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Interview with Mr. John Winston Walker, August 7, 1970, regarding his participation in the Delaware Foreign Study Program, 1923-24. The interviewer is Myron L. Lazarus.

Q This is a recording of the Oral History Program of the University of Delaware. We're interviewing Mr. John Winston Walker, and this is Myron Lazarus doing the interviewing. Mr. Walker, when were you born?

A I was born in January, 1903 in the city of Wilmington.

Q Where in Wilmington? I didn't know you were from Wilmington.

A Yes. Where I was born has been absorbed by the DuPont Company in some of their new buildings, but...

Q You mean around 10th Street?

A Yeah. It was at 11th and Tatnall.

Q Um hmm. And where did you go to public school?

A I went all through the Wilmington Public Schools, and I was graduated from Wilmington High School in 1921.

Q Where did you go to elementary school?

A My elementary school was what we called at that time School No. 2, which was at 11th and Washington Streets, and we were there for five years and then we went to No. 24 School, which is opposite what is now the Delaware Hospital, for grades six, seven and eight, and then we went to the Wilmington High School for grades nine to twelve inclusive.

Q Um hmm. And then from there you went to the University of Delaware.

A Yes.

Q Um hmm. What were your goals in going to the University of Delaware? What were you planning to do?

A Well, very honestly, since I was in high school a relatively good student in math, my teachers suggested that I start in the field of the School of Engineering. However, after a year in the School of Engineering--and I might say that I passed my freshman math very successfully--the idea was talked about of a group going to France in their junior year, and so I changed from engineering into Arts and Science and started to specialize in French.

Q But your only motive was the fact that you wanted to go to France, was that the major motive?

A That was the prime reason.
Q Which was the motive of many people who went on this program. Then what kinds of courses did you take in preparation for this?

A Well, in order to go to France, of course, we took French courses. I think we had two French courses at that time plus the regular courses offered in the Arts and Science School, such as English, history, science and so on.

Q Was your ambition then that you might teach?

A My primary ambition was at that time to go either in the diplomatic or consular service. But after I had been in Europe and talked to some ambassadors and consuls and consul generals, and I found out that it was necessary to have a private fortune or a private income in order to back up the government salary and allowances, I decided that this was no deal for Walker.

Q Uh huh. What professors did you have contact with? For instance, did you know Dr. Brinton?

A Dr. Brinton was the main inspiration, I would say, for our interest in French. However, the man who was, shall I say, the promoter of the foreign study idea was Raymond H. Kirkbride, and he had gone to France before our group went over in order to make the necessary contacts, both scholastic, social, living, and things of that type.

Q Um hmm. He spent the whole year about before your group went over.

A I believe so.

Q All right. Were there any last-minute instructions before you went on this trip? In Newark. Were there any ...

A I would say that there were no specific instructions insofar as our personal conduct was concerned. We I think were impressed that we were representing the University of Delaware, that we were the first group to go over under the auspices of the university, and therefore it was up to us to make a good record for our university and for ourselves in order to encourage other groups to be permitted to follow.

Q Um hmm. Did you have any contact with the university president in regard to this program?

A Dr. Hullihen encouraged the program. Dr. Hullihen was at that time the president of the University of Delaware. He encouraged the program and he came over to visit us in the summer of 1923 in Nancy, France.

Q Um hmm. How about talking about your trip over. You went to New York first, and you stayed overnight in New York.

A We stayed overnight in New York.

Q Were there any kinds of preparations there?
A: No, Mr. Pierre S. DuPont treated us all to a theater party the night before.

Q: This was in New York.

A: In New York City. He treated us to a theater party the night before we sailed and then we sailed on—the boat was called the Rochambeau, and we sailed somewheres around July the 10th. And the reason why I say that is because we were on the Rochambeau the 14th of July, which is Bastille Day, and we had quite a celebration on the boat.

Q: Um hmm. Well, tell us about it.

A: Well, of course on the boat on Bastille Day, which is similar to our July the 4th, the French go all out. They had a tremendous meal, and then after the meal we had a show put on by the passengers on the boat for the enjoyment of the other passengers on the boat. And some of our group participated. Mr. Lank played the saxophone and yours truly sang—if one dare say it as such—and we had opera stars who also sang, they were on the boat. And it was generally a gala evening.

