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Interview with Mr. Robert H. Richards, Jr., July 12, 1970, regarding his participation in the University of Delaware Foreign Study Program in France, 1927-28. The interviewer is Myron L. Lazarus.

Q This is a recording of the Oral History Program. We're interviewing Mr. Robert H. Richards, Jr. We're going to discuss the Foreign Study Program of the University of Delaware. Mr. Richards, where and when were you born?

A I was born in Wilmington, Delaware on November 14, 1905, at the corner of Delaware Avenue and Rodney Street in the front room, second floor.

Q Was your father an attorney?

A My father was a lawyer and my grandfather Richards was a lawyer. My grandfather Richards practiced in Georgetown, where my father was born and brought up, but he moved in Wilmington--my father moved to Wilmington, and started practice there. And his two sons followed him, my deceased brother Charles and myself, and I'm happy to say that our two sons are following along, too.

Q ~~Uh huh.~~ You went to school where in Wilmington?

A I went to Friends School and then I went away to boarding school to [sounds like "Tara"] School in Watertown, Connecticut.

Q What made you decide to go to the University of Delaware?

A Well, I had spent one year at Williams College, rather disastrously, and it was--the University of Delaware was good enough to take me in and I could continue my education there.

Q ~~Uh-huh,~~ I see. And what kind of a--what courses were you taking at Delaware? Were they pre-law?

A No, there were no pre-law courses; there was just a liberal arts course, English, history, economics, psychology, those are the only ones that come to my mind immediately, but it was a liberal arts course. . . no French.

Q No French?

A No.

Q Did you have any knowledge of the language at all?

A Yes, I had studied French for quite a long time, probably six or eight years. I couldn't speak the language at all. Irregular verbs I could balance on the end of my nose, but as far as speaking the language, I had no ability at all. I could translate it, but . . .

Q That was kind of typical of the education at the time anyway, wasn't it?

A It was very typical.

Q ~~Um-hmm~~. But you had read--did some reading of French literature.

A Oh, yes. Yes, we had . . .

Q Do you remember what you read?

A Oh, I remember very well my final year at the Tara School because as a result of it I almost didn't get into college, as the entire French class almost didn't get into college. We were reading a French Canadian book which was a . . .

Q Do you mean from secondary school?

A Yes, that's right, yes. We were reading a French Canadian book called [French title - sounds like "Murat Chatulaine"] and it was full of French Canadian expressions. The book had been approved by the Board of College Board Examiners so that it was a proper book to read. And on the examination, the College Board Examination, the entire class flunked the French examination because they used French Canadian expressions that they had picked up from reading Murat Chatulaine [?]. Fortunately, our professor, Henry Wells, I think his name was, was a member of the College Board of Examiners and found what had happened, protested violently to the Board that the book had been approved by the Board and anything used from the book should be acceptable for the Board's examination. His views prevailed and the examination was recorrected and . . .

Q In the light of the kind of background you had, huh?

A That's right. And at least a respectable bunch of us passed.

Q Um-hmm. Fine. What was Delaware like when you went to the University of Delaware?

A Well, it was very small and very quiet. Of course there was Delaware College and the Women's College. I guess it had become the University of Delaware, it wasn't still Delaware College, but it was the University of Delaware and the Women's College. And the two were completely separated. The only common meeting place was the library. The Men's College was on one side of the library and the Women's College was on the other side of the library and you were permitted to see one of the girls at the library, but that was all.

Q It's a little different now.

A It's a little different now, I'm sure.

Q Didn't they take courses together?

A No, no courses together at all and no faculty together. The professors at the University of Delaware didn't teach at the Women's College. Most of the Women's College professors were ladies; there may have been some men, I don't know.

Q How did you hear about the program, the Foreign Study Program of the

university?

