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### Transcript - Otilie Boetzkes Interview

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INTERVIEW WITH OTTILIE G. BOETZKES

January 15, 1970

INTERVIEWED BY MILO RYAN

TRANSCRIBED BY EILEEN NIVEN, Volunteer Typist from the University of Washington Retirement Association. July 17, 1981

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BOETZKES: My name is Boetzkes. We were history. My father came from Holland, near Holland. I lived part time in Holland. And there was a philosopher in the Middle Ages by the name of Putzianus. His real name was (Valdegar? Welldegar?), the German for Valdegar (or Welldegar?), and the low German for a "well" is a "Putz." And the Forschers (NOTE: German for "researcher" or "scholar") or writers in those days, they used Latin names and he used the name of Putzianus. And there finally deteriorated in the name of "Boetzkes."

INTERVIEWER: Boetzkes. And your first name is Ottilie.

BOETZKES: My father came from the border of Holland and Germany, and we lived in this estate there in Holland, right on the border of Holland and Germany.

INTERVIEWER: Did you paint that picture?

BOETZKES: No, my father did. Kind of amateur painting. Quite an amateur artist, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Have you done much painting?

BOETZKES: Yes, I sketch a lot when I travel, I used to...

INTERVIEWER: Have you ever had an exhibit?

BOETZKES: No, no, I am not professional.

INTERVIEWER: But you do sketch in pencil?

BOETZKES: No, in water color.

INTERVIEWER: In watercolor?

BOETZKES: I inherited that from my father.

INTERVIEWER: Was your mother an artist also?

BOETZKES: No, my mother was not artistic that way, but my father was.

INTERVIEWER: Where was she born? Was she from the same area?

BOETZKES: Born in Milwaukee. Her father was this '48-er I was telling you about.

INTERVIEWER: What was his name?

BOETZKES: Henry Bruggmann(?), Dr. Henry Bruggmann, he was a doctor, a Ph.D. from Leipzig. And he fled in '48. And finally he came to Milwaukee. My mother was born, I think, on Water Street in Milwaukee. It must have been a very German settlement in those days. She said, in the shops there were signs out, "We speak English here."

INTERVIEWER: "We speak English here."

BOETZKES: You see, my mother was born in '54 and she was an American. But...

INTERVIEWER: Your father then met her here, in this country?

BOETZKES: No, when he fled from Germany, from the Spandau, from the Festum, the fortress, he fled to London, where Karl Schurz provided him with a passport and he married his wife, a German, Sophia, from , where the Russian, Alexandra, came from and they lived in London and they were married and then they came to this country.

(NOTE: She is referring to her mother's father)

INTERVIEWER: But your father met your mother then in...

BOETZKES: Oh, my father?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

BOETZKES: My father was a young doctor. He had an interesting history, too. He came from on the border of Germany and Holland. And they were Catholics, it's all Catholic there, that region. And he even sang in the choir as a boy,

in the Catholic church. And he had a brother who was a priest, came to America, to Germantown and sent for this younger brother, who then studied medicine at Columbia. And my father, to repay for the money that the reverend whatever-his-name-was had given him, he decorated the of the church. He was quite a student.

INTERVIEWER: Then where were you born?

BOETZKES: I was born in Würzburg on the Main. My father after the war of 1870-71, they went abroad very often. My mother was a woman of means. Dr. Bruggmann (?) had become very wealthy. And they went abroad many times. And once they came back for my brother, my oldest brother, to be born. And they came back for my oldest sister to be born. But when I came, when I was born, they didn't come back. I was born on the Main in Bavaria. And we were studying at the Clinic there in Würzburg at the University.

It's still there, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Now, at the time, was he an American citizen?

BOETZKES: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So you are not an American citizen by naturalization then?

BOETZKES: No, I am an American citizen because my parents were American.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, you were born American.

BOETZKES. I was born an American citizen. See my sister and older brother, they were Americans by birth. I and my younger brother, we were Americans because our parents were Americans. I never was a German citizen.

INTERVIEWER: How long did you live in Germany then, before you were brought over here?

BOETZKES: Oh, I was a young girl. I was about 15, and they decided to come back in 1892. There was, I think, a bank, a depression, and my mother's money all came from New York, she had real estate in New York City, and she said, "You children are becoming too German." She wanted us to be Americans.

