes. After Yalta they went to Cairo.

CHIPMAN: We were no longer there. Of course, Cairo was a very very important post, then. But even when we were there, it was sort of a turning table --

Q: In all directions.

CHIPMAN: -- because there was no longer Europe. To make a diversion from Kirk, it was in those days -- do you remember the first aviators who dropped bombs on Japan? Not the atomic bomb -- didn't they drop bombs before that one?

Q: Yes, there were tremendous fire-bomb raids, in Tokyo particularly but other cities too.

CHIPMAN: Well, one night we were invited to dinner at the Mohammed Ali Club. I

remember that very well, though I don't see Norris at the table. Anyway, I was there and I sat next to an American officer who was wearing shorts. I was amazed at that, because we were in evening dress, the men in black tie. He didn't answer me directly when I asked him "how come." I discovered later on -- you might know his name, I've forgotten it, because he became a well-known airman, the leader of that group that dropped bombs on Japan. That was why he was wearing shorts. [Ed.: It was Jimmy Doolittle] He was most charming. The dinner was perfectly friendly. There were several of them. I happened to be seated next to him.

Well, we were also there during the incident you wanted me to relate, with Lady Diana [Manners], about the palace. The King was not doing what the British wanted. They wanted a prime minister appointed because they wanted the country to be quiet, naturally, no political upheaval. And the King, who was obviously not very pro-British, was not appointing this -- I've forgotten his name, [Nahas Pasha] the man's wife was very avant garde, a feminist, and I knew them quite well. But there they were. And Churchill, I mean, you know had employé les grands moyens and had the palace surrounded with tanks.

About that time Kirk gave a dinner to which he invited Lady Diana and Duff Cooper who were arriving from Singapore, I believe, possibly on their way to London, but they were not going to stay in Cairo. For some reason I was his hostess that evening. Halfway through dinner someone comes and murmurs something in Kirk's ear. Towards the end of dinner he goes to Lady Diana and Duff Cooper, excuses himself and leaves. He said, "Now, Théophania, you take over." He had invited a lot of prominent Egyptians, most of whom I knew, among them the Aboud Pashas. Possibly someone else from our legation, I don't remember.

The evening was proceeding and rather soon after dinner everybody was talking as usual, when Lady Diana gets up and says in a very loud voice, (imitating British accent) "How does somebody get a car here?" I look up -- I was probably talking to somebody, for a change -- and was about to, perhaps, turn to one of our distinguished guests and I saw that nobody moved a finger. I went to our military attaché and said, "Would you see to it that there is a car for Lady Diana." And that's how she left. The next day, what echoes I got from that dinner! All the Egyptians were indignant. "Who in the devil does she think she is to talk that way?" "British impertinence!" (laughing) I must say I thought she behaved very badly, because under the circumstances she could have been helpful and have realized certainly that if Kirk left as he did, it was for something serious. He had just learned that Churchill had given orders to surround the palace with tanks. And obviously this was a serious event which Kirk wanted to report to the department.

That was my first encounter with her. I saw her in Paris later on. It always seemed to me that considering the state of France at the time (which was lamentable -- it was cold, nobody had any heat, I know my mother had la piece unique, she had two rooms because she always managed to do things a bit better than other people; it cost the French a fortune to heat and feed themselves), -- it was not a time to be all dressed up, to be all

plumed up. You should have a little more discretion because the natives were -- it wasn't simply a matter of being French-born: I would have felt that way in any country under those circumstances. It seemed to me it was very callous on her part. She was a beautiful woman but so what? She could have been a little more aware [of the feelings of the French].

Q: Did you have any idea of how her own staff felt about her?

CHIPMAN: No.

Q: She has written rather dramatically about them, in the Paris embassy, saying that she found most of the wives to be incapable of carrying on a decent conversation, ill-informed about what was going on in France, and generally to be quite inept in every respect. I wondered whether or not you ever had any indication --

CHIPMAN: I know that she was great friends with Susan Mary Patton Alsop, which you perhaps know.

Q: Yes.

CHIPMAN: And I knew that because I was friendly with the Pattons. We greatly admired Bill, who had a hard time health-wise because he had asthma. Cy Sulzberger wrote a book, which certainly Bill inspired. They were great friends with the Pattons too, at least Susan Mary was a great friend of Marina Sulzberger. Well, I suppose Susan Mary understood somebody like Lady Diana better than I did. They were from different countries but more or less from the same milieu. I know there was that special friendship; and she frequented Louise de Vilmorin. Of course Bill Patton was financial attaché in those days, which meant that she met all these wealthy people -- bankers, etc. -- which were not at all our cup of tea, since we were "in" with the socialist leaders. (laughs)

Q: That was Norris Chipman's responsibility among others at the embassy there?

CHIPMAN: That was his main responsibility -- to see what the left was doing in France, which could be very important at the time. Because after all the communists had been against collaboration and had certainly done their bit, acknowledged by de Gaulle because he gave them posts, as you remember. He also recognized what women had done, because it was thanks to de Gaulle that women finally got the vote in France. Yes, we saw mostly people on the left and intellectuals. Norris had strong connections in the socialist camp, in particular with the syndicalists. I think I said earlier that it was thanks to his friendship with these people that the first Marshall Plan shipment was delivered. Because the communists intended to blackball it. It didn't happen, and Norris worked hard on that. These people and their wives came to our house frequently. Some wouldn't bring their wives. I had to insist that one wife come, and M. Gérôme — he's probably dead, now -- said, "Mais, Madame Chipman, ma femme -- vous êtes une intellectuelle" and I laughed my head off, "ma femme c'est une ouvrière." And I said, "Monsieur Gérôme, cela n'a pas

d'importance. Je voudrais bien connaître Madame Gérame. C'est votre femme" -- "you must bring her here the next time you come for dinner."

