



Citation for this collection:

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Interview with Mrs. Robert H. Richards, Jr., 7/21/70, regarding her participation in the Foreign Study Program of the University of Delaware in France in 1927. The interviewer is Myron L. Lazarus.

Q This is a recording of the Oral History Program and we're interviewing Mrs. Robert H. Richards, Jr., formerly Harriett Kellond. Now, Mrs. Richards, where were you born and when?

A I was born in San Francisco in 1907.

Q And you mentioned that you were from an Army family.

A Yes.

Q Your father had served where, did you say?

A He was serving in the Philippines at the time that I would have been born, and my grandmother insisted I come--that her grandchildren be born in San Francisco, where my grandparents lived.

Q And you were educated like an Army brat, is that the term?

A Yes. I went to quite a few different schools, and excellent schools, beginning in Roland Hall in Salt Lake City, and started right in in French right away. No matter what grade I was in, we had French. Then I went to . . .

Q This is elementary school you're talking about.

A Yes. And then I went to Columbus School for Girls in Columbus, Ohio, which was still an excellent school, had French when I was there. From there I went to Washington, where I went to the Eastman School.

Q Um hmm. And that's a secondary school.

Madero
A A secondary--well, yes . . . no, I was there in my seventh and eighth grades, I think. Then I went to the ~~Madero~~ School in Washington. I had very good French there. Went back to the Columbus School for Girls in Columbus for a year, and then my last year was in Texas in San Antonio, in [inaudible] high school.

Q So you'd been acquainted with French and the language for quite a while, all through your education, right?

A Yes. And I could read it. I could understand it somewhat, but I couldn't--I would say I was far from speaking it.

Q I see. And you got that when you went over on your trip.

A Yes. It took a while, too. I think French is the hardest language that there is to understand and to speak well, much harder than--although German is extremely hard, I think eventually you get the hang of it better than

French.

- Q Um hmm. Now what were the circumstances surrounding your finally getting the scholarship to go to France?
- A I had graduated from Principia Junior College, which--in the end of my second year, I went back again for a year as a housemother. And when I was a housemother, they offered me a scholarship. And it was also . . . two of us.
- Q You were kind of young to be a housemother, weren't you?
- A Yes. I remember, the girls I had were seniors in high school, and some of them--one of them was older than I. And the reason they found out that I was younger than some of them was that in the Christian Science Church, you are only allowed in the Sunday School until you're 20. So when Sunday School time came, I went to Sunday School for part of that year, and some of my charges were too old to go.
- Q Now, why--I presume it was quite an honor to receive this scholarship from the school.
- A Well, I suppose it was. They had this school of foreign affairs in Principia which they were just beginning then. And this young man, [inaudible], and I were the first ones to be sent over. I doubt that they ever sent anybody again for the full year. After that I think they always had a summer program at Delaware and they would send perhaps a student in that. Principia, I mean.
- Q You mean they would send them to the University of Delaware?
- A No, the University of Delaware would have a summer program in Switzerland or something like that. They'd send them for a shorter one, but they never again that I know of sent a whole--a student for a whole year. I don't know whether we were too much for them or not.
- Q I imagine the expense must have been--though you mentioned before what the expense was.
- A It was \$1,000 a year apiece, perhaps \$1,100 for the young women. It was \$100 more for us than the young men. And I was given a \$700 scholarship, and since I did not make use of my French, either teaching or working for 10 years after graduation, why my mother repaid my part of the scholarship.
- Q And you said this Mallory . . .
- A Mallory Brown, who was there when I was, worked afterward several years for the Christian Science Monitor--he worked abroad in France, and then he joined the State Department and worked in various embassies abroad, so he more than did the ten years that he was required. He has since died, though.
- Q Well, as I mentioned before, you had done . . . my looking into your records showed that you had done a lot of reading in French literature and so this is--you're not [inaudible] . . . on this.

- A That's so far back that I don't remember what I read.
- Q Uh huh. But you had done considerable reading, and . . . I had your record and Mr. Richard's side by side, and you had a list as long as your arm, and he just hadn't read anything. Now, do you remember the occasion when the program met in New York and received instructions and got together for the trip abroad?
- A I remember going up on the train with my father, it was the highest day I've ever known, from Washington to New York, and we went directly to the ~~[inaudible]~~ sounds like McAlpin ~~(sp)~~ Hotel and checked in there, but I don't remember meeting anybody in the group until the next morning. And I suppose the reason I remember that is 'cause we all had our picture taken, and I have that picture somewhere--I'm not sure just where.
- Q Do you remember with whom you checked?
- A Well, Miss Dennis was there, and I'm sure George Brinton was there, and Mr. Kirkbride, but Mr. Kirkbride did not go over on the boat with us. He was not well at the time.
- Q Um hmm. But Mr. Brinton did; he was in charge of the program.
- A Mr. Brinton and Miss Dennis, yes.
- Q Miss Dennis was the director for the women.
- A Yes. She was from Wellesley College.
- Q Um hmm. And she stayed a year abroad just as Dr. Brinton stayed a year abroad.
- A She stayed a year. They did that. They gave the opportunity to different--the women changed each year. They all had their own teaching job somewhere else.
- Q I wonder why they changed each year? Because Dr. Brinton was there for a good number of years.
- A Yes, but Dr. Brinton came from the University of Delaware. These other women had their own jobs in other universities, and they would take it for a year or maybe two years, but Miss Dennis only had a year to spend on it.
- Q I take it the university didn't have someone who was female of that comparable an education.
- A They needed someone who knew Europe well, and these women all did. And then of course we had Mademoiselle Savage when we got over there, who is the present Mrs. Brinton. And she was always there.
- Q Uh huh. Do you remember the next day in New York? Did you have any instructions on what you should do or shouldn't do, or . . .
- A I believe we sailed that day. We got plenty of . . .

