

## Mrs. Hamilton King's Bangkok Diary, 1911

by

William F. Strobridge\*

Hamilton King, newly-appointed United States Minister to Siam, and his family first viewed Bangkok's tiled roofs from a boat on the Chao Phraya River. Mrs. King and their three daughters accompanied the American envoy to King Chulalongkorn's tropical green kingdom in April 1898 following a long sea voyage. Before moving to Bangkok, the Hamilton Kings lived in the small village of Olivet, Michigan where he taught at his alma mater, Olivet College, as a professor of Greek. Both the adult Kings traveled in Europe prior to living in Michigan and Mrs. King studied art on the Continent. After he was chosen for the foreign service by the McKinley administration, Hamilton King, with his classical European background, reasonably expected appointment as ambassador to Greece. Instead, King went to Bangkok and the Athens post was filled by an American expert on Asian religions and languages.<sup>1</sup>

Settling at the riverside American legation and minus knowledge of Southeast Asia's peoples or affairs, the King family grew attached to their Siamese associates. The five transplanted Americans held the highest personal respect and regard for King Rama V. Unfortunately, Washington routinely rejected recommendations from Hamilton King to invite King Chulalongkorn for an official visit to the United States. In private correspondence to friends at home the Minister quietly solicited for some public exhibition of American friendship for King Chulalongkorn's country.<sup>2</sup>

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\* The author is an officer in the United States armed forces and served in Thailand from 1961 to 1963. He holds an M.A. from Georgetown University where he wrote a thesis entitled, "United States Relations with Siam 1898-1912".

1) The Athens post went to William W. Rockhill. He was soon recalled from Greece and became Secretary of State John Hay's Far Eastern adviser.

2) Letter, H. King to Rev. W.S. Williams, Oct. 2, 1903, King Papers, Georgetown University; Bangkok Des. No. 8, May 1, 1901, No. 113, Feb. 12, 1902, No. 296, Jan. 26, 1907; Dept. of State Des. No. 72, July 24, 1901, Dept. of State Telegram, Jan. 26, 1907, Record Group 59, National Archives Building (U.S.A.).

Meanwhile, the United States Minister's family busied themselves in their new home. The two older King daughters, Helen and Marie, were bridesmaids at the wedding of Louis Leonowens while young Cora Lee King contented herself hatching chinchok eggs under finger bowls. As time passed, the three King daughters left Siam to continue their education. Mrs. King remained in Bangkok with the Minister and served as a gracious hostess at the ramshackle American legation.

Through a series of coincidences, Hamilton King remained on the job as minister through 1910 when poor health forced him to seek medical care in the United States. Mrs. King went with her husband to Baltimore where he underwent a serious operation in October 1910 but found recovery slow. In Baltimore, a pair of American doctors advised Hamilton King that he could return to his Bangkok post and told him the change in climate would probably do him good. With this news, Hamilton King sailed from New York on December 10, 1910. His wife and their eldest daughter Helen, who now held a masters degree from Olivet, journeyed back to Bangkok with him.

The Minister's wife, Mrs. Cora Lee Seward King, kept a diary on the return voyage to Siam just as she had throughout their many years in Bangkok. Thus she recorded in her diary :

*Tuesday, January 24, 1911*

"... we reached the *American legation* about 10 A.M."

*Wednesday, January 25, 1911*

We sent a cable—"Seward—St. Louis—OK" so our dear ones may know we are safe before the long six weeks is over to wait for a letter. Father had an audience with Prince Devwongse. At 4 P.M. Father had a private audience with His Majesty King Vajarivudh in the Royal Mahachakri Palace.\*

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\* Neither Minister King nor Mrs. King ever mastered the Siamese language. The spelling of Thai names varied from month to month. I have spelled the names as they appeared in the diary but, in order to remove any confusion, I have also indicated the correct spelling in each case.

Vajiravudh as Crown Prince assumed the throne upon the death of his father, King Chulalongkorn, in 1910. His capital area's population grew to half a million and to the delight of the United States legation the Barber Line announced in New York City that its steamer *Shimosa* would call at the expanding city of Bangkok. In the modernizing city Minister and Mrs. King completed the required official calls and saw many old acquaintances among the British, French, Japanese, Dutch, Belgian, Russian, Italian, and German representatives to the Siamese court. After resuming duties in Bangkok, Minister King made his series of diplomatic calls by automobile.

*Friday, January 27, 1911*

... at 5:30 Mr. Tarler,<sup>3</sup> Father, Helen & I went to the German Legation to a Garden Party in honor of the Emperor's Day. There was a band & nice refreshments & we met a number of old friends & some new ones. We had a Napier car to go in & after being there about 3/4 of an hour we had to come back to the Legation and get Chang & our big wreath to be laid by His Late Majesty's urn in the Palace. Phya Phipat Kosa<sup>4</sup> ordered it made for us at the convent & it is of different colored artificial flowers—a wreath standing fully four feet high by 3 across—& thru the center a band of red, white and blue ribbon on which we sewed Father's official card. We were met at the entrance to the palace by a young Siamese in white & conducted thru a gate to the Palace where His Majesty King Chulalongkorn rests in his last home. The room is hung in white & gold. There are many wreaths given by different representatives & others and many things that have been used by His Late Majesty. We remained a few moments & put our names in a book there & came away realizing that we had lost a dear friend as well as a loved Sovereign. We came home quickly in the car.