And some of them were very nice. One of them told me, Oh, of course, Mr. Chipman has a much more -- it also made me laugh -- a much more important post than his title implies. Because of the work he does. Norris and I laughed so much afterwards, and I immediately told him this when we were alone. I said, "Well, your dear colleagues, that's what they think of you. Just leave them with that impression." But it was a very, very interesting time, and for Norris it was very fruitful and very gratifying and when I think of his going away so early I am very happy he had this time because he really felt he was doing something that was worthwhile for his country. And that was along the lines that he thought of. We even made sort of not friends, but more than a contact with Leon Blum, and he was going to come and have lunch with us, and then it was called off because he was sick and he died two days after that. Norris admired Leon Blum and it was Blum who had told one of these men that he would like to meet Norris. That's how it came about. So meanwhile we also saw some society people. I am not going to say that it was all that, we were friends with a Mr. and Mrs. [Robert] Cayrol and he represented Mr. 5% - Mr. [Calouste] Gulbenkian - in France. And they were very useful friends to us because they knew everybody in politics, in the arts, and when I am in Paris I still see their daughter occasionally. Cayrol was an exceedingly intelligent man and a big businessman, and naturally had all these contacts that could be -- even without contacts, you know by the very fact of talking to him you got an idea of what was going on that could be very useful. And he seemed to appreciate Norris a lot. She was a very cultivated lady -- she lived longer than he did and I saw her after Norris died, and I was then working on my own in the embassy.

And then there was my family and I know that they introduced Norris to Jenny Bradley, who in turn introduced Norris to [Arthur] Koestler. Jenny Bradley was the widow of Bradley who was an American literary agent. He introduced French literature to America and vice versa. She always had a very interesting crowd around her and in fact until lately I used to go and see her on Saturdays when she had an interesting crowd of people. She also introduced Norris to an American, a Negro writer, I think he was called [Richard] Wright, but I am not sure. But he was well known and he lived in Europe and Norris was very happy to talk to him. So that was one connection and then my mother introduced Norris to André Siegfried, who wrote I think a book on the United States, if I am not mistaken. And to certain artists...Bergson was already dead. I had introduced Norris to Bergson on our way to Russia, because I was a great friend of his daughter who was a deaf mute. Very good artist. Of course the sorrow of her -- the sorrow and the joy of her family -- you can imagine when you are Bergson to have a daughter that way. She learned how to talk. She talked in a very guttural fashion, and we were great friends when I was very young. She was older. And there was also a very important meeting with the first man who managed Renault, which became nationalized. And so forth and so on. I don't know who my family saw, and then again I picked up again with the André Maurois' later on. Madame Maurois was Simone de Caillavet, the granddaughter of the Madame de Caillavet [who] pushed Anatole France to work and was his friend for many years. And I

think altogether it was profitable, and agreeable, for Norris to meet all these people, you see. It takes a Foreign Service officer, after all, quite a while before he meets “on his own”. [See Note at end of interview.]

Q: Indeed -- if ever, in many cases.

CHIPMAN: Yes, if ever, as you say. My mother was very fond of Norris, and Norris used to kid her a lot. My mother, like a lot of Greeks, when she wanted something she was (in exaggerated tone of voice) a bit insistent! “Oh, Madre, don’t be this way” he used to say to her. (she laughs) He kidded her a lot but they got along very well. And then there was also my stepfather there whom Norris enjoyed talking with, who knew a lot about what was going on in France. He had many friends. My mother couldn’t entertain any longer in the way she had because it was impossible. After all, it was the aftermath of the war.

Paris was in a very sad condition when we first arrived. I know it used to depress me terribly. People had no heat; food was very difficult to come by. I remember going all over Paris, once, to find some green beans. I took the car and the cook and off we went. She told me all the places where I could find them. I was happy to be there, and at the same time in many respects it was rather heartbreaking. The buildings, for instance. My mother was living in Faubourg Saint-Germain in those days, in an apartment. When you entered, it was wet -- it sweated because it hadn’t been heated for so long, and they had had some terribly cold winters. My sister was then engaged, in her job, in some research in pharmaceuticals. We saw her young friends too, which gave us an insight -- she was ten years younger than I -- into the life of another generation. We met [Pleven], a deputy. He was an important man from Brittany; he became a [Prime Minister later on].

So it went. Norris got a lot of information of many kinds. We were there five years. Ambassador Caffery [appreciated] Norris very much, I must say; he told me so. When Norris finally had to have a kidney removed, Caffery very kindly came to see him. We had a very nice house in Neuilly. Claudette had been born not long before. Then I went to a dinner party -- this in connection with Caffery — now, I can’t remember our counselor’s name, I was very fond of him and of his wife who was Canadian and a very good painter... Jamie Bonbright it has come back to me. Well, anyway, he gave a dinner party and he sat me next to Caffery. I thanked him for coming to see Norris. “Norris appreciated it so much, I know you are so busy,” etc. And he said (laughs) very brusquely, “I like Norris! He comes into my office and he comes to the point. He never starts giving me a lot of detail that I know anyway.” Norris was delighted when I reported this to him.

Then Caffery was sent to Cairo. I think President Eisenhower didn’t particularly like him -- I don’t know why, because he was a very good ambassador, we all thought a great deal of him. MacArthur was with him and knew France well because he’d been there before the war, and [Jamie Bonbright] the counselor. Abbott was there. Chapin was there but didn’t get along very well with Caffery. There were very few of us at the beginning. I remember we went to call on Mme. de Gaulle once and we were just a handful of women. She was not in the Elysée, she was in a house in the Bois de Boulogne [where there was a

replica of “La France” in the courtyard. No one knew of my association with it.].

Q: Did most of the wives speak French?

