

An Oral History Interview

with

ELMA UDALL (part 8)

conducted by
Julie Ferdon

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Elma Udall Biography

The second of six children, Elma Udall was born on Dec. 23, 1917, in St. Johns, Arizona. She attended Flagstaff Teacher's College and Brigham Young University, eventually graduating from Arizona State University with a degree in social work.

During World War II she signed up for the Red Cross and served in Africa and the Middle East. Following the war and a brief stint with the FBI, she joined the newly formed CIA and worked in London and Helsinki. She later worked for the Department of State in Moscow, Berlin, Stockholm, Vientiane, and Budapest. She ended her career working directly with Ambassador Kingman Brewster at the Court of St. James in London.

JF: Okay, you were telling us about the coronation.

EU: Well, we watched the procession out the window, and it was fascinating. It was raining like crazy the whole day, but Churchill had the window down, sticking his head out.

JF: Did you see him?

EU: Oh, sure. Putting up his “V” sign. Everybody went by—the royal coach with the queen inside. We had a beautiful view of it.

JF: You must have seen some amazing people while you were there. John Foster Dulles was secretary of state at the time?

EU: No, he wasn't.

JF: I guess it was after him. But did you get to meet people like that?

EU: No. I wasn't on that level.

JF: How about embassy parties?

EU: Well, we had our own group, and we had our own parties. The embassy in London is so big, and the diplomatic corps is so big, that on that level we don't get involved at all. Winfield House was given by Barbara Hutton to the embassy, the state department, for the ambassador's residence, but he hadn't moved in yet. It'd been a club during the war for the air force officers, so we had that, used to go out there a lot. And there was so much to do around London, and going out in the countryside.

JF: That's what I wondered—what did you do for entertainment?

EU: Well, the theater, my God, you never could catch up with it. There was everything. And concerts and the whole bit. But it was not difficult to get to the countryside because there were not too many cars. So we'd plan our weekends and holidays and off we'd go.

JF: Was it you and any particular person—a roommate or....

EU: Oh, several of us. We worked in bunches. We were all fascinated with being there, and there were always so many things to do.

JF: Is this when you began your genealogical research, in England, was during this time that you were there?

EU: Yes.

JF: I think I asked you where you lived. Yes, I did, we talked about the flat you lived in, in London. This may seem like a bizarre question, but I read the other day that Gloria Steinem worked for the CIA, full-time, in the fifties.

EU: Really? News to me.

JF: You never ran across her, did you?

EU: Heavens no!

JF: It was certainly news to me! (laughter)

EU: She wasn't in the London crowd, I'll tell ya'.

JF: It was certainly news to me. Did you ever get homesick?

EU: No.

JF: And you, I assume, just continued the correspondence with your family?

EU: Oh, sure. Well, not then, but eventually you got to where you could telephone, prices went down and so on. I had lots of company, I loved visitors, too. My mom and dad came over at one point, on a tour, while I was there.

JF: Did you take them around?

EU: Well, they were part of a tour, but yes, around London. I took them down to Kent to see their relatives.

JF: You must have been—it just doesn't seem to me like there were too many women—as you said, your choice seemed to be nursing or teaching. And I would think that to have a daughter or a sister overseas, working for State, or for CIA, would be rather different. (laughter)

EU: Well, I mean, maybe for one particular group, or small town, but as I say, there were dozens and dozens of us. There were plenty of places where we were needed, so there we were. Of course we never said we worked for CIA—we always said we worked for the state department.

JF: Did that prevent you at all from getting to know people from England?

EU: No, because I had all my contacts anyway.

JF: Oh, that's true, you did anyway. While you were in England, Stewart and Morris both decided to run for the same congressional seat in Arizona. Mo was county attorney in '52, and Stewart was with the Amphitheater School Board.

EU: Well, he was practicing law.

JF: And practicing law. Well, they were partners together, at the same time, too.

EU: Yes.

JF: And I've heard that your father sort of had to step in.

EU: Stewart was going to go. Morris would like to have, and I think he thought his chances and all were just as good as Stewart's, but it never got to the boiling point. I think they did come up and talk to Dad. They wrote, or Mom or someone wrote and told me that Stewart was going to run for Congress. I don't think it was—I think Morris wanted to very much. Well, he tells about it in his book. I mean, here he was not going to get to do it, and was disappointed. And then in 1960, when Stewart is appointed to the cabinet, why then it's Morris' turn, and there he is. And thirty years later, he's still there.