- A I don't remember at all how it first came to my attention. Of course I was at the University of Delaware for two years before I went to France with the Foreign Study Plan, so it would be very easy to hear about it and find out about it during those two years. But how it first came to my attention, I have no idea.
- Q But you were going to be in your senior year when you . . .
- A I was going to be in my senior year. While it sometimes is referred to as the junior year abroad, as far as the University of Delaware was concerned, it could be either the junior or senior year abroad.
- Q It had a variety of names, I noted. Now, what was really your purpose in becoming part of this program?
- A Well, I think probably the principle motivation was I wanted a trip to Europe. And I think actually that I had mentioned to my family a desire to go to Europe the summer of 1927, and they had been good enough to send me on a schoolboy trip in 1924, but they didn't see any particular reason why I should go again. So being foiled in that purpose, I think that I concocted a cultural reason for going there by taking my senior year in France.
- Q Well, I'm sure it turned out that way . . .
- A In any event, my mother and father were willing that I do so.
- Q Uh huh. Well, that's the traditional education, you know. After college, you take the grand tour.
- A Well, of course, that's true in the old seventeenth-century, eighteenth-century English education, and I guess it was even true in the eighteenth-century American education, sending the son back to England before the Revolution and on to the Continent for some part of his education.
- Q Now, who was the director of the program when you got involved?
- A Dr. Raymond Kirkbride was the director of the program and also the creator of the program. It had always been my understanding that Dr. Kirkbride originated the thought and persuaded Mr. Pierre DuPont to provide the financing for it. I know Mr. DuPont was very much interested in it, and he happened to be a friend of my mother and father's--after I got back from France, he asked me to come out and see him and tell him my impressions of the program and my evaluation of it. du Pont
- Q Um-hmm. Was it satisfactory?
- A Oh, yes. Oh, eminently so.
- Q Did you have any particular preparations you had to make, other than the usual, you know, getting your clothes ready and . . .

- A No, I don't recall any particular preparations. The group--there were three from the University of Delaware--Catherine O'Neill, I believe, and a fellow named Claude Strong. I think Claude Strong has since died. As a matter of fact, he had to fall out of the program because of getting meningitis or some very serious disease in France. But the three of us went, the group of students, and I have forgotten . . .
- Q That was the total program?
- A No, no, no, no--just from the University of Delaware. There were a great many from--I was about to say, I don't remember the exact number from other colleges. The figure 27 sticks in my mind and may be entirely wrong. In any event, that group met at the Hotel McAlpin in New York the day before we sailed, and I have no recollection at all of what went on in this group except a group picture being taken.
- Q Was there any lecture on what you shouldn't do?
- A There probably was. I'm sure that there was an indoctrination lecture, but I have no recollection of it at all. I can only say that I was at the Hotel McAlpin for whatever purposes they wanted us.
- Q What did you do, stay overnight at the McAlpin . . .
- A Stayed overnight at the McAlpin and sailed . . .
- Q Had dinner? Was there a dinner?
- A I don't recall any particular dinner. I had gone over to New York with my mother to--who came over to see me off, and I have no recollections of it at all. I do seem to remember that either the day we went over or the next day there was some sort of a hurricane around here that did quite a good deal of damage. But I wasn't present at the time. I was on the train going over to New York.
- Q Do you remember what schools, let's say, the other students were from?
- A Well, I remember very well that one was from Principia in St. Louis. That was Harriet Kellond, who since became Mrs. Richards.
- Q Did you notice her at first, or when you got to France?
- A No, I have no recollection of her either in New York or on the ship going over. But they were also from Syracuse, southern--there were quite a number of southern girls there, and I don't remember particularly what southern universities they came from, but Randolph-Macon, I know, was represented by one or more, Dartmouth had someone there. As I understood it, the University of Delaware was accepted by almost all--that is the Foreign Study Plan--was accepted by almost all of the American universities, with the exception of Smith, that ran its own, and Yale and Harvard.
- Q ~~Was there~~ Didn't Vassar have a program, too? Maybe a little later . . .
- A Not that I know of at that time. I've never known of a Vassar program,

but there may have been.

Q What do you remember about the trip abroad?

A Well, practically nothing as far as the . . .

Q Do you remember the name of the ship?

A I'm not sure whether it was the Coronia or the Carmenia. I went over on one of them and I came back on the other, and which was which I don't remember. I don't remember a great deal on board the ship in connection with the plan because there were a group of college students going to France and Europe for the summer, and one of them was a particular friend of mine and I spent more time with that group than I did with the University of Delaware group. I do remember that we would have some sort of lessons on the ship. All I can remember is some sort of a spelling bee arrangement. I don't mean in spelling, but you would line up as in a spelling bee, and if you missed a question, then you went down the ladder and had to climb your way up. I reposed quietly at the bottom of the ladder without any difficulties.

Q ~~Uh-huh.~~ Did you get any French lessons on the boat?

A I'm sure that these lessons were in French and whether they were conjugating irregular verbs or vocabulary tests, I don't remember. But they were in French and about French.

Q How was your French at this time?

A Very poor, very poor.

Q Could you communicate?

A Barely. I had studied French for six or seven years and I could translate it--with difficulty, I couldn't speak it at all. I could conjugate irregular verbs with the greatest of ease, but that's about the extent of it. I had no speaking knowledge at all, which was somewhat typical of the kind of French that was taught in high schools and prep schools at that time.

Q ~~Um-hmm.~~ Where did you--where was your first night in France?