CHIPMAN: Elsie Abbott spoke French; I think she [is Norwegian]. Mary Chapin spoke French, she was in the first group who called on Mme. de Gaulle. Well, we spoke French after a fashion. In the very first days, we all did. We were all having trouble getting settled because it was not very easy to find places to live in.

Q: There was of course no assistance given.

CHIPMAN: No, not in those days. (laughs) We lived in a sumptuous house, 6 Ave. Foch, that belonged to a Mrs. Beaumont, who had really offered it to the government for practically nothing. The Chapins had lived there, and when they left Mary prevailed on me to take it over. I said, “No, it’s too big, and too costly,” etc. She said, “Look: the rent is nothing because she doesn’t want either the British or French army to occupy it.” It had been occupied by the Germans -- very often, you know, automatically it was taken over by the other occupying army. “She’s giving it for nothing.” But I said, “But the heat in that place! Mary, really --” She said, “It’s heated by the American army. To date we haven’t received a bill.” I said, “It doesn’t have staircases, it’s elevators.” “Yes,” she said, “it’s branched on what was known as ‘la rue des Saussaies’ where the Germans interviewed people that they arrested. There was always electricity. So the elevators, everything works.” It’s quite a large house. It seems to me to be unoccupied each time I pass it now. I don’t know if she sold it, or what. Her husband had bought it; his name was Schönberg. He had made a lot of money from big stores somewhere in the Midwest. Then he changed his name to Beaumont, as being a bit more elegant (both laugh) and married this beautiful mannequin. I never saw her but eventually she wanted her house back when things settled down. We were only there one year.

Then we were in Neuilly, where Claudette was born. From there we moved unfortunately to another government house about a year before we left for Rome. That gave me a lot of work. I was very tired. You know, I was 41 when Claudette was born, so all these moves, etc. But anyway, Lady Deterding who was Russian but whose fortune came from Lord Deterding whose fortune was in Royal Dutch Shell oil, bought the house. I tried to persuade Col. Jacobs, who was buying houses in Paris, to buy it but there was nothing in it for him so he didn’t buy it, which was unfortunate. In fact, for years he could not come back to the U.S. because from all the houses he bought for the Government he got something. He was not, I emphasize, a Foreign Service officer, but he had done very well in administration in the army and they gave him that job.

Since he bought houses, I couldn’t see why he wasn’t interested in buying this one. It was a charming house in Neuilly. And having a long nose and smelling things, I said to Norris, “He has no interest in buying this house because there’s nothing in it for him.” And he said, “Oh, you women, you’re always seeing complications that don’t exist.

End Tape 6, Side B
Begin Tape 7, Side A

CHIPMAN: Caffery said that we couldn't make a fuss about staying where we were because they were making a fuss about the minister's house, Ave. Emile Deschanel, because people were "squatting" there; and in those days you didn't have the right to put people out of a house. So he said, "We think you are right" -- I had consulted a lawyer -- "they have no right to put you out. But," he said, "we can't make a fuss with the Quai d'Orsay. We'll give you the first house that's available."

Another (laughs) enormous house which I didn't want! But there we were until we went to Rome. But the Paris assignment, and Russia, were certainly, I would say, our most interesting assignments. Then after Paris we went to Rome. After Rome we were in Bonn where we went through the unfortunate incident of John Davies --

Q: I'd like to have you speak about that because we haven't talked about it during this interview. This was in the early 50's, and McCarthy was making his inroads into the personnel of the Foreign Service and State Department.

CHIPMAN: I think even Sam Reber had trouble on account of McCarthy. And Sam Reber was our chief with the ambassador. Well, we had a high commissioner, Donnelly; very nice, and his wife -- from Colombia, I think -- was too. They arrived in Bonn and Caffery had told them, "Meet the Chipmans, they're very nice people." PERIOD. (laughing) That's typical Caffery. But since they had been with him elsewhere -- and I think Caffery had promoted Donnelly a lot, because he felt he was a very worth-while person -- we got acquainted immediately after that introduction.

Bonn was an interesting post, but you know a high commission is not the same thing as an embassy. For one thing, we felt -- and I, being of French descent, certainly understood it very well -- the resentment of the population at having us all there as an [occupying power]. That's what it was, really; with a diplomatic side but it was an occupation. And we were in the small town of Bonn and we caused all the prices to go up because things weren't so easy to find. Of course the Americans immediately built an enormous place which we baptized "the golden ghetto." Of course it was very comfortable, we had a nice apartment. I didn't like living this way. You know, people that you work with all in the same [buildings] -- I never enjoyed that kind of living. I envied greatly the French and the British, who had independent houses, but they weren't as numerous as we were.

John Davies had the over-all responsibility of the political section and he was very friendly with Norris, whom he knew, whose work he knew. I got along very well with Patricia, whom I admire greatly. Of course I didn't know her well then, but later, when I saw how she behaved, I was full of admiration for her. Norris had the contact with the German politicians. What was it that they had in those days? a Bundestag? Well, it was in Adenauer's time. Norris had access to these men. He had his own little house for an office, located in a place Mehlem, where he had a whole staff and two younger officers --

Norris didn't speak German -- who spoke it perfectly. Jock Dean and another older man whose name I don't remember now, helped Norris when he had to talk with some of the German politicians who didn't speak English or French. After a while, he felt that his work was not as useful as it could be just because there was this lack of immediate contact. He studied German but it's a very difficult language. In fact he told me, "Don't study it. You've recently studied Italian. Do your painting because this is where you can do it, you won't have many social obligations here." Because there was no local population to consort with; like Russia -- only the dip. corps.

That's what I did. He studied German faithfully and found that it was very difficult to get to know some of these politicians if you couldn't talk to them directly, since there was always a third person present to interpret. He found this greatly diminished his usefulness. So, I don't think he did anything about it, but eventually, perhaps through Andy Foster, I'm not quite sure about this, he was transferred to London. What was Andy doing? He was acting in the department?