So we came back in 1892.

INTERVIEWER: You were already well along in school then.

BOETZKES: Oh, yes, I was well educated. I knew French very well and English, I knew English by that time. I was very

INTERVIEWER: When you came back, then, within a short time you must have gone on to college, not to the university. Where did you study?

BOETZKES: A very fine, I don't know whether you know, the Packer Collegiate Institute. A very fine private school.

INTERVIEWER. In Brooklyn.

BOETZKES: This is how it happened. When we came back to New York, my mother thought she should put me and my little brother, my younger brother, into the public school. That was supposed to be American. And I stood it for a while and I said to my mother, "I can't stand that. I'm not learning anything, they don't learn anything. Why, it's kindergarten stuff." This was on Lexington Avenue in New York, about 68th. And so my mother wrote to Brooklyn, my father was asked as a doctor to build a house in a new project, a residential district, he was asked, they wanted a doctor. So my mother wrote to the School Board in Brooklyn, what they would recommend for a daughter and a son. And they recommended the Polytechnic for my brother and the Packer Collegiate Institute for me. It was a very fine school. Oh, the Greek and the Latin and the French and the English, excellent. And in the beginning, after a little while I was reported by the English teacher to the principal, and that was Dr. Backus, relative to these Backuses, Dr. Truman Backus. And he called me into his office and he had a twinkle in his eye and he said, "You were reported, that you weren't very good in English." "No," I said, "Dr. Backus, I have only been in this country for a little while, but I will be better." And then when I went to Barnard, he

gave me a recommendation, very excellent recommendation. I have made good all that.

INTERVIEWER: You had your degree at Barnard then?

BOETZKES: Well, not quite. I came here.

INTERVIEWER: When did you get your bachelor's degree then?

BOETZKES: 1901.

INTERVIEWER: 1901. Well, you had been teaching here then for two years before you...

BOETZKES: Well, I taught almost right away, and Miss Ober, I was in her Spanish class, I didn't know Spanish, I knew more French than they taught here, I was German anyway, so Miss Ober asked me to assist her in French. I had a class, a regular class. And I trembled, I stood there in front of these mostly older men, class of 40, and then they

INTERVIEWER: What did you do the first day? Do you remember?

BOETZKES: I trembled. I was a very shy girl. I was brought up in a very strict way, and I don't know what I did, but after a while these men... Some of them became later on very prominent, and I remember one man, a school superintendent already. They were older people who went back to school or they got their schooling later.

INTERVIEWER: How did you happen to come to Seattle?

BOETZKES: Well, about that time, in 1897, '98, my mother sold her property in New York, which was later one of Woolworth's stores, we lived very well over there from this property she had, which and she sold that, and so they had cash. And my father's travel fever. So they started traveling through Canada and they arrived in Seattle at the time of the Gold Rush. It was pretty nearly over and Mr. Wood, who was mayor of the town, asked my father to go along as a doctor that they needed in this gunboat

of the ship, and they needed a doctor. And my mother and father and my younger brother left Polytechnic and came out and they went up to Alaska.

INTERVIEWER: They left you here?

BOETZKES: No, I was at Barnard at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I see. They preceded you out here then?

BOETZKES: What?

INTERVIEWER: They preceded you here then?

BOETZKES: Oh, yes. Well, no sooner had they arrived at St. Michael than they built a boat to go up the Yukon River. And they had no longer, they had started maybe after a week or so, the river froze. And at Tanana they had to stay at the Mission, the Mission of Tanana, which is near Fairbanks. And my father painted some of the pictures there. There was just the Mission, just two buildings, I think, and cabins, this party of Mr. Wood, the mayor of the town. And they had to stay there all winter. My younger brother had red hair. All my \_\_\_\_\_, they all have red hair. And the Indians took to him and often he was for 48 hours in the wilderness with an Indian hunting. They seemed to think he was a god. And then they came out, when the river in May, I think... They could proceed, they proceeded to Dawson but didn't stay. But they left my younger brother, who later on became engineer, they let him stay and he had typhoid and lost his \_\_\_\_\_ mine claim, he lost his claim. And then he came out and went to school here and became an engineer.

INTERVIEWER: Where did he go from there? Did he stay here?