Q: Um hmm. By the way, do you remember the show you went to that Mr. DuPont treated you to?

A: It seems to me that it was one of the Music Box Revues, which were very popular in that period and were almost an annual production.

Q: Um hmm. Can you think of anything else that happened on the boat besides the celebration of Bastille Day?

A: No. The predominantly large number of people going over at that time were French who were returning home for the summer or after having been in this country for some time. It was a very cosmopolitan boat, and I think we picked up a little bit of French there on the way over. But other than that, it was a crossing, and of course that boat today, which is no longer in use, took 10 days to go over, and the American people can’t waste that much time.

Q: Dr. Brinton was on this trip.

A: No, but Professor Kirkbride was with our group all during the whole time we were in France. And he was the man in charge of the group. And I might mention that this seems a little bit unheard of at this particular time, but some of our members of our group went to France from New York and after a year back to New York on a budget of $1,000. And that included tuition, books, room and board, spending money, theaters, etc. It’s no longer possible.

Q: No, I’m afraid not. Now, when you got to France, you landed at . . .

A: Le Havre.

Q: And from there you went to Paris.
We were in Paris about two or three days, and then we went out into the territory of Alsace-Lorraine to the little town of Nancy, where we attended summer school with a great many other foreigners, and where each one of us lived in a private French home. So that it was necessary that we learn French in order that we might get along with our new family.

Did you do anything in Paris before you went to Nancy?

The only thing we did, I think we took a tour of the city, one of the brief one or two-day tours, you know, where you try to see everything and end up by seeing little or nothing, just get a gross impression.

Tell me, what about the family you stayed with, do you remember them?

I can no longer recall the name of the family, but the name of the street was 83 Rue Isabey, that's I-s-a-b-e-y. And there were two sisters in the family. We usually had our dinner in the back yard where it was pleasant, and they introduced me and some of the other group to various other people in the area and we went on picnics and little social gatherings together.

How long were you at Nancy?

I would say six weeks.

Um hmm. What was the university like?

Well, the university was rather small. There were a lot of German-speaking people there at that time because if we go back a little bit, Alsace-Lorraine had been in German hands after the war of 1870, and then after World War I, it was returned to France, so France was doing everything it could in order to get the people of Alsace-Lorraine to speak French, to like French, to become French. So there were a number of German-speaking people there. It was a very polyglot student group. We were fortunate in that . . .

Then mainly the purpose in Nancy was to learn French, even for groups that weren't part of your group.

Yes. And I would say this, that most of us had the background in French grammar and in French vocabulary, so that within several weeks, we could make ourselves fairly well understood and by the time we left Nancy we had a reasonably good grasp of ordinary conversational French--no extended discussions, but enough French to get around.

Enough French to understand the lectures.

Yes, yes. And of course through the contacts which Professor Kirkbride had made, we had--we were entertained by the president of the university and several members of the staff at some social occasions. There also was a dinner given by the University of Delaware to the members of the French faculty at the University of Nancy, and this dinner was attended by Dr. Mulliken, Rodney Sharp, Professor Kirkbride, and it was held at the Cafe Stanislaus and it was a really tremendous, remarkable dinner. I think we started about 7:00 and ended about 11.
With all the good French food. Do you remember the French food at all?

Well, I don't recall what we had at that time, but of course being a formal dinner, everything—you have a course for each thing and then with each course you have a different type of wine. And in between the courses you make social conservation, and as a result...

With the wine.

With the wine, and of course the combination of eating more than you normally do and drinking more wine than you normally do, everybody became quite loquacious by the end of the evening.

Sounds wonderful. Now, do you remember the family you stayed with in Paris?

Yes. After our sojourn at Nancy, we returned to Paris approximately the first week in September, and we attended the Alliance Française [sp?] which is a sort of prep school for foreigners. Here again, the majority of our group lived with individual families, although three members of the group lived in a French student dormitory. The family with whom I lived, their name was Weibel, W-e-i-b-e-l. The husband had been a major or commandant in the French army in World War I, and the wife had been head of a convent and retired for marriage purposes. And we lived with them very happily until I left France the following summer. We of course had the French custom of having breakfast in bed. Lunch was always a heavy meal, and I'm not sure whether this habit is still prevalent, but it used to be that all the stores and all the offices closed down from twelve until two in order to permit their employees to go home for lunch. And lunch was a major meal. Then usually in the afternoon around 4:30 or 5:00, we would stop somewhere to have tea and pastry, or a glass of beer and a ham sandwich, and usually dinner was about 7:00 in the evening.

