

DP-33

MARIANNE DUNAT BAIN

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FRANCE (BASQUE). 1919

AGE 21

PASSAGE ON *LA TOURAINE*

PHILLIPS: This is Andrew Phillips, and this is an interview with Marianne Bain, B-A-I-N. Her maiden name is Dunat.

BAIN: Dunat.

PHILLIPS: Dunat. D-U-N-A-T-. Um ,this will be Interview Number 407 [DP-33]. It is the 25th of May, 1989. It is Thursday , and we're going to start this interview at 10:25. when the telephone stops ringing. (They laugh.) You're originally from France.

BAIN: Yes.

PHILLIPS: Can we start, Mrs. Bain, by telling me where you're originally from and what year you were born.

BAIN: I was born in 1898. I am now ninety years old, and I had my twenty-first birthday on board the ship coming to America.

PHILLIPS: And where are you originally from?

BAIN: From the basque country in France.

PHILLIPS: And what village?

BAIN: Urepel.

PHILLIPS: Can you spell that?

BAIN: U-R-E-P-E-L. It's right on the Spanish border.

PHILLIPS: What I'd like to do is to have you tell us a little bit about your early life as a child, and perhaps you could start by telling us what your father did for a living.

BAIN: My father was a customs officer in the Pyrenees, which, at the border of Spain. And I lived there for quite a while and then I went with a friend of mine. During the first war I was in Paris when we were bombarded night and day. And then after the war I came back to Urepel, and stayed with my father. When my cousins, who lived in America, they were shepherders here, they sent for us. They were going back in one year, and they asked me to come and spend that one year with them.

PHILLIPS: Before we get on to that part of your life, I'd like some understanding, some sense of what life was like for a little girl in the basque country in your village.

BAIN: Well, the basque, it's entirely different from, uh, French. And they didn't consider themselves French at all. You have the Basque in France and you have the basque in Spain. And anybody, any Frenchman who came to the Basque country was considered a stranger until the war. Then they were all mobilized to go to war and, uh, I was in a little, I was brought up in a little village without anything to do there. And, uh, until I went to Paris with my friend.

PHILLIPS: What sort of house did you live in?

BAIN: Well, jus a little, uh, Basque house.

PHILLIPS: What did it look like?

BAIN: Well, it was white and red like most of them are over there. And, uh, we didn't have, we had one electricity in the kitchen, only. So we had to, uh, use oil lamps in the bedrooms. And lots of them didn't have the electricity either, so we were fortunate.

PHILLIPS: Can you tell me a little about your school days in the village?

BAIN: My school days I, uh, usually, Urepel being such a small place, they sent the worst teachers they had over there. And my father wasn't at all satisfied with the education I was getting there. So he sent me to some cousins away from there. And there I was overworked. We have, uh, Thursdays, the schools were closed. I had to go to school on Thursday. I had to walk half an hour to school and spend my Thursdays alone at school trying to catch up with the others. And Sundays I also, after Mass I also went to school. And, uh, so, at the end of the, they have a different system over there. When you're about eleven years old, you

pass an exam, and after you pass that you go to high school. You don't pass any exam until you're twelve years, eleven years old. And, uh, I was only ten and a half when I passed my certificate etude. But the teachers in Urepel resented that, so they protested, saying I wasn't the age, I was only ten and a half, instead of eleven. So they, um, on account of me they changed the age to twelve. So the following year I still wasn't eligible for the same exam that I had passed the year before. So I, the teacher had me teaching other children how to read and all that. My father wanted me to be a teacher, but after that experience over there for two years I wouldn't have any part of it. So, my mother died when I was eleven, so that my sister was keeping house for my father. And, uh, after she got married, when I was, I went to Paris with some friends I went to school with.

PHILLIPS: Could you tell me how your mother died?

BAIN: Oh, she had a sore throat. She must have had, how do you call that, strep throat. And we didn't have a doctor for twenty miles. So the doctor, he just let her die. A week later she was dead. He claims

the poison from her throat went to her lungs and that's what killed her. We don't know to this day exactly what she died of.

PHILLIPS: What sort of games did you play in school?

BAIN: Oh, like everybody else, like all the games that the children play. It wasn't very much difference between the children here and the games they played over there.