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3) U.S. Consul General George Tarler.

4) Siám's Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

The number of cars increased steadily on the capital's streets and eighty-seven automobiles were imported during the year that Hamilton King returned to Bangkok. By 1910 the Siamese government decided it was time to control the nation's new driving machines. Henceforth all cars in the city had to be registered with the authorities. In addition to automobiles and steamships, developing Bangkok also witnessed the advent of aircraft.

*Tuesday, January 31, 1911*

... to the Aviation Meet at the Sports Club. There was a big crowd there. We enjoyed meeting old friends as much as seeing Mr. van der Born fly in his biplane. It rose beautifully & came down gracefully but on account of the wind was of short duration. He made several flights with one 'passenger' at a time. We came away before the last flight to escape the crowd.

Smaller crowds assembled whenever the Hamilton King's faithfully observed American national holidays during their stay in Bangkok. A total of 28 United States citizens gathered at the Minister's quarters above the American legation in February 1911 to celebrate the birthday of George Washington. In addition to dinner parties, other popular entertainment at the time among the diplomatic and business community included Bangkok's Japanese cinematograph and the occasional foreign circus that called there.

*Tuesday, February 21, 1911*

It simply poured in the morning and we feared for [the] afternoon but by 5 P.M. it was beautifully clear & fresh after the rain so practically all guests came. We had 2 large white cakes—'Washington's birthday' cakes—that I ornamented with citron leaves and stems and crystalized cherries.

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5) Bangkok Des. No. 581, March 29, 1910, RG 59, NAB; *Monthly Consular and Trade Reports* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1910), p. 52.

*Monday, February 27, 1911*

We ordered a "box" at Harriston's Circus & invited Mr. & Mrs. Blackett and Dr. Carrington<sup>6</sup> to go with us. The clowns were fairly good & the performing tigers (5 of them) were unusually good. Between times we fed the small elephants bananas and on the whole had a pleasant evening.

Pleasant, quiet evenings were replaced by important Siamese ceremonies on a grand scale later in 1911. Special cremations were due the kingdom's rulers and Bangkok prepared for King Chulalongkorn's cremation ceremonies. Before his passing away King Chulalongkorn had commanded that the Buddhist rites associated with cremation be economized and held on a smaller scale than normal for Siam's kings. Attending the cremation ceremonies as his government's representative, Hamilton King received a bronze statuette of King Rama V from the royal house in commemoration of the historic event. The American Minister afterwards described King Chulalongkorn to a friend as, "a wise and a good ruler, intelligent beyond his time and devoted to his people."<sup>7</sup> Mrs. King and Helen attended as many of the ceremonies as possible in honor of King Chulalongkorn.

*Thursday, March 9, 1911*

Helen helped Father all the morning in the office. She had drawn a plan of the road and location of the Cremation with the place in line of each minister & explained it so well that they applauded her as she finished.

*Saturday, March 11, 1911*

... to Mr. Snyder's to help select 3 representative Americans to attend the Royal Cremation of his Late Majesty. Mr. Snyder was chosen to represent the Presbyterian

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6) W.L. Blackett represented Standard Oil Company in Bangkok while Dr. John Carrington directed an agency of the American Bible Society.

7) Letter, H. King to Williams, Feb. 5, 1912, King Papers, Georgetown University; Bangkok Des. No. 729, Apr. 27, 1911, RG 59, NAB.

mission of Southern Siam & Mr. Harris of Chiangmai the Northern Mission while Mr. Blackett of the Standard Oil Co. is to represent the business community.

*Monday, March 13, 1911*

At 5 P.M. Father with the 8 other 'specially accredited' envoys went to the Dusit Maha Prasalit hall in the Royal Palace where the King's body rests in a golden urn. There were services conducted by many priests & a sermon by H.R.H. Prince Vajirayana\* the text of which was :

"Earnestness is the path of Immortality Thoughtlessness the path of death. Those who are in earnest do not die. Those who are thoughtless are as if dead."

An English translation has been made by H.R.H. Prince Svasti.

*Tuesday, March 14, 1911*

In the morning at 8 : 30 Helen & I reached the West Gate of the Palace (as 'no ladies are supposed to enter by the Foreign Office Gate'). We were met & looked after by Foreign Office officials in 'white mourning' & after entering the Dusit Maha Prasadh Hall\* we were personally conducted by H.R.H. Prince Svasti. The golden urn enclosing the remains of His Late Majesty King Chulalongkorn rests on a catafalque of teak wood that is *completely covered* by wonderfully wrought gold. Near the base of this five tiered Praa Bencha are tables containing wonderful golden urns & dishes of ancient Siamese workmanship, many of them set with diamonds. A large *bull* in solid silver is emblematical of the year in which His Majesty was born and an elephant is typical of Siam.

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\* Correct spelling.

The golden urn to contain the ashes of the Late King is thickly studded with diamonds. In the room were priests chanting & many personal things that belonged to King Chulalongkorn. After spending sometime in this hall we were taken by Kuhn Peraj to see the gifts presented to the various schools, hospitals & churches regardless of sect. The money that has always been used at royal cremations for elaborate fireworks or lakons was willed by His Late Majesty to be given in this way that his memory might be kept alive in the hearts of many people.

