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Interview with Mr. T. Russell Turner, July 12, 1970, regarding his participation in the University of Delaware's Foreign Study Program in France, 1923-24. The interviewer is Myron L. Lazarus.

Q This is a recording of the Oral History Program of the University of Delaware, and we're interviewing Mr. T. Russell Turner. And Mr. Turner is going to talk to us about the Foreign Study Program of the University of Delaware. Mr. Turner, where were you born?

A I was born right here in Wilmington.

Q When--if you don't mind my asking.

A 1902.

Q 1902.

A And that would be very easy to find out, because you just find out when we went as sophomores and subtract the number of years.

Q Where did you go to school before you went to Delaware?

A Wilmington, Wilmington schools.

Q Wilmington High School?

A Wilmington High School.

Q And then on to the University of Delaware.

A Yes.

Q Uh huh. What did you study at Delaware?

A Just an arts course--just the general liberal arts.

Q And your goal tentatively, anyway, was teaching?

A That's correct.

Q And what kinds of French courses did you take at Delaware?

A Ha! Well, to be absolutely honest, I took--my freshman course was a review course of what I had taken in high school, completely review, nothing new. The second year, my sophomore year, was simply a reading course, reading/translation course. It happened to be that I was in a group of rather backward students, so . . .

Q This was a sophomore class?

A Yeah. There wasn't much progress made.

Q That sounds like a third-year French now.

- A Yeah, that's right. It was comparable to a high school third-year French, really. It wasn't . . .
- Q Uh huh. Did you--with whom did you take courses? Was Dr. Brinton involved in any of these things?
- A Yeah, I had Brinton in my freshman year and--no, Brinton in my sophomore year, and I had Kirkbride in my freshman year.
- Q Oh. So you had the two initiators of the program. What gave you the idea that you wanted to become part of the Foreign Study Program?
- A Oh, Kirkbride's enthusiasm about it. I think that's it, yeah.
- Q Well, he's the man that inspired you . . .
- A That's right.
- Q . . . to getting in this thing. Did you have any other motives for getting into the program?
- A No, because I think from the time I was in high school I looked very kindly upon the teaching profession. I had no leaning towards science or math. English seemed to be overwhelming to me, so when French came along, the opportunity to learn it pretty well by living there, I took the opportunity.
- Q And this was one of the stated goals of the program, by the way, the training of teachers.
- A Exactly.
- Q Now, how about the financing. How did you manage that?
- A I personally managed it through my parents, completely. Now, don't misunderstand me. They simply paid the student's costs, because of course there was overhead, which they didn't pay.
- Q Well, the program was helped by the . . .
- A Oh, yes. For example, the instructor who accompanied us and all the--his expenses, we didn't pay for that. We just paid our own.
- Q Well, the program was well endowed.
- A Oh, yes.
- Q When you--in preparing for this trip abroad, did you make any unusual preparations, or was this just your--this was your junior year, by the way.
- A Right. Well, we didn't. In fact, we went knowing a minimum about the French language, really, because when we got over there, we had to start with learning the very practical, basic things about the language.
- Q Speaking it. Yours was the first of the foreign study groups.

A Right, the first group.

Q Was it called the Junior Year Abroad then, or was it called the Foreign Study Program?

A Just Foreign Study Group. Then for some reason they began calling it the original group, and then the Junior Year Abroad or whatever they called it.

Q But there were a few who were in their senior year when they went there-- at least one that I know of.

A Oh, one. Yeah, one.

Q Well, you were actually part of the experiment. This was the first one and this was the first time they tried it.

A That's right. 1923.

Q But Kirkbride had been to Europe before this to set the whole program up.

A Oh, yes. Right.

Q So you didn't have him in class.

A In fact he had spent the year before abroad. He spent--he must have spent from '20 to '21, then he came back from '21 to '22--wait, '21 to '22, '22 to '23, and then in '23 he took us over. But he was here the year prior to our going over.

Q I see. Then it was two years before then.

A That's how he guided us all together. And he had been in the war, you see, up to 1918.

Q Um hmm. Well, do you know of any other kinds of planning? Since this was the first group, was the intention to continue it or just try one and experiment with it, or . . .

A Oh, no. His hope, his intention was to continue it and make it grow and involve other colleges, students from other colleges, which he did later on.

Q How is it that in the first year it was only Delaware students?

A Well, I think he was busy right there, you know, getting--he was teaching that year, as I recall, and was involved in just getting a group together to prove that it would work.

Q So this group was rather fortunate. I mean, they had probably a better opportunity to get into that program than any other group.

A I think that's correct, yeah. More attention, both from him, from those who backed it, from the French instructors and professors and the colleges. It was something new that was attractive to . . .