BOETZKES: He had a very interesting... I should let you read my..., one of the sections I wrote about my brother. He had a rather interesting career. The first world war came. He was already an engineer. He even taught a little bit here. He had many engineering projects. When the first world war started, he decided to enlist. He became a captain, I think, Engineering

Corps. And as long as he knew French, too, he taught French at Leavenworth, out at the . And in France during the war he was sent to the south of France, down there by Biarritz, by . And they cut down the forest which Napoleon had planted hundred years before. And his French again came in very well then. And then later on they sent him during the war up to Rennes in upper Normandie and he worked in the quarries. And then after that Hoover, President, asked him to be on the relief corps. And my brother's speaking French came in very handy. And my brother described, they were treated very luxuriously, these officers, in Rome and everywhere. And they went to Rumania on the Black Sea. And he was often invited to lunch or dine with the Queen Marie. Prince Carol, well, my brother describes, many times he was scolded at the lunch table. He already had his affair, he was supposed to marry, and he had his affair with Magda Lupescu. But my brother said the relief work was not very satisfactory, because when the white flour arrived, they couldn't use white flour. So he returned and he was one of the Directors in Athens in Greece, bringing water, fresh water, into Athens, you know Athens, they got it from Marathon. And from the water, they pumped it up to clean the streets. But the fresh water was brought from Marathon. They built a dam in Marathon, if you have been there, the dam is now completed. And they built the streets with marble from . A few years later I took my nephew LeRoy Backus from The Highlands. He was then 17, he was at Exeter -- you know Exeter? -- and he knew I was going to take a cruise -- I was teaching at Hunter College then -- and he wrote, I should let him go along -- it was on an old freighter there, export lines, in those days they had just old freighters -- it was supposed to be gone all summer in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. I forgot what I was going to say about that boy.



INTERVIEWER: About LeRoy?

BOETZKES: What?

INTERVIEWER: About LeRoy?

BOETZKES: Uh-huh.

INTERVIEWER: Now I want to get back on your story. You came to Seattle, and after your family returned from the Gold Rush...

BOETZKES: They came back. And my brother, my oldest brother was a doctor, too. My father and he stayed here and my mother went back to New York, to Brooklyn. They had a very large house in Brooklyn outside . And it had to be disposed of. They had other property there. And then in fall of 1899 my mother and I came through Canada and arrived here on a wet, cold, rainy day. There was no place to go except the Rainier Grand, which was the hotel then.

INTERVIEWER: Where was that located?

BOETZKES: Oh, I suppose where Augustine and Kyer's was, by the Colman Dock on First Avenue. It was the hotel. We had to stay a whole month. They couldn't find a house. There was no house then. My father wanted my brother and me to go to the University. We finally got a little house, it was just built, there were two houses, the parking lot next to the Meany Hotel, that was where we lived. Dr. and Landes, they lived right there.

INTERVIEWER: Yes. Who were your neighbors there?

BOETZKES: Dean Landes -- you know, Landes was one of the professors -- became Acting President? I lived . We had two houses then. Well, then my father bought six acres there on 9th and 50th and 47th, six acres.

INTERVIEWER: Is that where the church is?

BOETZKES: No, the church is the next block up.

INTERVIEWER: The next block.

BOETZKES: the library. And that was platted. My mother platted that -- my brother was engineer and laid out the plats in 1909 when the Exposition came. It was laid out and the city took 2-1/2 acres for a playground. You know...

INTERVIEWER: I remember.

BOETZKES: They paid cash. And we kept the house, which is still there, and a lot, which was sold later.

Some of it is now taken by the Freeway, 7th, I think, somewhere there.

INTERVIEWER: You started teaching, then, in 1899?

BOETZKES: Oh, yes, I started teaching.

INTERVIEWER: What was the campus like when you came?

BOETZKES: Wilderness, it was all woods. The University was very...Denny Hall was there.

INTERVIEWER: It was a new building, though, comparatively, wasn't it?

BOETZKES: You see, part of the University was still downtown, the law building. These columns here, in the Sylvan Theatre, they came from the law building. And Denny Hall was all there was. All the classes were held, and I think... To me, coming from Europe and New York, it seemed like a high school. Very crude. And Dr. Graves was President, Pierrepont Graves, a very learned, very fine man. He had a little goatee. And when he was very nice to me -- I came from Barnard and I had studied Greek and Latin and he had published etiquette books. He took me around and introduced me to the professors -- I was a young girl, of course -- and they had a lunch room in Denny Hall. Oh, it was so primitive, it looked so... He took me there. And then, he was very nice to me always, Dr. Graves.