We came home about 11 A.M. very warm but much pleased with our morning. In the afternoon Mr. Westengard, dressed in the uniform of Phya Kalaya Maitri, called for Father in his motor car & took him to the Dusit Maha Prasadh Hall. They listened to more services by the priests & received gifts from His Majesty. When the latter gave Father his envelope (containing a paper saying he would receive a bronze statuette of His Late Majesty) he shook hands & said he was very glad to have Father here as he knew our love for his honored father.

*Wednesday, March 15, 1911*

In the eve Mr. Westengard came down with his car & took us up to the Premane grounds & we went all around to see the different pavilions & up to the top of the Praa Meru. Over the place where the urn is to rest is an immense floral 9-tiered umbrella made of a fine network of pure white buds made by 700 women, as told to us. The screens around the urn are elaborately embroidered on pale blue that makes a fine contrast to the rich red & gold of the building & cloth of gold curtain lined with red.

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8) Jens Westengard, Foreign Affairs Adviser and then General Adviser to the Siamese government.

*Thursday, March 16, 1911*

We put banana leaves in the top of our black hats to protect us from the sun as much as possible. Mr. W[estengard] took Helen & me at one o'clock to the pavilion by the Palace wall. The procession started by our pavilion at 2:45 & for an hour a constant march of soldiers passed us and about forty minutes was taken by the actual funeral cortege to go by. First of this was the Tamruet Band clad in scarlet with their old time musical instruments [and] behind this in the distance was the golden car bearing the Holy Prince Vajivanya reading scripture. The funeral dirge was played by one man and two drummers. Five tiered umbrellas & insignia of royalty heralded the Holy Prince. Then came the huge state funeral car drawn by 220 scarlet clad men. The same car was used at the cremation of King Mongkut but it has been entirely renovated & recovered with gold. Many officials in peculiar old Siamese costumes walked on either side & behind the car bearing the golden urn. Then came His Majesty the King in Field Marshal's uniform & wearing the sash of the House of Maha Chakkri. Then the Princes of the Royal Family & immediately behind them the Ministers who were all 'specially accredited,' then the Chao Phyas & the Phyas & the secretaries and consuls & then the many officials, European & Siamese, belonging to the government services.

This procession continued to the Premane grounds where the Special Envoys were able to see the ceremonies but where we ladies were not admitted so Helen & I drove home & sent the carriage back to wait for Father who reached here about 7 P.M.

*Tuesday, April 4, 1911*

Helen & I were anxious to see the final ceremonies connected with the cremation of His Late Majesty. At 3:30 P.M. we secured a fine place just inside one of the gates at



Dusit Park on the little street running by Wat Benchamabopitr. The procession was much the same as the day of the cremation only His Majesty Vajiravudh\* rode on horseback.

King Vajiravudh and much of his government were busy in 1911 with the cremation of his father and his own coronation which was to follow. These two very important ceremonies slowed diplomatic activity at the American legation, but commercial affairs continued to demand Hamilton King's attention. Before he left the United States after medical treatment to return to Bangkok he was strongly counseled by the State Department on their desire for greater American commercial opportunity in Siam. Such a forward attitude in Washington contrasted with the excessive freight rates charged by the United States for exports and the illiberal treatment of Bangkok merchants by American business houses. Despite these problems, American plows earned first prize at Bangkok's 1911 agricultural exposition, New York's Jewell Filter Company won a contract for the water plant in Siam's capital, and an American gained control of a local English language newspaper.<sup>9</sup>

*Monday, April 10, 1911*

In the afternoon at 3:30 Father & Dr. Hansen<sup>10</sup> went out to Sapanturn to the opening of the Agricultural & Commercial Fair. His Majesty was present but got there late so Father didn't get home till 7 P.M.

*Monday, May 29, 1911*

A small dinner in honor of Mr. Lawton who is putting in the new filter plant for Bangkok's water supply.

*Saturday, June 24, 1911*

At 3:30 P.M. Helen went in Philip's [Huffman] carriage to the new Bangkok Daily Mail office & helped turn

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\* Correct spelling.

9) Dept. of State Office Memo, Dec. 7, 1910, RG 59, NAB; *Daily Consular and Trade Reports* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911), Feb. 1911, p. 43, June 1911, p. 1387, Aug. 1911, p. 542-43.

10) Dr. Carl Hansen, U.S. Vice Consul General.

out the first edition of the paper in its new home. Mr. Westengard came for us in his motor car and we dined with him.

Jens Westengard as General Adviser was the senior of several United States citizens hired as advisers by the Siamese government. In 1911 other Americans employed by Siam included Dr. Ralph T. Edwards at the Government Serum Laboratory and J.C. Barnett, an adviser to the Ministry of Agriculture. The advisers, Siamese officials, and all Americans in Siam were invited to the traditional Independence Day celebration held every year at the legation compound. On the Fourth of July Mrs. King prepared 10 pounds of roast beef and 18 quarts of ice cream.