JF: It certainly worked out the way it was meant to.

EU: Exactly.

JF: In 1956 you transferred back to D.C.?

EU: I came back to the States. That was the end of my tour—I'd been over there for five years.

JF: It was a five year tour?

EU: It was supposed to be two and two, but I came home at the end of five years. For several reasons, I was ready to get out. So I came home and got out, and I worked on the Hill. Stewart was on the Hill then—he was a congressman. But I couldn't work for him.

JF: Who did you work for?

EU: I worked for the Ways and Means Committee. I enjoyed it up there, I learned a lot, but the wanderlust was always with me.

JF: Where do you think you got that wanderlust from?

EU: Well, I don't know. Even in St. Johns, if Dad was going somewhere, I went. I just liked to see the world. I never felt I had to apologize or anything. I just liked it. And the more you get....

JF: It sounds like David [Udall] had some of that going, too.

EU: Well, if you look at it from afar, it seems a very kind of daring thing to do, but once you're in it, there's a system, and it's really quite simple. So then I decided, okay, I want to go again. So I talked to them, and they sent me to Helsinki.

JF: And this was still for the CIA?

EU: Yes. But I was there for eighteen months, and we lost the judge, in 1960.

JF: When you went to Helsinki, initially, your father was fine at that point?

EU: Sure.

JF: Helsinki would have been a pretty exciting place to be assigned right then, in the sense that it was in the middle of the cold war, basically, and Helsinki's right on the Russian border, and Russians were defecting a lot at that point, weren't they?

EU: Well, not that I knew of. Coming through Finland, they may have pulled them out and taken them somewhere, but we didn't get involved in any of that. But Helsinki, the Finns let you know that—they didn't get any foreign aid, they weren't entitled to any foreign aid.

JF: Why was that?

EU: Because they let the Germans through.

JF: Oh, through their land.

EU: Yes.

JF: So they let you know that?

EU: Well, I mean, what I'm saying is, because they got no foreign aid, they were on their own, so they did a lot—all the cars in Helsinki were Russian. They did a lot of trade with Russia. But I liked the Finns, a lot of them spoke English. They had wonderful opera and concerts and all that sort of thing.

JF: What was Helsinki like?

EU: Cold! (chuckles) It's a beautiful port, it's very—see, it had belonged to Sweden. Most of the signs were in both Swedish and Finnish. It belonged to Sweden for 400 years or something. And then it belonged to Russia for a hundred years. So the city was kind of—it had some Russian—there's a Russian church, and had some Russian touches to it. It's a beautiful port, but in the winter, of course, it was frozen solid. They cleaned the streets, get all the snow off the streets, put it in a truck, drive it out onto the inlet, and

dump it. In the spring, it'd all go out. But the ice was so thick that they could just, you know, drive the trucks out there and dump it. The summers were marvelous. We flew up to the Arctic Circle. Rovaniemi is the longest day of the year. Landed 11:30 [p.m.], the sun was out, the women were gardening, and the kids were riding bicycles and it was midnight—so what. So it's fascinating from that standpoint, because the winter days were so short, and in the summer we had eighteen hours of daylight for two months. They never turned the street lights on.

JF: We had, about two years ago, a foreign student living with us from Finland—six-foot-five high school student, who truly became my son. Just adored him. And he is now going to college on the Arctic Circle, because he and his mother decided he'd concentrate better there.

EU: That was clever! (laughter) But they handled all the cold and everything very well.

JF: Actually, he loved Tucson in midsummer.

EU: Well, I can understand that.

JF: And he's coming back again, midsummer.

EU: Oh, good.

JF: Where did you live while in Helsinki?

EU: Well, the embassy, there was an apartment building that they took over, and we all lived in that. It was nice, because it was just about a three-minute walk to the embassy, so you didn't have to plow through the snow to get to work or anything.

Dad, the judge, died on Memorial Day in 1960. Stewart called me.

JF: What were the circumstances of that? He was up in Wickenburg?

EU: It was a holiday, Memorial Day, and they'd gone on a picnic with Inez and her kids and her husband. They were near Wickenburg on the Hassayampa River, having a picnic and stuff. He just dropped.

JF: That was it?

EU: Well, they finally got help and took him into the hospital in Wickenburg, but he died shortly. It was a stroke.