Q: Political counselor.

CHIPMAN: Well yes, he was in London, but he came after Norris was transferred to London. Maybe he wrote one or two letters saying how he felt about Bonn(we had been there for two years), and that it would be better if somebody who spoke German had that post. Well, it is true. People are not going to talk to you in confidence if you have a third person there whom they're not sure they can trust.

Q: At least, not in quite the same fashion.

CHIPMAN: No, they don't talk in the same fashion, and he realized that. So, we went to London, which we adored, where we were very happy. We had wonderful friends, particularly Rebecca West and her husband, who knew all sorts of interesting people. Norris had a lot of contacts with newspaper people who followed the U.S.S.R. situation. He was a counselor of embassy then but not THE counselor. For political affairs, it was Andy when he came. Then Butterworth was our minister, Aldrich our ambassador. It all worked out very well, I think. The embassy was, at least as far as we were concerned, kind of a happy family. There were younger people. Leila and Evan Wilson were there, we had been in Egypt together. I can't remember everybody's name now. There was another couple --

Q: The Hookers were there before you.

CHIPMAN: That's right. Well, it all went very smoothly as far as I recollect. Norris made great contacts with Gaitskell, the big Labor leader. Dora was Russian-born and loved to talk to Norris. She later became "Lady Gaitskell" in her own right, sitting in the House of Lords. Very often she appealed [to Norris] (laughing) because she felt she wasn't strong enough to deal with Hugh. She wanted somebody to help her sit on him, so to speak. (laughing heartily) So she telephoned and said, "I would like Norris to come and talk to

Hugh.” Hugh was a don, actually, and sometimes she felt got a little too enthusiastic on the extreme left. So Norris was supposed to go and argue things out, which he did on a number of occasions. So that was interesting. They were very nice people. Arthur Koestler was in London -- he had finally settled there -- naturally a very interesting friend. I remember -- I wish I had a record of that -- a whole evening where, believe it or not, and I say that to obviate a laugh, I didn’t open my mouth!-- because Rebecca and Koestler went to it. You know, both anti-communist, sharing or not sharing their views, and it was fascinating.

Q: How did you come to meet Rebecca West?

CHIPMAN: She was a friend of Doris’s and she used to come here during the New Deal. She wanted to know the New Deal people -- I’ve forgotten the names of some of them. Doris once gave a big dinner, I remember, to which she had invited a number of the young New Dealers. Rebecca, you know, wrote for the newspapers. She was vastly interested in this big experiment. So she came over from England to observe it. Being great friends with Doris, Rebecca asked Doris what she could do to help her in this respect; and Doris did.

I remember in particular one big dinner I went to, which is how I met Rebecca. Years later, I asked Doris to write Rebecca that we were coming to London because I thought she would be an interesting person to contact. Doris wrote her; we met -- I don’t know if she was married when she first came to the U.S., I suppose she was; to Henry Andrews, a banker with Schroeder & Co. When we came to London he was retired. He was a very interesting man, vastly interested in the arts, and he and I used to go at it tooth and nail while Rebecca and Norris talked politics. We’d spend weekends in their house near Oxford. It was a very congenial time. We took walks; they had a beautiful place there. It was very pretty all around there. She often had people come in on a weekend. So it was very enjoyable, and to Norris very useful. They made a great difference in our stay in London.

There was one very prominent Britisher who had a newspaper [King-Hall] whom we saw very often. We naturally had contact with our British friends in the Foreign Office. Then our colleagues in the embassy; and certain society people that you met here and there. Then the Aldriches entertained a lot. Mrs. Aldrich gave two balls while we were there. One for Princess Margaret, which I well remember, when they were living at Prince’s Gate before they took over the Hohenlohe house in Regents Park. And there Mrs. Aldrich gave a ball for the Queen.

The ball she gave for Princess Margaret was remarkable for the fact that Princess Margaret brought her own crowd of young men along. The young Americans from the Embassy didn’t have a prayer of a chance to dance with her. (laughs) So Mrs. Aldrich ordered that they cut in! (both laugh heartily) You know, she was [a very energetic and remarkable woman].

Q: Yes, I remember her well.

CHIPMAN: Wooh! She was somebody in her own right. So they cut in. So Margaret had to dance with the young Americans in the embassy. At the big ball -- I say "big" because the Hohenlohe house -- did you know it?

Q: Yes.

CHIPMAN: An enormous house, which she had arranged very well, I must say, with a lot of taste. So the younger men were to dance with the Queen, and the older men were to dance with the Queen Mother. Norris danced with the Queen Mother. And we danced with nobody! (hearty laughter from both) I know Barbara [Foster] and I, really didn't care too much about this but we laughed and said, "Well, we are really left out of this business. At least Prince Philip could have danced with us!!" Anyway, it was quite an experience, I enjoyed it vastly.

The supper was spread on a long table. I was seated at the end, naturally. The Queen was there. What amazed me was that she ate with her gloves on. (both laughing) I thought that was absolutely remarkable. She was very charming. She's really lovelier to look at than her pictures. I don't know what she's like now, but she had this radiant, real "English complexion." It was a very glamorous affair. All the women all dressed up in their best gowns; everything done beautifully by Mrs. Aldrich, who evidently did not have to spare her pennies. You can well imagine. We enjoyed it very much. I think she invited everybody in the embassy.

Q: Speaking of sparing pennies reminds me that I haven't asked you whether you found the salaries adequate for the kind of life that you have described during this interview.

