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Interview with Mr. Herbert H. Lank, August 20, 1970, regarding his participation in the Delaware Foreign Study Program in France in the 1920's. The interviewer is Myron L. Lazarus.

Q This is a recording of the Oral History Program. We're interviewing Mr. Herbert H. Lank and the interviewer is Myron Lazarus. Mr. Lank, when and where were you born?

A I was born in Seaford, Delaware, which is about 80 miles south of Newark in Sussex County, which was then a town of about 2,000 people.

Q What was your [inaudible - tape interference] . . . ?

A Well, it was a family of very modest circumstances. My father was a local mail carrier, rural mail carrier, and he had a store which he ran on the side because he couldn't keep a wife on a salary of a mail carrier, so he had to have a supplementary income. And then also he had a small farm at the edge of the town which gave us a lot of fresh vegetables and things of that type as he was keeping the family's body and soul together.

Q Um hmm. A man of many virtues, huh? Now, you went to school downstate?

A I was graduated from Seaford High School in 1921.

Q Um hmm. How old were you then?

A 17.

Q And from Seaford High School you went on to the University of Delaware.

A Went to the University of Delaware, yeah. I wasn't an outstanding student, either at the university or in high school, for that matter.

Q Did you have any particular vocational plans when you went to Delaware?

A Not clearly defined. I thought that I would perhaps eventually study law or go into teaching. But I didn't really crystallize my thinking until I got through the university, for that matter.

Q Now, what kinds of courses were you taking at the university that led you to this program?

A I just took the general arts course and I got interested in French, I think, primarily out of pique. It was the only course in high school that I flunked, and they had a very good teacher there from Mt. Holyoke, Miss Martin.

Q This was at Seaford.

A This was at Seaford. And she flunked me, as I said, the only course I ever flunked. But I was so annoyed by it that I had a confrontation with her--they didn't call them confrontations in 1900 in Delaware, 1920. And she said yes, she flunked me. She knew that I knew as much French as any-

body else in the class, but I simply wasn't trying, I had the potential and I wasn't using it, so she thought she'd give me a shock.

Q She shocked you.

A She shocked me and I was so annoyed that I decided I would damn well show her whether or not I should be flunked in French.

Q That little situation kind of directed the course of your life.

A Yes, it did, really. And then when I went to the university, I took French there under Professor Brinton, who was one of the most extraordinary men I've ever encountered in my life. Of course those were the days when professors were supposed to teach and did, and they didn't have any of this publish or perish stuff that was keeping them from their professional calling, which was to teach. And the professors at the university who really molded my life were the ones who were for my money great teachers, but as far as I know never published anything. But Brinton was an eccentric chap and absolutely madly in love with the French language and the teaching of the French language, even [sounds like "effective bury"] on campus when such things were unorthodox among the faculty.

Q I'm sorry, I didn't get that last--a what?

A A beret, I say he even affected a beret, wearing of a beret.

Q Oh, I see I've heard of a beret [accent on last syllable] . . .

A I'm using the French pronunciation of beret, not beret [accent on last syllable].

Q It's my ignorance. O.K. You continued your association with Dr. Brinton for a while.

A Oh, yes, I kept it up for years. In fact, he became a very good friend of mine right from the beginning even though I was only 18 years old. There was sort of a rapport which was sort of set up and . . .

Q Between you and Mr. Brinton.

A Between Brinton and myself, yes, which was maintained until he died. A very extraordinary little incident took place--in fact, several during his lifetime. You know, about the only reason I--one of the main reasons that I went back to the university, infrequently though it was, was to see Brinton and keep the contact up, because I had always felt rather close to Brinton and Kirkbride, who was the originator of the Foreign Study Plan. But Kirkbride died shortly after I left the university. And the other chap I maintained contact with, still do--in fact, I heard from him this week--was Carl Reese, who was at that time a professor of mathematics at the university--not that mathematics ever interested me at all. But Reese and I and Brinton and I were very close friends, to a point where Brinton called me one day, many years after I was out of college, of course, because I was living in Canada then, and said he had a real estate deal going on down there and he'd like to be associated with me in a business way. So

he and a couple of other professors on the campus and I bought some real estate outside of Newark. In fact we still own . . .

Q This is Glen Farms.

A No, not Glen Farms, beyond Glen Farms. We still own parts of it--lots of it's been sold off. And then one day I got a telephone call from Philadelphia, this was--well, it was about a week before Brinton died. And he was in the Jefferson Hospital in Philadelphia, and I had no idea that he was ill at all. So he called me up--he always called me Lank--and he said, "Lank," he said, "I just called you up to say goodbye to you." I said, "What do you mean say goodbye?" He said, "I'm in Jefferson Hospital and I'm gonna die."