- Q Right. There was no routine then, was there? Now, who were the people who comprised this first program?
- A You mean students? Austin Cooley, Francis Cummings, David Dougherty, Cedric Snyder, John W. Walker, umm . . .
- Q Mr. Lank, you mentioned.
- A Lank, H. H. Lank, and myself. I think that's the entire group. [Inaudible].
- Q [Inaudible]. . . . Since you mention them, maybe this would be the time to talk about what happened to these people, the kinds of careers they went on to.
- A Well, of course Cedric Snyder died tragically very soon after we were graduated, in fact just a little more than a year after our graduation, in an automobile accident. Francis Cummings became executive director for the blind for the state of Delaware and became internationally known--went to conferences on work with the blind all over the world to present his ideas on making the blind proud of being able to support themselves. David Dougherty got his Doctorate degree from Harvard, taught at Clark University and soon after that went to the University of Oregon as head of the Romantics Department. John Winston Walker became a teacher and then principal of Haver-town High School. H. H. Lank went with the DuPont Company and after touring in France and in Argentina, finished his work and is now retired from the DuPont Company of Canada, where he was president and subsequently chairman of the board of directors. Austin Cooley spent a great many years actually taking care of invalid parents, and for the past ten years--the last ten years, probably--he has been involved in teaching French in southern colleges. Who did I miss?
- Q Well, don't worry about it. Now let's say . . . what kind of preparations do you remember right before your trip at the university? What kind of preparations were made there?
- A Really nothing at all. Really nothing at all. In other words, we had no practice in spoken French, nothing of that sort which you would sort of expect. But that was all taken care of when we got over there. Not just informally, but I mean actually by schooling.
- Q In other words, no orientation or indoctrination at the university? Because all the other groups had their indoctrination in New York, because people were coming from other universities.
- A Yeah. Well, of course we were in very close contact with the instructor, Mr. Kirkbride, who--his primary indoctrination was how to behave and how to appreciate what we were going to see, and to avoid making odious comparisons between customs and the culture of France and the United States. This was a valuable experience, because I know we enjoyed France much more having this feeling that we must not compare, we enjoyed France much more than we would have if we'd gone over and been critical of everything that we came into contact with.
- Q Of course it's one thing to hear it, in language, and another thing to get

the spirit of that idea. And so I guess that Dr. Kirkbride must have really given the spirit of appreciating another culture, not just telling it.

- A Well, that's right. He really loved France, and he loved everything about France, that was the thing.
- Q Um hmm. Now, he was in charge of the program when you went over there.
- A Right.
- Q He was with you. Was there anyone else in the program besides Kirkbride in charge of [inaudible], who was directing it?
- A No. No, he was our own instructor.
- Q And they didn't need a woman director because there weren't any girls in this first trip.
- A Right.
- Q What ship did you go on?
- A We went on the Rochambeau of the French Line, which was subsequently retired from service not too many years after we had the privilege of going aboard. It was what they called a one-class ship. However, it had two classes, a steerage that had been fixed up actually for our group a bit, and first class. We started out in steerage cabin, they called it, and we couldn't stand the food, so we paid the difference and moved upstairs.
- Q Is that right? Now, did each of you--you had cabins, I take it, right?
- A Yeah.
- Q How many of you were in a cabin?
- A Well, because we were moved from--we would have stayed down in third-class cabins and been perfectly satisfied to stay down there and eat in second-class and pay the difference, but I believe it was international law or steamship law that prevented that. You had to live and eat in the same class. As a result, we were cabined with either one other person or three other persons, because if we were moved into where there was a space, for example in a double cabin or a cabin for four. We were separated as far as sleeping, but that made no difference, so we didn't mind that.
- Q How long did it take to get across?
- A Eight days. Eight full days. Their motto was "leave and arrive in daylight." They never--the French Line at that time never brought you into port in the dark, or took you away in the dark.
- Q That's easily arranged. Dubious value, though. Did you have any activities on the boat that you remember?
- A Not many. No, there were not many activities. There was--there were no deck

games as I recall or anything like that. Of course no swimming pool on a ship that was as small as it was--no room for a swimming pool. And there was a salon where a great many of the people played cards and games of that sort, table games.

Q No French lessons, or any . . .

A Oh, no, no, no.

Q Um hmm. No other socializing--you did know everybody anyway, didn't you?

A We met a pretty good number of people on board. It was very informal, and . . .

Q Also small.

A Right.

Q Where did you land in France?

A Le Havre.

Q Um hmm. And from there you went?

A I went from there to Paris, just for a few days. And then we went to Nancy for six weeks. And that was really our first indoctrination in hearing French was at Nancy, where we heard lecturers in courses like the French Revolution, and also had private lessons in composition and dictation, things like that.

