quite near there which could be made as a clinic. It was a small property, but it worked very well. So in August of 1966, we moved our equipment from Iran Bethel School over to the new property, which was called the Doolittle Clinic. We had proper permission from the government and so forth for that clinic. To begin with, our patients, of course -- We told them it was closed and finished, but they gradually came back. It took some time to work it up, so that there were another ten thousand people on the rolls. [chuckles] We had, to begin with, just three days a week As I said, at the very beginning, it was only one day a week. Then we had it two days a week and two doctors, and then when we moved over to the Doolittle Clinic, we had three days a week and two doctors, and later three doctors, one of whom was Yahya Diba. He's a cousin of the Queen, and he was a medical student in England. He hadn't finally gotten his degree, but he was available, and he worked there for some months and was very interested in it, and so he brought the Queen there one day to see the clinic, and she was very interested. Then, of course, she came without any announcement, without any ceremonies or anything, and all the women were so thrilled to see her. Very nice. The clinic developed so that the first property we had was not sufficient. Fortunately, there was another property just at the back of that property that we could buy. So we had these two courtyards joining; we just cut a hole through the wall and doubled our capacity. Then, things began to be a bit difficult. That is, we heard rumors that all private clinics were to be closed and so on and so forth, so we referred to Dr. Diba, who had left the clinic. Of course, he had his own work as the head of the cancer hospital.

We asked him if he would be our umbrella, and he was glad to do so. So he took us over, and then it had to be open six days a week, which it was, and all day long, not just in the afternoon. That's the way it was left, and then, of course, the government has taken it over completely. They took all our furnishings and everything and moved them to another place, and our own property is left vacant. I don't know why they don't put people in it.

BN: Which government is that?

JD: The Iranian government; the Ministry of Health.

BN: When was that?

JD: That they took it over?

BN: Yes.

JD: Well, they took it over, of course, since the revolution.

BN: Oh, after the revolution, yes. I understand that you told me that you were receiving some milk or medicine from the government?

JD: Yes.

BN: Did you have a good relation with the government?

JD: Yes.

BN: How did you establish those good relations?

JD: I don't know. Through our friends, I suppose. Yes, we were very fortunate. Of course, after Farah came and saw the place, then she gave commands for them to help us, and that gave us more help. Then after Yahya Diba took over as our umbrella, he got us all sorts of things that we hadn't had before. That was a big help.

BN: If I remember correctly, you were honored or decorated or something in Iran?

JD: Yes.

BN: Can you tell me about it?

JD: Well, there were two different times. Once, we went to the Ministry of Education. The alumnae had a party there, and they gave me a certificate, so to speak; the administrator of education did. The next time was when the alumnae had a party celebrating my fifty years in Iran, and we had a big dinner party at the Sheraton Hotel, I guess it was. Then the Minister of Education was a lady minister, and she was there.

BN: Farrokh ru Parsa?

JD: Yes, Ms. Parsa. And she was there, and she gave me another decoration, which was very nice. I have a nice picture of her decorating me. It's very sad to think that she was made away with that way.

BN: Yes. [pauses] Why do you think the church in Iran was not so active in social projects?

JD: I suppose they didn't have the facilities, or the money. Or the vision, perhaps.

BN: What changes have you observed in the life of the church since you arrived in Iran?

JD: It's gone through many changes. To begin with, it was completely in the hands of the missionaries. There were no Persian pastors at all. To begin with, it was, of course, the Persians and the Armenians and the Assyrians were all together. Then after some years, they separated, and the Iranian church was separate from the Armenians and the Assyrians. Gradually, the missionaries turned over the work of the church to the Iranians, completely. It's gone through many phases, and it's too bad that the attempt to have all three of the groups work together didn't work out. Maybe

BN: Okay. Let's go back to 1921 again. Can you please give me a physical description of Teheran, at that time?

JD: Yes. Teheran, at that time, of course, had no paved roads. All the roads were just little dusty streets, and the transportation was entirely by doroshkes. There were no taxis until much later, and the streets were dark at night. The joubs, of course, were full of filth; more than they are now. Our problem of getting water into the compound was something. As you know, the mirab came around in the middle of the light with a lantern and brought the water into your place. Then, to obtain drinking water, we had to have the sagha bring his goatskin of water every day, either from the British embassy or from the government outlet. I have visions of Teheran as being very dark and very dirty, and seeing nothing but veiled women on the streets. As you said, a person unveiled such as we were was outstanding, because there were so few.

BN: I hear from somebody that they had gates around the city of Teheran.

JD: Yes. There were thirteen gates at important sections of the country. It was just too bad they were done away with; but Reza Shah very wisely saw they were too narrow, and would obstruct traffic. I don't know what we would have done, later on, if we'd still had those gates, but they were beautiful. They were very nice. And of course, they used to be kept closed at night.