A We--I don't recall what port we landed in, but we went to Paris, and I think we spent one night in Paris and then went on to the University of Nancy. We left sometime in July, I think just before the 4th of July, and we were to spend the summer at the University of Nancy in order to prepare the students adequately to follow the courses at the Sorbonne in Paris and be able to keep up with the work at the Sorbonne.

Q Sort of a refresher . . . or a cram course in French.

A Well, it was a cram course it would be, more than a refresher. And of course all the courses there and in Paris, too, were in French, and in

fact we were not supposed to speak English at all, among ourselves or to anyone else. Everything was supposed to be conducted in French. I can't say that that was lived up to.

Q Well, you might have lost weight if you didn't know how to say, "Pass the potatoes," huh? How did you live in Nancy? Was it a dorm, or--you didn't live with families . . .

A Yes, we lived with families. Every one or in some cases two students would be in a family, and as far as the girls were concerned, I think they were always two to a family. I lived in a--in style, in a sense. I suspect--in fact I believe--that my father had paid a little bit more to be sure that I had as good and comfortable accommodations as possible. And I lived with a little more comfort than the rest of the youth. In Nancy I lived with a family called Moreau, M-o-r-e-a-u. He was a plumbing supply salesman. The house was very comfortable, but he and Madame Moreau were not educated people and as far as the association with them was concerned, it wasn't particularly pleasant. But the house was a brand new house, and in fact the last touches were being completed while I stayed at a hotel for two or three days waiting for it. And I had what was certainly unique in our group, and probably unique in Nancy, a room with a private bath.

Q This was with the family.

A With the family, yes. They had given up the best room in the house, and it had a private bath, and I enjoyed it very much indeed. In fact, I would invite my friends over to have a bath because at that time in France bathroom accommodations were--certainly private bathroom accommodations were rather unique and these were not wealthy families, of course, that the people were staying with and sometimes they--while they would all have toilet accommodations, some of them would have to go out to a public bath to have a bath, and they were the ones that I would invite to visit me to use my facilities.

Q Um hmm. I've heard stories about their going out to the public baths.

A Yes, there are many of them. The Moreaus had two children--I can't remember what they were--what their names were, a boy and a girl probably four and six years old, something like that. And they also had a dog, and the dog was the delight of Monsieur Moreau, who had a large black moustache, I might say. He was a French bulldog, sort of like a Boston bulldog. And after dinner he would pat his lap and that damn dog would jump up on it, and he would embrace the dog, kissing the dog, and then sway from side to side, giving what he called the "grande balance" ~~[sp?]~~ or the "petit balance," the big swaying or the little swaying. And it was--I didn't care for it particularly. Mr. and Mrs. Moreau didn't get along too well at times, either, and of course each one was trying to get me to take his or her side in the matter. I had enough sense to just say, "Everything is fine and for the best in best of all possible worlds," and not take sides in any of the family scraps.

Q How was the food?

A The food was very good, I thought. That was one of the things that Monsieur

Moreau would fight with Madame Moreau about, and she would appeal to me for a decision, which I wouldn't give, but actually I enjoyed it. She was a pretty good plain cook.

Q Where were the courses at Nancy?

A The courses were at the University of Nancy.

Q Was there any difficulty getting there from where you lived?

A No, no. I was quite close to it. Some of the others were further away. But I was quite close to the university and had no trouble getting there at all. I can tell you one of the things that I look back with some amusement, and that was the toilet facilities at the university. The university, of course, was a coeducational institution, but to . . .

Q That was kind of unusual then, wasn't it?

A No, I don't think so. The toilet facilities were common. That is to say, you entered a long room, which was lined with urinals, and then you went into a room behind where toilets were. The result was that the girls had to go through what would be considered the men's toilet in order to get to theirs. And the southern ladies would not do so under any circumstances, no matter how dire.

Q What did they do?

A [Sounds like "swoll"]

Q Do you remember the particular courses that . . .

A No, these were not regular courses. They were all designed as cram courses to enable us to take--to hear lectures in French, take notes in French, think in French. And I can't recall what particular courses they were, but that's what they were designed for. I do remember now that one of the courses was in phonetic spelling, which was very useful and--to a foreigner, in listening to lectures in a foreign language.

Q Um hmm. But you actually took your notes in French.

A Yes, indeed. Yes, indeed. The class was divided into two sections, the advanced section and the retarded section, and I might say that I rested very comfortably in the retarded section. There didn't seem to be much I could do to get out of it. I tried one device. Every Saturday we were supposed to turn in a theme in French. It wasn't too long, but it was long enough. I devised the scheme of telling Madame Moreau what I wanted to say and having her write it down, and then I would copy it. But I quickly found that I could get higher marks on my own than I could on Madame Moreau's compositions, so I was forced to be honest about it.