CHIPMAN: No. No, not at all. It's not that I spend money extravagantly, because I've had to earn my living several times, and I know the value of money. My family at times had some and then they didn't have any. I had a very extravagant mother, [as I have] said in passing. So I have a good notion of how to make ends meet, so to speak. And I found it rather difficult. Norris's father helped us when we went to Moscow. First of all, he gave us a car, the car that we had with the Bohlens. Then he helped us also when Claudette was born. But we never saved a penny. So, -- you won't believe it, --when Norris died in Belgrade, I had \$2,000 in the bank. It was very urgent that I go to work.

Jimmy Riddleberger had warned Loy Henderson that I would need a job and all that, but it was only through the kindness of Glenn Wolfe that I got the job in the embassy in Paris. I really felt that the State Department could have done a little more for me at the time than they did. Particularly Loy, who said that when Norris died, it was as if he had lost a younger brother. Well, it was that way. I was very glad to get that job because I really needed it. But it shouldn't be that way. I know, too, that Avis told me herself that she had to work. And after all, she was an ambassador's wife, had been for years.

I don't think that's quite right. Because when you go out that way, into the field, you really lose all your contacts at home, unless they are very very close friends. Of course I always had Doris as a friend, but she was old and sick when this happened to Norris. Her husband was helpful several times. He got Claudette into Abbott Academy, for one thing. In that respect I got practically no help from the Department.

I compare ourselves, for instance, to other countries that are naturally less wealthy than we are. Pussy von Herwarth told me that not only did she have a certain allowance for clothes but that they also had the right, at government expense, to go to a spa to recuperate from the nervous tension of this or that post, you see. And it was covered by the government. Now I know that when they are abroad the British are much better paid than we are. I don't know about the French. But it really ends up that to get into the higher spheres -- being a minister at an expensive post, or being an ambassador -- you have to have quite a large private income. And I don't think that's right.

I know we spent everything that Norris made. Of course, I think that if Norris hadn't felt that his father had some money, he wouldn't have acted so; he would have been a little more cautious. But on the other hand, he felt that to do a good job we had to do what we were doing. And despite his ability, perhaps we wouldn't have gotten such big posts. When you look at it, we went from one big post to another.

Q: In succession, which is very unusual.

CHIPMAN: Very unusual. I don't know. Perhaps it was known that Norris could do it in view of his ability, and secondly, financially. But when he died my mother-in-law was still living. She was sick, she needed a day and a night nurse. And I had to work. Mr. Chipman, in fact, lost a good bit of money before he died, unfortunately. I suppose he wanted to play the market when he was no longer really able to do it. I just simply had to go out and make some money to bring up Claudette. I really think I'm speaking the truth when I tell you that the first retirement check I got from the Government was just a little over \$2,000. When I mentioned this at one point to the current consul general in Paris, he said, "Per month?" I said, "Are you joking? For a year." He was indignant. He said, "It's not possible." I said, "Yes, that's how it was in 1957."

So, I don't know if salaries are better now...

Q: There has been a considerable improvement, there's no question about that. Both in salaries and in allowances of various kinds for travel, education of children, and so on. There has been considerable increase. There are many who would say it's still not adequate, even with these increases, but there has been a considerable change.

CHIPMAN: And the cost of living has also increased a lot. I know "Chip", for instance, could never have been an ambassador if it hadn't been for John Kennedy, because I know he was given some special funds. "Chip" didn't have any money. And I don't think he had any prospects the way Norris had, actually. His mother was still living, a comfortable

life but sans plus. So, well, I know Avis told me, "Shamelessly I put my head or my back on the block when I arrived in Paris to the couturier who would give me the best deal. And it happened to be Dior." Of course, they had three children to educate and that was costly. And the Paris embassy, I know, is expensive to run because I was told that by Offie, whom I'd like to talk about too, because Offie was Bullitt's secretary and he was immensely useful to a lot of Foreign Service officers. Carmel Offie. He was a Foreign Service officer.

After the war he went into business and really made a pile of money. Unfortunately he was killed in an airplane accident. But Carmel was a very intelligent Italian from an immigrant family and he used to tell you, "my mother was a picture bride." And he also boasted that it was the wife of a Foreign Service officer somewhere in South America who taught him how to use a fork and knife. But I admire him for the fact that he rose absolutely from the ranks and became somebody who was quite worth-while and very fair to his colleagues in the Foreign Service. He had a very temperate influence on Bullitt, who sometimes had a tendency to explode and to state his convictions strongly. I wouldn't want this to go beyond us, but for your information, he was very rabid about Bohlen and Yalta, and it was Offie that calmed him down. We all approved of him. Norris told him, "You're quite right, there's not much that he could do. After all, Roosevelt was the president, and what was he? Just a simple Foreign Service officer that was translating and interpreting. But Bullitt didn't sometimes put himself in the place of other people. He knew what he would do, and what he did with Roosevelt, he blew up. Well, it was not everybody who could blow up with the president, obviously.

So I always think of Offie with a great deal of affection and regard for his friendship and for what he made of his life, when he started, really, with nothing. He was just a clerk in a sense. He was in Paris, and I think of him because he told me all the economies he achieved for Bullitt in Paris. Bullitt was wealthy. Offie said he used to go to the Mont de Piété or Marché aux Puces and buy silver chandeliers for him and all that sort of thing because he had to put so much more money of his own than he got from the government to run the Paris embassy. And I really don't think that's right. Of course he was a man of wealth, but still there's a limit to what you can pour --

Q: Out of one's own pocket.

CHIPMAN: Yes. It was the same thing with Alexander Kirk. He told me that his business advisor told him that he had to get out of the Service because he wouldn't have a penny left. But then of course Alexander lived -- he didn't have to have (laughing) three houses in Cairo. He had a boat, the government house, and the house near the Pyramids. But these men wanted to do their job in rather a glamorous manner, I mean representative of a great nation.