BN: Do you remember where they were?

JD: No, not all of them, of course. There was one on Yousefabad where Shah Reza is now; at the junction there. And the Dowlat Gate; and the Qazvin Gate. All around the city. In those days, of course, the city was so small: there were only

two hundred thousand inhabitants, instead of the four million that we now boast of. You could walk around the city in a few hours, on the Khandagh When they filled that in, that moat, we wondered what was going to happen to the houses that were built on the moat. But I never saw any one collapse: I think they did a good job of filling it properly. But that was something, when they did away with that. But they never have solved the problem of too much water since they did away with that moat. Whenever there's a heavy rainfall, the people in the south of the city get into trouble, immediately. Floods; some terrible floods down there. If they'd kept the old moat, they would never have had that problem.

BN: When you arrived in Teheran, you told me that you lived in Ghavam Saltaneh.

JD: Yes.

BN: Was that part of the city considered inside or within the gates, or outside the gates?

JD: That was within the gates.

BN: It was?

JD: Yes. Shah Reza was the first street outside the gates. Teheran was in the city, but it was very much the northern part of the city, so when the modern Americans, who came in in such numbers, spoke of my house as being in the southern part of the city, it was really funny, because they just had no idea of how it used to be.

BN: How many Americans were in Iran at that time?

JD: Well, if there were forty or fifty, we thought we had a lot. And most of those were missionaries; there weren't business people at

that time, at all. But I was looking to see, at some old pictures which Mrs. Elder sent me, of our mission group back in -- it must have been -- '26, when there was a big group. I suppose there was fifty of us at that time. Then you look at it when things were closed out in '79, '80, just two families -- the Esetos and the Thomases -- finished. It really is amazing the way the numbers went down.

BN: In addition to the missionaries, were there any other Americans? Was there an American embassy in Teheran?

JD: When I first went there in 1921, there was no embassy belonging to the United States. They simply used -- They housed -- Quite near Ghavam Saltaneh there was a big building which they used for the embassy. Then, of course, they bought it, and it was Sam Saeed who built the American embassy as it is -- as it was. Now the Persian government is using that for I don't know what.

BN: I hear they're not using it at the moment, but they have plans for it.

JD: Yes.

[interview interrupted]

BN: Miss Doolittle, can you please give me a historical background about the school when it was first opened, and then through the years, and how it progressed.

JD: Yes. When it first opened, an Armenian woman was in charge of a small day school. That was under the church.

BN: And the year?

JD: That was 1872. Then they decided that they should have something that was in the hands of the missionary, and that would be more

profitable, perhaps. So they opened a dormitory, and had two or three pupils. That developed quite well; they had quite a number of students. But the girls left so soon, because they said, "Oh, any girl who is sixteen years old, she must be married. There's no point in her being in school." So they had this system of contracts, with the parents, that the girls were to stay in the school for a certain number of years. That helped a great deal. As I said, all the girls then were Armenians. They were taken in free; they got their meals, their clothes, their education, and everything for free, but they were on contract. That lasted perhaps ten years; not more than that. Some of the missionaries objected, thought it wasn't a good idea. But it had accomplished its purpose, in keeping the girls in school for several years. They started a course with the first class, and went eventually through the twelfth class, but those were really old girls when they graduated. [chuckles] I remember, so distinctly, when I was first there back in 1921 to '24, there was one girl in the upper classes who came to school very irregularly. We couldn't find out why. Every week, she would be absent a couple of days. Upon investigation, we found that her family wouldn't let her go to school regularly, because then people would know that she was going to school, and would criticize. So they'd sent her Monday and Wednesday and Friday one week, and perhaps Tuesday and Thursday the next week, so that she wouldn't be on the streets. At that time, most of the girls came to school with an attendant. They brought a servant with them, who would carry her lunch, which she would eat there at the school and then be there. They were very closely guarded.

it's just as well. After all, each want their own language.

BN: Were you personally happy with the work of the church and mission in Iran?

JD: Well, I suppose a lot of things should have been done differently from what they were.

BN: Can you give me a few examples?

JD: [chuckles] Well, I don't know that I can put my finger on it exactly. Perhaps it was inevitable that they left so much work to the missionaries to begin with, and I think, to a certain extent, they certainly still do need outsiders. For instance, for the pastors, or at least for the preaching. The church is very unhappy about the lack of spiritual food. After all, it's a very little and a very weak church, and with very few outstanding members. Not many people who can preach. They're all very unhappy about that.

BN: How big was the church when you arrived in Iran? Congregationwise?

JD: Of course, to begin with, the congregation was fairly good, because people did leave their work to come to church on Sunday, and there was the boys' boarding school, and they were all taken down to church. The church was filled up with people like that, and it was a mixture to begin with. When I first went there, there were the Armenians and the Iranians, and the Armenians predominated, although the services were held in Persian.