*Tuesday, July 4, 1911*

Dawned fair & cool (for this time of year) & continued fair with a good breeze till after 5 P.M. Just when guests were expected the rain came down in torrents for over half an hour! Still the old Legation was comfortably filled & all seemed to enjoy the aft[er]noon. Helen had draped American flags on the screen & placed Pres. Taft's picture there. A Siamese flag was over the photo of His Majesty & we had palms, ferns and roses in all the rooms.

In the aft. the band played the different national airs for each minister, charge d'affaires or other representative as he arrived & this pleased everyone.

At the Fourth of July festivities were American missionaries who taught school in Siam among their good works. Their schools included the first boarding school for girls in Siam, Wang Lang, which the Hamilton Kings visited frequently.

*Monday, July 17, 1911*

Right after breakfast Father drove with me to the Wang Lang landing & I went across to spend the day & night with Miss Cole.<sup>11</sup> Spent most of my day in visiting classes

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11) Edna S. Cole.

(125 children) in Siamese & English & in seeing their sewing, crocheting, bead work & lace making classes. We had a rest in the aft. & in the eve Mrs. McFarland came in. Miss Cole talked over & showed me the plates & plans for her new geography of Siam.

*Monday, July 24, 1911*

At 4:30 we started for Wang Lang. He [H. King] and Miss Cole had a look at the piece of land she is anxious to add to Wang Lang School & then we took her and Miss Blount<sup>12</sup> for a sail up the river.

Both King and Westengard kept close contact with American Protestant missionaries in Siam and worked with Prince Damrong on missionary problems. Coronation preparations, however, required the attention of officials in Bangkok. Doctors resolved the question of Hamilton King representing the United States at King Rama VI's coronation when they pronounced the Minister fit for continued diplomatic service. Mrs. King, a trained and talented artist, thought she would contribute to coronation embellishments by doing a sketch of King Vajiravudh and Prince Devawongse was informed in confidence of her project.<sup>13</sup>

*Tuesday, September 19, 1911*

Dr. Hansen went with Helen, Father & me in a launch to Dr. McFarland's<sup>14</sup> where the annual Presbytery dinner was given. Among other good things we had peacock & pomelo salad with the rice & curry for which the McF[arland] cook is noted. Mr. Westengard came down early for dinner on a special errand to say that Mr. E.H. Miller in the Department of Foreign Legations and Consulates had said to Luang Sanpraketch that our government wished to appoint

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12) Bertha Blount.

13) Letter, H. King to Prince Devawongse, Nov. 25, 1911, King Papers, Georgetown University.

14) Dr. George B. McFarland.

Father as "special representative" to the Coronation because of his long & honorable service & because they believe him to be persona grata to the Siamese government. Prince Devawongse\* said *his* government would be very pleased & they only hesitated on account of Father's health.

*Wednesday, September 20, 1911*

In the morning Dr. Poix<sup>15</sup> & Dr. Hansen came in to see Father & told him they felt sure that he would be able to stay for the Coronation & take part in all necessary functions without detriment to his health. So Father & Helen went up to Mr. Westengards to inform him & he conveyed the message to Prince Devawongse in the aft[ernoon].

*Friday, October 6, 1911*

In the morning Father was busy till nearly noon in the office & in overseeing the coolies pot some plants. I heard them laughing & went to see what had happened. A snake was trying to swallow a tokay & the tokay was trying to swallow a frog.

*Wednesday, November 1, 1911*

I got my sketch of His Majesty nearly completed on the Manila paper<sup>16</sup> & Mr. Jensen<sup>17</sup> came down to see about the adjustment of the electric lights. We took it down to the landing & all promises to be satisfactory. Father received last Thursday from the State Dept. Washington, this cable, "Credentials accrediting you as President's Special Representative at the Coronation mailed today. Adee." And at the Foreign Office this aft[ernoon] H.R.H.

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\* Correct spelling.

15) Dr. A. Poix of St. Louis Hospital.

16) The sketch is now on deposit at the Siam Society through the efforts of Mrs. C.L. Rose and others.

17) Mr. K. Jensen, an electrician of the Siam Electricity Co.

Prince Devawongsee said he had just received a cable from Luang Sanpakitch saying that the U.S. government would send a military attache during the Coronation.

An attache was considered necessary by the American Minister. As the date for Vajiravudh's coronation grew near the diplomatic community assembled decorations and made provision for official visitors. Hamilton King, conscious of the importance of Siam's coronation ceremonies, requested that the United States send a temporary military attache for the occasion. As a consequence, the War Department dispatched Colonel Lea Febiger from the Philippines to Bangkok where he acted as American military attache from November 29 to December 14, 1911.<sup>18</sup> Weakened from the bustle of coronation ceremonies, the American Minister also pressed his daughter Helen into service, and she marched in the procession as her country's representative.<sup>19</sup>

King Rama VI crowned himself according to Siamese custom and Hamilton King described the 1911 coronation as a splendid success. His vice consul, Dr. Hansen, unable to fully agree with the Minister's judgment, told the State Department that the Siamese were disappointed over America's skimpy participation at the coronation. He pointed out that Washington failed to send a warship or two for the royal occasion and neglected to do anything about refurbishing the American legation building for the event, a "tottering structure" compared to the imposing residences of the British and French representatives.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, the Hamilton King family, charmed by King Vajiravudh's coronation, kept pleasant memories of November and December 1911, although they were momentarily surprised by the effects among their staff of the revolution in China.