JF: It had to have been a tremendous shock.

EU: It was.

JF: Was he in his fifties then?

EU: He was sixty-nine.

JF: But otherwise in great health?

EU: Well, yes. I mean, he was overweight, and he'd had a slight, I guess, probably a slight stroke earlier-on, but in those days they thought it was probably indigestion, and nothing else happened. They didn't go to doctors very often. It wasn't like it is now where you have physicals all the time.

JF: So was he even aware that he had a stroke before?

EU: Not 'til later. I mean, it was several months before, and I guess they finally decided that's what it was. It was a terrible shock.

JF: And that was Memorial Day 1960, so Kennedy had not been elected yet?

EU: He was running. Stewart was involved.

JF: So he didn't live to see his son become a cabinet officer?

EU: No. For several months I didn't do anything, and then Calvin [Udall] called me. I went to work for their law firm, Fennimore Craig.

JF: Were you able to come back for the funeral?

EU: Oh, I left immediately. It was the thirtieth of May, the first of June. Jets were just coming in. I was on a prop plane—Helsinki, Copenhagen, Gander, crossed over Canada, I don't know. I thought I'd never get there. And when I got there, they met me at the airport and took me to the capitol, where my father was lying in state.

JF: He was already lying in state when you arrived?

EU: Yes.

JF: Do you have any idea how long it took you?

EU: Two days. Stewart called me Tuesday morning, because the embassy was closed—you know the time difference. I was on a plane that afternoon. Everybody just took over, they made all the arrangements, they packed me, and everything else. I mean, you're each other's family, all of you, when you're at a place like that.

JF: Oh, sure, in that kind of environment.

EU: And we were a small group. And by Wednesday afternoon, I got home, I guess. And the funeral was on Thursday, I think.

JF: Was he chief justice at the time?

EU: I think so. You know, they rotated every two years.

JF: Because I would imagine lying in state in the capitol was quite an honor.

EU: It was, without a doubt.

JF: And he was buried in Phoenix, correct?

EU: Yes.

JF: Why Phoenix instead of St. Johns?

EU: Well, we talked about it. It was so sudden. Mother was in no condition to make decisions. See, they'd been down there for thirteen years.

JF: Oh, they had, already?

EU: He'd been on the court for thirteen years. And she said had it happened earlier, they would have thought of going back, but at this point, it was just easier.

JF: And much of their family was probably....

EU: Well, we'd all gone, there was nobody.

JF: So you, I assume, immediately moved in with your mother.

EU: Oh, yes, I stayed there with her. We spent the summer, we drove back to Washington, and I resigned, and we visited Eloise, and we crossed the country, stopping wherever we wanted.

JF: You drove back to Washington, you say?

EU: Mother and I drove to Washington. Well, Eloise had come out for the funeral. We drove her back. We were gone about a month.

JF: And Eloise was in Washington, then?

EU: She was in Richmond, Virginia. They lived there for thirty years. He was with Reynolds Metals.

JF: Okay. So that was probably a really good thing to do for her, is get her back there, see her kids.

EU: Anything. We just wandered. It was terrible for her. And it was hot, it was summer, so we finally came back. The boys said when you're ready to get a job, let us know, and we'll look into the field. Before that happened, Calvin called me and said, "Why don't you come to work? I need...." At first it was just temporary, but then I stayed on.

JF: And that was Fennimore Craig?

EU: Yes.

JF: Did you work there full time?

EU: Oh yes.

JF: And what did your mother do then?

EU: Well, she—it was pretty awful. Her days were okay. She filled those, because she always had. At night, he came home. Well, I came home. So that helped. We went to see the Indians, we traveled, we went to Tucson, we went all over. So then after—that was in '62, I guess. I was doing all right. I had a lot of friends. I liked Fennimore Craig.

I'll make this short, after the judge died, and we had the convention and Kennedy was nominated, and then in December he appointed Stewart to the cabinet. And so for Christmas, the boys gave Mother a ticket to go back to the inauguration. I told Fennimore Craig, "Put me on leave without pay, 'cause I'm goin'." And they said, "No, we think very highly of your family and all, and we're proud to have you go, so go." So I went for about ten days. Mrs. Webb, Lee's mother, we all went back, and had tickets to the inauguration and all that.

JF: Were you all surprised when he got the appointment? Was that something you saw coming?