BN: I see. And were there women and men mixed in the church?

JD: No. Men sat on one side, and women on the other, largely.

BN: So they didn't have the separate services for males and females.

JD: No, they didn't. In Hamadan, of course, they had a curtain down the middle, so the women sat on one side and the men on the other

side, but in Teheran, they didn't do that. But the men tended to sit by themselves, and the women by [themselves]. Families never sat together, which was too bad.

BN: When was the change?

JD: This came about gradually.

BN: And they used to come to church with veils and chadors?

JD: Yes, of course. There was one person whose name you wouldn't know, and that was Khanom Mostofi-al-Mamalek. Did you know her?

BN: No.

JD: She always came to church in a veil, and the way she became a Christian was through selling water to the Alborz College. She contacted the Jordans -- of course, she owned the water -- and while she was carrying on with them, she became a Christian, and she was baptized. She came to church very regularly, and she always had a particular seat that she sat in, towards the back of the church. [chuckles] One day, there were some people from Hamadan. They didn't know that she had a particular seat, and they sat in her seat. [laughs] She was much upset. But they all had special seats and, as I said, the men and the women sat separately.

[end of side two, tape one]

September 30, 1983

BN: Miss Doolittle, can you remember how many girls graduated from Iran Bethel School?

JD: No, I don't -- I never calculated all of them, but I suppose about a thousand, throughout the years.

BN: Could the girls enter colleges and universities after graduating from your school?

JD: Yes. Yes, several of them did. Not necessarily in Teheran, but in Beirut and in the United States.

BN: Could they go to school, to colleges in Teheran?

JD: Yes. That is, when the universities were open in Teheran. There didn't used to be any universities. But by the time the universities were open and accepting of girls as well as men, we were using the government program and so they had their certificate from the government, which was what they needed for getting into the university there.

BN: In addition to your work and services in the school, were you in any way active in the women's movement in Iran?

JD: Not as such, no; except as we taught them in their school programs and in contacts with them. But I was never a member of any women's groups.

BN: Did any of your school graduates come to you for advice?

JD: Yes, often, they came.

BN: What kind of advice were they looking for?

JD: Well, all sorts of advice, as to what they should do and whom they should marry and what they should do with their children, and so forth.

BN: Can you elaborate on that a little bit?

JD: I don't know that I could, really, because usually their contact with me with their problems was short, and they went back and went on their own way in doing things.

BN: What do you think was your greatest achievement?

JD: I don't know that I had any achievement. [chuckles]

BN: No, I really don't want you to be very humble. You've had many great achievements, I believe.

JD: Well, I think, perhaps the fact that I re-opened classes for the girls in 1940, after the schools were closed, and kept a group going, and kept working with the alumnae association, because we had a very active alumnae association, doing all sorts of things. I think those were worthwhile, probably. If I hadn't kept the girls' school open, there wouldn't have developed any Damavand College. They used the school as the nucleus for that. And of course, when Miss Gray took over, her philosophy was quite different from mine, and things changed very much, but at least this women's college was open.

BN: What do you consider were your failures?

JD: My failures? Well, I think, a failure to win many people to Christ. That was a real failure. But those who have been won to Christ are very keen Christians. I think too many of the so-called converts said they were Christian because they felt it would please the missionary, and as soon as the missionary was no longer around, they were no longer Christian. In my position as the head of the school, I was very careful not to over-persuade anyone, because it wasn't useful. As you know, the Iranians like to do what they think will please the person they're working with. I think too many of our -- as I said -- so-called converts just lapsed.

BN: How much were you involved in the course of decision-making as to what the mission has to do in Iran?

JD: Of course, all of us met together every week to discuss the problems and decide on what should be done. We did that for many years: every Monday afternoon after school, we'd all gather together in one of the homes and discuss our problems. So I was envolved that way.

BN: How was the school financed?

JD: It was financed with money from the Board in America, the Presbyterian Board. The girls didn't pay anything: absolutely nothing. When I got there in 1921, the fees were from three to six rials a month, or a term -- I'm not sure which. But anyway, it was nothing. But of course, expenses were nothing. I mean, they'd feed a group of twenty girls on five toomans a week. [chuckles]

[interview interrupted]

BN: Now, Miss Doolittle, how much were you charging as tuition from the girls who were recently or lately registered in the school?

JD: I really have forgotten, but I think it was between three and four hundred toomans for the year.

BN: Only that much?

JD: Yes. And of course, we thought that was high. But that took care of our needs, and that tuition helped a lot with my work among the poor. You see, I got started among the poor when I was out of a job, really, when the school was developing. Then when we bought that big building, we were able to open the clinic. The girls really supported it by their tuition. We didn't have any money at all from the Presbyterian Board; it was all on our own.