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18) Colonel Febiger published photographs of the coronation in the *National Geographic Magazine*, November, 1912, pp. 389-416.

19) The photograph of Miss King in the procession together with the others reproduced are on deposit at the Siam Society courtesy of Mrs. C.L. Rose.

20) Letter, H. King to J.A. Eakin, Feb. 5, 1912, King Papers, Georgetown University; Bangkok Cons. Des. No. 353, Dec. 15, 1911, RG 59, NAB.

*Sunday, November 26, 1911*

At 3 : 30 P.M. H.R.H. Prince Devawongse came to see the big crayon sketch I have made of His Majesty. We asked for any suggestions & he said he had none. He thinks it very good.

When we were ready for tea today we found that Wee, Fook & Check (the coolie) had all had their queues cut off ! They certainly look & feel queer. I am surprised at old conservative Wee.<sup>21</sup>

*Monday, November 27, 1911*

In the morning we were up earlier than usual & were as busy as we could be till noon. Draped flags on the front veranda against the vines in the center. Down on the landing we put up His Majesty's picture & draped two Siamese flags over it & American flags at the side and below the picture.

*Saturday, December 2, 1911*

We left home a little before 9 A.M. and went to Mr. Westengards where he & Col. F. [ebiger] joined us in their car & we went to the Dusit Maha Prasad Hall. We had been told that no ladies would be allowed to see the Coronation ceremony but got word late last night that if we were willing to stand for several hours we could go. The ceremony of crowning was supposed to commence at 9 : 40 but it was just 12 o/c when His Majesty placed the crown on his head, sitting on the ancient Coronation Stone. His Majesty received the consecrated water from all the provinces in turn & then came in the procession to the hall where we were waiting standing. After prayers by the Brahmin priests

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21) Wee, Fook, and Check were Chinese employees of the legation household. It is interesting to note that Sun Yat-sen visited Hamilton King in December 1908 whereupon the Chinese nationalist claimed American citizenship.

& the receiving of the royal standards & regalia & ancient weapons of the monarch His Majesty crowned himself while the Siamese anthem was played & men played the weird music of ancient times on conch shells and a salute was fired.

We left this hall about 1 & went to the National Library to wait awhile & cool off, then walked to Wat Phra Keo where His Majesty & the royal princes of Siam & the visiting princes were seated & waiting. His Majesty knelt before the altar (above which is the world renowned emerald Buddha) and declared himself defender of the faith in the presence of 80 priests under the presidency of H.R.H. The Holy Prince Vajiravanapatriarch of the kingdom & brother of the late king. This ceremony was quite brief.

*Sunday, December 3, 1911*

Drove to Mr. Westengards & drove behind his car (both of us bearing in front of our cars a large red 'krut' on a card). This took us right through the lines of soldiers on each side of the street & we found seats in the large pavilion erected at one side of the Premane grounds. His Majesty came in procession from the Grand Palace about 4 P.M. & Chao Phya Yomaraj gave an address to His Majesty for the people. At its close the 'common people' who were kneeling or crouching on the grounds & packed like sardines gave a peculiar wild call & then a most enthusiastic cheer three times. I had never heard it before. After this the procession with His Majesty carried on a gold palanquin & accompanied by a long line (four to eight abreast) of soldiers & sailors & near him men bearing the gold & silver trees from the different provinces, all in quaint old time costumes, went to Wat Bavaranives. It was most gorgeous & wonderful.

*Monday, December 4, 1911*

We had an early tiffin as we had to dress & go to the royal landing near the Grand Palace to see His Majesty go to