Um hmm. That wasn't the main meal, the 7:00 dinner.

The lunch meal was oftentimes more important than the dinner in the evening. And of course some of our group went to a building, a gymnasium, which the Y.M.C.A. had set up during World War I, and we played basketball two or three afternoons a week. And we became members of what they called the Paris-American Basketball League.

How did you make out?

I don't recall the comparative standings, but it might be interesting to whoever listens to this that Russell Turner was a member of the Olympic basketball exhibition team in 1924 in Switzerland.

He didn't tell us that when I interviewed him.

Well, I just happened to think of it.

Did you have any other experiences with your family? You talked about living there and eating there, but were you close enough to meet any of their friends or become really part of the family?
Well, the family had one son who was at that time in military service in Morocco, but they did have from time to time friends in, and when they had the friends in, we were invited to share with the evening or the afternoon with them. It was a very warm, cordial feeling.

Who also lived with you with this family?

There was just the man and his wife and myself, and . . .

Oh, just you. I was thinking you had a student . . .

And then about—oh, sometime after Christmas, Mr. Lank was unhappy with where he was staying, so he came to live with us.

He [inaudible] . . . What were the courses that you took?

Well, we had several courses in French literature. This, incidentally, was called the Corps de Civilisation. It was at the Sorbonne, which as you know is the University of Paris, and they were run primarily for foreigners. We had courses in French literature, French history, French art, and we did supplement those by some tutoring sessions on pronunciation.

How did the university—the Sorbonne—compare with the University of Delaware?

Well, of course, you must go back to remember that the University of Delaware when I attended there had a student population of around 600. At the Sorbonne there were thousands of people from all over the world. And the classes, of course, were—shall we say, no attendance was taken. It was up to you to go there, make your notes, do your outside reading, and then at the end of the course, you had an oral examination by the professor in his particular field.

Concerning the course.

Concerning his course.

Um hmm. Did you get to meet any of these professors socially?

We had several social affairs with them. I do not recall specifically anything that we did, although I do know that the dean of the faculty there invited us to his home several times. We were also very fortunate in that because we were the first foreign study group, we were able to meet a great many people that the average American student did not meet. For example, Ambassador Herrick, who was the ambassador of the United States to France at that time—and just as a matter of information, he told us that on an average he spent eighty thousand dollars a year out of his own pocket to maintain his status as an ambassador. We also met Marshal Foch, who was the generalissimo of the armies in World War I. We met General Pershing. We met Marshal Joffre. We also had tea at the home of some of the lesser French nobility, where, among others, we met Clancarey [sp] and Errio [sp], who was mayor of Leon at that time. Every place that we traveled, it seemed that Professor Kirkbride had planned well enough ahead so that we were received very cordially by many of the leading citizens of the various
An interesting comment, the French railroads are owned by the government—at that time at least, and the French were trying to encourage the people to have large families because so many of their men had been killed during World War I, and since there were eight of us plus Professor Kirkbride, we traveled at a reduced rate, because we were considered to be a numerous family.

Q Well, now that we're on your travels, let's go back a little bit and talk about the travels and the touring that you did. Maybe we ought to go back to Nancy. What kind of touring outside of Nancy did you do?

A Well, our principal touring around Nancy was to the battlefields of World War I, which we visited rather intensively. We also went to a steel mill, we went to a brewhery, we went to a glass manufacturing place—most of these were within a day's journey of Nancy. And then when we returned to Paris after finishing at the Alliance Francais, we took a trip down to Bordeaux and Biarritz, and we were in just a little bit of Spain. Then if we may jump ahead to Christmas time, we left Paris and went to Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, Germany, and came back to Nancy for New Year's Eve, and then returned to Paris. And jumping ahead to our Easter vacation, we then went down to the central part of France to the town of Marseille. We went over along the Riviera to Nice and Cannes and the principality of Monaco, and we had lunch in Italy, then we came up through Switzerland and returned to Paris.