PHILLIPS: Was it a happy childhood for you?

BAIN: Yes, except that, uh, I was sent to my cousins in a ranch where I didn't know anybody, and I was miserable, and I was overworked over there, and it wasn't a very happy time. Then my brother came. My father sent my brother to the same school and it was a little easier then. But then after I passed my certificate etude, I was almost twelve years old. And, uh, so I stayed home for a while, and then my friend asked me to go to Paris with her. I went with her.

PHILLIPS: Before you go to Paris, I think, probably, well, not past, before, now, the First World War had not yet begun, it began when you were in Paris.

BAIN: Uh, it began when I was in Paris. No, uh, it began before I was in Paris because I waited till the end of the war over there, in Paris.

PHILLIPS: Tell us about what it was like for you and your family in your village, just before the beginning of the First World War.

BAIN: As I said, it was a very small village, and it's all farms and, uh, so you only saw the people, they all came to church on Sundays, and it was the only time you saw the farmers. All the week long there was absolutely nothing to do there, nothing, until the following Sunday when they all came and spent the day in the village and got drunk and they had a ball, but they disappeared until the following Sunday again, and it wasn't very exciting. I'd had enough of that. So when my friend invited me to go to Paris, I jumped at the chance. My sister was living at home then. She wasn't married yet. And, uh, so I went there until the end of the war.

PHILLIPS: Tell me how you travelled to Paris. Tell me about that journey.

BAIN: By train, Well, as i said, Urepele was so far down on the, it was last village in France. after that it was the mountains to

Spain. And, uh, we had a courier, what they call a courier, carriage that came to get us. The train was about thirty miles away, the first station, the closest station of the train. And, uh, so they came to, uh, there was a courier, a horse carriage that came to pick up everybody who wanted to take the train. We had to leave three o'clock in the morning from Urepel. And we took the train thirty miles away from there. And Bayon and Biarritz were the closest big towns, so we went there quite often. There was nothing to do in Urepel, absolutely nothing.

PHILLIPS: So tell me about the trip to Paris.

BAIN: Well, we took the train to Paris and then, I stayed there quite a while. It was during the war and, uh--

PHILLIPS: Can you give me your first impressions when you saw Paris?

BAIN: Oh, I was quite impressed with Paris after the little village where there were only four hundred and some people living there. And I was bewildered when I got to Paris. And I had a wonderful time over there. And we, during the war we all had godsons in the Army that we corresponded with, and they came to see us when they were on furlough, and we had a wonderful time, except that we were bombarded day and night. We

had the Bertha the Big Bertha, that was focused to Paris, and that was in the daytime we were allowed to go on one side of the street only. And then at night we had, the planes came to bomb us.

PHILLIPS: Why were you only allowed to walk on one side of the street?

BAIN: Because the Bertha was focused to the other side of the street. It was coming from east to west, so we were supposed to go on the east side of the street because the shells went to the other, the opposite side.

PHILLIPS: Tell me what it was like living under those bombardments.

BAIN: We were supposed to go to the basement every time the planes came at night. They had the tier de barrage first, that they warned us that the planes were coming. And then we were supposed to go to the basement. I went there once and it was worse than being upstairs because it resounded all around you. You thought the building was going to fall all over you. So I refused to go there, so I stayed there, in the apartment, after that. And, um, well, it was pretty scary at the time.

PHILLIPS: What was the, when you said you had godsons, did you describe?

BAIN: Godsons, yes.

PHILLIPS: Tell me about that arrangement.

BAIN: Well, we had corresponded with them. They, in the newspapers, they had a lot of ads with some boys in the service wanting a godmother. So we wrote to some of them and then corresponded with them, and then they came to see us, and it was lots of fun.

PHILLIPS: Was this, why did the Army, or the government, arrange this?

BAIN: So the boys wouldn't be so lonesome. So they had a girlfriend who would write to them.

PHILLIPS: It was like a morale booster.

BAIN: Oh, yes.

PHILLIPS: Tell me what happened when you met your first godson.

BAIN: Well, uh, we went out. We had the best time we could. Nothing happened. We just had showed them Paris and the theater and all that.

PHILLIPS: What was Paris like in those days?

BAIN: Well, it wasn't very, there wasn't as much nightlife as there is now. It was pretty quiet at the time. But the Paris itself hasn't changed very much since then.