Q My goodness, really?

A And he said, "I just wanted to let you know, when I'm up there on my little cloud," he said, "I'm gonna have an eye on you and I want you to behave yourself." So that was my last conversation with Professor Brinton. He was really a remarkable man. He was a screwball to a lot of people, but to me he was just sort of a natural guy, he did what came naturally. He took an extraordinary interest in students who responded to his particular love and interest, which was the French language.

Q Did you know Mrs. Brinton very well?

A Not too well. I knew his first wife. That was a very sad case. She was I believe a mental case and it ended rather tragically. Mrs. Brinton was I think Professor Kirkbride's secretary after I was in France. And of course I used to see her every time I went back, and I was always very fond of her. But I never came to know her very well because I just saw her intermittently on visits to the campus.

Q Um hmm. She's very much interested in this program, too.

A I imagine she would be, because she was in on the ground floor of the thing at the organizational level and time level.

Q Now, let's get back to the University of Delaware. Otherwise, you went on this program, this junior year abroad, mainly because of Dr. Brinton.

A Oh, yes, no doubt about that. Because I had no financial backing. I had to work my way through school for the most part. My parents couldn't afford it. And I was the oldest son, so I couldn't borrow very much from my two brothers, although they did kick in a few hundred dollars during my college career. I don't know how they got it together. 'Cause I waited on table and I raked leaves, worked in the library, and washed windows and babysat and everything else, and played in an orchestra at night--you had to do an awful lot of things to get through college in those days.

Q_2 [Unidentified female] What did you play in the orchestra?

A Played saxophone. That was the best-paying job I had. I got $5.00 a night for that. That was big money in the Twenties.

Q Now, how did you finance your year abroad?

A I pinched and pinched and scraped and borrowed, did everything but steal. Of course the program was not subsidized beyond the administrative costs. The students themselves had to pay their own expenses, but Pierre DuPont paid all the administrative overhead so the students didn't have to contribute anything to that. And I had borrowed money from an uncle and the two brothers. But that sounds like quite an undertaking, but in point of fact you got an awful lot for your money in those days. Twelve months abroad, including steamship passage to and from Europe, came to about $1,200, all expenses for the board and room, tuition, travel, side excursions, everything. It came to about $1,200. Today, I suppose it'd cost you about $5,000.

Q Now, did you have any occupational plans when you entered the program?

A Not at all. I had no idea what I could do, should do, or even wanted to do. When I finished the program, I was reasonably proficient. I had--I think perhaps because of an ear for music--had no difficulty with the tonal qualities of the language at all. The syntax was the thing that I had to struggle with, of course. But after I finished the course, made reasonably good progress in it, then I decided I wanted to teach French.

Q Now, you're talking about when you finished the year abroad.

A No, when I finished the university. 'Cause when I went back to the university for my last year, there was a chap at the head of the department--how he ever got to be head of the department, I wouldn't know--his name was Dr. Patterson. And he was my idea of a screwball.

Q This was your senior year at Delaware.

A This was my senior year. I came back and took advanced French . . .

Q That was after your year abroad.

A That's right. I had no intention of taking anymore French in the university, because it seemed rather a comedown to go from the Sorbonne to the Newark campus and study French. But this chap Patterson, he got very exercised over it. He was very annoyed that I hadn't signed up for this French course. So he really coerced several of us. He was the department head. He coerced us into taking this course, which was a lousy course. But he was the head of the department and thought we had to do it. So the finishing off of the French at the university was just a tame or almost unpleasant experience, because it was just a waste of time. But I felt that I had some responsibilities, some duties, perhaps, to show my loyalty.

Q And to get your degree.

A And to get my degree, yeah. Although that wouldn't have stopped it. They couldn't have stopped me getting a degree because of opting out of senior French. Plenty of other things that would get--lead you to a degree. He

might have been unpleasant, but I don't think he would have been . . . . Anyway, after my senior year, the things that popped into my mind were, of course, having traveled, which was unusual in those days for students to have a year abroad--most unusual, I thought of going into the diplomatic corps or the State Department. And I was advised by Dr. Ryden, who was head of the History Department--who took an interest in me as well, to go down and take the examinations. And he . . .

Q You mean for the foreign service?