INTERVIEWER: Who were some of the other faculty members at that time?

BOETZKES: Well, at that time there were not many there. Kincaid. I

took a course in zoology or biology from Kincaid.

INTERVIEWER: From Trevor Kincaid.

BOETZKES: Yes. To me it was... I had not taken... I had chemistry a little... it was very fine. And the other professors were, Professor Meany, of course. Let me see, Haggett and Thomson, they weren't here yet.

INTERVIEWER: Savery?

BOETZKES: Who?

INTERVIEWER: Was Savery here?

BOETZKES: He might have been here. He might have been here. Yes, Savery...

INTERVIEWER: Smith?

BOETZKES. Milnor Roberts came afterwards. I can't remember.

INTERVIEWER: Did you study under any of these men?

BOETZKES: Dean Fuller (?) in Engineering.

(NOTE: This is not an answer to the previous question. She has just thought of another name.)

INTERVIEWER: Dean Fuller, yes.

BOETZKES: Dean Fuller. My brother studied under him. Dean Fuller. I think they were mostly bachelors. Oh, Padelford came, I think after. "Pádel'ford," we called him. And they built the first little house there on 15th. It cost \$1,800. They were rather poor. They had just been in Europe and they were rather poor, but they were... Sunday nights we used to come to his house and have a seminar for a little while. He was sissified. His name was Padé'lford, but the students called him Pádel'ford. (NOTE: Difference is in the syllable accented.)

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I see.

BOETZKES: Pádel'ford.

INTERVIEWER: Pádel'ford.

BOETZKES: I had some fine students then and some of them are still living. They are still loyal. When they see me, they still know me. For instance, Max Hipkoe, you may remember him, he became Purchasing Agent. He was one of my students. They are still friendly and last year we went on a cruise together, he and his wife and I . And Dr. Schmitz was always very, very friendly. He was one of my students. There was another who became very famous, Dr. Henry Nide (?) in Chemistry, I think the first world war made him famous. He is in chemistry. Benson, I knew Benson before he was married. Oh, let me see. Of course I knew Trevor Kincaid. Miss Ober was a very fine little lady. She had learnt Spanish in South America, she had been a governess or a teacher there, in the Argentine.

INTERVIEWER: Did you study under Dr. Meany?

BOETZKES: He never got his bachelor's degree.

INTERVIEWER: He never did?

BOETZKES: They should have given it to him. He was a wonderful man. He was tall, beard, reddish hair, and very fine, friendly, typical Westerner.

INTERVIEWER: In what way?

BOETZKES: We all loved him, of course. He had a course we called "Forestry." We went around the campus and we learned about the salal berries and about the mushrooms and all the trees. I learned to know all the trees. We all had to take Forestry, all had to take that course from Professor Meany. When I was here, they had a "Clean-Up Day" when they cleaned up the campus, the students did and the faculty did. The faculty and the students, we were very friendly, you see. I was young, the students were young, and the faculty were mostly young, they were mostly young fellows coming from the East. And then we cleaned up the campus on, I think, a May day, the girls provided the food and... Oh, my, Milnor Roberts, he was such... You don't remember him...

yes he did!  
1885

INTERVIEWER: I remember him.

BOETZKES: I always felt very friendly to him. He was always very nice to me. But during the first world war, it was cruel the way we were treated. Dr. Meisnest was fired overnight.

INTERVIEWER: Dr. Meisnest?

BOETZKES: Yes. Pressmann (?), Eckermann (?), all fired, fired. Hoff, Hoff was a married man, fired.

INTERVIEWER: Were these men American citizens?

BOETZKES: Oh, they were all Americans. I was the only native of Germany. I was the only one.

INTERVIEWER: They were all Americans? They were fired?

BOETZKES: Their German was acquired. Well, anyway, they were fired. Big headlines in the paper, "Dr. Meisnest Fired." He and I, we occupied the same room in Raitt Hall -- that's where the German Department met at that time -- and when I came Monday morning in the office, I said, "Dr. Meisnest" -- I had seen the headline -- "Dr. Meisnest, did you know about this?" "No," he said. And now I think about it, he had given a lecture -- oh, we had a German Club then -- I think on Faust or something else. Fired!