PHILLIPS: So as the war continued, you continued living in Paris. What were you doing?

BAIN: Well, uh, nothing. This friend of mine had two little children, so I more or less taught French to them, because they came from Spain. And, uh, took them to the park every day. There wasn't very much to do, not during the war.

PHILLIPS: And when the war finished?

BAIN: When the war finished, father insisted that I go back home. And my sister got married, and then I was stuck keeping house for my

father when my cousins who lived in America sent me a letter with a ticket asking me to come and join them for one year. They were going to France after that. So I went through, I had my twenty-first birthday on board the ship.

PHILLIPS: Tell me about making that decision to leave France to travel to America.

BAIN: Oh, that was easy. I was so fed up with staying there.

I was so lonely. My father was gone most of the time, sometimes all night. They were guarding the border between Spain and France and, uh, I was alone most of the time. And I had enough of it. So when I received that letter, I was only too glad. I didn't care what happened. My father went to live with my sister. And, uh, I didn't have any qualms about it, either. Until later, when I decided to stay here, I felt what did I do to my poor father.

PHILLIPS: Why was your father guarding the border?

BAIN: Well, he was a, what they call a doigne. They have, all the military was guarding the border so there

wouldn't be any contraband. And they used to catch all the people that came with contraband, which was quite a business at that time.

PHILLIPS: Can you tell us a little bit about that?

BAIN: Well-- (She laughs.) Thanks to my friend, I learned a little Spanish, and when my sister decided to get married, everything was so much cheaper in Spain that we decided to go and get her trousseau in Spain. So we went, we drove mules over the Pyrenees to go to Spain. And my sister got all sorts of materials which wrapped everybody. There were four of us, wrapped everything around our waists, all the materials around our waists so we could pass them without paying any duty on them. So when, uh, we arrived at the border, I went to talk to the guards over there in Spanish, I was the only one who spoke Spanish, while the others were passing through the border, so they couldn't, they wouldn't catch them. So we did a lot of contraband. All the liquor and everything was brought from Spain. It was so much cheaper over there. And, uh, there was a lot going on.

PHILLIPS: Okay. There's some kind of machine going on in the background, so I'm just going to stop for a minute. (Break in tape.) See, what we have in the background, apparently, is the gardener with some kind of machine and, uh, we hoped the noise wouldn't get too much worse after

that wonderful story you were just telling us about the contraband. You were a smuggler for a little while.

BAIN: Oh, yes. But we all did smuggling. We all, uh, we went on mule, with mules, over the mountains. And, uh, we, everybody did some contraband over there, even the guard's family. (She laughs.) So while I was speaking Spanish to them, the other ones went through with all the things that they had bought in Spain. It was so much cheaper over there.

PHILLIPS: This was after you'd come back from Paris.

BAIN: Yes. Uh-huh.

PHILLIPS: What about nightlife and boyfriends? Was there any such, uh, phenomenon in the small village?

BAIN: Not very much, no. I had only one boyfriend who went to Chile, so I didn't see much of him. He went, he came from Chile to go to war, and that's how I met him, over there, when he was on furlough. But--

PHILLIPS: Explain that. Why was he going to war, where?

BAIN: Every Frenchman who was living in a foreign country was mobilized, everybody. Even, uh, even my son. The French women don't have much right, and right. And, uh, my mother, any French mother who was in a foreign country, in case of war their sons can be called over there. And my son could be called to serve in the French Army, too, even though he was born here. So all the French people, living in a foreign country, they were all called to the war, to go to war over there. Some did, some didn't. My cousins were called, too, but they didn't go. So, they finally went after, two years after the war. They were in jail for two months for not coming when they were mobilized. All French people had to be there.

PHILLIPS: So now tell us about your decision to leave France to travel to America.

BAIN: Well, it was only for a year, so I was thrilled to have a year's vacation away from all that, it was so dull over there, after having been in Paris for two, three years. Uh, I just couldn't stand it any more. So when I received an invitation to come here for a year I jumped at it, and my father didn't dare stop me, I was so excited. So that's how I came to America, for one year, and I'm still here.

PHILLIPS: Tell me about actually getting ready to leave, and what that was like leaving your friends. What happened?