Q In the two days you spent in Paris, what was the purpose of that?

A Well, probably--the courses didn't start in Nancy, you see, so they just used that time to show us around Paris to get a birdseye view, so to speak.

Q An orientation to Paris.

A Yeah.

Q Now, with whom did you live in Nancy?

A Private families, private families.

Q Can you remember the name?

A Oh, yeah, I remember it very well. I remember why I picked my family. I said, "I'll take that one because the name's easy to pronounce." It was Folmer, F-o-l-m-e-r, and a very gracious family. They lived in a large house in a sort of place that you think of as being totally French. In other words, it was a large house surrounded by a large garden, which in turn was surrounded by a wall. So it was the type thing you expected to find there, but often don't. And it was in the suburbs. I had quite a walk to the University of Nancy. And the family was composed of an elderly mother, two sons and a daughter. And they were very gracious, very delightful

people, very much like my own family at home. Very much like them.

Q Have you ever had any contact with them since you left?

A No, and my experience with--it almost makes me feel that it's something typical of the French. I know this is dangerous to say, but I wrote to both families, the family there at Nancy and the family at Paris, wrote to them several times subsequent to leaving them, and never have received one word from either one of them. Never a word. And people tell me that this is typical. I don't know whether it is or not. But it was really strange to me, because particularly Paris, the family there, an elderly lady and her middle-aged daughter, treated me as a young son, because I was quite immature at 20 years of age, and treated me, as I say, just like a mother and older sister, and yet never replied to anything I ever wrote to them. Very strange.

Q Um hmm. Did you meet any other French men and women?

A Why, yes. Of course we were in French courses at the Sorbonne, and as a result, in our classes, we became quite well acquainted with the students in the classes. Also, people from other countries, because the courses were primarily for foreigners who were in France.

Q Any impressions about them?

A Not particularly. I'm inclined to think human nature's pretty much the same anywhere. If you want to find the good about a person, you find it. If you want to find the evil about him, you find it. It's what you look for primarily.

Q What did the University of Nancy look like? What was it like there?

A Well, the one word that I always think of as looking like, it just looked old, as does the Sorbonne. I mean, they're old buildings. They not only look old, but they are old, of course--soft stone, which becomes very dark and dingy. It absorbs the dirt and the filth, and unless they're cleaned, of course they just look dirty. The seats in the classrooms were hard and uncomfortable. I'm always reminded of the youngsters who lived in my neighborhood in Paris. The youngsters used to carry their books in a piece of carpet sling, just a piece of carpet that was folded with a piece of cord attached to the middle of each fold, with their books inside and that string was around their shoulder. And unless you knew what that carpet was, you might wonder, but the carpet was for him to sit on when he was in school, because the seats were so hard. So it was a very practical sort of thing, but to see the youngsters trudging to school with their little satchels of carpet . . .

Q They had a little pillow, too. Were the courses there--at Nancy, I'm talking about--as the--let's say courses at the University of Delaware.

A I think--oh, definitely not, now. There was practically no questioning by the instructor of the pupil. They were all lecture courses.

Q An Nancy, too.

- A Yeah. And once a week you'd have what they called a seminar, or comparable to a seminar, but they were not comparable to our seminars, because it was the whole class again. In other words, if you had French Literature of the 19th Century on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, on Thursday afternoon you would go into a seminar. Well, it was the same class, excepting someone in the class would be picked out to go up front and give a talk on some part of French literature in the 19th century.
- Q Someone who had prepared before.
- A Right.
- Q But there was still no discussion, or . . .
- A No, nothing, not at all. I think the primary purpose was that you'd get an opportunity to hear all the French that they could thrust at you, and also absorb all the history of French literature and history and philosophy and so forth that they could give you.
- Q Sounds like you were living, eating and sleeping French.
- A Right. That's right. I think that was the purpose of it.
- Q And in this private conference or . . .
- A Well, that was practically the same at Nancy as it was in Paris, excepting at Nancy the private lessons were given by the instructors of--really, they were professors. In fact, I had the dean of the summer school for my instructor for private lessons at Nancy. Whereas at Paris, it was a private school very close to the Sorbonne. And in these lessons, they would give you a subject, and you'd write a composition, and then come back and converse with the instructor as he corrected your composition, and challenged you to do better vocabulary and better construction and all this. The thing that impressed me so much, I remember, was that my private lesson in Paris was from six to seven on Saturday afternoon, and that was really--and we worked so much during the week that I had . . .
- Q You mean in the evening, six to seven.
- A Yeah, I had to prepare my composition on Saturday afternoon, and believe me, that was hard--a beautiful afternoon, you know, and I'd have to sit at home and work on a composition.
- Q So you really had advanced to the stage where you didn't need much tutoring in speaking. I mean you . . .
- A No, you see, the other thing where you got the biggest value or the best instructor in speaking was your home life. It was for me, at least, because in both homes in which I lived, they insisted upon my speaking. They wouldn't let me be quiet. They just questioned me and made me talk at the dinner table and lunch table. So that I actually had to talk. That was our best practice in speaking, at least it was mine.