End Tape 7, Side A (SIDE B BLANK)
Begin Tape 8, Side A

Q: You were, I would guess, virtually unique among U.S. [Foreign Service] wives of that time, in the context of your professional life that you had led both before, during and even after you married Norris Chipman. Was it difficult for you to shift gears, as it were, from having the experiences, say, that you had with Doris Stevens and so on and suddenly, as you said, become a housewife in Moscow?

CHIPMAN: Yes, it was difficult. I'm not going to say it wasn't because it was. It was difficult. In fact, at one point, I had to come back to Washington. My in-laws were very kind to me. I came and stayed with them for about a month or so, perhaps a little longer, and then I went back. I was not there when Alexander [Kirk] arrived, and we had this famous meeting on the staircase. It was difficult because, in a way, I was perhaps years older than some of the ladies there, and I had had a very interesting life . . . with Doris [Stevens].

Q: It wasn't only with her which was of course preeminent at that time in your mind, I'm sure, but you had led a rather independent existence before that as a student with your uncle, then living in the United States separately and so on, ways that were quite different, I should guess, from the lives of most Foreign Service wives at that time, who married quite young and who grew up, as it were, in the Foreign Service. You had already "grown up" outside the Service.

CHIPMAN: Yes. I was twenty-nine when I married Norris. I think in a way what saved my life in Moscow was the arrival of Avis [Bohlen].

Q: Ah yes. You had not known her before they came?

CHIPMAN: No. Although she was very much younger than I was -- and very much what I would call très jeune fille -- basically we had a lot in common. For one thing, Avis was very well brought up, and you know that that is a big point in getting along with people. Then Kirk came, and he put some enjoyment in our lives -- not only mine. He was amusing, as I told you, and he entertained a lot which kept you busy, and you felt that you had to help him -- which gave you a feeling of responsibility, to which I was accustomed. So I enjoyed it, and I also enjoyed his appreciation. He was very appreciative of what had been done, and he showed it in many ways. You know, he was always giving presents to all of us. One of his favorite things . . . He would say, "Let's go shopping, Théophania," and we'd go in the commissione magazines (shops). He had evidently Russian friends he had left here in the United States, and he bought things for them like icons and some of the silver things like those you see here in this room. Some of them he gave me; others I bought because I thought they were very pretty. [Then] there was much less than there had been previously because foreigners had gone through all these stores and bought up a lot of things.

Q: Your Foreign Service experience actually -- after taking up your position in Paris -- allowed you to look at the Foreign Service in a way that very few other women were able to do. During the time you were at that embassy, where you were for a long time, what

about changes that you saw in the embassy and in Foreign Service later on, say, with the putting into effect of the Wriston Report, which, it appears, brought about an enormous change in both the size of the Foreign Service and, one might guess, in the ages and experiences of the people who came into the Service at that time?

CHIPMAN: Yes. There were a lot of what you might call lateral-entry people who came into the Service -- people like Ridgeway Knight, who I think became an ambassador subsequently. Well I think that some of them were a little bit impatient with the Service. They felt things didn't go quickly enough, particularly in the way of promotions. Those like Norris, and I think also Bohlen, waited five years at one point for a promotion when they entered the Service. They learned to be a bit more patient. It was also, I think, a little tough on the ones who had started at the bottom of the ladder.

Q: Others have certainly said so. There was in fact among those older members of the Service some disenchantment at the inclusion of so many new officers, making the chances of promotion that much more difficult.

CHIPMAN: Yes, I think that's true. I have only gotten that really through Norris. He was not that way. Perhaps he should have been a little more, actually, but he wasn't (laughs). He was interested in his work; particularly when we were in Paris he was doing a very special kind of work, and you had to have had his background to be able to do it.

That's one of the reasons we stayed there so long. Ambassador Caffery wouldn't let him go, and that's the truth of the matter. He had a good bit of power in the State Department in those days. I think Freeman Matthews was the head of the European section, and when he wanted to move Norris, he [Caffery] objected. When he left Paris, we were promptly moved, because obviously a lot of people want to go [there]. Actually, we were delighted to see that it was Crawford who came and took our place. We became very friendly. Norris passed whatever contacts to Bill, and I took care of Barbara and showed her a few of the ropes that would be interesting to a woman -- among other things, where to have a nice hat made.

Q: Did you have any feeling about the effect of the McCarthy period, for example, on the way the Foreign Service conducted itself during and after that period? Others have suggested that that whole period blighted the Service in terms of reporting and so on, in a way that has lasted much longer than has been realized.

CHIPMAN: Well, of course . . . We were in Germany when we felt very affected by McCarthy because he sent [Roy Cohn] to Europe. We were very fond [and I still am, as you know] of the Davies's. Norris had a very great admiration for John as an officer. We were very sad. We were very distressed to see that he was treated the way he was. Very frankly, Norris wanted to resign. I was the one who prevented that. I said, "Look, Norris, it's not going to do John any good. This thing will probably blow over. You are trained to do nothing else. You have to earn a living." I may not have been the major reason why he gave this idea up, but I certainly had my say about it. It affected the Service deeply, that I

know. And of course we felt that we were not sustained at all by our chief in the Department.

Q: Many others have voiced the same feeling.

CHIPMAN: It was all so exaggerated, this whole thing, by McCarthy. I don't say there wasn't a little bit of cleaning up that needed to be done, but not certainly among . . .

Q: Among the major officers, at any rate?

CHIPMAN: Speaking of Germany, our minister there was also under attack. I think he also left the Service. The way they harassed John [Davies] . . . I mean seven loyalty boards he was submitted to. It was disgraceful. Here was a very, very valuable officer, who only saw into the future, as we now know. I have tremendous admiration for Patricia. I don't know that I would have held up the way she did . . . They were made for the Foreign Service. I cannot think of a couple who were better made for the Service. They had all the qualities: they had the looks, the intelligence, they had a certain background, a number of languages, too. After all, John spoke Chinese, a number of dialects. So . . . I'm sure it had a long, lasting effect. How do you want people to feel they can report honestly what they think and do it -- and then are treated that way . . .? I suppose that's what others have told you, too.