BAIN: Oh, I didn't care, I was so excited about coming here, about going away, that, uh, nothing happened. I just, that's all that was on my mind. I didn't think about, anything about, it was only for one year, so I didn't mind leaving my friends or family for one year.

PHILLIPS: So what ship did you travel on?

BAIN: The Touraine. The poor ship was in such a bad shape that it was the last trip they took. After it went back to France they went, I don't know what they did with it, but it wasn't in circulation any more.

PHILLIPS: And the journey, what was that like?

BAIN: It took us ten days to come here from Cherbourg to New York. And I'll never forget the first sight of the Statue of Liberty. It was such a wonderful sight, because we were coming to the land of liberty. I can't tell you the feeling when you see the Statue of Liberty when you arrive here. It's fantastic. I had my twenty-first birthday on the ship. Then we got to Ellis Island. We were herded right through Ellis Island. We

had a doctor's visit first. Everybody didn't pass it. And, uh, you had to have a certificate of good conduct before you even set foot in this country. It had to be signed by the mayor of your town. And, uh, some of them didn't come. They were sent right back. You had to be in good health and have nothing against you. Your conduct had to be good to get into this country, which is different from what it is now. (She laughs.)

PHILLIPS: Can you tell me any stories about your travel on the ship for those, in that ten days period travelling to the States?

BAIN: Well, I made a lot of friends on the ship. I came here with a friend of mine. Two of us came here. She had a sister that lived in Culver City. So, uh, it wasn't, it wasn't too lonely, because there were two of us. We didn't stay in New York. At that time they had, at each station they had, how do you call those, the one who helped the visitors who don't know the language.

PHILLIPS: Translators?

BAIN: No, that isn't it. Oh, I can't think of the name. They directed you and they put you on the right train and all that. So we had to change in Chicago, so they put us on the right train to come here. And, uh--

(She laughs.) There was a funny thing, happened the first morning. We were having breakfast on the train and, uh, we, naturally, we took everything that had a French name like omelettes and things like that, and then my friend said, "Don't look now, but people in the back are eating scrubbing brush." So, when I looked, I said, "That's funny." It was, uh, how do you call that? That wheat, a big square of wheat. Oh, I can't think of the name now. For breakfast. It was cereal for breakfast. We had never seen that. And, uh, so we thought, well, Americans have such a funny taste, they're eating brushes for breakfast. It looked like a brush. (She laughs.) Shredded wheat it was. And, uh, so we thought we were going to have a hard time adjusting ourselves to it. And during the war we cut our hair short and our skirts short, and when we came here they were wearing long skirts and long hair so we thought, "What a strange country. They don't follow the fashions." But, uh, we went to Culver City and we got, soon got adjusted. There were all Basque people there, and we soon got adjusted. We met an awful lot of Basque shepherders here and so finally we started looking for a job.

PHILLIPS: Tell me a little bit about that Basque community/ What was that like?

BAIN: Here, or over there? Here they were all shepherders. Even to this day they can come without a quota because they were so short on them. And the families over there--

PHILLIPS: Explain to me what a quota is.

BAIN: Well, uh, United States--

PHILLIPS: Oh, a quota, a quota.

BAIN: --let's in so many people from each country.

PHILLIPS: Yes, it's a quota. I understand.

BAIN: The quota. And, uh, they can't come without, uh, they're welcome any time here because over there the families are so, large families, ten, fifteen children. One every year, practically. But still, to this day, the eldest one inherits everything, all the farm. So when he gets married, all the others have to do something, so they came here as

sheepherders, because that's all they knew how to do. And, uh, I remember them, every year, that courier used to come to the place and all the young men used to go here. That was somebody that had connections with the United States and did nothing but herd them all over here. So he took them to the train and, uh, he'd see to it that they got here, California or Colorado. There are a lot of Basque people here, and they're mostly sheepherders. And then when they, uh, make enough money, they used to go back to France. They didn't associate with American people at all. They used to go back to France and get a wife over there. And then sometimes they made enough money to buy a ranch for themselves. But, uh, they used to pick a wife over there and bring her back here, and they were all so anxious to come here that, uh, they'd take anybody for a husband. And, uh, at that time, I had a lot of Basque friends here and, uh, we used to go to a ranch with my children in Puente.