A For the foreign service, yeah. He says, "You won't pass them," he says, "no one ever does but," he says, "then you will get an idea what the requirements are and then you can take a year at Georgetown or one of the universities in the Washington area that give specialized courses for this purpose. And then you get in on the second try." So I went down and took the examination. I remember one of the examinations was in maritime law, about which I knew absolutely zero, but I took the examination just to see what it would be like, 'cause I had to take it. And I had no intention of passing these exams and didn't pass them. The passing grade was 70, as I recall, and I got--on the total score I got I think 67, 68, which was extraordinarily surprising for me. And curiously enough one of the low marks I got was in French. There was another screwball there who was the French examiner, and I took this French thing so lightly that I was a bit cocky, and I went through this thing entirely with the wrong attitude. And he cut me down to boy's size on the mark sheet. But I had no intention of going immediately into the consular corps, because I had no hope of passing the examination. But I did toy with the idea of going back to the university for a year to bone up and take those courses that would permit me to pass the exam on the second try. But . . .

Q You were only two points away from it, weren't you?

A Yeah, well, you might as well be 200. So I then had to get out and get some money because I didn't have anything to fall back on at all. So then I thought I would try teaching French. And I went to a teachers agency, and they sent me up to--they said they had just what I wanted, so they sent me up to ~~Petty~~ [sp] Institute in Heightstown, New Jersey. They needed an instructor in French for this private boys school. And I was interviewed by the headmaster, and he asked me a lot of questions, but he showed no interest at all in my French. Of course, he didn't speak any French himself. So I said to him, I said, "This is not quite the type of interview that I'd expected. I thought that you'd be asking me about my French." He said, "Well," he said, "we're specifying a French teacher, but what we're really after is a basketball coach." So I said, "Thank you very much. Goodbye." And so after that rather sour experience with the educational world, I decided I'd never--I was never cut out for that sort of hypocrisy. And then I walked into the DuPont Company, off the street, back in Wilmington, Delaware, and asked them if they had any jobs, and they said there were some opportunities up in a little town called Parley [sp], New Jersey, where they were taking on college boys to learn how to paint automobiles, that they had just discovered a product called ducco, they didn't know quite what they had, but it looked interesting. So if I wanted to go up and apply for a job, I might get something.

Q And you were gonna paint cars?

A So I started off painting automobiles. But that wasn't the idea, that was just to give you an idea what the product was like. The commercial side of the thing, of course, was where I was destined. I had no intention of carrying on painting automobiles, although I'd rather do that than teach basketball. But it goes to show, I think, that you don't really know where you're headed, necessarily, when you go to college, or even when you're immediately out of college.

Q I was under the impression that you entered the DuPont Company and you did something with your French. Didn't you work with their offices abroad?

A Well, I'd say everything you see around here is due to the fact that I went to the Sorbonne under the Foreign Study Plan, because it was certainly the keystone which held up my career, subsequent career, with the DuPont Company. I've never worked for anybody else. And actually they sent me to this little town of Parley, New Jersey. Of course, ducco was a fantastic discovery. It revolutionized, among other things, the automobile business. And they sold the rights to--or they made a dicker on a partnership basis with a company in France to manufacture ducco in France, because obviously they weren't going to be able to take care of the world requirements from the United States. So I was on what they called the "marine order desk"--I was just an order clerk in Parley, which was a community consisting of nothing but a plant, a Y.M.C.A. and two staff houses. Of course they had a lot of houses for employees, but there was nothing there in the way of industry except the DuPont Company. So being a bachelor, of course, I was only 21, I was around the clubhouse at night--where we all lived, the bachelors lived, and I met a chap who spoke French. And he seemed to be a bit lost. And I got in a conversation with him and he said he was over to find out the details of this new discovery of ducco and they were going to manufacture it in France. This was all in French because his English was rather limited. And I said, "Well, I'm here every night, I haven't got anything to do, if I can help you at all with the translations or help you in any of your contacts, don't hesitate to call on me, I'd consider it a pleasure and an opportunity to be able to do so." So he didn't say anything more, but the next morning I went back to my marine order desk and I got a call to come in and see the export manager. It was hard to believe, but they had built up an export department then of, oh, seven or eight people, I suppose, and there wasn't anybody in there who spoke any foreign languages at all. So the export manager had this chap on his hands and couldn't handle him very well because of the language barrier, so he asked me if I'd like to transfer right away, that afternoon. And I said sure, I'd be glad to. So it was arranged that I should pass over to the export department forthwith, because of this language facility which I had. Then they signed the deal, put up a factory, and then they had to send over a man to run the factory and a man to run the laboratory. They chose those men--of course neither one of them spoke French, so they had to have somebody to go along with them to more or less hold their hand, and then I was asked if I'd go over to France and accompany these chaps and act as interpreter for them, which I was very happy to do. I made one mistake there. I said I was 21 at the time. I was 21 when I went with the DuPont Company, but that was 1925. But actually this was in 1927, early 1927, this thing happened. And so I got married in March of 1927 and when I came back from my honeymoon, the day I came back from my honeymoon,