Q Did you do any touring around Nancy?

A Yes, we did. I can recall two tours, one I didn't take and one I did. They were just trips. The one I didn't take was a short trip on one Saturday

to the steel mills of Lorraine. Lorraine had a number of steel mills, and there was one trip to the mills of the Baron de Wendel (d-e-capital W-e-n-d-e-l), who was the head of one of the large steel companies in France. I did not take that trip because I had fallen behind in the reading that we were supposed to do, and I devoted that Saturday to catching up on my reading. We later took a trip to Strasbourg, which was not far away, and spent the night there, I think, and came back.

Q How were things arranged? Were there a director of the boys and a director of the girls?

A Yes, there were. George Brinton was in charge of the boys; he of course was part of the French Department of the University of Delaware. While Dr. Kirkbride had come to Europe with us in the director until we got to Europe; he then went back to the United States and George Brinton became the director.

Q Was he in charge of the whole program?

A He was in charge of the whole program and under him Dorothy Dennis, who came from Wellesley, a professor of French at Wellesley, was in charge of the girls. But George Brinton was the top man. I might say that after we got to Paris for the winter we then met Marguerite Savage, who was a secretary at the Paris office and later married George Brinton.

Q I've interviewed her.

A I understood that you had.

Q Now, what family--with what family did you stay when you went to the Sorbonne?

A In Paris I lived with a delightful family of which I was very, very fond, Couvart-Desvergnés, do you want me to spell these names? C-o-u-v-a-r-t-hyphen-~~D~~-e-s-v-e-r-g-n-e-s, I believe. Monsieur Couvart-Desvergnés was a lawyer and a referee in the commercial courts in Paris. He allowed me to sit in on several of his cases. His wife was a very large, fat and jolly woman who was always telling jokes and was very pleasant, indeed. They had three children, Jean, the oldest one, who was a few years younger than I, and Francois, and the youngest a daughter Jaqueline. They were a very charming family; I have very pleasant memories of them. During the Second World War they had very difficult times. I did the best I could to send things to them to help out.

Q Did you get these extra accommodations with this family, too?

A Well, these were not--these were the very best accommodations, but they were not extra. I think actually they had two levels of accommodations, depending upon what the students could afford, and this was the top level because other students had been there before, and afterwards, also. So these were in the ordinary budget, but the upper level of the ordinary budget. I had a very comfortable room there. I didn't have, of course, the private bath that I had in Nancy, but it did have a private washbasin in a little . . .

Q In your bedroom was that?

A In the bedroom--not exactly in the bedroom, it was sort of a closet that closed off the bedroom, there was nothing in there except this washbasin and of course a radiator. This was an apartment and they had central heat. But the French at that time thought that central heat was very bad for you, so they would never put a radiator in a room. They'd put it in a hall, or in the closet, and in this place they put it in the little niche where the washbasin was. It ~~did~~ ^{was} not very good for heating, but it was all right.

Q Do you remember the address of this home?

A Yes, it was 4 Square Lagarde, L-e-g-a-r-d-e. I later took my daughter to Paris on ^{an} occasion, and I thought it would be interesting to show her where I had lived and all of the little back alleys that I would run through between there and the Sorbonne to get to class. I found to my dismay that the geography of Paris had changed very much indeed. There were a great many hills where I had no recollection of any hills before, and it was much more tedious getting there than when I was young and didn't care.

Q ~~Uh-huh.~~ You didn't notice the hills then.

A But it was quite--this was on the Left Bank as the Sorbonne is on the Left Bank, and I was a little further away from the Seine and the Sorbonne, and some of the little alleyways that I would use as shortcuts were quite--they had been there with the same names since medieval times. I remember one of them was the Green Cat, and there were others with similar somewhat amusing names.

Q ~~Um-hmm.~~ What was the Sorbonne like then?

A Well, the courses we followed were a series of courses--or some of the courses--of a series given by the Sorbonne for foreign students. They were--I remember having a course in French history by Mr. [inaudible French name, sounds like "Guillaber"], French family life, French literature, French art, in addition to which we took other courses, sometimes at the Sorbonne or sometimes at another school, the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques [sp].

Q You took courses there.

A I took two courses at the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques. One was a course in modern businesses, and the other was a course in means of transportation.

Q ~~Um-hmm.~~ That was a rather elite school, wasn't it? I mean, you had to know your French.

A Oh, yes, it usually referred to as ^{Scipol,} ~~[inaudible, sounds like "cipore"]~~, I believe. It's . . . it wasn't easy. Except they had very kind professors there. I remember the old gentleman who gave me my oral examination on one course, I don't know what course it was. The only question he asked me, he said, "You're an American, aren't you?" And I said yes. And he

said, "By the way, how many justices do you have on your Supreme Court?" And I said, "Seven." He said no. I said, "Eleven." He says, "No, you fool, there are nine." And that was the only question he asked me, and you can see I handled it very well, and I passed the course.