Q And you eventually caught on.

A Yeah, um hmm. As I think back, the University of Nancy was pretty clever, because you know, you usually think of learning history, for example, start at the beginning and come up to today. But Kirkbride and the University in Nancy agreed on this, that for us to comprehend what the instructor was saying, it was better to begin with something nearer our time and our experience. So there they started, I remember so well, with the French revolution. That's about the only thing we knew about in France, even remotely. So we'd catch what he was saying because we were at least partially acquainted with it. And when we went to Paris, we started in literature, instead of taking 16th and 17th-century literature first, we took the 19th, and then went back, you see. And by the time we'd taken one semester of 19th and 18th, then we were well enough versed in the language that we could get the unfamiliar spelling and so forth of the 16th, for example, century. So I've always appreciated Kirkbride's thinking, because it seems to me that he thought out things pretty well.

Q Was he in constant contact with you?

A Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. For example, well, as I mentioned before, we went to the opera or the comic opera or the legitimate stage, legitimate theater . . .

Q This was in Paris.

A . . . at least once a week, and he was always with us. And in addition to that, we had occasion to go to his apartment very frequently and sit down and talk with him, meet people . . .

Q In French?

A Yeah. Oh, he wouldn't allow us to speak English with him, never. He really did not appreciate our meeting each other. He didn't want us to meet during the week or after school or any time with each other. The farther we stayed away from Americans, the happier he was. But it didn't work completely, I'll tell you. Some of the fellows--I was more of a loner, so I was a good distance from any one of the other fellows. So I had very little opportunity excepting when we met at class, you see. I rarely ever saw any of them, except just in class.

Q When you got together, though, that was English.

A Oh, yeah, you can't help that.

Q What did he do when you were in classes, then, at the university, at the Sorbonne, Kirkbride?

A Well, he was an administrator then, you see. In other words--for example our expenses--even our spending money was sent to him by our parents. And he paid the family with whom we lived and all that sort of thing, so that he was busy all the time.

Q Tell me a little bit about the tours you took before you went to Paris, the tours around . . .

- A Oh, well. Of course from Nancy, that was not too far from the battlefields of World War I, so that we actually covered most of the battlefields of World War I. For example, all the way from the English Channel, all the way over to--of course, the Vosges Mountains, we were almost right there, at the Vosges, so that we went to Verdun and all the rest of them. That was a tremendous experience. Each Saturday we went by bus to a different battlefield.
- Q Um hmm. What was the condition of those battlefields at that time?
- A They were--it was only five years, you see, and they were still--for example, the famous Tranchée de Baïonnette, the Bayonet Trench, with the bayonets still standing up where the men--where the trench collapsed with the Frenchmen standing holding their rifles--bayonet were still there, standing up in the battlefield. And for example at . . . well, the now-famous mortuary where they have a soldier from each of the nations in tombs was not even built then, so that there was just a little shack where an unknown soldier from each of the . . .
- Q Were the shell holes still there, or were things . . .
- A There was one place we visited, Mont [inaudible, sounds like "Beucom"], where the--which was one of the most fascinating places. It was actually a hill that had been dug out for tunneling by the Germans, and they occupied that for most of the war and were finally chased out by American artillery. And those holes were still there, because they were mammoth holes in the top of the hill. But by and large most of the battlefields had been leveled, but . . .
- Q People were beginning to farm again in these . . .
- A No, not on the . . . for example, in Verdun, it was just a pile of small rubble, small rubble . . . you usually think of a--as a youngster, you think of a fort, for example, as being a building with [inaudible] wall with a fellow standing up there popping out. Well, of course, Verdun is nothing at all, it's a hill with tunnels through it . . . [inaudible] and several forts surround it. We went into Fort Duvoe [sp], which was very interesting, one of the small forts there at Verdun. And saw where in one end had been the Germans and the other end the French, underground in the same fort for several weeks.
- Q Did you visit any historic shrines other than World War I?
- A Well. Now, that was only from Nancy that we took those trips. Later on from Paris--oh, from Paris we took a trip down into the chateaux country and missed very few of them. We went through chateau after chateau until we were almost tired of chateaus.
- Q Any chateau wines along the way?
- A Oh, yeah, once in a while. We didn't have too much money to spend on that sort of thing.
- Q Were you allowed to, by the way?