- Q I see. You mean, you arrived one day and sailed the next day.
- A Yes. We went immediately to the boat, which was the Coronia [sp?], and I was never . . .
- Q But there was no send-off speech, you know, "you shouldn't do this," and "you shouldn't do that"?
- A No, they did all that aboard the boat. We had plenty of directions and we knew that we had to behave and we had to keep up our grades. That was all gone into before we left.
- Q On the boat.
- A No, I think we understood that before we were accepted. I'm sure that was true.
- Q Well, that was in the communication and . . .
- A Yes. I would say that was true. It didn't surprise us in the least, but we were much more carefully chaperoned than anything in this country would ever think of being--the girls, the young men could do as they pleased.
- Q Well, other groups, for instance, received instructions in New York and they had a dinner and they received a speech from perhaps the president of the university. And I was wondering if anything like that . . .
- A I don't remember any of that. Just our getting together there in the Mc-Alpin and I believe we sailed in the afternoon.
- Q What year was that again? I don't know if I . . .
- A 1927. I mean July of '27.
- Q O.K., what was the boat like?
- A Well, the boat was extremely old-fashioned, and there were four . . .
- Q For then.
- A Yes, it was the old Coronia. It was one-class boat, a ten-day boat, and I was in . . .
- Q What do you mean--it takes ten days to get there?
- A 10 days to cross, yes. We went to Le Havre. Now I think we--I don't remember where we stopped before. I just remember arriving at Le Havre early in the morning.
- Q Were there any activities on the boat that you remember?
- A Oh, yes. I enjoyed the boat very much. I was in a very small stateroom with three young girls from Randolph-Macon. And I was just about the right age, I would say, to go. I was 20 and had my 21st birthday when I was there

in March. And these girls, one was 19, one was 18, and one was 17, and they were all ready for their junior year, and they all came from Randolph-Macon and they were all from Mississippi and they were bright. At that age, you can imagine, they must have been very bright. And we did quite a few things together on the boat. Miss Dennis thought everybody should see the sunsets, so we had the first sitting at meals. And she told us exactly how we should behave, and I've never forgotten the things she told us. What you did say and what you didn't say, and what you did do and what you didn't do, and how you hold your knife and fork, and how you eat your dessert with a spoon and a fork. And I think she was excellent, and I think the young women in that group really learned how to behave in Europe for the rest of their lives.

Q Can you remember, besides the holding of the knife and fork, do you remember some of the specific instructions she gave you?

A She gave us more, I think, with the way she . . .

Q Well, I mean, for instance, let's take an example of what you should or shouldn't do.

A What we should do with our families that we stayed in, if we wanted to send them something . . . if they had a death in their family, you never send them the bead flowers that you see, or permanent flowers you see in Europe, that that would not be proper; you send live flowers because your association with them was something new, therefore you wouldn't send artificial flowers or bead flowers. She told us things like that, you see, that Americans might not know. Words we should use and words that we shouldn't use.

Q In French.

A In French, yes.

Q Um hmm. How about things like dating and that kind of . . .

A Well, she didn't need to bother about that at all. We were never allowed to be with a person of the opposite sex except our fathers. That was the only person we might see if they came to Europe. Even an uncle we couldn't go out with without a French-speaking chaperone. And if the man didn't speak French, well the chaperone, if she was French, would just have to sit quiet, but we never went anyplace without a chaperone--ever. That's not saying that we didn't, but we weren't supposed to.

Q How long did you stay at Le Havre?

A Just long enough to catch the boat-train. We arrived at dawn. I remember getting up at 4:00 so I could see the first signs of shore, and there was a great big advertisement for Baby Cadem Soap [sp]. That's the first thing I remember seeing. And the harbor's quite different now. It's much more filled in with buildings and things, they built out into the harbor more. And we got immediately on the boat-train, and I can remember on the way to Paris the food was so much better than the food on the Caronia, that was pretty poor. The food was so good on the train. And I remember seeing all

those red-tiled roofs on the houses as we passed. We went immediately to a hotel, a small hotel, in Paris. I think it was called the Hotel Trianon, across from Trianon Palace. The young men went to another small hotel. And we had a perfectly delicious lunch, I can remember, and then we were all taken to the headquarters, and . . .

Q At the hotel you had lunch?

A We had lunch at our own hotels, yes. I couldn't tell what the number of my room was, because it was a thing, it looked like a seven that had a cross through it. I found out that's the way you made seven's in France. That was the number of my room. And we had a very good lunch, some kind of chicken I remember it was. And we went immediately to the headquarters at 4 Rue du For [sp?], which was that New England wooden house that had been built there, it was our headquarters. And this young man who was from Principia came up to me and said, "I thought I'd better tell you, you have halitosis." We'd all had garlic for our lovely meal in the middle of the day and didn't know it.

Q Well, you were beginning to enjoy the French customs right away.

A Yes, but they should have fed it to all of them. We had a very nice time, and we were in Paris for about three days and we took rides on the bateau-mouche to see all the things first at a distance. Then we were taken to Notre Dame. They gave us a very good . . .

Q Introduction.

A Yes. We stayed three nights at the hotel, Trianon Palace I think was the name of it, and then we--on the Rue Beaujura [sp]. And then we went by train to Nancy.

Q How many of you were on this program all together, do you remember?

A Yes, there were 30 girls and 14 young men. And then in . . .