BN: Oh, you were not getting any help.

JD: No. We were self-supporting; also supporting the clinic. Which, after all, we should be doing.

BN: What would you like to see to happen to this school and the clinic in the future?

JD: Well, the school, of course, is completely out of my hands. As I said, Miss Gray has quite a different philosophy from mine. I

kept the school small, because I thought you could have much more influence when you knew the girls. When you have over a thousand girls, you can't know them, and you can't do much with them, especially when they no longer have any chapel or anything like that. Whereas, with a small group such as we had, naturally, I knew all our girls, and taught all of them and we had daily chapel. We had religious literature for them to refer to. With the clinic, I would be glad if the clinic came back again into the hands of the alumnae. Of course, I said it's been taken from us entirely; the government is running it, and I'm sure it's on quite a different basis from what we had.

BN: What do you think will happen to Iran in the future? How do you see the future of Iran?

JD: I don't, at present. I only hope that the communists will not get in. The fact that they've put out a good many of them recently is encouraging, but of course that's the communists' aim, to get in there, to have their access to warm water, which they don't have. If they don't come in, I don't know what will happen. They say that they have people well-trained to take over from Khomeini. I think there's got to be another revolution before things are solved.

BN: While you were serving in Iran, had you ever been attacked or intruded [upon] by communists or other parties?

JD: No. No, never.

BN: Did you ever have any girls with communist ideas in your school?

JD: I think there were some, yes, but they were not the majority, by any amount of means.

BN: There was a time that the school boys and girls were very active

in political affairs, in the fifties: early fifties. How was your school facing --

JD: It didn't have any connection with any of those things. I think very few of our girls were involved.

BN: At that time, I remember they used to call a strike and close down the schools. Did that ever happen to your school?

JD: No. [pauses] Once upon a time, we were in trouble with the Ministry of Education because apparently one of the girls in the school complained that we had chapel. So they sent for me to come down and see the Minister. He asked about the chapel, and I said, "Yes, we are a Christian school and we have daily prayers." I said, "If you want to, come and listen." So they sent a delegation to school at the hour of prayers, and they were so pleased with it, they sent their relatives to the school after that. [chcukles] And there were no more objections. I think the chapel hour could be a very good force in --

[interview interrupted]

The girls all seemed to like chapel, and I think it had a great deal to do with molding their characters and their ideals. We had some very good speakers. At one time, one of our graduates who was a convert from Islam (although she didn't become a Christian until several years after she left the school) -- she was one of the teachers, and she did a fine job of giving chapel talks, because with her background, she could talk their language, and did very well. In connection with that, I was again called down to the Ministry of Education, wanting to know what chapel was. So I explained to them. Then when I came back to school I told this person about the objections, and she said, "What shall I

do? Shall I soft-pedal it?" I said, "No. We're here for that purpose, and if we can't have chapels and can't have good talks to them at chapel, there's no point in our being." So she went on, although she knew that she was being criticized, and might be in trouble. But she went on with her programs and did a good job.

BN: Who were the people who gave you the greatest assistance in Iran, and in what way?

JD: I don't know; it's hard to say. There are so many people that helped me in various ways. Of course, they -- A great many of our girls were from the upper classes, and they had pull, they had the know-how, and they could get things done for us, both for the clinic and for the school. I think they were a help. But as to any one individual as being a special help, I don't think there was any.

BN: Who was your closest colleague?

JD: In the school, to begin with -- the first three years that I was there -- Charlotte Young was my closest friend. Then of course she got married. When I had been here in '24 through '26, I had attended some of the classes at the Seminary in New York, and one point made by one of the professors was that all missionaries should make friends among the nationals, and not stick to themselves. He thought it was very important. So when I went back, Gertrude Nourollah was there and she was in her own mission and she was very discouraged because she was all alone, so we became friends. She has been my friend all through the years. I think if I hadn't been there, she would have gone back to England. She couldn't take it, because in her circumstances she was really an outsider,

having studied in England all the years that she did and having her mixed parenthood: Armenian and Jewish. That was difficult. So the family didn't take her in too much. As a matter of fact, she really doesn't know her Armenian relatives. She identified more with the Jewish group, because she was working among the Jews. But she just had no friends. Of course, in our mission there, there were just the two of them: she and Miss Donners So I think that was very fortunate, that we could live together and help each other in various ways, although we never worked together except for some of our Friday schools. We got those groups to compete with each other and to see each other every year, and things like that.

BN: Miss Doolittle, I want to thank you very much for the opportunity that you gave me for this interview.

JD: It was very nice having you here; I appreciate your coming. It's a long trip to come for the little information that I can give you.

BN: The information that you gave us was great. Thank you very much again.

JD: Thank you for coming.

End of Interview