

After Long Wait, Lillian, Tippy Marry In Speedy Tempo

Civil Nuptials Follow Family Ceremony

By LILLIAN TRUAX EGILMEZ
ISTANBUL, Dec. 20 (By Mail)—Dec. 16, 1948, was a gray, cold, rainy day in Istanbul. Yet it was beautiful to me, for it was my wedding day.

It was typical of our erratic life, that after an eight and a half year courtship, our wedding was sudden and hasty. Our earlier well-laid plans had gone astray when the investigations by the Turkish government dragged from weeks into months.

Then, they came to us, an unexpected close a bare five days before my residence permit expired. To obtain another permit might have incurred additional delay, the very thought of which drove us headlong to the altar. Now, as an alien married to a Turkish citizen, the troublesome permit is no longer required.

This unforeseen turn of events had a silver lining, for it enabled us to have the kind of quiet wedding we both preferred but which, in Turkey is most unorthodox. Ordinarily friends and relatives would have been insulted that we should be so ungenerous about the whole thing. Under the circumstances our haste was forgiven, and a huge dinner party later smoothed the remaining rough edges of protocol.

Lillian Truax of Clermont who went to Istanbul, Turkey, to marry her Indiana University sweetheart, Ismail Hakkı Egilmez, is now Mrs. Lillian Truax Egilmez. The ceremony was performed in Istanbul after months of official red tape delayed the wedding. Mrs. Egilmez, a graduate of Ben Davis High School and now the wife of a Turkish businessman, has been describing her life in the Turkish capital. In this article, she relates the story of her wedding and the celebrations which followed it.

ENTERING the "holy state" in Turkey involves two ceremonies. There is the family ceremony, which is the big social affair, and the austere civil one recognized by the government. Generally, the civil ceremony is performed first and is followed by the family celebration. To simplify matters for us, we had the civil ceremony in the afternoon after the family one in the morning.

The social or family ceremonies are reminiscent of the days of veiled women and patriarchy in Turkey. The bride and groom exchange vows between themselves and place the wedding rings on the third finger, left hand. The rings are then removed and re-

placed, with appropriate words of doom's one distinctive character blessing by the head of the bride and groom's family. This is usually done in the presence of friends and relatives but, in keeping with our wishes, only the family was present for our ceremony.

The bride is customarily presented with a precious gift on behalf of the bride-groom. In olden days this gift was given when he was permitted for the first time to see the face of his bride. Nowadays the veil is gone but the custom remains. Thus I became the recipient of a beautiful ring of six exquisite diamonds. It was given many years ago to Tippy's mother by her father. As it was one of her treasured possessions, so it shall be mine.

IN THE AFTERNOON, after our private ceremony in the morning, we went to the Marriage Bureau for the civil ceremony. The Marriage Bureau for our precinct is located in Eminonu square. The front of the building houses the offices of the bureau. A side entrance off a narrow cobblestone street leads to the "salon" where the marriages are performed.

Contrary to its elaborate name, the salon is a huge bare room with rows of bare benches and straight chairs arranged as in a classroom. There are no draperies, no rugs, no adornments of any kind.

The tiled floor, which is the

same as the floor of the room, is

the steady drip, drip of water into the pail on the floor sounded like some sort of torture.

The gloom of the dry day outside, permeated the room making it even more cheerless.

In spite of the dreariness of the

room and the cold, blowing rain

all was gaiety, warmth, and smiles. And, though usually deeply affected by surroundings, I

felt content and happy.

I CHATTERED with Mr. Gustin of the American Consulate as Tippy arranged last minute details. Since regular hours are held here as in any civil office, there were many other people in the room. Having retained my nosegay of rosebuds from the previous ceremony, my identity was obvious. Much whispered conversation and benevolent curiosity was directed at the foreign office by the strangers.

We had not planned for anyone, other than the two required witnesses, to be present; but some 20 of these "strangers" were Tippy's friends who came to wish us luck.

Nejat Key, an ex-classmate of Tippy and mutual friend from Indiana University days, was to be his witness, and Mr. Gustin, the American vice-consul was to be mine. Mr. Gustin had to be present to fulfill the duties of his office, and I liked the idea of having an American as my witness.

The official who was to perform the ceremony sat in a high backed chair behind a table upon which a huge book lay open. Tippy and I were seated in ornate chairs opposite him. Tippy's witness sat at one end of the table and Mr. Gustin at the other. Who, asked the official, would interpret for me? Tippy said he would. And who would interpret for Mr. Gustin? Tippy "couldn't do both." Nejat was disqualified since he was Tippy's witness. One of the unexpected guests, an old college friend named Orhan, came to the rescue. Seating Orhan next to Mr. Gustin, the ceremony began.

The witnesses were asked, each in turn, their names and addresses. Then I was asked my name and birthdate, and the names of my parents. The official who was to perform the ceremony sat in a high backed chair behind a table upon which a huge book lay open. Tippy and I were seated in ornate chairs opposite him. Tippy's witness sat at one end of the table and Mr. Gustin at the other. Who, asked the official, would interpret for me? Tippy said he would. And who would interpret for Mr. Gustin? Tippy "couldn't do both." Nejat was disqualified since he was Tippy's witness. One of the unexpected guests, an old college friend named Orhan, came to the rescue. Seating Orhan next to Mr. Gustin, the ceremony began.

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