Q I wonder why there was a predominance of women?

A Well, I think because it was asking too much of a young man to break into his college career. Girls' college careers weren't so serious as men--how did they know what it was going to do for their later life? I think that's asking quite a lot of someone to do.

Q I think they'd probably be quite willing to do it now, though.

A Oh, I'm sure they would. And then also I think men's colleges were cheaper in those days than this. Women's colleges, on the other hand, most of them were just a little bit more unless state colleges.

Q Um hmm. What do you remember about Nancy?

A Well, my mother was very anxious that I always live in a Protestant family, which I did in Nancy, and I went directly to their house I was to live in. It was up a hill. It was a charming house with a high wall around it and

and rather a--you came to this point in the wall with a road going up either side, almost like the prow of a ship, but you went uphill from there, and in this garden, very old-fashioned and sort of overgrown garden, was this very charming little house, and rather severe everything in it, because she came from--she was a Protestant from Lorraine. I think she had probably not always lived in Nancy, she was a widow then. And it was a very--sort of a drab house, but nice. And she was a very nice woman. And she had other borders there.

Q What was her name now? Do you remember?

A Now that you ask me, of course, I cannot remember, but it will come to me.

Q What was the size of the family?

A She was alone. Her daughter was married and lived in Strasbourg, was married to an architect. But one of the girls from Randolph-Macon, who had been my cabinet-mate on the boat, and I went to this house to live. And there was a young English girl there and the girl from Randolph-Macon and the English girl could not understand each other's English at all. It was absolutely . . .

Q Really?

A Yes. They couldn't understand what they were saying. There was a young Belgian boy there who had an Austrian tutor whom he was traveling with, and then there was a young boy from Maine who was there. None of them stayed very long. We stayed all summer, the girl from Alabama and I-- Louise Ledbetter [sp] was her name. And we walked to the university every day, and they had special classes just for us. The university was closed, but we had our own classes. The thing that the professors there found the hardest to understand was the way our young men--how carefree they were. I remember one of our classrooms was a--the benches and the tables that we wrote on went up like an amphitheater. It was not round, but they just went up in a perfectly rectangular room. They went up as they went back. And one of the professors was called out of the room for something, and when he came back all of the boys were trying to walk tightrope on the backs of the benches, which were just a board about like this. And we were all screaming with laughter. And a French college student in those days would never have done such a thing. Life was serious to him, and they didn't understand people who didn't want to study and who didn't know how to conduct themselves. At least they thought they didn't.

Q That wasn't quite true about . . . were they non-students? I mean, they studied, I mean . . .

A These were the boys in our group, and I think perhaps they had to be prodded into studying perhaps a little more than the girls. Some of the girls in our group were extremely smart, and there was one of French-Canadian descent who spoke good French and understood everything. We, on the other hand, didn't understand the French that was spoken to us in Paris when we arrived there, and were about to get off the train . . . suddenly all these blue-smocked porters came and flew away with our baggage, and we tried to grab it back. And when we spoke to them, they just spoke to us in a language we

couldn't understand. And we noticed when we came back to Paris after three months in Nancy, we could understand the porters perfectly. They had been of course assigned to take our luggage, you see, we just didn't know.

Q What courses did you take at the university?

A In Nancy, you mean?

Q Yeah, at Nancy.

A Well, we had a different--we had review, kind of, of all French literature, and we had French history, and then then each week we would have a different subject assigned to us and it was a long vocabulary so that we might learn about business one week and universities another and sports another time, and shopping and maybe--we'd have lectures on French life, and they'd explain to us how different people in France . . . where they were in society, that if you were in manufacturing you had to be way up to be accepted in certain professions and others not. Doctors had not yet been entirely accepted in France, it was just coming.

Q This is a description of the social system at that time.

A That's right. We had--each week something was given to us like that with a complete vocabulary, so that we really had a very good background of French. Thanks to George Brinton--he was the one who laid it all out.

Q Um hmm. And by the time you were through there, you were ready for the Sorbonne with not too much trouble.

A Yes, we really were. They gave us this test when we arrived, and then they gave us the very same test afterwards, and as I remember I stood fairly high when we took the test at first--I mean, I was not near the bottom by any means. But some of the others then progressed faster than I did, because you see I had had a fair amount of French. And I didn't stand as high when I took the test again, because all the others needed was a little good French drill.

Q Uh huh. Now, you traveled a bit when you were in Nancy.

A Yes, we took a few trips. We would go to places not too far away. We went to Metz and we went to see the battlegrounds of World War I. We went to see . . .

Q How did they impress you?

A Well, it was quite interesting to see those trenches with the bayonets sticking up. It was actually soul-shattering. The other battlefields we saw had been made more like parks. And it was interesting to hear how the things went on, because of course all the names were familiar to us and the various battles. But it was interesting to see. I don't know that I'd choose it--I don't care much about battles, and I don't know that I'd choose it again.

Q Did you visit anything cultural besides that?