A Oh, yeah, sure.

Q I didn't know what kind of restrictions had been . . .

A Oh, no, no. We were treated as adults. We were treated as adults, and I think learned a great deal from that experience.

Q Now, let's talk a little bit about Paris. What was the family like in Paris?

A Well, as I say, it was an elderly lady and her middle-aged daughter. And my contact with them was completely at the meals, because they rented two apartments. They, the two of them, occupied the second floor, and three men--we were three men--occupied the third floor, a Norwegian, . . .

Q It wasn't like in Nancy where you stayed . . . you were part of a family.

A No, no, typical Parisian apartment dwelling, that's what it was. But again, very, very nice, very hospitable. Food just like I would have eaten at home, excepting the different cultural differences in food, which I enjoyed tremendously.

Q Did this make a French gastronome out of you?

A Yeah, I enjoyed French food, yes indeed. But the thing that fascinated me was the fact that here was a lady whose husband had been ruined by the War of 1870, and who had died in his early married life, leaving a widow with a baby, and nothing to support herself with, who had taken in these foreign visitors for a good many years, and had survived and was surviving in very comfortable circumstances. One thing that still impresses me was the fact that I had a little coal stove in my room. They had no central heating--there was very little central heating in Paris in the type homes or type apartments where we lived. I had a little--we would call them "bucket-a-day" stove in my room, and the daughter carried coal from the basement up to that room every day. And yet they brought in a hired maid to wash the dishes. They did not wash dishes. Our breakfast dishes, our lunch dishes and our dinner dishes were all rinsed and stacked and left for the bonne, the maid, the next morning. And yet the daughter would carry coal from the basement to the third floor, which seemed rather strange. But these are the customs that they had then. I don't know in forty years whether these customs have changed or not, maybe they have.

Q Now, you were in a room with two other fellows?

A Not in a room, we each had our own room.

Q Oh, I see. But in the building itself, in the third floor apartment.

A Yeah, um hmm.

Q Tell me something about the office or building that the university had in Paris.

A It was only Kirkbride's apartment. In other words, his apartment . . .

- Q Later on they developed something more.
- A Oh, I imagine they would have had to with 100 or 150 students they'd have sometimes. But at that time it was just his apartment.
- Q Um hmm. What was that like?
- A Very much like the one I lived in, almost exactly like it. Just for example a front bedroom, then the next room was a--just a minute--beside the front door was a little kitchen, and then down a hall . . . and on the other side was a bedroom, then you went down a hall to the dining room, and then to another bedroom, and then at the far end, a very small bath. This was typical of that--not only my neighborhood, where I lived very close to the Luxembourg Gardens, but also where he lived, which was quite a ways from where I lived. But they were very much alike. I think most of these apartments were built when Napoleon III renovated Paris. You know, he was the one that drove the famous boulevards through the congested little narrow, congested streets that existed from time immemorial, Napoleon threw these immense boulevards in all directions through Paris in order to open it up for protection from outside invaders and so forth--and also to make the circulation more reasonable and faster.
- Q This apartment, was there a name for this kind of apartment, a pension, or something like that?
- A Well, it's not because it's an apartment, but pension really means a boarding house, is the nearest thing to it in America. You see, these people, for instance the lady with whom I lived, people like that would go to the university, they'd go to the Sorbonne, and have their name put on a board or a list, and then when you came to the university, you'd ask the university, "Where is a good pension?" And they would recommend this place.
- Q No dorms like at the University of Delaware, huh?
- A No. Well, now, there was one, not like the University of Delaware, but three of our men lived in a place called [sounds like Le Cap]. Now, it was a pension, but it was an almost brand-new building with a nice foyer, a nice reception room, and rooms, lodging rooms, and also a very nice dining room. But it was definitely for French students. Our fellows got in just because there were vacancies. And they had quite as much an opportunity to speak French as I did, because there were French fellows all around them. And in one case, one of the fellows actually shared a room with a Frenchman.
- Q This wasn't by any chance on a street called Le Cat [sp]?
- A No, it was on . . .
- Q Because in another interview, somebody said he went to a street to get to the Sorbonne and it was called the Blue Cat.
- A No, this was Cap, C-a-p, Cap.
- Q Oh, I see. What were the courses you took at the Sorbonne?