EU: Well, he had been active in Kennedy's campaign, they knew each other, they'd been on the same committee, working together. In a way, he was a natural for it. And I don't know how much indication he may have had, but he called Mother from the airport in Phoenix and said, "I'm on my way to Washington, and have an appointment to see Jack Kennedy. I'll let you know how it comes out." He was going to see him the next day, I think, but something happened that Kennedy was in New York, so it got delayed a day, or Stewart had to go up there, or something. But then it was announced that Stewart had been appointed Secretary of Interior. And it was all across the headlines of the Phoenix newspaper. And they didn't like him anyway, but there it was.

JF: Why didn't they like—oh, they didn't like Kennedy?

EU: No, they didn't like Stewart—they never liked Stewart. He was a liberal. But anyway, the newspaper came out to interview Mother. Our picture was on the front page. They said, "Oh, well, now this is so exciting, the first time an Arizonan's ever been a member of the cabinet," etc., etc. "What were you doing when you found out today that..." She said, "We've known for three days." And they said, "How could you keep a secret like that?" She said, "Levi Udall taught us to keep a secret."

Anyway, we went back. Stewart had gotten acquainted with Robert Frost. He had been the poet laureate—or whatever—in residence.

JF: How had they gotten acquainted?

EU: I'll tell you: he was the poet of the Library of Congress for the year. And usually they had—he'd do a reading for the Congress. It was kind of a traditional thing they did. So it was all arranged, he was going to do it, and the Congress was invited. But it was one of those nights when they got going on the appropriation bills and went on 'til ten o'clock, and stood him up, they didn't go. And anyway, I think he was a little miffed, but Stewart called him out of nowhere and said, "I'm sorry, I was looking forward to it. Will you give us another chance? I'm going to have some of my friends out to the house, and would you come?" And so he came. So they got to be real good friends. He visited him in Tucson. It was Stewart's suggestion to have him on the inauguration. So when we got there, Stewart said, "Robert Frost didn't want to stay in a hotel, but Mrs. Mahoney, who owns the Francis Scott Key house at the end of the Key Bridge is letting him stay there, and I volunteered you to take care of him." I said, "Well, that proves that politics makes strange bedfellows." So anyway....

It was very exciting and very hectic. We went from one reception to another, and this and that and the other. Robert had his own entourage, but we would go. I spent the night there and fixed him breakfast, and we'd visit. The morning of the inauguration, of course it snowed and all that. We were talking, and he said, "Of course I wouldn't be here if it weren't for Stewart." And then he wanted to be sure he looked good, and I pushed his hair down, and we visited. And then we went up to the Hill. Stewart still had his office, so we went in there, but he had to go off to meetings and stuff. Robert pulled this ratty piece of paper out of his pocket and said, "Can I get this retyped?," to Stewart, and Stewart handed it to me. So everybody was milling around. I moved them off the typewriters, and I put in two copies, one for me and one for Stewart.

JF: Good for you!

EU: Of course the Hill [Capital Hill] was using blue type, but I triple-spaced it and I made it real pretty and took it in to him. "Oh yeah, that's fine." I saw Stewart, he took the original and put it in his pocket. I think he finally had to cough it up. So we go over—well, you saw it—it was high noon, and eighty-two-year-old eyes and the blue type and bright sun—he couldn't read it. And he told me that morning, "This is the first time I have ever written a poem for an occasion. Usually I get an idea and I mull it

around for about a week, and it kind of falls into place.” But he was still working on this one. And what it was, was a preface to *The Gift Outright*, dedicating it to this Augustine age of poetry and power, to the new administration. And, as you know, he stood up and started to read, and couldn’t get through. Lyndon Johnson stood up with his top hat and tried to shade the podium, and that didn’t help much. And finally Robert just said, “I can’t.” And then he launched into *The Gift Outright*. You know, “the land was ours before we were...” etc., etc. And oh, he felt terrible, he’d ruined the whole thing. Anyway, Stewart finally said, “You know, Robert, after all the swipes you’ve taken at the elements in your poems, I think they finally got even with you.” So Robert kind of cheered up.

Anyway, so then I stayed on until the fall of ’62 with Mother, and then the boys, my sisters, everybody said, “She’s going to be okay, so go on.” And she said, “Go on.” So I went back to Washington.

JF: Had she already started her book then?