the big wheel called me in and said they wanted to send me over to France for three months. And I said, "Well, that's splendid. What'll I do with my wife? I just got back from my honeymoon." He said, "Well, we can't handle that. It's only for three months, but it seems like a long time, I know." So this man, his name was Moussman [sp], he was the division manager of the DuPont Company, subsequently became the assistant general manager and was a remarkable man--so he said, "Well, we can't pay your wife's expenses on a short trip like this." But of course a short trip--everything was by boat in those days. And he said, "But we'll advance you the money and you can pay her expenses and take her along with you and we can take it out of your salary." [Inaudible - tape interference] . . . . Of course he was a smart cookie. He knew I should be saving some money and perhaps wouldn't be doing so, unless the thing was finagled in some way. So he concocted this whole plan so that they would take the expenses out of my salary. Then when I came back, ten months later, not three months later, he said, "Just put it in the expense account for all these expenses." And so that gave me a little nest egg which I'd never had before, and I proceeded to the stock market [inaudible - tape interference] . . . . But in those days people like Mr. Moussman, who was one of the great men of my life, they did unorthodox things in order to help young people get on the right track. But anyway, this year abroad, the first year abroad, I met Oriana Bailey, and we subsequently became engaged--not 'til after I had finished the university. She finished Smith in 1923 and this was in 1923-24 that I was there on the Foreign Study Plan. And she was over there polishing up her French and we met in the home of her father's partner--her father was teaching at Boston University, but he was in the travel business as well. So we met there at Thanksgiving dinner, having been invited by the assistant pastor of the American church there. And Nick Walker, John Winston Walker, who was also a member of the Foreign Study Plan, and I were asked to go to Thanksgiving dinner. And there were a couple of girls there; one of them was my future wife. So that's how we met. And then we became engaged after I finished the university. In 1927 we were engaged and we were married two months later. And then we went back to France, as I said, to hold the hands of this chemist and this production engineer. So I was called back from there because they had something that was rather important that I should come in the export department, they wanted to get me back in the export department. So I came back and went into export, all of this having been brought about, of course, because of my knowledge of French. And then in 1931, almost four years later, the manager in Buenos Aires was home on leave and was killed in an automobile accident. So there was a great tizzy and they had to find somebody to go down in Buenos Aires in a hurry. And fortuitously Mrs. Lank and I had been studying Spanish at night. We had the head of the Spanish Department at Rutgers University come over to the house, we had a little group there of five students and we studied Spanish assiduously, using the textbooks in fact of this Professor Moreno Lacalle of the University of Rutgers. So when this chap was killed and they had to have somebody to go to Buenos Aires in a hurry and it just so happened that I had a fair working knowledge of Spanish, [inaudible] . . . it was easier to learn Spanish after I had a good, sound basis of French. So I went down to Buenos Aires because of the language and was there from 1931 to 1942, in the golden era before Peron, and then the president of Canadian Industries, Ltd.--this was in the middle of the war--who had been [inaudible] to the British government and was one of the stalwarts around Churchill, a guy by the name of Purvis, Arthur Purvis, he was killed in a

plane takeoff at Prestwick. It was a sabotage job, evidently. There were a lot of people and he was on the plane; they were all killed. So then they had to have somebody in Canada, preferably with a knowledge of French because they were located in the province of Quebec, which is 80 to 85% French. So they ground out the requirement sheet and I was asked if I'd like to come to Canada in 1942. I had already given notice to the DuPont Company that I wanted to be out of Latin America within two years. I gave them two years notice because my kids were getting to the point where they had to have schools which I didn't think would be provided by Argentine residence. So they knew I wanted to leave there within a reasonable period of time and then this accident came, so I came up here. And then at that time Canadian Industries, Ltd. was owned half by DuPont and half by Imperial Chemicals, which was in England, as was the company with which I was working in Buenos Aires called Duperial. When I came up here, the French came in very handy, of course, because very few business executives, even today, speak French in this predominantly French province. As I say, 85% is the figure of the first-language group here. That permitted me to get into a lot of things which normally business people don't get into if they're unilingual. For instance, I'm on a couple of boards of directors where all of the transactions, all of the meetings and everything, concerning the company are in French. Well, if I didn't have this background, of course, which was brought into play by the Foreign Study Plan, there wouldn't have been any possibility of my serving on the boards of these companies. In fact, the fees that I get from these companies I use to an extent to send students abroad. I've sent ten young Canadians to study in France for a year in the last three or four years. So it's just the seed[inaudible] has sort of come to fruition and the old cycle has gone a complete turn.