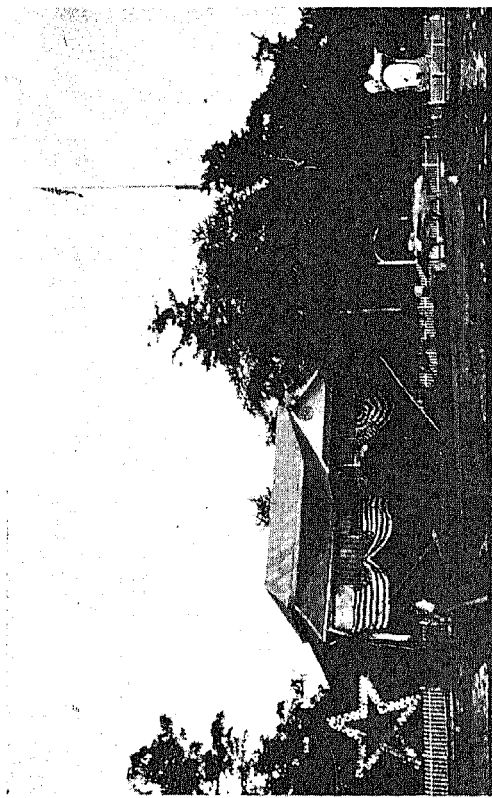
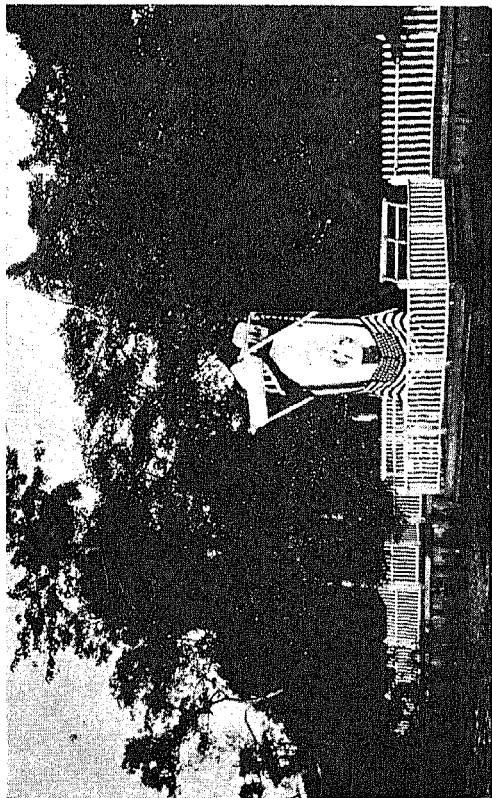
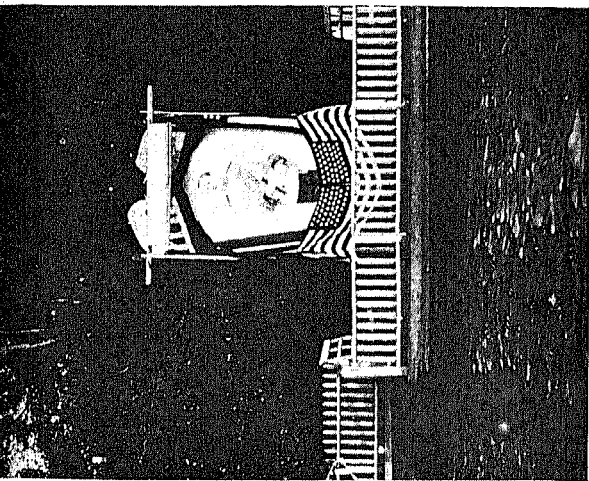


Plate 1.  
American Legation, Bangkok, November 27, 1911.