- Wanted?*
- A Well, we went to see the great munitions family, the Vondeau [sp] family. We saw their factories and their villages they built for their people, and we were taken to their own chateau, which is most unusual. We had tea in their own chateau, and such magnificent things, it was like a museum, just the things that were lying around on tables. It was very, very much furnished. It was just really almost a clutter, but priceless that you'd see on every table. They wanted my husband, of course--I was no more particularly interested in him than anyone else--and they wanted him of course to . . .
- Q You say you were.
- A No, I was not at the time. *Wanted?* They wanted him to be the one to go around with Madame du Vondeau and everything, but he somehow didn't seem to make that trip. I wouldn't say whether he missed the train or whether he was saying to study, but he may have missed the train.
- Q Oh, I see. He wasn't there, you mean.
- A He didn't go on the trip. No, he didn't make that trip, no.
- Q I can see him now, we were saying, you know . . . your husband being so tall and . . .
- A That's right. She was a beautiful woman. I mean, she--oh, I think she was probably in her '30s, and she was very charming.
- Q Can you remember anything else of your travels?
- A Well, we went to Strasbourg. We had two or three days in Strasbourg before we went to Paris. And I remember only taking one pair of shoes and rain, rain, rain. I never saw such rain. My shoes were soaked the entire time. I've never been so wet. But I did love Strasbourg and although I had seen the cathedral in Paris, Strasbourg was the first cathedral I've really--I had already studied a little bit about them then, and I thought that all cathedrals should be that soft red that the one in Strasbourg is. I liked that town very much, Strasbourg, particularly the old French part. The new colossal [sp] German I didn't like so much, because of course we were indoctrinated with a dislike of everything German, as we had been as children. I was brought up to--because I remember World War I very well, and I was brought up to dislike the Germans and of course the Japanese, because I was born in San Francisco. Thank goodness I've gotten over both.
- Q Where did you stay when you visited Strasbourg? Did you stay overnight in Strasbourg?
- A Yes, we stayed at a hotel just off the station, and I don't remember the name of it, but I could point out to you as you stood at the station and faced a great big open place, there was a big street in front of you, and it was on the left side of that. It was a big oblong place, and it was on the left side opposite the station.
- Q Um hmm. Was there any inconvenience in traveling around with so many students?

- A Not at all. Everything was beautifully managed. We had this Monsieur Begut [sp] who arranged all our trips. Everything was done and never was there any trouble. We went everyplace in taxis, and there was always a chaperone in every taxi that had three or four girls in it--always.
- Q Is that right? And where were they from, these chaperones--were they French chaperones?
- A The chaperones were some of them people who worked for the university; there were two or three people in the office and then the--as we called them, our "madames" would take turns. They would go to the opera with us, you see, because . . .
- Q Now, whom do you mean by "our madames"?
- A Where we lived, the places where we lived. And there were always enough of them available since they'd put three or four girls in each taxi with one chaperone. It always worked out very well that way.
- Q But it must have been quite a parade with all those taxis.
- A Well, we all lived in different places and it was all arranged and we were all picked up. In Nancy . . .
- Q But when you finally arrived where you were going . . .
- A Yes. But in Nancy, of course, we walked everyplace. We walked to the station in Nancy, and we thought nothing of that. I suppose it was a mile or two, but it didn't seem strange to us to do that.
- Q Um hmm. And can you think of any other highlights of Nancy that impressed you?
- A I remember going horseback riding in Nancy, and I wondered why my horse didn't make very good time and found out afterwards he only had one lung, so he couldn't go very fast. I loved Nancy, I thought it was a very interesting city. I think the Place Stanislaus was one of the most beautiful places I've seen.
- Q This was in the city.
- A Yes. And I remember my--the man whom I later married was quite interested in the young woman who was in this same house with us, and one of his best friends was the one that I saw the most of. And I remember his giving a dinner party for somebody, somebody who came in the group to visit us, at this Cafe Stanislaus, the most delicious meal I think I've ever had. Then we also had a very large ball there at the Cafe Stanislaus which was called the Tennis Ball. The university students gave that, and we were all invited. I can remember going to that.
- Q The students from Nancy.
- A Um hmm.

Q What kind of a contact did you have with the students from Nancy?

A None. None whatsoever. Most of them were either on vacation; there were certainly none in the university. The university was closed. And we just did things with each other. We were supposed to always speak French, and we did whenever we were sure anybody was listening, and we really got a very good command of French because we had to speak French in our families where we lived. There was no English, as I told you, the English girl in our boarding house couldn't understand the girl from Alabama, so they had to speak French.

Q How about with Mr. Richards? I mean, was it always French?

A No. He and I--we suddenly decided we liked each other before the summer was over, and . . .

Q Before you left Nancy?

A Before we left Nancy. And no, we didn't speak French with each other, but we could. If we were in a restaurant or something, it came perfectly to speak French. The four of us, this other young woman and I and these two young men, we used to go--well, as I remember, the only thing to do was go out in the afternoon and sit at a café, and I always insisted on drinking citron pressé, if you asked for lemonade you got something horrible in a bottle, which wasn't fresh. And they kept telling me citron pressé was more expensive than beer, 'cause the beer in Lorraine is delicious and it was only a franc a glass. Citron pressé cost 2.50. So the young men would treat us and they kept telling me that I was too expensive, and they said, "Why don't you drink something else?" And I said, "Well, I wouldn't mind having champagne." I didn't know . . .

Q What is citron pressé, is that pressed lemon?

A Yes. They bring you a lemon and they bring you these things that you squeeze with--you can buy them here now. And they bring you a glass and a little bit of ice and some seltzer water and sugar and you make your own lemonade. It's delicious, you see.

Q That sounds wonderful.

A And I being very naive and never having had anything to drink, I said I wanted champagne, so my husband, who was at that time escorting the other young lady, he was perfectly game about the whole thing. He ordered a bottle of champagne--I didn't know champagne came by the bottle and I didn't know how much it cost. And so there the four of us sat, and as the cork popped--there was not a soul in sight, but suddenly as the cork popped, all the various members of our group, I don't know where they came from, as if they came out from under the stones in the street somewhere, because it was a big city. And I think there must have been at least ten of them there willing to have a glass of champagne with us. So after that I learned to drink beer.