Q_2 Is this done through a particular university?

A I'm doing it through Bishop University down in the eastern township of this province. So those are the broad outlines of . . .

Q Let's talk about this one comment you made on financing students abroad. Did you work through the University of Delaware any on this or anything?

A No, because at that time there was no possibility of getting income tax relief on contributions to universities outside Canada, and all of my income is derived from Canada. So I had to choose a medium.

Q You were involved with the Foreign Study Program before it went out of existence at Delaware, weren't you?

A No.

Q No? Weren't you involved with the Alumni Association . . . [end of side one of tape]?

A Well, the boards that I'm on, I have to go over--well, I don't have to, but once a year I usually go to a board meeting over there. [Inaudible - tape interference] . . . a French company . . . they have the board meetings here, but once a year they have the annual meetings over there.

Q You were describing the events that led up to your presidency of the DuPont Company up there.

A Well, I don't think there's much to add to that. The essential thing insofar as your records are concerned is that this whole thing all moseys back to the Foreign Study Plan, the influence that it had and the preparation that it afforded for my future career. Of course at the time I had no idea of what the significance of it all was. There was certainly nothing planned about it, obviously, when you make progress because a guy gets killed in an automobile accident and another guy gets killed in an airplane accident--things you can't very well plan for. However, if you do have an interest in languages, it usually goes with an interest in travel [fades out] . . . international affairs; if you apply those same interests to your business life, it's only natural that it should lead you into export work, foreign study work. I've had a keen interest over the work in the international things that I'm speaking about now. International Chamber of Commerce--I've spoken in several countries all over the world at International Chamber of Commerce meetings. I just relinquished two months ago the presidency of the committee for [sounds like "Institute of International Affairs"]. Well, these things lead to extracurricular activities that are more or less in line with the preparatory work that's gone on at the university level. Incidentally, before I forget it, we were talking about extraneous things, one thing leading to another. It's perhaps interesting to reflect upon the fact--you asked me if I gave the commencement address at Delaware in 1959 and I said I did. Well, that was in English, as you know. I also gave the commencement address at the University of Montreal in French when I received an honorary degree there, and I have had to give several lectures abroad in Spanish in connection with the International Chamber of Commerce. It's just a little sideline on how one thing leads to another. But another interesting thing to me at least, because it's so personal, is that living in Seaford, Delaware, this little farming community which subsequently became the first--the location of the first nylon plant in the world, as you perhaps know. Of course, I got full credit for that because I was the only employee in the DuPont Company who came from Seaford, Delaware, so all of my old cronies there thought I had arranged it. Obviously, I had nothing to do with it at all. But my greatest distance away from home, until I went to the university, was 125 miles. I actually went to Philadelphia once on an excursion with my father and my brother. So buzzing off from Sussex County to Paris was quite an adventure.

Q_2 You went to Philadelphia by boat?

A No, I went with my father. So in July of 1923 the eight of us in the Foreign Study group, and Professor Kirkbride, went over to France on the old Rochambeau, which is quite a story in itself. We were met at the [inaudible - French place] by Brinton, Professor was already there. And he proceeded to celebrate this inaugural visit by taking all of us to a little cafe right across the street from the [sounds like "Gar San Lazer"]. Well, I wasn't as sophisticated as some of the others, but after all I was only 19, and I'd never tasted alcohol. So he asked me what I wanted to drink, and I had no idea what to order. I said, "Oh, something sweet." So he told the waiter to bring a Vermouth Cassis, which was very sweet. I finished that and he said, "How'd you like it?" I said, "It was very good. I liked that." He said, "Well, you better have another one." So I had another one and then after that I got up from the table to go to our little hotel in the Rue de Amsterdam, which was right next door, and I found that

my knees were made of rubber, so that was another inaugural incident which I have to credit to my dear old friend Professor Brinton. My wife and I met in Paris in 1923. We went back there in 1927 [interrupted by telephone]. As I say, my wife and I met in France in 1923. We married in 1927, March, and then I went back to France to work for this [inaudible - French name] that I spoke to you about. So our first child was born in France, and automatically was a French citizen, of course. He's 42 now, he's a DC-8 captain with Air Canada and buzzes all over the world--just got back from Moscow a couple of days ago. And our second child was born in Argentina; our third child was born in Argentina. We all came to Canada in 1942 and all became subsequently Canadian citizens. The boy who was born in France married an Irish girl that he met in London. The second boy married an American girl that he met in Stockholm. And the third boy married a Canadian girl he met in Switzerland. So these things start off with the Foreign Study Plan and they get into very ramified situations, both corporate and personal.