Q: You speak about the Davies, using them as an example of a couple particularly suited to the Foreign Service. Surely one would think that you and Norris Chipman yourselves could hardly have been duplicated in terms of your own varieties of experience, of background, of language abilities, of skills with people and so on. Do you feel that the Foreign Service, after the Wriston program, continued to bring into the Service [those] who were as suited as they might have been for diplomatic life?

CHIPMAN: It's very difficult to judge. Perhaps some, yes. But as far as the men were concerned, there was such a training asked from them. It was so difficult at the time they came into the Service to get in . . . It is natural that they should have been disappointed. For the women, I think it was a little bit different.

Q: In what ways do you think so?

CHIPMAN: Well, because we hadn't . . . none of us had gone through this harrowing training. It was just accidental that I was bilingual, my mother being Greek and I was brought up by an English governess. In fact, I was also supposed to learn German . . . if it hadn't been for the war [World War I] . . . in fact we had already engaged one. We had an Irish governess that we adored, Miss Lewis. Of course I had a lot of experience -- with friends my mother and stepfather had, and also through my uncle's. It helped me with Alexander Kirk, for instance.

Q: I would think so. It must have been, whether you realized it or not, whether at the time

or later, of very unusual quality -- your whole background. You had not only the cultural experiences, but the practical experience of having worked with Doris Stevens. That meant that you must have developed certain skills of communication, of meeting strangers, of making points . . .

CHIPMAN: And trying to influence them when necessary.

Q: Exactly. So it was not a passive kind of experience that you brought to the Foreign Service, but a very active one.

CHIPMAN: Yes . . . perhaps. But you know, I never really talked about that, for some reason, with my colleagues.

Q: So? Did you have the feeling that perhaps they wouldn't have appreciated it?

CHIPMAN: I don't know what it was. I think very few people knew that, that I had worked with Doris. Naturally, . . . Avis, and, I suppose eventually Annelise Kennan may have known about this. I didn't so much want the other ones to feel I had done things that they hadn't done. A reticence . . . you know . . .

Q: Well, a natural delicacy of feeling that I would have anticipated you would have. Do you recall any other Foreign Service wives of that time whom you met, whether American or not, who had had the kind of professional experience [you had]?

CHIPMAN: A few. Patricia Davies was a journalist before her marriage. Mme. Beaulieu, the wife of the Canadian ambassador in London, with whom I occasionally painted, was a talented artist. Barbara Foster painted and sculpted very seriously. Mrs. Bonbright was a talented painter. It was at the Bonbrights' dinner table that Caffery told me indirectly how it was that he was made ambassador to Paris. Actually it is what I gathered.

Q: Goodness. How was that?

CHIPMAN: Well, Norris had just had this kidney operation, and he wasn't at this dinner. It was a Christmas affair -- just embassy family. I happened to be seated next to the ambassador. It appears that our army wanted bases in Brazil, and they wanted . . . to do something about it. They wanted to invade and take these bases. And when Caffery [Jefferson Caffery served as U.S. ambassador to Brazil from 1937 to 1944, and as ambassador to France between 1944 and 1949] heard about this, he flew to Washington, and he told Roosevelt, "I'll get you anything you want, but please don't do that. It would be a terrible mistake . . . and a terrible mistake for your Good Neighbor Policy." And he did get [the use of] them. We did have bases in Brazil during the war. I know because my plane stopped, landed in one of them, coming back from Egypt -- everything was hush hush . . . curtains drawn . . . but we did stop, and even changed planes for the U.S. I suppose that in gratitude, Roosevelt, impressed by his ability and wise mind, made him ambassador [to France].

Q: Do you think wealth is important in the Foreign Service?

CHIPMAN: I think it helps.

Q: It never hurt.

CHIPMAN: No. I think it helps. I know that we spent every penny we had -- and some of Mr. Chipman's -- trying to do a good job because of the entertaining . . . it was the entertaining . . . it was just never sufficient, you see. And in a place like Paris, London, Rome . . .

Q: All large posts, and important posts, where you and Norris Chipman served.

CHIPMAN: So . . . I don't know how it is now, but it certainly should be more generous.

Q: Did you know the Hartmans in Paris? . . . Donna and Art Hartman? You were still there, I think, when they came. That must have been toward the end of the time when you were in Paris.

CHIPMAN: I wasn't working any more in the embassy. In fact they were the last ambassadors that asked me to the embassy. After that, I was never invited. I was there at the time of the presentation of Bohlen's portrait (to be hung in the embassy) when Avis came. I was at the dinner, when Mrs. Harriman was there and spoke, and Avis said a few words. I think the Hartman's were charming people, but by then I was out of it, you know. She seemed always like a pleasant and intelligent woman.

Q: When did you stop your work at the embassy in Paris?

CHIPMAN: On my own?

Q: Yes.

CHIPMAN: Norris died in '57, and I started working in '58. I was there almost ten years -- nine-and-a-half -- so it must have been '68. Actually, the ambassador to OECD for whom I was working as protocol officer requested I remain one year longer. It seems personnel was having a hard time finding a replacement. I must admit I found it humorous as no job could be found for me for a whole year after Norris's death. It was only due to Glenn Wolfe's kindness and interest that I was appointed to the Paris embassy as my friends Didi and John Brogan called his attention to my plight.