INTERVIEWER: You mean he found out from the newspaper that he had been fired?

BOETZKES: Yes. It was cruel the way they treated us. No one would speak to me. I had Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ in the Music Department as a best friend. I had a little car, I had a little coupe, and I was the only woman who had a car, and we were such good friends. She used to say, "Miss Boetzkes, what would I do without you?" Never spoke to me again. Never. She was English. But they kept me. They put me back into the French Department, where I started.

INTERVIEWER: Did they suspend the teaching of German in that time?

BOETZKES: I had one class, I had the last class. And I was so suspicious of the students. One of them kept asking me questions. I said I wouldn't answer them. I said, "I know we have spies in the class." Well, it was a cruel, cruel... Dr. Patzer, he was in the French Department, his wife was very German. She was a medical doctor from Germany. We were very good friends. And she almost became . . . . . When we met in the streetcar together, she would shiver, she said, "Oh, we are afraid to talk German." And I had a friend, a Mrs. Plesch (?), she was also from . . . . ., and a neighbor of mine one day said, "You know, Mrs. Plesch's husband is a spy." He had been a swimming teacher to the Emperor. I said, "Well, she doesn't even have a husband." She had left him and a divorce. You see, that's the way rumors came around. It was sad, it was very sad.

INTERVIEWER: Who fired these people? Was it the President? the Board of Regents?

BOETZKES: No, Suzzallo.

INTERVIEWER: Suzzallo did it?

BOETZKES. I went to Suzzallo one day. I said, "Dr. Suzzallo..." Oh, no, Dr. Frein of the French Department said one day to me, "Miss Boetzkes, someone..." -- I think it was Miss Simpson, you remember Miss Simpson?

INTERVIEWER: Lurline Simpson? Yes, I remember her.

BOETZKES: I think it was she. He said, "Someone is questioning how you can be loyal to your teaching French and you're German. She doesn't see how you can be loyal." And I said, "Who is this who wants my position?" And he wouldn't tell me, but he said, "I advise you to go to Dr. Suzzallo and get protection." And I said to Dr. Suzzallo, "I want protection." And he said, "You don't need protection." And I said, "Dr. Suzzallo, the men in my department were all assistant professors and getting \$1,800,"

I said, "married men, Dr. Hoff and Mr. Royal (?), they don't get enough to pay them for milk for their children." He was raising himself to \$12,000, Dr. Suzzallo was. It was funny. Some time later I was in New York teaching at Hunter College -- several of these professors would like to have come, couldn't -- and I was having tea with my sister and some friends at some café, I forget where, Dr. Suzzallo and his lady friend, the red-haired secretary, came in. He was then looking for a job and I had my good job. He was no good. He was a professional politician. And he was no good. I know, he always wanted to make goo-goo eyes at me. He used to come to my class. The acoustics were very poor in Raitt Hall. I had this little room there. It was built for Miss Raitt.

INTERVIEWER: I see.

BOETZKES: The German Department had the floor. We were a good-sized department then, we had eight in the Department. What was I saying? Well, anyway...

INTERVIEWER: You were talking about Suzzallo and...

BOETZKES: He used to come in and complain that the acoustics were bad. He would come in and sit there, in the back. I didn't know he had this affair with this red-haired secretary. He did have. He had a very fine wife, but she was like Irenée in the Forsyte Saga. Well, I had no use for Suzzallo.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of changes did Suzzallo make, other than what you describe?

BOETZKES: He started this Tudor style of architecture. You see, we had Meany Hall and the Architecture Building, they were, I don't know whether you'd call it Romanesque, or whether it was Roman, or Norman or... It was an American type, Meany Hall. And then he came to this new idea and, I think, the Tudor...

INTERVIEWER: Were you still here when those buildings were being started then?

BOETZKES: Oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER: You stayed on.