Q Mr. Lank, let me ask you a question that I don't know if you quite answered it. You talked about how beneficial this program has been to your understanding foreign language and so forth. What did you learn culturally from this program that may have helped you out later?

A I think you learn as much by osmosis as you do in any other way, as far as the foreign study plan. Because I took an arts and science course at Delaware and majored in modern languages. But actually the cultural side of the thing is more collateral than anything else. When we were in France, aside from the classroom work, of course, we had to see 26 operas, I think it was, and 28 plays, and all this, of course, was evening stuff. And then we had to do so many visits to museums. We had concerts. We had travel. All these things were part of the plan, but they weren't part of the curriculum. I think that culturally you pick up as much from the collaterals as you do from the major activities.

Q Did any of this program change your outlook on life or on people?

A Well, I think everything changes your outlook. Just how specific it was--I remember one thing that I did certainly kind of learn--I'm not sure whether I learned it from the French experience or whether I learned it from the Spanish experience. And that is that all this yakkety yak about traveling and making a better world because you come to know people better and their language and their culture, is just so much hogwash, because you can come to know people an awful lot better and therefore come to hate them an awful lot more. You don't necessarily have to love anybody simply because you know them better. So I think there's an awful lot of overstress . . .

Q Don't you understand them better?

A Yeah, well that may not be a very good thing. You may be much better off as far as the peace of the world is concerned if you don't understand the other guy and what he's doing. When you get to understand him and know the skullduggery that he's interested in, then things get complicated. No, I'm not a believer in the so-called fact that you better know a person, the more you're gonna like them. I know too many people that I dislike and I dislike 'em because I know them too well.

Q But at least it destroys a lot of preconceived notions that may be wrong.

A Oh, yeah, sure. But when you eliminate the preconceived notions, that doesn't mean that the notions are going to be any holier or any more trustworthy than the preconceived notions.

Q This has nothing to do with what we've been discussing, but in reading over your communications with Brinton and the university, I noticed you had some views on the humanities and the sciences that were kind of interesting.

A Well, the scientists have obviously gotten us into an awful fix, because they don't know the social consequences of their discoveries. Perhaps the worst thing that ever happened as far as the Middle East is concerned is the transistor radio. Every Egyptian's got one even though he hasn't got a camel, and therefore he's got an instrument which can receive all the propaganda and only the propaganda that is being dished out from Cairo. So how you stop those things, I'm sure I wouldn't know.

Q But you're saying this is the effect of technology. Do you think a knowledge of the humanities would be of value to the scientist?

A Oh, sure. Otherwise I don't think--he's not a well-educated man; he's not a well-educated man if he's merely a scientist. I think the proof of that of course comes in the life of Einstein. Einstein was a very cultured man. One of the reasons he was so miserable was because he knew the consequences of scientific results. I think a scientist can be a much happier, more placid man if he's not a humanist, because he just doesn't realize what the effect is going to be of science upon society. However that's a long way from the Foreign Study Plan.

Q Well, not really, because what you learned in your program was something of the humanities--and your profession has to do with the sciences.

A Well, I really have no profession.

Q Well, let's say your company . . .

A No, it does, but I don't, you might say, in the sense that I'm not a physicist or a chemist or a mathematician at all. I'm a humanist, and yet I headed for many years what was regarded as the top technological organization in the country, in the industrial field. But I don't know the first thing about chemistry or physics. So you prepare yourself, I think without even realizing it, for getting along with people and appraising people and choosing people, encouraging people; and if the guy you are encouraging people is a physicist, then he does a good job in physics, a chemist a good job in chemistry, and you achieve some sort of a facility for molding various elements together. But for someone who's doing the molding, which was my role, he doesn't have to be a scientist. If you did have to be, of course, I wouldn't have been president of the DuPont Company of Canada.

Q You then would recommend a humanist in that job rather than someone educated strictly in the sciences.

A No, not necessarily. I think it depends entirely on the individual. I think you find just as wonderful humanists among the scientists as you'd find--certainly more humanists among the scientists than you do scientists among the humanists, because the humanist as a rule, he shies away from

science, but the scientist doesn't necessarily shy away from the humanistic studies.

Q Well, I have no other questions, Mr. Lank. I want to thank you very much for your interview and the time you spent with us, and I guess we can . . .