Q Were many of the courses--did they have oral exams like this?

A They always had oral exams. They had written exams and oral exams. And they can be just as nasty as they want to be, if they want to be, or they can be just as kind and helpful. I well remember taking the oral examination in French art by a gentleman whom I do not care for whose name was Schneider [sp?], N. A. Schneider. And he asked for examples of a certain type of architecture and I gave him the answer, and I'm still not sure which it is, [French word] or [French word]. In any event, I said it the wrong way. And he said, "No." And then I racked my brain all over the place and finally he gave me the correct pronunciation, said that it was perfectly apparent that while my French accent was lousy, I knew what I was talking about--unlike the Supreme Court.

Q Did you do any touring of Paris?

A Yes, indeed. Part of you might say, our courses were to go to the opera and to go to the theater. I never--I can't tell one note from another and never enjoyed music, so the opera was not my particular dish of tea. I do remember, we would have a box in the opera and a certain number would be in each box--at [inaudible] boxes were very cheap. And I can remember as soon as the lights went down in the audience, going out to the antechamber where there is a sofa which you can lie down on, and doing so, and having Miss Dennis, the head of the girls, come out and say, "Oh, you've gotten there first." She evidently didn't like music either. I might say that that's not entirely comfortable because the Paris Opera, and particularly these sofas in the anteroom, are noted for their fleas. I don't think I ever got any, though.

Q How was the Sorbonne different, let's say, than the courses at the University of Delaware?

A Well, they were different in the sense that they were purely lecture courses, and this applies also to the École Libre des Sciences Politiques. There was no questioning of students to determine whether they'd done their homework or hadn't done their homework; nobody cared. You either passed your exam or you didn't pass your exam, and that was that. So it was entirely oral and the courses at the Sorbonne were quite large. They were given in good-sized amphitheaters and there could be no personal connection between the student and the professor.

Q You didn't get to meet any of the professors.

A Quite probably I did. I don't remember actually, but I'm sure that the University of Delaware would have some sort of reception or something in which I did get to meet the professors. The professors were perfectly willing, if you went up to them after class, to talk to you and help you in any way, but it was not a question of communication during the class between the professor and the student.

Q Were the exams based strictly on your assignments and the lectures?

A Yes. Now, in addition to the Sorbonne and the École Libre, we had tutoring courses in French throughout the year in Paris. I'm trying to think of the name of the school just across the street from the Sorbonne, I can't think of the name, would have ladies or men who would give joint--when I say joint I mean a lot of students together--resumes of what was being studied and also individual tutoring in French and the French accent. I had a very charming young lady named Mademoiselle de Sangenet [sp]. She made me stand in front of a mirror learning how to say [inaudible]--it's very difficult. Once you learn what they're really talking about, and the difference that they're trying to describe in the sound, and can understand that, then it's much easier to say an "o" properly. Not "o"--"o."

Q Have you kept up with your French?

A No, I have not, and I can assure you that the "o's" I've been giving you are not nearly as professional as Mademoiselle de Sangenet inculcated in me.

Q How did you do in these courses?

A Well, I passed them.

Q O.K.

A I'm not going to answer any more. As a matter of fact, I don't remember. I didn't pass--I was not a brilliant student--but I passed the examinations, and by how much of an eyelash, I don't remember at all.

Q Did you go beyond Paris in your travels?

A Yes, indeed, we took two trips. One I think was between the University of Nancy and Paris in which we made quite a tour of the--France and southern France. We went down to the Mediterranean Coast, we went to-- I can't tell you all the places we did go to. I know that we . . .

Q Was this during vacations, or was . . .

A This was during vacation. This probably lasted 10 days or two weeks. Of course, you say vacation--the University of Nancy was being run strictly for us, so that when we wanted to stop, we stopped. But the University of Paris began after All Saints and All Souls Day, which are much more holidays--or were then--in France than even Halloween and Mischief Night are here. And schools begin promptly in November after that for the regular term, so that we spent ten days or two weeks prior to the opening of the Sorbonne in this trip around France. I know we went to Avignon, I know we went to Nice, I know we went to Lourdes, to Carcassonne, to Bourges, and I'm sure that there were a number of other places that I don't recall going to. I'm always--I can always remember, and I'm amused, by a guide or courier who traveled around with us named Monsier Beguet (B-e-g-u-e-t, I think--no, that wouldn't be Beguet; I don't remember the spelling). Monsieur Beguet had a large black felt hat with a large broad brim, and he