Q What kind of accommodations did you have as you made these trips? Did you have people take care of your luggage, did you go by train and bus or just by train . . .

A I would say that 90% of our traveling was done by train.

Q Were people taking care of your luggage?

A We handled most of our own luggage there. There wasn't any problem. And hotel reservations had been made in advance by Professor Kirkbride or someone that he had asked to take care of them.

Q Um hm. What kind of hotels did you have?

A Usually we went into the small, French hotels, not the tourist-type hotels. We did not go into any Ritz Carltons or anything like that, but usually a small, family-type hotel. Which was excellent because of the fact that we could see how the French lived when they traveled, and also we met more French people and were able to practice our French more.

Q Um hm. What was your association with Dr. Kirkbride?

A Dr. Kirkbride was our—shall we say father confessor? He handled the financial details insofar as paying for our tuition, our room and board, of giving us spending money, securing tickets for various theatrical offerings.

Q Was there any other adult in charge besides Dr. Kirkbride in this first trip?
Dr. Kirkbride was 100% in charge, but of course he had to report all his financial dealings back to Mr. Wilkinson, who was at that time the business manager of the university.

Yeah. Well, this was back in the United States.

Yes.

But there was no one else besides Kirkbride who was part of the program in France.

He was the program. He earned...

'Cause later on they set up, of course, a larger group, and they had more people involved.

That's right.

What were the specific courses, now, that you took at the Sorbonne?

Well, I mentioned there was a course in 17th-century, 18th-century, and 19th-century literature. There was one or two courses in French history, which I imagine covered the whole span of French history from Charlemagne on down. And we had a course in French art. As I recall, those were the main ones that we had. And then those of us who went to another school, the Ecole Libre of Political Science, we took French geography and French commerce there. This school was just for those who were interested in the business phase. And I think there were only three of us who attended that particular school.

You, and Mr. Lank...

And Mr. Nendenhall.

I see. How did the group do academically? Maybe it's a hard question, but say compared to other groups.

I don't know where you would find any comparison along that line. I would say that individually each member of the group did approximately the same quality of work as he had done at the University of Delaware. In other words, Mr. Cummings was the best minded one and so he got the best marks over there. But I don't think there was any great fluctuation of...

But they all did well.

Everybody passed their work, and we received credit for our junior year at the University of Delaware by virtue of having completed this junior year in France. And then we returned to Newark for our senior year in September of 1924, and six of us were graduated in the class of 1924—or '25, rather. Mr. Nendenhall was graduated in the class of 1924.

Un hmn. Are there any other experiences that stand out in your mind from your trip to France?
A Well, I—everything was so enjoyable and so stimulating that it's rather difficult to pinpoint anything in particular. Some of us were fortunate enough to attend a ball, which was held in the Paris Opera House, which was extremely impressive. We went to Christmas Eve Mass at one of the large cathedrals, which was—which had among its celebrants, in addition to the priest, some opera singers, some members of the Paris Symphony Orchestra, and was a most impressive spectacle. Of course, as So most Americans, I think we sneaked off and went to the Folies-Bergère, which wasn't too impressive, to some of us at least. I think I was in the section of Montmartre three times in the course of about 14 months. Once was in the first day or so that I was in Paris, once in the middle of the winter, and once to take up a friend.

Q Um hmm. This is the [inaudible] section of [inaudible].

A Yes, it used to be the dens of iniquity up there.

Q C.K. I won't ask you any more about it. What do you think you got out of the whole program? What kind of a contribution to your life did this make?

A Well, from the selfish pecuniary point of view, it enabled me to make a living as a French teacher. From the point of view of my general life, I would say it enlarged my outlook on the world in general, and I realized that there were other countries and other peoples in the world besides the United States and its citizens. I've always said this, that regardless of what ever happened to me, nothing could destroy the impressions and the sights and the stimulation that I had received during the year that I was in France.

Q It kind of changed your outlook on people.

A I think I became more internationalized, if I may use that.

Q Cosmopolitan, maybe.

A Or cosmopolitan if you like. Not so chauvinistic.

Q Um hmm. Now, what was the trip back—I mean, did you all go back together?