EU: Well, that was the one thing that helped. Yes, whenever she had lunch with Helen, she’d write all this down. And I was taking a lot of it down to the office when I had a spare minute, and typing it for her. In the middle of the night, if she couldn’t sleep, she’d get the box out from under the bed and work on it. And it was the one thing that she could concentrate on for quite a while [to] take her mind off other things. So yes, that’s when she really started putting it together. They just wanted to write the story for Helen’s children, to begin with. They had no idea of doing a book.

JF: So you returned to Capitol Hill in ’63?

EU: Yes, I worked for George McGovern.

JF: Why George McGovern?

EU: He was a friend of Stewart’s.

JF: Okay, so Stewart recommended you or suggested you?

EU: Well, some friend of McGovern’s was going to work in Interior for Stewart, so anyway.

JF: What did you think of McGovern?

EU: He was a good boss. He’d been around a long time, and he was a good senator. I wasn’t quite sure—well, I won’t say that. I hadn’t worked on the Senate side before, and it was different from the House side, but all very interesting. I never got very close to him. I mean, there was quite a staff, and I was part of it, but we all respected him and believed in what he was doing. He’d been a congressman when Stewart was a congressman—they knew each other very well.

JF: Did you work in his senatorial office or for one of his committees?

EU: No, the senatorial office.

JF: That was during the civil rights era, wasn't it, with the march on Washington?

EU: No, I wasn't there, that was after. This was when Kennedy was killed.

JF: Oh, you were with McGovern when Kennedy was killed. How was that?

EU: Well, Stewart and Lee—there were five members of the cabinet on their way to Japan for a meeting. I was staying in McLean with the children. They had Margaret who came and spent the day out there, but I would go out at night and spend the night, take care of the kids and get them up in the morning, and then Margaret would come. Harold was the driver, and he'd bring Margaret, and then he'd take me. With Stewart gone, Harold didn't have much to do. So we all came back from lunch, and the television was on, and there it was. You couldn't believe it. We just sat mesmerized, like everybody else, for an hour or so while they kept doing things over and over and over. And finally it hit me, those kids are going to be coming home, they'll let school out, and I'd better get there. So I called Harold, and he came and got me, and we both cried all the way out, and he came in the house with me. He was wonderful. He'd been the driver for Ickes. He came in the house with me to kind of explain things to the kids. We just all kind of sat there—Tom and all of them—all evening. We were all piled on the couch.

JF: Tom would have been what, high school then?

EU: Yes, I think he was.

JF: Had you met Kennedy?

EU: At the inauguration. We went to the White House when the cabinet was sworn in. I went down the line with them. See, they line up according to the age of the cabinet. So it was five and five, and Stewart's next to Kennedy, because Interior's the fifth cabinet [post to be established]. So anyway, he said, "Jack, I want you to meet my sister, Elma," and those blue eyes looked at me and he said "It's a pleasure to meet you Elma. And this is my wife, Jackie." And then there was Adlai Stevenson, they made him a member of the cabinet. And I floated out of the room. Stewart said that was the last time he called him Jack. He's "Mr. President," to everybody.

JF: Interesting. Well, there are certain protocols, I guess. Was he more so than other presidents about that, do you think?

EU: Oh, no, I think it's traditional.

JF: It's probably been a different thing for you and for Tom and everyone there, thinking, "How does this affect Stewart, and Stewart's job?"

EU: Well, I think, to begin with, everybody was so sort of shattered, that nobody wanted to think about anything. It wasn't 'til after the funeral. Stewart took the boys to the funeral, but I watched it on television. Well, I was still in the city, I didn't go out to their house—they were home.

I guess maybe I stayed on maybe 'til the spring—I can't remember. Then I decided, "Okay, I'm goin'." So the agency might have taken me back, but I went to the state department and applied, and they took me, and I worked there for several months.

JF: Why did you do the state department instead of the CIA?

EU: Well, it's different. They had different places to work.

JF: Different countries, you mean?

EU: Yes. I mean, in each country it's different, depending on what the problems are—where the state department's pretty regular, you know what's coming with all of those. And when you apply, of course you don't have a choice. But anyway, they.... And I had gotten kind of tired of being undercover, where you had to make up your story and this, that, and the other.

JF: I can imagine that would get a little old.