- A Definitely French literature, primarily, the different centuries of French literature.
- Q Were they tough courses?
- A Well, they were not--I wouldn't say tough. The examinations were tough, at least they were for me, because I didn't pass them with any flying colors. In fact, I can't say I actually passed them, because when you think of trying to cover a literature from the 15th through the 19th century in two semesters, it's almost [inaudible]. Now, they were simply lecture courses and we had a book called The History of French Literature, where for example today if we heard a lecture on Balzac, we'd go back home and open our History of French Literature and read about Balzac, and maybe read some short story of his or something like that. We had a course in French art, too, with a very fascinating character. But that's what it consisted of.
- Q How did the--could he demonstrate the art when there was a course in French art? Did he show anything?
- A Well, actually, no, he did not. What he talked about was--for instance, he'd mention Monet and he'd tell the types of painting that Monet did. Or he'd talk about an architect and tell about the type monuments that you'll find here and there, and why he represented Romances, and what class [inaudible] and what have you.
- Q Not like today when they throw slides on the screen and . . .
- A No, he had no visual education
- Q Now, you'd have a course, and then would you have an exam after the course was over?
- A We had an exam at the end of the year, yeah.
- Q Of all the courses.
- A Yeah. For example, we went into a large room, very big room, sat down, and the instructor came in and said--one man came in and he said, "Write all you know about Balzac. You have three hours." And he walked out.
- Q This was just on the one course, then, French literature.
- A No, this . . .
- Q He could have asked you anything, on literature or art?
- A Now, this was the first thing that he did. "Write all you know about Balzac, his life and works." Then you went into your own--for example, we had four or five different professors, and each one examined us in detail. I remember one of the questions that the art professor asked me was "What's [sounds like "clef de voute"], what's in clef de voute?" Well, I didn't even know what keystone was. I knew that clef de voute was a vault key, but I didn't know what a vault key was, or I didn't know what a keystone was. I wasn't born in Pennsylvania. But they could ask anything

like that. For example, in literature they might say, this is orally, these were oral exams, "Name three works of Rousseau." Well, you'd say, "Du Contrat Social." "Well, what did Du Contrat Social represent, what was the philosophy of Du Contrat Social?" this type of thing.

Q Um hmm. Then they can follow through.

A Right. It lasted--each one lasted about a half hour. And very, very embarrassing in a way, because if you went into a--one of your professors might have as many as 30 students in there. Now, the third person called up was Dr. Cummings [inaudible] Why was he called third? Because he was the third-best in the written examination that we had had first, you see. And why was Turner called one of the last? Because he was among the last in the written exam, you see. So that's the way it worked.

Q Did you take any courses other than at the Sorbonne?

A Well, as I say, our private lessons, they were three days a week.

Q Um hmm. But beyond that, you didn't . . .

A No, no. There was one man, one of our students, Austin Cooley, who did not attend the Sorbonne. He went to the Ecole de Science Politique, and . . .

Q What is that, and what's the difference between that and the Sorbonne?

A Well, it's--as its name implies, it's political science. Interestingly enough, he stayed two years. He didn't come home with us. He stayed over there the next year.

Q Was it more of an elite school than the Sorbonne?

A No, no, no--not necessarily.

Q How would you compare the professors with those that you had at Delaware?

A Oh, this was a very interesting thing. I wouldn't dare do that, I wouldn't compare them, because I was very fortunate at Delaware. I had Dr. Seyfert [sp], and men of that type, because Delaware was small and the top men taught [inaudible] . . . so that it has to be different now. But you would think that that would have been the case at the Sorbonne. But, as I understand it, I may be wrong about this, but as I understand it, the combination of the different courses which we took was known as [inaudible] Civilisation Francais. Now, as I understand it, the [sounds like "abonnement"], that is the tuition, for these courses was higher than the tuition for the average French course. So the best professors in the Sorbonne grabbed those courses, so that we really had the top men, Libretain [sp] in modern literature, Chenguer [sp], as I mentioned, in art . . . we had the top men in the Sorbonne, which makes a lecture course. Because a man knows more than he just learned last year, he doesn't produce a good lecture. These men were brilliantly educated and could give a good lecture.

Q Um hmm. Now each course met what, three times a week, or every day? Three times a week?