A No. After the end of the year at the Sorbonne, which was approximately the end of June, several members returned directly to New York. Some of us traveled into England and Holland and a little bit more of Belgium. And I mentioned Mr. Turner was in a basketball exhibition at the 1924 Olympics.

Q Did you travel with Mr. Turner after the Sorbonne? He traveled throughout Europe.

A Yes. Well, he traveled by himself, but Mr. Turner and I came back on the same boat together in August.

Q I take it you also did quite a bit of traveling. Did you go to England?

A Yes.
Q. You went to the places you just mentioned, then.

A. We covered London and its surrounding attractions, including Shakespearean country. And I happened to run into—this seems a little bit odd, of all the places in London, I ran into Mr. Dougherty in Westminster Abbey. And he didn't know I was going to be there, and I didn't know he was going to be there, but it was just one of those peculiar circumstances.

Q. This trip you financed on your own. It was not part of the . . .

A. That was—what I said, those boys who went back to the United States almost immediately after the end of the term at the Sorbonne were able to do it on a $1,000 budget. Some of the rest of us who did extra traveling on our own, thanks to our family and their money, why we were able to have a few extra [sounds like "fillups"].

Q. How long was this traveling that you did?

A. I traveled for roughly about six weeks after the Sorbonne ended. And I was on my own and went first to Belgium, then to Holland—incidentally, this may be just a little interesting. I landed in Holland one evening. I had French francs, Belgian francs, English pounds, American dollars, and not a cent of Holland money. And so until I got to the hotel, it was a little embarrassing, because the taxi driver had to wait outside until I got some money changed in order to pay him. And then I went over to England. Then I went from Southampton to French Brittany, a little town called San Malo [sp], which is a little fishing village from which a great many of the Brittany fishermen go, two or three months at a time, and also I visited while there that great big cathedral which is surrounded at water at high tide—I can't think . . .

Q. This is in Brittany, you say?

A. Yes, French Brittany. It's surrounded by water at high tide. It used to be a prison and then it became a monastery and what not. It's not far from San Malo—what may it's name be? [Tape is interrupted here.]

Q. And then did you come back to the United States alone?

A. No. Turner and I came back to the United States. After I left San Malo and some of the towns in the area, then I came into Paris and Turner and I met each other and we returned to the United States in August. It might be interesting that when Turner and I landed in New York, my parents met me, and I was so impregnated with the French language that I babbled to my father in both French and English and he thought I was a little off the rocker. As a matter of fact, to carry us out a little bit further, when I returned to the University of Delaware as a senior, I lived in the fraternity house, and we had a deck there with about eighteen beds on the deck. And when I become extremely tired, I talk in my sleep. It made the other fellows on the deck mad, because when I talked in my sleep, I talked in French and they couldn't understand me. And that's the truth.

Q. That's good, you were thinking in French. That's the ultimate, isn't it? To think in the . . .
A That's the ideal thing, to learn to think in any language. And of course when we were in Paris, sometimes weeks would go by and we wouldn't speak any English at all. And even our group, when we met together, we talked in French.

Q You were supposed to.

A That was what we were supposed to do. And sometimes we would go over to the American Church, which is just off the Champs Elysees, in order to hear a service in English or in American, if you like. Most of the time we attended the various French cathedrals with our young men that we had met. I might also say that we used to make one-day excursions from Paris to various places, like one day out to Versailles or one day out to Fontainebleau, one day to Chartres, one day to--though the French pronunciation is "Rans"--Reims. And we visited at Reims the champagne cellars, which were quite impressive, but as I recall, they didn't give any samples.

Q Maybe you were too young at the time.

A Well, as a matter of fact, most of us were in our 20th or 21st year. I celebrated my 21st birthday in January, 1924, with some champagne which at that time cost approximately $1.00 a bottle, the very best French champagne. Of course the exchange was in our favor at that time, because the nominal value of the franc was approximately five to the dollar, but it fluctuated in that period of the early Twenties, and we were getting somewhere between 18 and 23 francs to the dollar, so that everything was comparatively inexpensive. You could buy a package of Wrigley's gum for approximately one cent in American money.

Q Um hmm. Now, when you came back to the University of Delaware, what courses did you take then?

A Well, we continued with our French. We had to take English. Some of us took history. Some took science courses, like for instance I took a course in physiology under Dr. Palmer.