carried with him a railway guide. In those days, at least in France, you didn't get a timetable from each of the railroad systems, but you could buy a thick volume, probably two inches thick, which contained timetables for all the trains in France. And Monsieur Beguet, in addition to his broad-rimmed hat, had a railway guide. He was a nice guy and you would usually be talking to him on the train, and I happened to notice--this was in the fall of 1927--that the railway guide was for 1906. And I said, "Monsieur Beguet, what are you doing with this railway guide from 1906?" "Ah," he says, "it's very good." I said, "But all the times of the trains have changed." "Ah," Mr. Beguet said, "but the stations haven't." That's the only explanation I ever got from him on why he carried a 1906 timetable.

Q They probably didn't run on time anyway.

A No, they didn't run on time anyhow, you're quite correct. Mussolini was then making the trains run on time in Italy, but he had had no effect whatsoever in France. And the other trip was not planned. This was part of the whole ball of wax that had been paid for, the trip to the south of France that I've just described. But during the Easter vacation, a group of us made a trip to ~~San~~ ^{Saint} Michel and a couple of the bordering places on the Brittany and Normandy Coast--I'm thinking of them at the moment . . . which was not a part of the whole schedule. We had to produce the funds for that, but it wasn't very expensive and quite a group went along. We had two unusual experiences on that trip. One, in staying at Mont ~~San~~ ^{Saint} Michel, there was a very famous inn there called the Mercular [sp]. And as you know, there is a winding stone street leading up to the mountain--mont--where the monastery is. Coming out of the Mercular the morning after we'd gotten there, to see men in doublet and hose running up the street in complete--their costume was in complete accord with the surroundings to them, but it was very surprising to see them. Of course the answer was they were making some movie up at the top and these were a couple of actors who were a little bit late and they were running to catch up.

Q You thought you were back in the Middle Ages . . .

A Exactly, exactly. And the other one was, there was a little island off Mont ~~San~~ ^{Saint} Michel called the Isle de Ré. We decided we'd go up there for lunch. There's a little bit of an inn there and there's no telephone or anything like that to them, but there is a telegraph line and we sent them a telegram that 10 people, I think we were about 10, were coming for lunch. So we hired a boat and there wasn't any dock or anything like that. The boatmen had to carry us out to the boat on their backs; coming back they did drop one of the ladies, but fortunately it was on the way back and not on the way over. And when we got to the Isle de Ré, they had no word. "Who are you?" "Oh, but we sent you a telegram." Well, they didn't get the telegram. "Well, what are we gonna do about it?" "Well, the only thing we can do about it is go get some lunch for you." And they went out and got fresh lobster out of the sea, fresh fish they caught, they had a cow and they milked the cow and we had fresh milk . . . it was the most delightful luncheon I ever had in my life. Everything was just . . .

Q [inaudible]

A Exactly. So that turned out very well.

Q I supposed you developed some gastronomic tastes from France.

A Oh, yes, yes, indeed. There were, of course--particularly in Paris, there were many fine restaurants. The family that I lived with had come from Perigueux, or had lived part of their life in Perigueux, and knew some restaurants run by people from Perigueux, who are noted for their cooking, and recommended a number to us, and we went to them then and have--to one of them, gone back ever since. It's become somewhat famous--the Restaurant Rusier [sp]--or rather Rusier was the proprietor, it's called Restaurant Perigourdin [sp] in the Place St. Michel. And it has attained a certain fame since then, and we've gone back whenever we've been in Paris and sat there overlooking the Seine and enjoyed it just as much now as we did then.

*Perigourdin
St. Michel*

Q That was very delightful. How many times have you been back to France?

A Oh, quite a few times. We didn't go back until 1938--'37, I guess it was. And then we didn't go back until after the war--the Second World War, of course, but since that time we've been in Paris oh, I can't tell you the number of times--quite a few times. I almost bought a chateau in France once.

Q ~~Um huh~~ Was it this first trip that made you interested in France?

A Chiefly, but as I said before, I had been in Europe once before in 1924 as a schoolboy and I had liked and enjoyed Paris then. But the year we spent there of course is the year that really made Paris such an attraction to me. And I must say it is--I love Paris and go back every opportunity I can, and I hope to go back this coming Christmas with one of my children and their family.

Q Do you have any other memories? I've asked you a number of questions, but what other things impressed you?