PHILLIPS: Where?

BAIN: In Puente. That's right outside Los Angeles.

PHILLIPS: Spell that?

BAIN: P-U-E-N-T-E. Uh-huh. And, uh, so there's nothing, there's an awful lot of Basque sheepherders here.

PHILLIPS: Do you still maintain contact with these people?

BAIN: Not very much any more, no. I don't see them any more.

And I'm forgetting the language now, which was my first language. It's very difficult.

PHILLIPS: But there's a community here that's still-- Let me ask that as a question. Is there a community here that still speaks that language?

BAIN: Yes. There are Basque clubs here. They're all on the Chino and all that. And they have two Basque picnics a year. One in Chino and the other in El Monte. And, uh, that's quite a day. It's an outdoor mass said in the morning. It's the day before Labor Day, always, one of them. And, uh, and they have a Mass in Basque, and then they have, after that, they have festivities, all folklore dances, all in Basque costumes. And, uh, their main thing is, uh, the main meat is lamb, of course. They're all shepherders. And they have barbecued lamb, and they're all dancing all afternoon, all Basque dances in different, they still have them. And they have one, uh, up north, near San Francisco, too. A big one. All the Basques go to them, no matter where they live.

PHILLIPS: Do you go?

BAIN: I did go until not too long ago. I don't have any ride, and I didn't want to drive over there myself, and I didn't have any ride to go. But, uh, I'm expecting my son here about that time, and I want to go with him.

PHILLIPS: Do they prepare the lamb in any particular way?

BAIN: Barbecued leg of lamb. So that's what happens twice a year, every year, the same thing.

PHILLIPS: So what did you, how did you earn a living when you moved to The United States?

BAIN: Well, when I came to Los Angeles to meet my cousins, they were staying in a Basque boarding house. One lady came from the same place I did. And, uh, I found a letter saying that things had gone bad for them in New Mexico and they'd gone back over there, and so they wanted me to join them there, spend the year there. And on the way, on the train coming here this way, all I saw was Indians and desert, and desert, and desert, and more desert. And I say, "I'm not going to spend a year over there." So I

said I'm just going to go and find a job here and wait for them here for a year. And when I exchanged my francs for dollars, I had exactly ten dollars in my pocket. So I, uh, that lady, the landlady helped me find a job, she took me to an agency in answer to an ad. They wanted a mother's helper with five children in Beverly Hills. She said, "That's not for you." So they agency put in an ad. And I was a French girl, just right after the war, and the French people were very popular at the time. And I had four answers, and every time they named one they'd say, "That's not for you." And then, uh, there was a lady, a millionaire lady, who was looking for a travelling companion. She said, "That's for you." So I had an interview with the secretary and the lady, and she told me, "Well, I think you'll do, but you come for only one week. Don't bring any luggage with you." So I went there, it was one week, and I guess I made the grade because she did nothing but travel. So we went all through Europe three months later, all through Europe. She had a chauffeur and a car in Paris she had him meet us in London. And we went by car all through Europe two years after the war through Germany, Luxembourg, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary. And I left her in Switzerland and I went to spend a week with my father, and then I met her in Paris. And then we came back here, and every year we would go to, every winter we would go to New York to see all the theater, and every summer we'd be travelling someplace in California. And we were just going to the North Cape when my cousins arrived. So they wanted to know if I was ready to go home, I said, "No. I'm going to the North Cape."

Because my father would never let me go again if once I got back home. So that's why they went without me. I came here for one year, and I'm still here. So we went to the North Cape, a cruise to Iceland and all the North Cape. All the Scandinavian countries, and we came back here. I was very anemic at the time and, uh, so she had, we were staying at the Alexandria Hotel at Fifth and Spring, which was the only big hotel here. I saw them build the Biltmore and the Ambassador and all the other hotels, and that was the only big hotel here. So, uh-- (Tape ends.)