- A It wasn't--that was not too different from the United States, because Monday, Wednesday and Friday were quite filled, as I recall, and as I say, I think Thursday was a seminar and maybe one or two classes on Tuesday. I don't recall that too well, but as I recall most of the courses were three times a week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- Q And you had a rather full program on the weekend with the opera and . . .
- A Ah, yeah, well, of course we went to those any night in the week when we got the tickets.
- Q Do you like opera, did you like opera?
- A Very much, yeah, very much. I think without exception we all enjoyed it.
- Q Then there was what else, the Comedie Francais [sp?], you mentioned, and what else was there that you . . .
- A Well, what they call the Theatre Francais, which is legitimate theater, spoken, you know, not singing, music. And the Odeón, which is comparable to it but not as expensive, it's different--younger actors and things like that.
- Q Did you get much of a chance to talk to French people, other than the students and the families. Could you go around Paris and . . .
- A Oh, yeah, we got around, there wasn't any doubt about that. Of course on our trips, you see, we had trips which encompassed practically all of France. About the only region that we didn't cover was around Le Havre where we came into France. We really didn't cover that coast. But we spent Easter, for example, along the Rhine. We spent Christmas in Nice, Monte Carlo. We spent time on the southwest coast at Biarritz. All of our vacations we traveled. We didn't stay in Paris, and actually covered the country practically.
- Q Usually you went by train, didn't you?
- A No. We even got into the central part where the famous factories are, I can't think of them off hand . . . Schneider [sp?], the famous Schneider factory where they constructed everything from a straight pin to a locomotive. In fact, this was an interesting thing about Kirkbride, he got us into many places, factories and places like that, the like of which we had never seen in our own country. For example, we got into the [inaudible] chocolate factory which is comparable to Hershey in the United States. Of course Hershey you can get into, that's a poor example, but we really did get into many places. We went to a famous steel factory in Alsace where they just don't take visitors. They don't have visitors. We went in a brewery, of course, . . . so that we really got around. The only place we didn't get in was the Havilland [sp?] China place, and we went there with a written agreement that they would take us around, and when we got there the man who greeted us acted as if he'd never heard of the group, he never heard of anybody daring to come into Havilland, that they might break something and all this. We got into the [inaudible] China place, though, so we didn't care about the other.

Q Where did you stay on these tours? I mean, they weren't one-day . . .

A Oh, no, no. No, we stayed in small hotels, not the plush ones, but the small ones. And incidentally, if I were to go abroad, I think anybody would get a better picture of France by staying in little, intimate-type hotels than to go over there and stay in these plush things. You can find the plush hotels in the United States. But it's the little hotel on the Left Bank where you get a picture of French life, and cleanliness. Their small hotels are just as clean as clean can be. We never--I only had one unfortunate experience with filth, and I'm proud to say it was not in France. I'd gone out of France--I won't tell you what country it is, but I'd gone out of France. And that was the only time. I was traveling down the Rheine--and still you don't know what country it was--and I had a real bad experience one time.

Q Was that a hotel?

A Yeah. Just a small hotel, because I steered clear . . . I took that trip from [sounds like "Austen"] down the Rheine, another wonderful experience I had in meeting people. I determined that I was not going to follow the route that the average tourist takes, so I started at Austen with a timetable and picked little backwoods trains from here to here and from there to there, you see, and came down from Austen to Strasbourg. At the end of my year, I went to Nancy and visited the family where I had been the previous summer, you see, had a nice reunion with them. But I enjoyed that trip down the Rheine tremendously because the Rheine was right here, the train ran along it, and . . .

Q You didn't get a boat, you just went by train.

A By train. And I think I must have crossed the border a half dozen times, because you'd ride two hours and get out and go through customs. The train just went back and forth across the border.

Q Did you do this on your own?

A Yeah, at the end of the year. I had a little bit of money left, so this is what I did.

Q How much longer did you stay in Europe? School ended when, around June?

A Well, now, I stayed a little bit longer than the other fellows. The other fellows came out, oh, a week or two before I did. I stayed from--we left here about the 1st of July, and I got home about the 1st of August. I was away from home 13 months, . . . 13 months. But I left Paris to go up to Austen and stopped at a little town where an American had established a miniature Y.M.C.A. He had been an American Y.M.C.A. director and had enlisted in World War I, and at the conclusion of the war he stayed there and inaugurated this miniature "Y" program with volleyball, primarily--no swimming pool, just the volleyball court and a few rooms for fellows to live in. And the day I was there, the French government decorated him for the work he had done for French students . . .

Q In Y.M.C.A. work.