A I don't know--have you . . .

Q Have you any final comments you want to make about the program?

A No, I don't think . . . I think it's a great tragedy that the University of Delaware let the thing drop. It was the great experiment in education, I think, of this century. Of course it's been followed up by an awful lot of people, and a lot of universities. But the University of Delaware I don't think has ever had the credit for the fact that it did originate it--Kirkbride, Brinton, and a chap who's hardly ever mentioned, his name's Buzz Wilkinson. He was the business administrator, so-called, at the time of the university. He was an Englishman with little formal education but a remarkable man. And he did an awful lot for the plan itself, getting the DuPonts to finance it. And my senior year I was faced with not being able to finish my year because I just didn't have the money. And Buzz was a chap you could approach, and I explained to him my problem. He says, "Forget about it." And he called up P. S. DuPont's secretary and he said, "How much does the guy need?" And Buzz says, "He needs $250.00." So he sent out a check for $250.00, and that's how I got through my senior year. But when you had 900 students on the campus, of course, you could expect a man of his qualifications to be really interested in people and their problems and do something about it. But Kirkbride had some very discouraging moments. He took on the administrative responsibility, and Buzz Wilkinson really got him over the hurdles. Brinton was more happy-go-lucky, he was strictly on the disciplinary side, that is as French is a discipline, and he wasn't particularly bothered by details of budgeting. Things of that type just didn't really interest him. I don't know that he would have been capable of handling them anyway. So the real nitty gritty part of the thing was Kirkbride and Buzz Wilkinson. Buzz because--they called him Buzz because he was business administrator. And Dr. Hullihen, of course, who was the president of the university at the time, took a very keen interest in it.

Q Did you have much association with Dr. Hullihen?

A More than a student would have today. I mean, I used to--of course, when there were 900 students on the campus and you were engaged in an experiment like this, you're bound to be thrown with people that normally you wouldn't be thrown with. So I used to see him socially occasionally and also actually he called me into his office two or three times and asked me about things that he thought I might have some competence in. But the thing that was more important to the first Foreign Study group than to any other group was the fact that it was the first group, and it was such a novel experiment, so much interest was aroused in France, where we were, that we got to see people and meet people that one wouldn't normally meet as a student. And there were only a few hundred foreign students at the Sorbonne when I was there. Of course today there are thousands and thousands. So the members of the faculty could give us some attention. The fact that they had a

committee of three examine us when we arrived, for accent and knowledge and so forth, and the same committee of three examined us when we left to determine whether or not the experiment was a valid one, productive one, was an indication of just how much attention you could get from a university if you're in a novel situation or if you're in a small situation. By the same token, these professors at the Sorbonne, plus Brinton, who was an extraordinarily active fellow, they put us in touch with a lot of people. We were invited here and there and elsewhere. The mere fact that I met my wife on Thanksgiving day was derived from the fact largely that there were very few students in Paris at that time who were from abroad. So when a hostess called up the minister or the assistant minister of the American church and said, "This is a national holiday; gather a couple of students and bring them up," why, you got a much better chance of getting an invitation if there were only 50 Americans there than you would have if there were 5,000. So we got the breaks. And then, aside from that, we got to meet people. [Inaudible - French name] who started the Citie Universitaire [sp] was interested in us and at the November 11th dinner, 1923, Armistice Day, Kirkbride somehow wangled an invitation for us and we met Pershing, we met Foch, and people like that. Well, you don't get that anymore because of the tremendous weight of numbers of students there. And there was a very well-known French hostess over there who was interested in us because it was a novelty, I suppose, and she used to invite us occasionally to what was called the Cercle [inaudible - French name]. This was after the war and they had the Hands Across the Sea and so forth and so on, you know, so they had this Cercle [inaudible], which was a former magnificent residence on the Rue de [inaudible - French street name]. And we met a lot of big wheels there in these social functions. And it was a club called the Cercle [inaudible], and years later when I was in a position to pay my own way, I was having lunch there one day with a very close friend of mine, Jean [inaudible French name], the old tennis star, Davis Cup champion of 1927, '28, and I was telling Jean that I had always had sort of a dream that someday I would belong to this club where as an impecunious student I was received so graciously by these people. So he said, "Well, why don't you join?" And I said, "That's a good idea." In the meantime, they'd changed their name to the Union [inaudible - sounds like "de Fallier"] but they still had the same premises. Well, I joined the things years and years ago. I never use it but once or twice a year, maybe. It's sort of silly, but it's a sentimental thing. It's just a couple of doors from the Elysee Palace. These are little side things that you follow through with. You don't--if I need another club--I don't know why, but I maintain this membership merely because of this association that was initiated during the foreign study year in 1923-1924. And going back there to work I established contacts, acquaintances and friendships, which I've maintained to this day. And I'm never lost in Paris for someone to call on. Of course some of them are dying off, but there's still some stalwarts left. So these things have an enriching effect on one's life which certainly was never foreseen when I scrounged around to get $1200.00 together to have a year abroad.