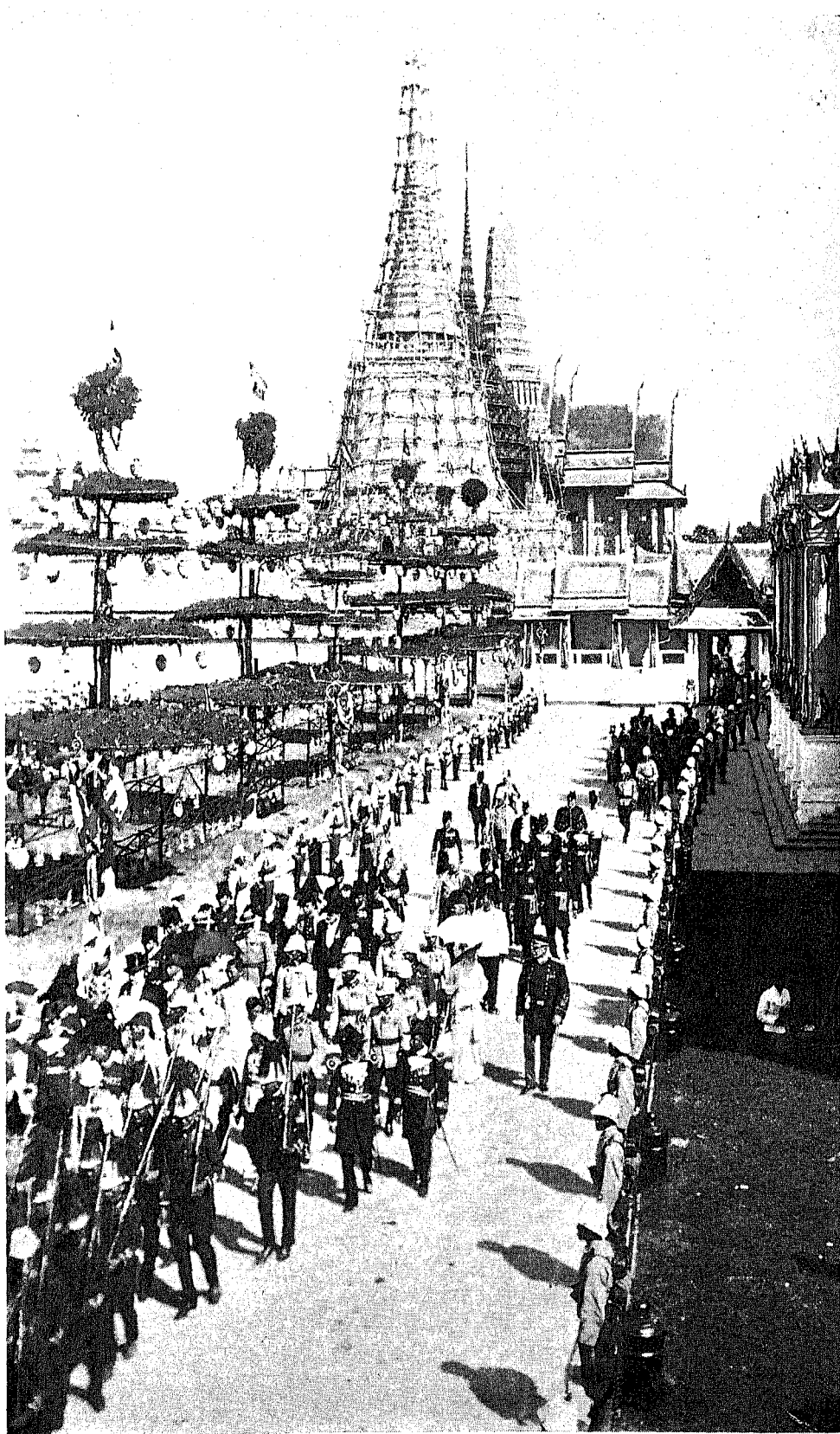


Plate 2.

Colonel Lea Febiger and Miss Helen King in the Coronation procession, December 2, 1911.

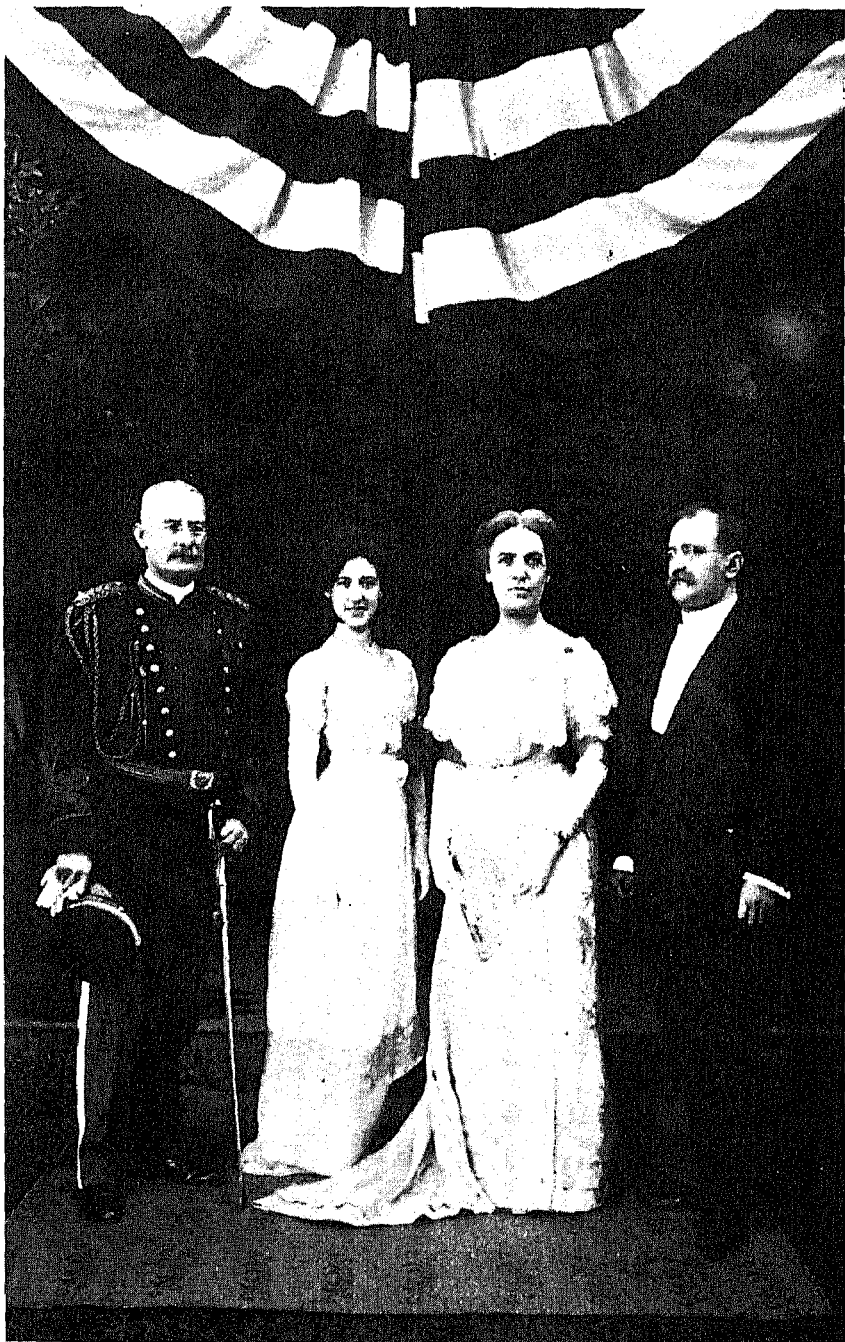


Plate 3.

Colonel Febiger, Miss Helen King, Mrs. Hamilton King, Minister Hamilton King. (Official photograph for the Coronation. *Ed.*)



Wat Chang according to ancient custom in one of the wonderful state barges. There was first a long procession of smaller barges & then the royal state barge for His Majesty, freshly gilded & with the oarsmen in their quaint red old time costumes. The gilded oars held in the air & dipped to the rythmical music of the men made a brilliant spectacle long to be remembered.