Q Now, did you make any attachments with anyone you met besides Mr. Richards in Nancy? For instance, the woman with whom you stayed.

A Yes, I was very fond of her, and I wouldn't say I was nearly as fond of her--people in Lorraine are a little colder, and I think she'd had a hard life and she'd had people staying in her house, and we were just more boarders, you know. She was awfully nice to us, but . . . and I remember when my father came over after the year was over, we went to Nancy and he spoke ^{gn} French and she spoke no English. We all went out to dinner together, and they had a perfectly delightful time with each other. But as far as we were concerned, no, I wouldn't say we were too friendly. Just very good terms, that was all.

Q Now, what was the family like with whom you stayed in Paris?

A In Paris I stayed with a maiden lady, but she said, oh, we were [sounds like "demimonde"]. She was the daughter of an officer and I was the daughter of an officer. And although she lived alone, she had a married sister and lots of the married sister's children--I guess there were really only two sons, but they were married and we saw quite a bit of them. And she felt that I was more like a daughter to her, because she had never taken boarders before, and she wanted me to meet people and do things. And for that reason I felt really closer to her. She also was a Protestant, because my mother insisted on it, and her family came from Alsace. The people I lived with in Nancy came from Lorraine. They were extremely nice people, I thought.

Q Did you meet any Christian Science families in France?

A Yes. I went to the Christian Science Church there, and there was a teacher from Principia at that time who was running a kind of--she had an apartment there and was taking people to stay with her, students who wanted to come over. One of them was studying dancing and was quite a famous dancer after that named Grace Cornell. She spent most of the winter there. And I spent Christmas with this Miss Duteau [sp?] was her name. I spent the Christmas holidays there. Although, I must say, the university had wonderful arrangements for Christmas and I did the things they planned. We had a real banquet on Christmas Eve, stayed up all night then went to . . .

Q Where was this? Where did you do this?

A I can't remember the name of the restaurant, but it had been planned ahead and all of us were there. My husband of course had gone--he was not my husband, but Robert Richards had gone to England for his holidays . . . but they called us the "réveillon" and we stayed up all night, had this delicious . . . we went first of course to church. I think we went to San Tostash [sp]. Notre Dame would have been too expensive, I think--you have to buy tickets, and I remember being picked up in a taxi and taken to the Midnight Mass. And then we all went to this great banquet, which was delicious. And that of course was really in the morning, because it was after Midnight Mass. And then we were taken--we all went to [inaudible, sounds like "Le Aile"] and had breakfast. That we did on our own, I believe. Maybe some of them had chaperones or something along. I remember arriving home in the daylight.

Q Um hmm. Tell me something about the office the university had in Paris.

A Well, it was a delightful little New England building, and it had modern plumbing. That's one thing I remember which you didn't find anyplace else,

'cause the plumbing of the places I lived in was a little primitive, and although . . .

Q Why do you call it a New England building?

A It was a little wooden house that was put up for some sort of a fair they had there, and it was built . . .

Q Financed by Americans?

A Yes. I forget just what it was for. It didn't stay there very long. It's long since been torn down. I think the university rented that for several years, and it had nice rooms downstairs where they had various receptions and things. I remember having a reception with some French-speaking students once and we couldn't imagine why they spoke slightly different French, and they looked so different, they were all so dark. And we found they were all Egyptians. There was a group that owned the building that did for foreign students of all kinds, but we happened to rent most of the building, and the upstairs was our headquarters. And there were classrooms where we had our . . . every subject we took in the . . . in those classes for foreigners they had--by foreigners I mean us and all the other nationalities . . . we were tutored in every subject we took for about three hours one afternoon. Every afternoon we were tutored in a different subject.

Q Now, these were for courses you were taking at the Sorbonne.

A At the Sorbonne. Because . . .

Q Who would be tutoring you in these various courses?

A French professors from the Sorbonne. Some of our own professors tutored some of these subjects, but mostly they were women who taught in the winter and they were excellent professors. They were very, very good. And then besides we would have a private lesson at the École du [sounds like "Pantheon"] which still exists. That's not far from the Sorbonne.

Q This was in French.

A Yes. We had a . . .

Q French language?

A We had a private tutor who gave us phonetics and made us learn poems and things. We always had phonetics the whole time we were there, at both Nancy and Paris.

Q How was your accent?

A I think it was pretty good. Certainly our accent was better than the Smith girls at the time, because the Smith girls didn't have to work as hard as we did. And I say we worked extremely hard.

Q And this was the other school that had a program similar to Delaware's.

- A Yes, yes. And they really worked on our accents. And I think they got results.
- Q Um hmm. Now, this tutoring that you received in each subject, what did that consist of, a review of the lectures, or to see what you knew . . .
- A It was as though the teacher was giving us the course himself or herself. We'd have assignments, and we really worked in them. And then we would go to the lecture at the Sorbonne, and that man might give all these assignments out, but the American students were not . . . not all of them did what was handed out, you see. But these tutors saw that we did. And then even that was not enough, so finally after a few weeks, they hired a large hall, and every Saturday morning, a girls school right near where our office was, we went there Saturday mornings and had a short exam in every subject we took. Now, that is not the subjects like the *École de Science Pol*, where my husband went, those they were responsible for themselves. And some people took courses at the *College de France*, and some in the Sorbonne. I took a course in *[inaudible, sounds like "Laresh Boucho" (sp)]* and his maxims. And I took another course of Pascal.
- Q This was at the Sorbonne, now.
- A At the Sorbonne. But I didn't take either one of those two for credit. I just did it because I wanted to take a regular course. But these other courses we had in the school for foreigners, we took those for credit and had to pass those exams.
- Q Oh, well, you just listened in on the other courses that you were talking about.
- A Yes. I tried to do the work. I had the books and things. But there was so very much else to do that I didn't get it all done, 'cause I didn't really have time.
- Q Um hmm. Now, what were the other courses specifically for credit, now?
- A French history . . . different French . . .
- Q Now, there was a whole year of French history.
- A I think we had two different semesters of French history, yes. I mean, to cover the whole thing so we got through the whole French history. I took two different literature courses, or perhaps even three in the two semesters. I took history of philosophy or "History of Ideas" as they call it, and history of art. We took two semesters of that, so that we really had a good . . . a good understanding of French art and architecture and philosophy. And I thought they were excellent courses. Other people laughed at us and said, "Oh, you just took the courses for foreigners." But we just took them in depth. We had to learn everything about them, because otherwise we wouldn't have passed these exams.
- Q Did you have exams at the end of the semester, or at the end of the whole year?