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

PHILLIPS: You were telling me--

BAIN: Oh, I was, we were staying at the Alexandria Hotel and, uh, I was very anemic at the time, and every time we came from a long trip like that, well, I was sick. So we went to the North cape. When we came back from the North Cape, which is a marvelous trip, I got very sick. So this lady called her doctor and he said send me to the Milk Sanitarium in Long Beach, which doesn't exist any more. And a lot of movie stars used to go there. You had nothing but milk, and they used to get it to change their complexion and all that. And I was there for three months drinking nothing

but milk, a glass of milk every hour, and having osteopathic treatments. And the lady came, she was just going to South America, where I wanted to go so badly, and the lady came to see me and she said, "Well, doctor said that it's going to be a long time before you get back on your feet so we'll have an ambulance take you to New York and put you on a boat and have your father meet you on the other side." Well, no sooner was she gone that I said, "I;m not going there. And after all the experience I've had, I'm not going yo go back to that small place with my father and keep house for him. He was with my sister. He was perfectly all right there. So no sooner was she gone that I wrote her a letter saying that I couldn't go back now because my father would never let me go again and, uh, so I'd do anything but go home.

So she sent me her secretary saying, "Well, she got a replacement for you, and they go to South America, and she doesn't want to undo the good that has been done to you in the sanitarium." So she suggested while in South America you come and stay at the Alexandria Hotel with me, and if you don't feel any better when she comes back, then they'd still send you home. So I said, "That's more like it." So I had a ball at the Alexandria Hotel because the maid we had was the wife of the British Overseas Club, President of the British Overseas Club. And, uh, she asked me, she knew, I didn't know anybody here, she asked me if I'd like to go to some doings at the Overseas Club, and I said, "Well, yes." And that's where, right after the war, that's where all the Belgian, French and American, English soldiers met, at the Overseas Club, all in uniforms still. You know who was, who had

the hot dog stand at the Overseas Club? Boris Karloff, before he went into the movies. Then, my husband was a secretary in the club, so that's where we met. And, uh, while the lady was in South America, I used to go out with him every night. So when she came back here, she had a hairdresser who was Czechoslovakian, and who did all the hair for a lot of movie stars. So I asked, I asked him if he could get me in there. I took a course in dress designing. And by the time she came back I had a job at the Cecil B. De Mille Studio designing clothes, so there was no question of sending me back home. So I went to a boarding house, and went to the studio. Eventually I got married and, to a Scotch man and had two children. So that's why I'm still here.

PHILLIPS: Tell me a little bit about working in the movies at Cecil B. De Mille Studio.

BAIN: The head of the wardrobe department was Clare West, and the first thing she asked me to do was a French Chinese headdress. I had to design one. What in the world is a French Chinese headdress? So I did any kind of headdress and put some Chinese motifs in there. She seemed to be satisfied. But she was very, very difficult to work for. Pola Negri was at the studio at the time. She was quite the rage. And, uh, so I designed for her. She was very difficult to work with, and I was a nervous wreck. And my husband used to come and pick me up at the studio every night and so one

day she came to me and she said, "Well, I decided--" I didn't think she was happy with my work. She was always, uh, complaining. And, um, so one day she came to me and she said, "Well, I've decided to open a shop of my own. I'm going to quit the studio, and I want you to go with me." So I couldn't think of anything worse than going to work with her outside of the studio. So I said, "Well, I'm sorry, I can't go with you because I'm getting married." That's how I, so I-- Her whole staff went with her out of the studio.

PHILLIPS: Where did they go?

BAIN: I don't know how they did after that, but seeing as she was quitting the studio, I didn't want to stay there. I didn't want to go without her, and I didn't want to go with her, so I quit the studio and got married.

PHILLIPS: Did you work after that?

BAIN: No, I didn't work after that because I got pregnant right away and I was busy at home. At that time I did a lot of modeling, too. And then after that, my husband died twenty years later, and after that I went to work. I went to, designing clothes. So my daughter, I used to go to France quite a lot. After I was married, I used to visit my