Q It's quite obvious today that no one could get the personal attention that you got in that program, but do you think this kind of program is still possible today?

A At the University of Delaware?

Q Well, just any university--this kind of completely organized, planned program.

A Well, they've got it, of course. Smith's got it, Yale's got it, Stanford's got it--there are a half a dozen of them that have it.

Q With this kind of planning, this kind of detail?

A Yeah, it's detailed as far as the structural part is concerned, but I don't see how they could possibly have the personal attention, the personal contact, the personalized flavor that we had, because we were only eight students.

Q I was thinking in terms of why would a student join this kind of a program now since Europe is easy to get to, you know, and students travel on their own with fellow students. They'd be less likely to bother with a program like this.

A Well, my reaction is just the opposite. I should think that there's still enough novelty in the thing to make it just so far ahead of another humdrum year on the university campus where you can attend classes or not if you want to. It's quite a change. I think for any guy who doesn't take life seriously to go over there and take a year abroad, well he might as well wait until he gets to the university and gets a sheepskin and then go over there and loaf around for a year. But if he really takes it seriously, I think there's almost as much to be gotten out of it today as there was in 1923, except for personal contact, the intimacy that we had. Of course expenses are quite different, too. I had an excellent boarding house--well, boarding house, there were just two of us there, a private family, really. And I had a lovely room--no bath in it, of course, but I had a piano in the room, and board and room was $40.00 a month. Today I suppose it would be $200, $250, maybe $300.00 a month, to get the same accomodations that I had. So there are financial limitations. But the affluent society that we have, there are an awful lot more people that can afford to spend ten times as much as I spent, than was the case in 1923 and '24. But I've always felt it was a great shame to wash this thing out at the university. The people who succeeded Kirkbride--Brinton didn't head up the department, and they had some--in my opinion--people without very much vision, who succeeded the Kirkbride/Brinton group.

Q Did you know Dr. ~~Byer~~ [sp]?

A I only met him. I only met him. But I gather he was not too enthusiastic about this thing.

Q Well, I think it was the president--Carlson [sp]--who scotched it.

A I never got the story, because I had no occasion to be intimately associated with the thing; it didn't last for a terribly long period.

Q Well, it was mainly that he envisioned the university as a state university and where the program was helping more people from out-of-state than residents of the state of Delaware.

A Well, that's an administrative problem, of course. In our group of eight

there was only one person from outside and he was a bit of a loner. The other seven kept together very intimately. Of course they all went on and followed through, most at least followed through with the work that they did at the university. The most brilliant one in our crowd, of course, was the blind fellow, Frankie Cummings, who was my closest friend. He went on and got his Ph.D., and became a world-known authority, of course, in the administration of blind societies and work and so forth and so on. He died when he was about 50. But he was absolutely brilliant, and an absolutely charming fellow. And then after him, Dr. Dougherty [sp?], you may have interviewed him because he's very well known in the modern language world. I think he's the immediate past president of the American Society of Professors of Modern Languages. He had a very good career connected with the State Department's extracurricular activities in teaching French in France as summer work that he carried on while he was at the University of Oregon, where I think he's still teaching a few courses. Of course Winston Walker, he started off teaching French; he wandered into administration. Tommy Turner, he started off teaching French and he wandered into Y.M.C.A. work.

Q We've interviewed both of those two.

A Snyder, who had great potential, he was killed in an automobile accident three or four years after he got out of the university. Mendenhall went into the banking business, I went into industry, and Cooley, who was the loner from outside--and the only reason he was there was because Kirkbride went to a little college in Pennsylvania called Westminster, I think it was called, and Cooley was a student at that college, and he heard about this thing and knew Kirkbride and he got in on the act. But there's no doubt about it, of course, the real guts of the thing comprised of Kirkbride, Brinton, Wilkinson, with the backing of Hullihen and the money of P. S. DuPont--although I don't suppose P. S. ever put in more than $50-$75,000 in the whole thing. I haven't any idea what he did put in over the years, but he got it off the ground, mainly, that was the important thing.

Q Well, I want to thank you and I don't want to take too much more of your time.

A Well, we'd better see if we've got anything on this tape.

[END OF INTERVIEW]