

Foreign Service Family Oral History Archives Underway

The Foreign Service Family Oral History Archives were established earlier this year with a grant from the Association for Diplomatic Studies (ADS). The Archives library, a collection of interviews taped with family members of the foreign affairs agency community, currently contains a number of tapes available to researchers, historians, AAFSW members, or to anyone interested in reminiscences of "how the Service was."

After previewing the initial Archives tapes, Donald Ritchie, Associate Historian of the Senate, proclaimed them "a genuine historical resource and just plain good listening." Former Ambassador Richard B. Parker, President of the Association for Diplomatic Studies, arranged the ADS grant to launch the Archives.

When asked about her activities during the 444 days of the Iranian hostage crisis, Penne Laingen taped a two-hour interview with Archives Coordinator, Jewell Fenzi. Peggy Morgan, in Washington for a few days from Gainesville, Florida, found time to discuss her Foreign Service experi-

ences dating from the 1940's. An interview with Naomi Mathews recounts her voyage across the Atlantic in a convoy to join her husband in Kabul during World War II.

Frances Dixon preserves, for the first time on tape, the memories of her friendship with Woolworth heiress, Barbara Hutton, during a tour in Tangier, Morocco. FS offspring, Alexa Burdick, interview by her mother, Pamela, gave a firm opinion about boarding schools.

Craig Tymeson taped an interview on being a Single in today's Service; Sheila Switzer's tape was a narration on Foreign Born Spouse concerns. Both interviews were recorded as resource tapes for the Overseas Briefing Center. The current goal of the Archives is a library of 200 or more taped interviews.

AAFSW members interested in participating in the Archives project as interviewers, narrators, transcribers or as committee members, please call Jewell Fenzi, Coordinator, 387-4024, or Hope Meyers, Archives Liaison with AAFSW, 965-2285.

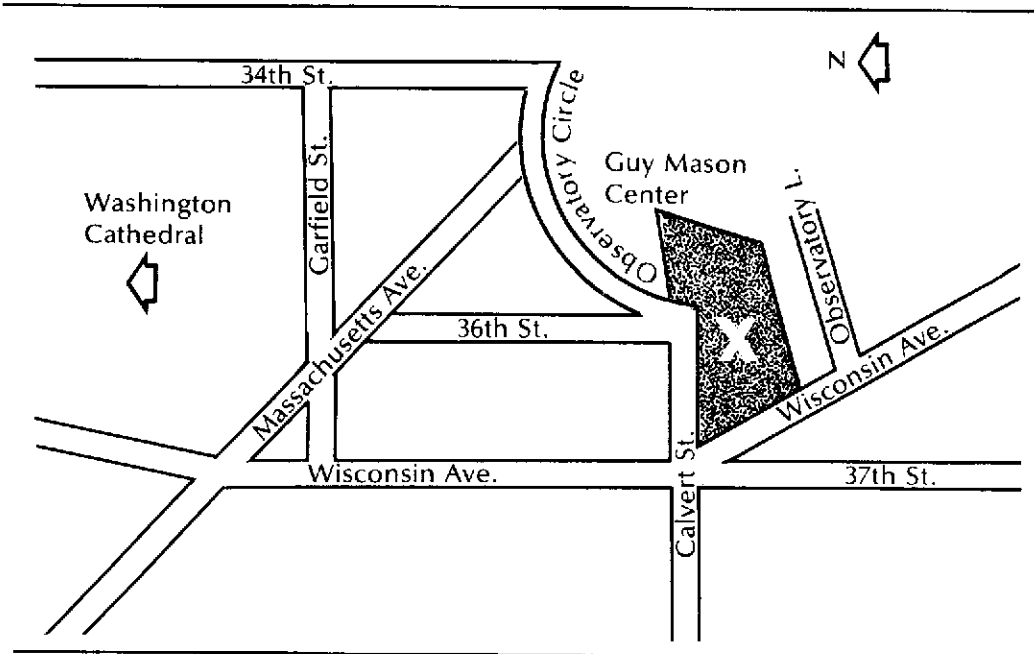
What is Oral History?

The way of life which characterized an earlier Foreign Service may be disappearing, but there are many of us who remember it vividly. We have a wealth of memories and scores of entertaining tales to tell. Few of these colorful experiences will be preserved in writing, to the profound regret of social historians. (A retired Ambassador documenting his career achievements is unlikely to mention the evening his wife danced with a prince!)

Oral history is not the recording of Fourth of July speeches. The interviews deal with day-to-day personal experience and are intended to inform and delight a wide variety of future researchers.

A group of foreign affairs agency members are now finding time to preserve these memories on tape. The recorded interviews are a valuable supplement to traditional historical sources, and they provide a sense of immediacy that goes beyond the written word.

From the FS Family Oral History Archives Interview Kit



Map to the November 22nd FORUM Meeting at the Guy Mason Center. Please note that the entrance to the Center on Calvert St. has a Detour Sign — disregard and proceed the short distance to the parking area on the right.

And Now for the Rest of the Story

In the September AAFSW NEWS we published another Alumnae Update from Betty Hazelton. In the Update, Betty talked about the very interesting FS career of Ambassador and Mrs. Parker T. Hart. Mrs. Hart's first name is Jane.

Also in that issue, DACOR was referred to incorrectly as the FS Retirement House. DACOR, which is located at 1801 F Street is a meeting place for FS Retirees and also for those currently employed in the FS.

See you at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, November 22.