La Rochefoucauld

- A We had them at the end of the semester, because each course was a semester long, so when we finished it we . . . as I remember . . . at least I think that's the case. Maybe not. I know we had a written exam, which was an essay type. You'd have three subjects given to you, and you really had to cover it. And then we had an oral exam which was frighteningly hard, and I remember not getting a very good mark on . . .
- Q Was that on each subject you took, now?
- A Yes.
- Q An oral exam on each course.
- A Yes. And I may be wrong in thinking . . . no, because I remember we had a mid-term holiday when we went to Brittany, so I'm sure that . . . I think the courses were one-term each. But the oral exams I thought were extremely difficult, and I got a very poor mark on one of the History of Art exams, because I had not visited one of the churches that had been mentioned in the course. I had plenty of other examples to give of this particular kind of Gothic, but Saint Germain [inaudible] . . . I had never been in. And the professor just chose to give me not such a particularly good mark because of that. I passed all right.
- Q Now, tell me something about the assignments that they would give you at the Sorbonne.
- A At the Sorbonne? In the college themselves? They would just give you quantities of reading to do, and then the students were asked in the regular courses, they were asked to write papers. They didn't have to, the French students, if they didn't want to. And in our lectures, they were merely lectures with lots and lots of reference to books, which of course the university had bought and given to us, so we had all the books, you see. But I don't remember that we had to do any assignments for them, because the classes were too big. There were several hundred in each one of these amphitheatres [inaudible]. . . . But we had to write papers and things for our tutors in the office.
- Q Did you meet any of the professors?
- A Yes. I can remember one reception, we went to someone's apartment. There was one thing, another thing that I did not do, and I was awfully sorry. We were invited to someone's apartment that was absolutely modern at the time, everything in it was modern. Now why I had . . . I didn't go, I didn't have sense enough to go, and I can't remember why not. So I didn't see that. But these things were arranged from time to time. I did have also friends--I forgot about that. This friend, a Christian Scientist who had two daughters there, the Ellis family, Ellis Adding Machine family, and they . . . after Mr. Ellis died, they went there and lived. And this young man who went to Principia and I used to go and see them. And he later married one of the daughters. But I must say I did many more things with Robert Richards. We had a very good time. We saw many things, went to all sorts of restaurants . . .
- Q Well, tell me some of these restaurants and the things you did. This would

be more of the social life.

A Yes. Well, now, almost every Sunday, I can remember, we either went to the theater--I would tell my Mademoiselle whom I lived with, Mademoiselle Lamont [sp], that I was going out . . . you see, she knew I had these American friends there, and I said I was going out with my American friends. And we would go to the theater because that's the best time, Sunday afternoon. We'd go to many theaters, very good plays we saw. We went to all the race tracks that were within easy railroad distance of Paris, and then we would go out to dinner after the races or after the theater, and I'd get home, oh, I don't know, nine or ten o'clock, you see, we'd have dinner until about then. And I know the restaurants we went to were La Peruse [sp], which is still there, and went once to the Tourdajon [sp], and . . .

Q That's in the Eiffel Tower, isn't it?

A No, the Tourdajon is the most expensive restaurant in Paris and . . .

Q Four stars, something like that.

A Yes, it's just opposite the Ile ^A ~~St~~ Louis; you can see the back of Notre Dame from . . . it's way up high. We found a small restaurant that my husband's . . . his French family recommended, a little tiny place which is still there, called "Le Marchant de Bonchos [sp]," he came from Pertegore [sp], and he just had a few tables there. We went back later and it was so simple I don't think it suited my husband very well. It was just a little neighborhood . . .

Q When you came back, you mean.

A Yes. We didn't go back . . .

Q Things looked better when you were a little younger.

A Yes. We didn't go back to France for 11 years after we graduated, that would have been about '38 or '39, and then we didn't go back again for another 22 years. So it was more than 30 years after we graduated before we went back the second time, and then we've been I would say almost every year since then.

Q Um hmm. Because . . . why? Why the more recent times?

A Well, because he was working too hard and we didn't have enough money.

Q Logical.

A We had children and we just couldn't go, I mean, it was too expensive. We did take that one trip. We went once for three weeks and hired a car in 1938, and it was just before . . . you could tell something was going on in the way of unrest, in the way of war coming. Our last child was born in January of 1938, and we went to Europe that summer for three weeks, and then as I say didn't go again for 22 years after that.

Q Was France the place you visited most, let's say in vacations or travels?

A When we were over there . . .

Q No, I mean, did you go to other countries besides France?