Q This was to complete the requirements.

A To complete the requirements of the University of Delaware. And we were all graduated without any trouble.

Q But you did continue to take French courses.

A We did continue. It was a sort of an afternoon seminar. It was conducted by the chap who was then head of the French Department, Dr. Patterson, and we all thought that he conducted this seminar more to keep up his own French and to learn a little bit about French than he did us any good. I trust the man is dead by now and this won't get back to him.

Q How, from Delaware, what did you do?

A From Delaware I went to the University of Pennsylvania along with Mr. Cummings and Mr. Turner, and we did graduate work there in the field of
Romance languages, mostly French. And Mr. Cummings, Mr. Turner and myself received Master of Arts degrees from the University of Pennsylvania in 1926. Both Mr.--all three of us at one time or another have been instructors in French at the University of Pennsylvania.

Q Um hm. How long were you at the University of Pennsylvania, now?

A I was at the University of Pennsylvania until 1929. That is, it wasn't full-time, because I started to teach in September, 1926, and I was teaching in New Jersey and taking graduate courses at Penn in the afternoons and on Saturdays. But I was an instructor there from 1928 and '29, and then I left...

Q Were you a full-time instructor?

A Full-time instructor.

Q Um hm.

A And I left teaching in 1929 in order to enter the business world, and that of course was a very bad time to do it, because the stock market crash occurred in the fall of 1929, and I eventually returned to teaching in 1932.

Q Where were you teaching in New Jersey?

A Gloucester City, New Jersey, which is just outside of Camden.

Q Was it in a high school?

A Yes.

Q What kind of business were you in at the wrong time?

A Well, I was in the Studebaker, Fierce Arrow Export Corporation in South Bend, Indiana. Then I went with a Hickman and Squire Food Distribution Company in Cleveland, and then about 1931 I returned to Wilmington, Delaware, and I worked for a stock brokerage firm in Wilmington. But none of these business opportunities seemed to give me the kick that I received from my association with students, and so in 1932, in September, I returned to teaching and I was in the field of education until I retired in 1968.

Q Now, when you were in business, did you use your background in French?

A I used the background in French with the Studebaker Corporation, because my idea was to prepare to go abroad as a representative. But then of course after the stock market crash, why--and even before then--sales of cars abroad had declined tremendously, and they were cutting down instead of adding to their correspondence abroad.

Q Um hm. Now what was the--when you went back into teaching, where did you--where were you teaching? After you left business.

A After I left business I started to teach again in Ridgewood, New Jersey,
which is not far from George Washington Bridge up in Bergen County. I taught there for two years. . . .

Q And this was a high school?
A Senior high school. And then I . . .

Q What did you teach, now? What years of French did you teach?
A All years. First, second, third, fourth, it didn't make any difference. We could get along in most of them. And after two years in Ridgewood, I had an opportunity to come to the Haverford Township Public Schools in the senior high school, which selfishly was approximately midway between my home in Wilmington and my wife's home in New Jersey, so that it was a very convenient middle spot. And as I mentioned a little while ago, I was a teacher of French up until 1945, when I became assistant principal, and in 1953 I became senior high school principal, and in 1954 until my retirement in '68, I was called assistant to the superintendent of schools.

Q What was your responsibility to that job?
A As assistant to . . .

Q Assistant to the superintendent.
A I was in charge of all federal projects. By that I mean the National Defense Education Act, this other one that came along shortly thereafter where you were supposed to help people who had educational handicaps . . .

A Yes. This ESEA started around '58-'59, and it was up to me to prepare the necessary papers and all of the red tape in submitting applications in order to try to get money for the school district. And I prided myself that I always got more than enough money from the federal government in order to pay for my salary.

Q At least, huh? What are your plans now, sir, now that you're retired?
A Well, since I have retired, my wife and I have done quite a bit of traveling, and we plan to continue to travel as long as we are physically able to do so.

Q Wonderful.
A We have traveled all over--I think we have been in every state in the Union. We've been all over Canada from British Columbia to the Gaspe. We have been in most of the Caribbean Islands. We have been to Hawaii, we have been to Europe twice, and this fall we plan to take a passenger freighter cruise through the Panama Canal to the west coast of South America. Interspersed there have been quite a few trips to Florida for various lengths of time.