A I don't know that there is anything. I remember Nancy as a beautiful city, and it is. They had a lovely square in the middle of Nancy, the Place Stanislaus. You may remember Louis the 13th's daughter married Stanislaus of Poland. And I think he got thrown out of Poland so the king gave him Lorraine to live in, and this Place Stanislaus is of course named for him. It's a perfectly lovely eighteenth-century square and the houses all around it are entirely in keeping of the epoch--I think they are, as a matter of fact--including one of the hotels, the Grand Hotel, is on one part of the square. A lovely restaurant is on another part. In those days it was one of the fine restaurants of France but it no longer is. As a matter of fact, we had a dinner party there for George Brinton's first wife. The Brintons were largely separated, but Mrs. Brinton came to Nancy to be with George.

Q This is during your trip with the program.

A Yes. And I thought it would be a good idea to have a little celebration for Mrs. Brinton's coming. I might say that I got to be very good friends with George Brinton. Needless to say, he's a good deal older than I am, [but] we became very good friends on this trip.

Q What was Mr. Brinton like?

A Oh, it's very difficult to say. He was a tall, awkward, thin, gangling man.

Q Did he give you an appreciation of French civilization and culture?

A No, he gave me more an appreciation of George Brinton's civilization and culture, which was part French and part Pennsylvania Quaker. And he and I--and also my wife went with us; by that time we had become quite fond of each other and did many things together--and George . . .

Q You didn't get married in France?

A No, no. Not until sometime in 1930. George would go with us and chaperone us and pay no attention to some of the regulations that you could only speak French together and that you weren't allowed to go out for--young ladies were not allowed to go out for dinner with anybody unless it was a close relative, not even a cousin would do. But I think that George and Harriet and I had a number of dinners together.

Q Certainly France was the romantic place to have . . .

A Well, that was the time of Scott Fitzgerald's being there. I saw him in Paris. I knew him; he lived in Wilmington at one time, as you may remember, out on the Delaware River. And I didn't know that he was in France, but just happened to see him come out of the subway station and I must say that he had seen better days.

Q Any other interesting figures that you knew in Paris?

A No, I don't think so. I had one very amusing experience--at least it was amusing to me. In those days, the I. G. Farben Industry was one of the great chemical companies of the world, and Mr. Lamot du Pont went over to have some sort of a conference with them, and he and Mrs. DuPont coming back from it stopped in Paris and they were friends of my father and I was a friend of their kids, so they asked me out for dinner, very nice, and went on about their business. And about the next week, Mr. Scully, James Scully, vice president of what was then the Hercules Power Company, went over to Germany to see the I. G. Farben people, too. And when he came to Paris, again, he was a friend of my family, he asked me out for dinner. First thing he wanted to know, he said, "I understand Lamot DuPont was here." I said, "Yes, sir, he was." He said, "What did he tell you?" I said he didn't tell me anything. He then went on and said, "I know how young boys are. I know how young boys are. You want to go see the Folies-Bergere." He said, "I understand that entirely; you want to go see the Folies-Bergere." Well, I said, "Mr. Scully, really, the Casino de Paris has a better show than I've seen in both" He said, "I understand how young boys are, you want to go see the Folies-Bergere," 'cause Mr. Scully wanted to go see the Folies-Bergere and he was gonna go see it, but he was gonna blame it on me. That was perfectly all right, so we went out and had a delightful dinner and went to the Folies-Bergere. Mr. Scully didn't speak any French at all, but he had traveling with him

Farben

du Pont

Shelly

Shelly

Shelly

Shelly
Shelly

Petrus MEYERINGH

Petrus Meyerinhg

~~Petrice Meiring [sp.]~~, from their Rotterdam office, who spoke French and everything else. He later came to Wilmington and became a vice president of Hercules. He was the translator at the time. So we went to the Folies-Bergere, and between the acts you go out to the bar and all the girls of not ill-repute, but no repute at all, gather around you. And Mr. ~~Scully~~ *Shelly* was loving it, and Peter and I would say, "We don't have any money. Papa (pointing to Mr. ~~Scully~~) has all the money." So of course they left us immediately and all started fawning on Mr. ~~Scully~~, which he loved. So that's about all I can remember of the . . . *Shelly*