A That time we went only to France, that first visit, and the second visit our daughter at that time was working in Africa, so we went to Southern Rhodesia, and we didn't spend any time in Europe then. We had to go through Europe to get there. The next time, she was working in the French Congo, so my husband didn't like Southern Rhodesia, and he didn't think he'd like the French Congo. He didn't go, and I went to see her, so we'd go through Europe to get to Africa. And I found the French Congo extremely interesting because of it being French. But I wouldn't care to live there, I think, it was a little too primitive for me, too many mosquitoes and things like that.

Q Paris certainly isn't that.

A Oh, I loved Paris. And anything about France, I loved everything about it.

Q Can you think of anything else that occurred in your social life, I mean other restaurants or places that weren't in the usual tour?

A Well, we would go . . . take sightseeing trips out of Paris. You could take the train in the morning. I mean, for instance, we'd go to Versailles.

Q Was this with Mr. Richards or was this with the program?

A The program took us on a lovely trip to Versailles. Of course we went everywhere by train, it was so inexpensive to go by train. And then we'd be met by taxis, you see. Or else we'd walk--at Versailles you can walk from the station to Versailles, at least we could in those days. I don't think I'd do it now. And he and I went to [sounds like "Malmeson"] and we went to Fontainebleau and Pierfant [sp], a lot of those places. And I remember one time my mademoiselle went along as a chaperone, but once was enough for her. She just . . . when we said . . . I said I was going with my American friends, that suited her. Now, I could have gone with another girl to some of these places, but not with a young man, because the French people didn't understand a jeune fille going out without a chaperone. They certainly do now, though. They don't make any bones about it now.

Q But you did go on your own, anyway?

A Yes. And we were never free except on Sundays, and we'd make these various excursions, go places . . . and almost every Sunday we'd do something, like go to the races or go to the theater, or go on a sightseeing trip. And we really saw a great many things that way.

Q Mr. Richards, when you mentioned something about the gambling, was that the horses you were talking about?

A Well, no. We did bet on the horses, and it was very pleasant, because you didn't have to spend very much, I forget how many francs, but it came to about 50¢ a bet, which was very pleasant for us, I remember. But no, the

gambling, when we would travel, why the girls would all have to go to bed at night, you see, and then George Brinton and the young men would to . . . there's always a gambling casino in any resort in France. And they would go to the gambling casinos. The only one I went to was Monte Carlo. For one reason, I wasn't 21 until March, you see, and you're not allowed in a casino until you're 21. And I had trouble proving to them that I was 21 because they said, "But this is 1907, you were born in 1907 and it's 1928, how do we know you're 21 yet?" So I'd get my passport and prove it to them. Then the year was practically over by then, you see. We finished up in July.

Q What do you remember of Mr. Brinton?

A Oh, I remember him quite well. I really think he . . . of course I had never seen an American who had a perfect French accent before, and so I was very much impressed after I'd been there for a while by that. And I think that he was a remarkable man. I don't think the foreign study group would have been the same without him. I don't think . . . I think Mr. Kirkbride gets all the credit for starting it, laying the foundations. But I think the curriculum was entirely George Brinton. Now what . . . all the social part, and the theaters, because we went to many theaters and operas, and aside from that, books were bought just for us to read. We came back with a real library. I had to have a wooden packing case made, and most of my books are still in it, to get all the books back from France, we had so many, and they were paid for by the university. So who planned all that? I guess both of them did that.

Q You mean they're still in it, now?

A Many of them are still in it, because they were packed in there and I never had a chance to unpack them again until I got into this house. And by that time I would just go in it and take a few books out when I needed something, you see. I've kept my French up somewhat; I've done some things at the university.

Q Um hmm. What have you done, taken courses?

A Yes. As I was studying German, which I was doing for years and years, why then I'd be intrigued by one of the French courses, so I would take that too, you see.

Q This is the University of Delaware you're talking about.

A The University of Delaware, yes, somebody I particularly wanted to . . . some visiting professor or something, and then as you grow older, if you're like me, you have a passion for grammar. And I'm just crazy about how languages . . . what you do with them, and how you say things. So I took some of the advanced grammar courses that were there for . . . particularly for . . . they used to be graduate courses. I think they're now for seniors, too. But they were 601 courses, which means graduates and seniors may take them. And teachers would come and brush up on them. So I've done that . . .

Q Um hmm. Did you ever use any of your French in any other way besides courses?

- A Not for years and years, and it got rather rusty. No, I didn't. Here in Wilmington I had very little occasion. Except I remember when Pierre Belman [sp] was invited by the Bancroft Company for lunch, and he brought his mother along. And my husband and I were invited for lunch, and then they were shown around, they saw Longwood and various things. And nobody in the group could speak French but my husband and me. She could speak no English, Pierre Belman can speak English. So there our French came in handy.
- Q How did you do on these tests from the Sorbonne? The Sorbonne sounds like a very difficult school, very famous school. How did the Americans do?
- A I think our group did pretty well. There were some Russian and some . . . some of the . . . it was particularly the young women in these groups that did well. There was a Russian girl, and then there was someone from one of the middle European countries who stood way up at the top. And some of our girls stood fairly high. But I think our group showed up pretty well. They would have sent home all the students who were poor students, but for some reason in our group nobody got sent home, because somebody made a big fuss, and so none of the poor students got sent back. There were only a possibility of two or three of them, so they all stayed and whether they all passed or not, I don't know.
- Q Do you remember what the fuss was or how they managed to stay?
- A One of the girls who was to go back, her father just made himself scarce, they couldn't get ahold of him. And there was no place to send her.
- Q Was that done by design, I wonder?
- A Oh, I'm sure it was by his design. He didn't want her to come back. He paid her tuition and he wanted her to stay. So since she didn't go back, why there were other people who were doing a little better than she but hadn't broken the rules that she'd broken, so if she didn't go back, they didn't send anybody back.
- Q Which didn't hurt . . . displease anybody.
- A No. So everybody got along very well, and I think they enjoyed it.
- Q Can you think of any other highlights of your life in Paris that stick in your mind?
- A No, I think not. I think that's it. There were many . . . not that there weren't many, but there were a great many, and I enjoyed everything about it. I just loved it. I felt when I got to Paris as if I'd been there before. It was one of the places that was just home to me. Only one other city have I ever felt that way, and that was Baghdad, why I don't know. But Rome doesn't do the same thing to me; London didn't, although I'm growing more fond of London. But Paris did that to me.
- Q Um hmm. What do you think besides learning the language and the French culture, how do you think this contributed to your life? This education, this year abroad.