Q Sounds wonderful. Earlier before we began to tape, you were talking about
the participants in the program and how successful these people turned out to be. Maybe we could go over who they were and what they eventually did.

A Well, I mentioned previously that one member of our group, Cedric Snyder, was killed in an automobile accident somewhere around Detroit about the year 1930. I am not sure exactly of that date. Francis . . .

Q What did he do before? What did he eventually—what did he do?

A I think he was a teacher in a private school.

Q I see. Um hm.

A Then as is said usually on some of the T.V. programs, in alphabetical order, we have Francis Cummings, who earned a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in about 1931, and who eventually returned to the—to Wilmington, Delaware and at his death a few years ago, he was executive secretary of the Delaware State Commission for the Blind.

Q Is he—he's still living.

A No, he died here several years ago. I can give you that date here in my book if you want it subsequently. David Dougherty entered the graduate school of Harvard University and earned a Ph.D. in comparative philology, and after teaching at Wooster Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, he went to the University of Oregon where he was executive officer of the Division of Modern and Classical languages. He also went to Europe for about eight years in charge of IDEA groups of teachers who were perfecting their knowledge of French. And he was stationed in Tours.

Q What is he doing right now, do you know?

A At the present moment, this summer, he is touring Europe. He will return to the University of Oregon in September and teach one or two courses there, probably in old French.

Q2 Excuse me, did you say that Mr. Cunningham was blind?

A Mr. Cummings.

Q2 Mr. Cummings was blind?

A He was blind. Mr. Cummings was blinded when he was about 12 years of age as a result of spinal meningitis.

Q2 Did he have any particular problems going through the program?

A No problems whatsoever. He could walk all around the campus of the University of Delaware without anybody helping him; he knew his way around; he knew people by their voices. He was an artist on a typewriter. He could type a letter without practically any mistakes. And as a matter of fact, to continue with Francis Cummings, he used to live at the Overbrook School for the Blind. He would get on a trolley car that went down Lancaster Avenue, he would get off at Lancaster Avenue, get on another trolley car that went to 34th and Spruce Street, and then he would walk a square or so to get into the building where his class was or where he
was teaching. He did this without the aid of any dog, and he never carried a cane. It was a sort of a standard joke when we had class reunions, the boys would come up to him and they'd say, "Hi, Frankie, do you remember me?" And I have never seen him make an error in identifying a person. A tremendous chap.

Q Then he had no problem in France, huh?

A None whatsoever. None whatsoever. A tremendous chap.

Q But the group had to help him along somewhat.

A Oh, we would help him on and off trains, or if we were walking down a street, why, he would hold our arm or something like that, but other than that—and of course he hired people to read to him when none of us were available. But he was one of the most tremendous characters that I have ever met in all my life.

Q Well, he accomplished quite a bit.

A Indeed he did.

Q Then I think Lank was the next one.

A Yes. Herbert Lank, shortly after graduation from the University of Delaware, went to work for the DuPont Company. He had tours of duty in France, in Brazil [sic - Argentina], and about 1944 he came to Montreal, Canada where he was working with a DuPont affiliate, and subsequently—there two corporations, there was an aluminum company and a DuPont company, they had to break up. And Herb became first the vice president and then the president of DuPont of Canada. And the last several years before he retired, he was chairman of the board of directors of DuPont of Canada. The next member in our group, his name is William Kenneth Mendenhall. He worked for several banks in New York after graduation. He worked in Washington for the government for a while. He was in Europe, I believe in London, England, for several years, and then just for quite a number of years prior to his death, he was executive vice president of the New Jersey Bankers Association. I can give you his death, too, after while if you want it. Russell Turner, as was mentioned here, did graduate work at the University of Pennsylvania. He taught at the University of Pennsylvania. He subsequently taught in the Wilmington High School for a number of years, and then he became affiliated with the Wilmington Y.M.C.A. and when he retired—for the last several years before his retirement, he was called Boys' Work Director, and I understand that he did a tremendously effective job with the young folks there. And we have already mentioned Walker, so we won't say anything more about him.

Q Well, I want to thank you very much, Mr. Walker, for the interview.

A Now, are you interested— you're cutting that off now, aren't you?

Q Yeah.

[END OF INTERVIEW]