Shelly

- Q How do you think this influenced your life, or made you different?
- A Well, I think it did, because in my opinion, the one year that I spent in--stop the machine The one year that I spent in France was far more important as far as an education and broadening your views of life than all the other three college years put together. And in that sense, it had, I think, a considerable influence in my life. Of course, the knowledge of French came in handy from time to time, but it wasn't an important thing, and anything that I did it--just as it wouldn't be an important thing in going to France. It's nice to be able to speak it, but you can get along without it. The broadening of your point of view and the realization that there are a great many very reasonable, very nice people living and doing different things than the way you do them, was very important. As I think I said to you, but probably not when the machine was on, Mr. Pierre Dupont was a friend of my father's, and he was largely the financial angel of the Foreign Study Plan. And when I came back, he asked me to come out and see him and tell him about the Foreign Study Plan. And that was--he asked me what I thought of the--the value was, and that's what I told him then as I tell you now, that the broadening of your concept of human beings is the most important thing that happened. Aside, of course, from meeting my wife.
- Q And you got this pretty much living in another culture.
- A Living in another culture as a member of another family. As I told you, I didn't live as a member of the Moreau family in Nancy. That was not very--nothing good about that at all. But the Couvart-Desvergnés in Paris, I was living as a member of their family and they tried to do nice things, and I just thought of one thing that they did do. We were talking a number of days of what was my favorite food. And I said I thought probably I liked wild duck as much as anything. And a few days later Monsieur Couvart-Desvergnés' mother died. She lived . . . [end of side one of tape].
- Q When you were through with the program, you came back to the United States with the group.
- A No, the group did not come back together. You could come back any way you wanted to. Your transportation was provided. I came back almost immediately after the courses were through and the examinations were through. But some, as my wife did, traveled in Europe for a while before they came back. I got back early in July, it was just about a year since I'd left, and that was my final year in college. Of course commencement had occurred, and I couldn't get my diploma until the convocation in the fall of 1928. Also, there was a slight matter of a French examination that I had to make

up, too.

Q [inaudible]

A Yes, I told you I had one unfortunate year at Williams College in which I took a course in French, and I flunked it. So I had one condition. And having just come back from studying in France for a year, the--making up that examination was not too difficult.

Q I can imagine. You had as good a preparation as . . .

A Also, there was a requirement of a course in Delaware history at the University, or was at that time.

Q There still is.

A And well, there should be, and that is given the freshman year, and of course I had not taken that, so it was necessary to have an examination in Delaware history. But having completed that, I . . .

Q Who was teaching that course?

A Clay Reed. . . and still is, I guess. Having completed both of those matters, I was entitled to a diploma in a convocation, so I promptly took to my bed and sent my mother out to get my diploma for me. And then went up to Harvard Law School, arriving a little late because of this illness that I had,

Q Did you contact this in France, or here--the illness you had?

A Oh, no, it was just a cold or flu or something like that. It wasn't of any--it was just something that kept you in bed. Then I went to the Harvard Law School for three years and we were married in the middle of it in January of 1930. Graduated from Harvard Law School, came back to Wilmington, and was admitted to the bar and started practicing law here, in part as a law clerk to Judge ~~Willey~~ [sp]. Judge Victor B. ~~Willey~~ was the judge of the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals at the time, and I served as his law clerk for a year.

Woolley

Woolley

Q Where was this, now?

A Most of my work was done in Wilmington. He had an office in Wilmington, although the court sat in Philadelphia. But most of the--I did go to Philadelphia once or twice with him--practically all of my work was done in his office here doing research for him for his opinions. That was not in those days a full-time job; it took about half my time, and the other half of my time I worked for my father's law firm, Richards, Layton and Finger. And said he with a certain amount of pride, my father's law firm has now become my law firm.

Q When were you a judge?

A I never was a judge. The closest to being a judge was as clerk for Judge

~~Willey~~. Woolley

- Q Were you a member of the Delforeigns [sp]? There's an alumni group that . . .
- A There was for a very brief period, I think. George Brinton tried to start such a group, and he and I, I think, incorporated some sort of a thing, and he became the president and I became the treasurer. We had one convention, one reunion, I should say, in Providence, Rhode Island, if my memory serves me correctly, and that was the extent of it. There was very little interest in it as far as I could tell, and the treasurer found himself with I think \$18 or \$20.00 in the treasury and a defunct organization. And what were we gonna do with that? The bank would send me a bank statement about the Delfor Associates bank account until finally George Brinton and I decided we would ~~be~~ devote it to something at the university, I've forgotten what it was.
- Q There wasn't ever a dinner of alumni--alumni^{al} of this group? I thought I remembered reading something about it.
- A To the best of my knowledge there was one reunion in Providence, Rhode Island, and never another one.
- Q Do you know a Mr. Lank?
- A Yes, indeed. I know him well, and he was--I think the year before mine in the . . .
- Q He was the first.
- A Was he in the first year?
- Q One of the first, yeah. When they were all Delaware students, yeah.
- A Then I'm wrong on that. He's as you know the head of DuPont in Canada, and he came back and does come back to Wilmington from time to time. I see him and . . . I didn't remember that he was in the first group. I knew that he was in a group, but I thought it was closer to our own time.
- Q Well, I want to thank you very much, Mr. Richards. It was a pleasure talking to you, and I'll sign off.

[END OF INTERVIEW]