*Tuesday, December 5, 1911*

At 3 P.M. went to the Premane grounds to see 10,000 children assembled with banners to do honor to His Majesty. An address was made by the Minister of Education & His Majesty replied. Then cheer after cheer was given, the girls waving their handkerchiefs & the boys their caps. It was most enthusiastic but rather tiring as we had to stand much of the time & the sun poured in on our heads. We then dined with Mr. Westengard & the Colonel & then went out to the royal theatre at Dusit Park to the gala performance of old mythological plays. One play with a wonderfully gorgeous ballet lasted till midnight when we had supper & then again listened or looked rather at the peculiar Siamese dancing & posing till 2 A.M.!

*Wednesday, December 6, 1911*

We attended a very interesting ceremony in the aft[ernoon] in the pavilion at the Pramane\* grounds, presentation of the colors to the various regiments of the Army. Colonel F[ebiger] dined at the Grand Palace, His Majesty giving a dinner to the chief officers of the Royal Army & the military attaches who are here for the occasion. We all went to the grand ball. Everyone seemed to be there & the rooms were brilliantly lighted.

*Thursday, December 7, 1911*

At 12:30 Father, Helen & I went to H.R.H. Prince Lopburi's for tiffin. It was a very enjoyable affair. The

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\* Correct spelling.

palace is beautiful in itself & beautifully furnished. The Prince & Princess were very attentive & all the royal & special representatives were present. We had just time to drive to Mr. Westengard's where Father changed from his frock coat to his evening coat & then we went to the Premane grounds to see the review of the troops. 30,000 men were assembled. His Majesty on horseback rode in & out several times of the vast assembly. Then the royal party stopped near the large & comfortable tent where we were seated & all the different regiments marched past, taking till about 5 : 30.

*Friday, December 8, 1911*

After dinner we went to the royal landing. The Marine Corps band gave us a fine concert & the sailors gave an address which His Majesty answered amid enthusiastic cheers. Later we went to the riverside to see the royal barges pass by beautifully illuminated by rows & rows of lights. In one boat was a party of men who sang praises of His Majesty. Afterwards came beautiful fireworks on the river & finally the illumination of Wat Chang in the distance in colored lights. His Majesty said good night to his royal guests about 2 A.M. & passing near us, he stepped up to Hamilton & said, 'Mr. King I am glad I don't have to say good bye to you. I want you to say to your President that personally I am very glad he asked you to represent him here rather than sending a stranger.'

The royal carriage was waiting its four beautiful black horses & the scarlet coated men in attendance. But suddenly many of the sailors insisted in taking out the horses, attaching ropes to the carriage, & they themselves drew the carriage to the Grand Palace with oft repeated cheers.

After the coronation the Hamilton Kings witnessed a formation of the new Wild Tigers. King Vajiravudh's Wild Tiger organization was characterized by the Minister as a radical movement which nonetheless

offered Siam great promise in education and health.<sup>22</sup> The King family celebrated Christmas and then greeted some of the increasing number of American visitors to Bangkok.

*Saturday, December 9, 1911*

Father and I went in the car to Dusit Park to see the muster of the Wild Tiger Corps. The Queen Mother came about 4 & His Majesty a little later mounted on horseback & accompanied by a company of Wild Tiger cavalry carrying long spears on which were long, fluffy white tails such as are on the front of the royal barges. The royal standard, a large yellow flag with a red "krut," was run up on the staff & the men gave an address to His Majesty & he acknowledged it with the men cheering wildly. It was a glorious afternoon & a most enthusiastic welcome given the King.

*Monday, December 25, 1911*

Helen & I were up till late doing up packages & getting ready for Xmas so we slept rather late. We called in all the servants & children, 18 in all, & gave them their Xmas things. Cornucopias filled with nuts, fruit & candy for each one of the 18 with cheques for the boys & scarfs for the women. We had already sent cheques to Wang Lang School & Bangkok Christian College.

Mr. Westengard ran down to wish us a merry Xmas & helped us to get off all of Helen's 15 candy boxes and our roses (a dozen in each bunch) to the diplomatic ladies all done up in white tissue paper & our cards tied on with red bebe ribbon.

*Wednesday, December 27, 1911*

Went with Dr. Dunlap<sup>23</sup> at 5 P.M. to a prayer meeting to welcome Dr. Bradt's party of Americans who are touring

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22) Bangkok Des. No. 760, Nov. 24, 1911, RG 59, NAB.

23) Eugene P. Dunlap.

around the world visiting & studying missions connected with the Presbyterian church. Father & Helen went up to the reception following the meeting.

Hamilton King and his wife greeted American visitors and attended Siamese ceremonies throughout 1911. Often in physical pain, he regularly reported events to Washington where, despite his actions, no long range policy was formulated for relations with Siam. Well meaning American advisers who dined with the King family had little effect on the cordial but distant disposition of Washington for Bangkok. The few United States businessmen who ventured to Siam were given help by the American envoy but their numbers were so few that they could easily be accommodated in the small legation at the Fourth of July celebration. Mrs. Hamilton King worried about her husband's health and the United States remained unmoved by the active representation of its Bangkok Minister in 1911.