EU: Yes. And so anyway, I worked in the state department. It was when Greece and Turkey were having their trouble over Cypress. I worked in that section for quite a while.

JF: So you were in Washington, working for the state department?

EU: Well, I worked in the state department for about six months or something. And I knew the personnel gal, and I told her, "Okay, I'm ready to go." And she pulled out all the stops, and she said, "The best job for you is to go to work for the political counselor in Moscow." I said, "You gotta be kidding!"

JF: Whoa!

EU: She said, "No, with all the jobs coming up, that's the best one for you." So I kind of gulped and thought, "Well, why not?" A lot of my CIA friends thought I'd gone around the bend, but I carried in my passport, "The person to be notified in case of emergency is Stewart Udall, secretary of Interior." So I thought that might help things a little. (laughter) So I went. And I was there—the girls do eighteen months and out. Or you could do one year there, and one year in western Europe, and then home leave. We were busy, believe me. And it was cold, in more ways than one. This was '65.

JF: When you say “cold in more ways than one,” obviously weather, but cold war....

EU: With the relations with the Russians, yes.

JF: What was Moscow like?

EU: It's unlike anything else. It's quite a city. It's got a great underground, so you can get around. They've got great big wide streets, but they were kind of out of balance, because there were more trucks and buses than there were cars—especially in the winter—everybody put their car up on blocks and covered it up. But we worked awful hard.

JF: Was it difficult being an American in Russia?

EU: Well, if you behaved yourself, if you didn't try to take pictures and things you shouldn't do, they left you alone. If you got one inch off the straight and narrow, beware. And so we behaved ourselves. But it was fascinating. The Bolshoi, the ballet, the opera—everything was magnificent. There was a section in the embassy called UPDK, which worked with the Russian government. If we wanted tickets to London, we wanted our shoes fixed, we wanted tickets to the ballet, we had to go through them. We didn't speak the language, we didn't know where the shops were. So you never knew. You could put in for tickets, but you never knew until two o'clock, when the driver came back, whether you were going that night or not. So it was always very exciting. When you got in there, it was another world. It was beautiful. The music, the theater. You forgot the whole thing.

JF: You've had amazing arts experiences.

EU: Shakespeare and the ballet—I've seen the best. So we were determined to see as much as we possibly could. We'd go to museums. We didn't have cars, but on off days we could take an embassy car and driver. We weren't followed by the KGB, because they were our drivers.

JF: They were your drivers? (laughter)

EU: And they didn't speak English—ha, ha. But anyway, we went out to Peredelkino, which is the artists' village where Pasternak—I made a pilgrimage to his grave. He was the same age as my father, he died the same month. We went to Leningrad. They encouraged us to travel.

JF: But did they also warn you about things like English-speaking drivers?

EU: Oh, sure. We were well versed on all that. I mean, you may not know much when you get there, but there's other people who've been there ahead of you, so you learn.

They had a nice system. The couriers came in twice a week—flew in—with classified material, and we'd have to have the pouch ready to go out with them. And those days were hell. But regular mail and unclassified stuff, they arranged it so that two employees from Moscow, with diplomatic passports, you took the mail out on the train, eighteen hours to Helsinki. You had a compartment, and the letters, the main bags, were in there with you. The packages and stuff were somewhere else. So you got this trip out, and then you had two days in Helsinki, and then you brought the mail back. So we each got a turn at that.

JF: You got two days to play?

EU: Yes. And I'd been in Moscow before, so we went to saunas, etc. But the thing that really got to you, you had to use manual typewriters, because they could read the impulse [i.e., of electronic typewriters]. IBM said, "Well, why didn't you tell us?" I mean, they had a building—our whole place was bugged. So you had a typewriter at your desk which you could use for ordinary stuff. There were two rooms upstairs where they had built a room within a room, with glass brick. So there was one room where you'd go to take dictation, and the other where the typewriters were. But even there, you didn't have electric. And I'm tellin' ya', all that typing on those manual typewriters....

JF: Makes for sore fingers.

EU: Well, and your back. That got pretty tiresome, especially on pouch day. But, you know, we were bugged all the time. Finally, the Seabees came in, and one room, they took out the whole wall to see where the bugs were. See, they bugged it as the building was built. So you knew all that. It worked both ways, because if you were mad about something, you could explode. Yet otherwise, we went for a walk, because we wanted to talk.