- A Yeah. So it was in no way connected with the "Y," I don't mean that. He was completely on his own.
- Q Did you get your start in your interest in the "Y" from that?
- A No, not at all.
- Q What ship did you come back on?
- A The Rochambeau. Two of us came back on the Rochambeau.
- Q This was a little bit better than going over.
- A Well, it was the same ship.
- Q Oh, I see. Um hmm. And then they retired the ship.
- A Soon after. Four or five years.
- Q Can you think of any other experiences that stand out in your mind, things that might be amusing of your trip.
- A Of course we never took a trip that was not amusing. I mean, when you think of eight young fellows going off on a trip, they were always amusing. One of the most amusing things was, we were coming home from our visit to the Riviera and on our way to Geneva. Now at Geneva we were to be entertained by the dean of the college there for dinner and for a visit around the city and so forth, so we got on a train--I think it was--well, anyway, wherever we left the Riviera, we got on a train, and our instructor said, "Now, fellows, you're in the back of the train. Now, when we get to a little junction at noon for lunch, be sure and bring your luggage up to the front of the train," because he was in the front of the train with his luggage, and he said, "Bring all your luggage up there, because when you come out--when we all come out for lunch, you'll have to get on the front end of the train, otherwise we'll land dear knows where." So we said O.K. So we came out and we got on the back of the train and he got on the front of the train. Eight of us got on the back of the train and he got on the front, because we didn't know it was gonna leave soon. First thing we knew, he was going one way and we were going another. But we were on the right end of the train and he was on the wrong. So we got to Geneva about dinnertime and had a nice dinner with the dean, no instructor. One of the boys had to make the thank-you speech and so forth. And about eight or nine o'clock that night, the instructor came to the hotel followed by a pushcart with eight suitcases, eight overcoats and eight hats. He had--they had taken him to the first little depot beyond the junction and he had gotten out and had the porter walk all this luggage back to the junction and he'd taken the next train to Geneva.
- Q This is Kirkbride.
- A Yeah. This is the type thing that can happen, of course, when you have a bunch of fellows like that. We should have gone with him. He told us to come up to the front of the train. We deliberately got into the back.

- Q Now, when you came back after your trip, you had another year to go at Delaware and completed your senior year at Delaware. You didn't have any trouble qualifying for the French requirement, did you?
- A No. We had a very disappointing experience with our teacher at that time. He was . . .
- Q At Delaware?
- A Yeah. He lasted only I think two years down there and was a complete--well, no other word for it but failure. He was not qualified for his position at all. So we didn't do so well with him.
- Q You mean you continued on with French in your senior year.
- A Yeah, we wanted--we could have used the year very, very well. For example, you have philology, etymology and all these things to study in a language, which we should have done, you see, but it wasn't available. I mean he didn't know French, much less things like that, so we didn't have a very good experience, not at all.
- Q Brinton--Professor Brinton wasn't part of the program at that time, was he?
- A Only his interests. He was very much interested.
- Q But he was at Delaware.
- A Oh, yes.
- Q Well, when you graduated from the university, what did you do then?
- A Well, I went to the University of Pennsylvania and I was offered an assistantship there while I worked for my Master's Degree, and then they gave me an instructorship. And I was there nine years. Then the Depression came along and [inaudible . . . End of side one of tape].
- . . . I also had a course in scientific French for students who were in engineering schools and definitely scientific students who were also good students and made the course very interesting. What I did was to write to France and get magazines, a magazine called Science et Vie [sp?], which is a better type magazine than Popular Mechanics, but it's not a learned magazine for engineers. Well, for example, at that time the automatic telephone was just coming into use. And there was an article in there on the automatic telephone. Then the next article might be something on civil engineering, which the civil engineers were interested in. Or there would be an article on some phase of chemistry. So that Penn found out somehow that I had one year of engineering, my freshman year of engineering at Delaware, and they found out I had this one year of engineering and gave me this course in Engineering French, as they called it. But it was very, very interesting.
- Q And then from there you went to the high school, Wilmington High School.
- A Um hmm. And then . . .

Q How many years were you at Wilmington High School?

A I was nine years at the University of Pennsylvania and nine years in high school, then 25 at the "Y," Y.M.C.A.

Q How would you sum up your program with the university in this Foreign Study Program as to the contribution to your life?

A Well, to me the biggest contribution was giving me an avocation which I'm still enjoying, because I've never stopped reading French. I'm now reading books--I'm so glad that I brought home a trunkful of paperback books, because now during retirement I'm enjoying reading them tremendously. I also belong to the French Book-of-the-Month Club where you get a French book every month which I read too rapidly and run out of reading from that source. But it's a glorious avocation just to have another literature besides your own. But I think even more important than that was this experience of going abroad, living abroad, being more or less independent, meeting people, having to learn a language to communicate, I think it gave me a sense of being able to do more than anything that I had had previous to that. In other words, I was inhibited, I was backward, I was almost unsocial, and I think this had a very definite effect upon my life. It gave me a feeling of having something that sort of boosted my morale tremendously. I know it did. Now some of the fellows, of course, didn't need this, but I did.

Q And also it gave you a way of looking at things.

A Oh, yes. I mean I don't think anybody can go live with foreign people or people of another country and learn to appreciate their culture and their way of life and not be more tolerant of people. I don't think this is possible.

Q People of different ways and different [inaudible] . . .

A Particularly by living there you learn why they have these customs, why they do things the way they do. We're so prone to say, "Why don't they do like we do? Our way's so much better than theirs." When you learn why they don't do those things the way we do, then you get an entirely different picture.

Q Well, I want to thank you very much, Mr. Turner.

A Well, it was a pleasure. I hope it can be of some value to you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]