parents for, my father and my sister, for four, five months at the time. I took my children. I spoke French to them ever since they were born so they know both languages, and I took them over there and I put my daughter in school. She was three years old. And when we came back my son didn't understand a word of English any more, and my daughter either. I had to go and sit in school with her. She wouldn't go alone. Then I went quite often to France to see my brother. And my father had died already and so one day my daughter was grown up by this time, she worked at the Title Insurance and Trust here. And we went over there, and my brother asked me, "What does she do?" My brother was in the Army. I forgot to tell you about him. And he became a general in the French Army, and he was on the staff of General Eisenhower in Belgium after the war. And he met a lot of American officers there. And, uh, he asked me, "What does she do?" "She's a secretary for an insurance company." He said, "Is that all? Well, I'll fix that." So he wrote to, I can't remember his name, that was in General Eisenhower's staff with him. He was the head of the Democratic party here. So he wrote to him, and before, by the time my daughter got home, she had an application blank to join the CIA. So after a while she went for a year's training for the CIA, and then she went to Norway. She asked me to go with her. I said, "No way. No, I'd been there already." Well, she insisted, so I went and spent two years in Norway with her. Then we came back. She came back to Washington after two years, and then she was sent to Paris. Of course I jumped at the chance to go back to Paris. My brother lived there. So I

went three years with her in Paris. So at that time I had seen, renewed acquaintances with all my friends I used to go to school with and all my family and heritage and everybody. Three years over there I've even forgotten I had ever been to the United States. And then, my son was a geologist, and he had a Fulbright Scholarship for the Petroleum Institute outside of Paris. So I had them both at the same time over there. And, uh, they were both coming back here about the same time, and I thought, "What do I do? Do I stay in France, or what do I do?" So I thought, well, my children are closer to me than any member of my other family, so I think I'll go back over there. So I came back to Los Angeles. He went to Sacramento. She went to Chicago. She got married as soon as she got back here, somebody from Philadelphia. And then Chicago. Then, well, this is the only home I ever had. I've been very active in all the French societies here. I was president of the French Ladies of Charity for twenty-five years. And I was decorated by the French government for it. And I've been president of the group for White Fathers of Africa since 1960 when we came back from France.

PHILLIPS: What is that group?

BAIN: It's missionaries to Africa, and it's a French organization, it's a French order, and they all have to speak French. No matter what country they come from, they all have to speak French because

it's a French order. And they're here to raise funds for Africa. So they come and go. And, uh, I've enjoyed working with them for so long, since 1960 I've been working with them.

PHILLIPS: Did you go to Africa?

BAIN: No. I was invited to go to Africa by them many times, but I've never been there.

PHILLIPS: Did your daughter enjoy working for the government in the CIA?

BAIN: Oh, yes. In Norway it was entirely different because everybody was so friendly over there. Of course, it was a small embassy over there. But in Paris it was much bigger, and she was there when they had the Summit meeting that didn't take place. General Eisenhower was there. We went to meet him at the station, at the station. And, uh, she met so many people over there. And she was the private secretary to the head of the CIA, so she had a chance to meet quite a few important people with whom she corresponds still. And the people in Norway come to see her still. So we had a wonderful time over there. Then I found myself all alone here, which wasn't so good.

PHILLIPS: But you're still out and about. You're going to lunch today. You're ninety years of age?

BAIN: Yes. We're going to the White Fathers. We have a luncheon meeting over there. I belong to the French Cultural Club. I'm the Vice President. And, uh, they did a charity. I was twenty-five, I came in for the fiftieth anniversary, and I got out for the seventy-fifth. And I worked for the French hospital here. We have a gift shop. O belong to the Auxiliary. I belong to the Auxiliary of St. John of God. I have plenty to do here.

PHILLIPS: All right. I think, is there anything else you would like to tell us?

BAIN: As a matter of fact, I told you just about everything.

PHILLIPS: I'm sure there's a lot more, but what you told us was very interesting.

BAIN: (She laughs.) I've had a pretty interesting life. I've met so many wonderful people here. I still correspond with the uncle of the King of Spain, and I have some friends who give two, three dinners a year for

about a hundred people. That's where I met (?) and, uh, King Farrukh's family. There's only one sister left now. I meet her every time. And I have a very good friend of mine who was a French count. And, uh, another one who was a Grande of Spain. There's a lot of interesting people here.

PHILLIPS: It seems like a lot of Europe's hierarchy have travelled to the United States.

BAIN: Yes. Oh, yes. A lot of them. And then I also met a member of Parliament, British Parliament. He was very interesting. He spoke such beautiful French. He could recite Victor Hugo's poems in French beautifully. I've met a lot of interesting people here.

PHILLIPS: Okay. So that brings us to an end of our interview with Mrs. Ban, Interview Number 407 [DP-33].