Note added by Mrs. Chipman, May 27, 1991: Norris Chipman's knowledge of the Parisian scene

Norris, also through my mother, met an old friend of hers, Monsieur Labeyrie. He was then Governor of the Banque de France. He invited us to lunch with him in the stately building of the bank, near the Comédie Française, in the heart of Paris. Needless to add, his position was a very important one. He had a bewildering personality. By then, I believe he was pretty much on the left. He had been “chef de cabinet” of Poincaré and of Caillaux, both of them ex prime ministers. I am sure he expressed interest in meeting Norris as we were en route to Moscow. I am still a great friend of his daughter: Claude Reymond Lépine and her three attractive daughters. While Labeyrie at the end of his life ended up by being communistic, I may add that none of his family have such tendencies, rather the contrary.

Poincaré’s and Caillaux’s political beliefs were quite opposite. Caillaux was on the left. His wife shot Calmette, director of an important Paris daily (possibly Le Figaro) who had published love letters which she and Caillaux had exchanged when they were not married to each other. It created, due to the personalities involved, an enormous scandal. Madame Caillaux was tried but acquitted. Madame Calmette, who as result had a nervous breakdown, came to recuperate in my mother’s clinic. When I happened to be accidentally walking in the clinic’s park (I was a child), I remember seeing this slender, sad silhouette draped in floating, filmy veils. Quite lovely!

While in Paris, we also often saw the André de La Boulayes. He had been France’s ambassador to the United States at the time of our marriage (1935). They included Norris and myself in an official but very agreeable luncheon as a compliment to our engagement, and subsequently attended our wedding. I was rather flattered when Madame de La Boulaye inquired from the State Department who Norris was. In fact, when I kidded her about this, she answered: “Well, you are a French girl, and as such, you are under our protection. We feel that in their absence we should take the place of your parents.” It was rather complimentary, and I was touched she had bothered.

We had equally a very friendly relationship with the Guy La Chambre. He had been Ministère de l’Air before World War II, and in fact, ran into trouble and went to the US. However, he returned and he was able to justify himself, and this was soon cleared up. He was from an excellent French family. His wife had been a well known actress, Cora Laparcerie. She was an elegant, experienced and charming hostess. He was, when we knew them, the mayor of St. Malo in Brittany, and they had a wonderful, historic home on the “ramparts” (walls) of that ancient city. Their home in Paris was equally agreeable, a hotel particularly close to the Place des États Unis. Their entertaining was superb, and the company amusing, lively and as usual mixed, belonging to the various spheres of society.

Narrator’s note: On page 57, John Fitzgerald Kennedy should be added to the list of prominent people who visited Moscow while we were stationed there. His father sent him

on a tour of capitals when he graduated from Harvard. The dacha group, the Bohlen, Frank Hayne, Norris and I did most of the entertaining as he was really a youngster. (Probably why I forgot to add him to the original list of prominent visitors). We were all very much taken with him, due to his youth, friendliness, quickness of mind and his undeniable charm. I remarked about this at the time to Norris, because being ourselves very different personalities [in the dacha group], it was surprising how unanimous we were about JFK. I have just seen Oliver Stone's remarkable film "JFK", which refreshed my memory.

From a private correspondence 3/11/92: As I was rereading passages of "The Wise Men" by Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, I came upon the name of Heywood Broun, the husband of Ruth Hale, Doris' (Stevens) dear friend. I really think I should mention his name as he was not only a prominent newspaper man but he was involved in forming the American Newspaper Guild and in other union activities. He was one of the celebrated guests at the famous Thanksgiving 5-day parties given by Marie and Averell Harriman and organized by Alexander Woollcott. In view of Broun's notoriety, I feel I should mention his name. I was several times with Doris and Johnaton a guest at the Broun's Westchester home when they had parties. They loved to swim naked in a pool (a natural one) which, in my opinion, was far from clean and in which I refused to enter. Furthermore, including themselves, most of their guests were no longer very young and I, who was accustomed to draw and paint from beautiful models, did not think it was a particularly enjoyable sight.

BIOGRAPHIC DATA

Spouse: Norris B. Chipman, 1901-1957 (Born, Washington, DC)

Spouse Entered Service: 1928	Left Service: 1957
You Entered Service: 1935	Left Service: 1968

Posts:

Norris Chipman, before marriage

1928	Washington, DC
1929	Riga, Latvia
1930/33	Paris, France
1933/34	Riga, Latvia

Norris and Fanny Chipman

1935-36	Washington, DC
1936/39	Moscow, USSR
1940/42	Cairo, Egypt
1940	TDY Kingston, Ontario, Canada

1943/44 Washington, DC, Department of State
1944-50 Paris, France
1950/52 Rome, Italy
1952/54 Bonn, Germany
1954/56 London, UK
1956/57 Belgrade, Yugoslavia

From 1958 to 1968, Fanny Chipman served in the US Embassy in Paris as Receptionist, Assistant Librarian and as Protocol Officer at OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development).

Status: Widow of FSO

Date/place of birth: 1905, Asnières, France

Maiden Name: Bunand-Sevastos

Parents:

Antonin Bunand
Anthippe Sevastos

Education: Lycée de St. Cloud; Lycée de Versailles; Antoine Bourdelle, private studies, 1924-27 and Le Vésinet, summer 1928; Baltimore Art Institute, 1943-44, studied with Professor Jacques Maroger, painter and head of Restoration Department, Musée du Louvre -- expert on varnishes and oils used by Flemish and Italian painters -- who was temporarily in the United States during World War II

Date/place of marriage: June 1935, Washington, DC

Children:

Claudette

Profession: Artist, Feminist

Positions held in Washington and at post: Worked as assistant to Chairman Doris Stevens and as Executive Secretary to the Inter-American Commission of Women; member of official delegation from Haiti to Inter-American Commission of Women at Inter-American Conference, Montevideo, 1933

End of interview