- A Oh, I think that it gave me a desire always to go on learning things, doing things. And I guess my Army training made me like meeting people, because I'm always anxious to talk to people and see what they're like. And this certainly helped.
- Q Do you think this broadened your view of life, or society, or people . . .
- A Oh, definitely. Oh, very much so, yes. I think that's what it did most for me.
- Q Did you ever meet anyone who was not affected in this way abroad by . . . not broadened by this kind of contact with people for a year?
- A Who stayed that long?
- Q Yeah.
- A No, I don't think I have, ever. Not living as we did in families, I just don't think it would be possible.
- Q Um hmm. Now, when you left Paris, you came back to the University of Delaware?
- A No. Miss Dennis tried to get me into Wellesley, but they wouldn't take me for just one year, so I went to George Washington University, which is where my mother and father were living at the time, so my degree is from there.
- Q Um hmm. You mentioned earlier that you went back to France after the program, rather soon after the program.
- A No, not for eleven years.
- Q Oh, no, didn't you go back with your father?
- A No, he came over and got me. He came over when the year was over. I wrote to my family and said, "Some of us would like to travel a little when the group breaks up," because we had not gone out of France. I still feel that you could spend your life traveling in France and you'd never see it all, and the French people always felt the same way about it, you know, they said they have everything. And they do. They have every kind of climate and every kind of scenery. And I said I would like to see a few things before I came back and some of the young women and I wanted to do that. And I had a word right back, "What a lovely idea, your father will be coming right over to travel with you." So he came over and . . .
- Q Had he been to France before?
- A He had taken what he called a Cook's tour. He was sent to France just as the Armistice was being signed, so that's all he got to see. He worked in the General Staff all during the war in Washington, so he got to see . . .
- Q What rank was your father, by the way?

A He was a colonel by this time. And so he came over and we were in Paris and we showed him around Paris, and then my husband went on . . . I guess he went on home with the group. And then my father and I went first of all to Nancy and stayed at this lovely hotel where the group didn't stay, but one of the older hotels, the Grand Hotel, and we had dinner, of course, at the Cafe Stanislaus. We took my Madame Fromier, I guess that's her name, Madame Fromier in Nancy, we took her out to dinner. And . . .

Q Was she surprised to see you again?

A Oh, I wrote and told her we were coming, I'm sure. I don't remember, but anyway from there I wanted to go to Germany. And my husband and I had both taken these . . . one of our professors gave us German lessons in Paris. We had ten German lessons, and I hoped I'd have a word or two to say in Germany, but of course it didn't begin to help any. My father and I went from Nancy then to Strasbourg and stayed there for a night or two and enjoyed that. And then we went to Cologne and took the Rhine boat-- now whether we ended up at Cologne or started at Cologne, I don't remember, but then we went on into Belgium. And he was quite interested because he had been to Coblenz on this trip he took, this short trip. And he was very interested in that. In fact, I think he was more interested in the things in Germany than he was in France, because he had seen them when he went over. And then we went to Belgium, which we enjoyed very much. We liked Brussels. It at that time was very cheap and the food was delicious. We stayed in a hotel where there was no dining room, and I think our rooms, we each had a room, I think they cost something like 75¢ a day. And wonderful restaurants around. Then we took the . . . I'd never flown before except I took a flight in Nice when we were there with a group. Robert Richards took me up just so I'd been up in a plane. But we took the plane from Brussels to London, my father and I did. And then he loved England, because he was Canadian-born; he came to this country as a baby. And he couldn't understand the middle class Englishman at all. It annoyed him terribly. We took a United States liner home, came home on the George Washington, I think it was.

Q And then you went to George Washington. How did you keep your contact with Mr. Richards?

A Well, . . .

Q If you don't mind my asking.

A No, heavens, no. We were extremely fond of each other; it was no question of not having contact. We wrote to each other all the time, you see. He met me when we came back.

Q But you went a whole full year at Georgetown.

A Yes. He was in law school, you see. He was at Harvard. But after all, Wilmington and Washington aren't too far apart. He'd come down and see me. I think I went up . . . came up and visited his sister in Rehoboth that same summer of 1928, and then I came at Christmas of '28 and visited his family, I came here. And then I went to Panama to live, you see, in 1929. He came down there and we were married in Panama.

Q How long were you in Panama?

A Just about three months. I went there in the summer, and . . .

Q Was that with your father?

A Yes, he was stationed there. And then Robert came down and we were married in Panama in January of 1930.

Q Well, I want to thank you very much, Mrs. Richards. It was a very pleasant and enjoyable afternoon.

A Oh, well, I've enjoyed it.

[END OF INTERVIEW]