But we got around, we went to Leningrad, we went to Tallinn, we went down to Peredelkino. We went down to Tolstoy's estate. And then another girl and I went to Siberia.

JF: Wow. What was that like?

EU: It was spring. We had one of the officers who spoke excellent Russian, and he was kind of the travel advisor. We went to Irkutsk, which is kind of the center of Siberia, on Lake Baikal. We flew on Aeroflot. We spent several days there, and it was fascinating. It was May, and so it was getting warm. And you know how lots of people have double glazing, double windows—they had triple. And they had moss and plaster going around each crack. It gets down to sixty below [-60° F.].

JF: Sixty below! That's not wind chill.

EU: And we were up near the Arctic Circle. And we stopped in Irkutsk. We didn't have to have the guides—whatever their tourist people are, in-tourist [?]-we could go on our

own. But once we got where we were going, they picked us up, we had to deal with them. Well, you couldn't go on your own without language, to get transportation and stuff. And we went down to Lake Baikal and all sorts of places. And then we went to Yakutsk, which is under the Arctic Circle, further east than Peking [i.e., Beijing], and they looked like Eskimos.

JF: Did you go by....

EU: We flew.

JF: That's right.

EU: Some of the people went on the train to Vladivostok, but we decided we didn't want to take that. It takes a week to get out there, and a week to get back. And if it's bad weather, you don't see much, the windows are so dirty you don't even get to see anything. So anyway, we flew.

JF: It was still—I imagine that you could only see what they wanted you to see.

EU: Yes. But when we got to Yakutsk they assigned us a lovely lady. She had been teaching English for ten years in the schools, and had never talked to an American. She had an English accent, but she'd never talked to an English-speaking person, 'til we showed up. And so she was wonderful, we loved her. And she took us all over. She said, "The museum is closed today, but I called the mayor and he said, 'Open it up for the ladies.'" So we went to the museum.

JF: I'll bet you were a treat for her, too.

EU: Oh, yes. In fact, I took the suit off my back at the end and gave it to her. It was old anyway. But anyway, we went down into a permafrost shaft, all sorts of things. We had a great time out there.

JF: Permafrost shaft? Down into the permafrost?

EU: Well, they had cut this shaft so that you can see how the permafrost is. They do research out there. They say we don't do much with America, but they do with Canada and places like that. Anyway, we had a great time out there.

JF: In places like Russia, Finland, were you able to keep up with the Church at all?

EU: Well, I told you, in....

JF: In the Middle East?

EU: Yes.

JF: And London.

EU: Oh, sure. I even taught Sunday school for a while there. In Moscow there was one girl. She was a nanny. She was Australian or something, I think. She was Mormon. I never met anybody else. In Berlin, they had quite a bit, but it was all in German—I didn't go too much.

JF: Did you ever run into missionaries?

EU: In Helsinki. The Finns all had a sauna on Saturday night so they could come and have dinner with me. But anyway.... All right, I've got to get myself out of Russia and move on. So I said, "Okay, a year's enough, I want out." So they sent me to Berlin. And most of the people in Berlin had come from the West. Here I am, 110 miles inside the iron curtain. Well, hell, I came from the east! Berlin was the best, brightest, gayest city I'd seen in a long time! So it didn't bother me. So I was there for a year, and Berlin was very exciting.

JF: This is West Berlin?

EU: Yes. See, the embassy was in Bonn, but there was a mission in West [Berlin].

JF: That was a pretty major time in Berlin, wasn't it?

EU: Yes, it was.

JF: Reformation of Germany.

EU: Well, we weren't quite into that, but it was—the East and the West were pulling back and forth, pretty much there.

JF: Was anybody allowed to go on the other side of the iron curtain?

EU: We had diplomatic passports, so we could go through Checkpoint Charlie, we'd show them through the window, and they had to let us in, in a military car.

JF: What an experience! How did you find the difference?

EU: It was almost as though they were each going this way. They kind of turned their backs on each other. But it was still pretty banged up over there, and the shops were pretty, you know, scroungy stuff in them. One of the gals in Berlin, her job was publication procurement, mostly books. She'd get requests from Washington for all sorts of things, from the east. I went with her a time or two, and we'd go over to the bookstores over there, and she'd buy all the stuff. She spoke very good German. So I'd only been there about a week, and she invited me to go. Then we had lunch over there. The opera over there was fantastic.

JF: Oh, was it really?