BOETZKES. Yes. I was here in 1919 even, after the war, '19, I was teaching French. There was no German Department. But my heart wasn't in it and I had an orchard in Oregon. Professors like Dr. Meisnest and Dean Roberts, we all had orchards somewhere . We were absentee orchardists. I had an orchard in Hood River and I often, I went there during all my vacations. It was very health-giving, the climate and mountain air, the altitude. My mother had bought it for me and I developed it. At that time it came into bearing and I felt I was very independent. I had 20 acres. I left. I didn't do anything for quite a while. My mother had cancer and I took care of her until she died and then I started traveling and got a job at Hunter College. It was very nice, how I got that job. I had edited here a German book and then I wanted to go on with that. I liked the kind of work. And I was traveling to South America with a friend and on the steamer coming home, on the freighter, I was reading a German story in a magazine, a serial. I laughed so much that my friend said, "What are you laughing about?" And I said, "This is such a very funny story, very good." And I sent it to Heath & Co. and they accepted it. And I was writing on that when I came back to New York, and Dr. Green, I think, was the editor -- they have very fine men as editors in this college text (division) -- and he said, "Miss Boetzkes, you can't go on editing unless you teach." "Well, I said, "I thought I had given up teaching." And then he said, "Go over to Hunter College." You see, I was a native -- in Hunter College in the languages they kept only natives in



languages -- a very fine college. They had, oh, about 35 in the German faculty. They didn't discontinue the German during the war.

INTERVIEWER: During the war.

BOETZKES: No.

INTERVIEWER. Did these men, Dr. Meisnest and others, did they get back?

BOETZKES: Oh, it was very sad. Dr. Meisnest, he was a real Westerner, a certain type, but a good man. Dr. Meisnest was a good man. He wasn't much of a scholar and his German was -- not quite like mine. But anyway, he had a son, Darwin Meisnest, who had become sort of prominent in the city. He helped to build the Athletic Club. And I think the Edmundson Pavillion. I think he helped finance that all, got the money. Anyway, he was sort of prominent. Dr. Meisnest couldn't get a job. No. And Darwin helped, tried. Dr. Meisnest used to say to me, "They wouldn't give me a janitor's job." They wouldn't. The other professors -- Dr. Pressmann (?) came to me -- he had made his doctor's degree in Germany, they all had -- he said, "Now all my preparation, education, is just gone." He died soon after. Eckermann (?), he was more, what shall I say, he knew where to find his way into the powers to be. He was put into the English Department. He was the only one. Later on he wanted to get into Hunter College, he wrote me. I never respected him much. But he was scholarly, he was all right. The other professors, I don't know. I often asked what became of Hoff. Nobody seemed to know.

INTERVIEWER: Did the students react to the firing of these men? Did they approve of it or did they disapprove?

BOETZKES: Yes, they were very fanatic. You went through the second world war. You don't remember the first world war.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I do.

BOETZKES: You do?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I remember. I was 11 years old.

BOETZKES: Well, anyway, we were... It wasn't Hitler. In the second world war it was Hitler. But in the first world war, I don't know, it was a fanaticism, a feeling they had, I don't know what it was. We were just ostracized.

INTERVIEWER: Both students and faculty?

BOETZKES: Yes. On the campus, if I would walk across, the young professors like Harris (?), who used to be friendly with me, would just pass me by. Miss \_\_\_\_\_ never spoke to me again. Dean Roberts, who was friendly with me until he died, he was the only one who came across the campus and had the courage to shake hands with me. I have always remembered that. And at every birthday party, when my nephews in The Highlands or the other one gave me a party, they always had Dean Roberts. They always had Dean Roberts. I don't know what it was, it was hatred against...

INTERVIEWER: What was the city like? That is, in the University District at that time?

BOETZKES: Ohhhh, the University District! I came from Europe, I had seen a beautiful city. And here! (NOTE: She is not being complimentary to the University District.) When my father wanted to buy a house, build a house, take a house, and he looked at several across the bridge, what is now the bridge -- the house is still there, a very nice house -- another one on Queen Anne Hill, where Dr. Churchill (?) lives, where Mrs. Griffiths, Stanley Griffiths, Dr. Churchill's house, "Well," he said, "how would you get to the University?" Well, this bridge wasn't there. You had to go over by the Fremont Bridge. So finally, after we stayed a month at the Rainier Grand Hotel, we got this little new house -- there were two little new houses built,

the plaster was still wet -- and it was so primitive out here. There were no sidewalks. The streets were muddy. The streetcars stopped at 42nd, I think. 35th was the City Limit. And for the Post Office we had to go 'way down to Fremont to get the mail, to get the post. It was very primitive, very frontier-style.

INTERVIEWER: Where did the students live, most of them?

BOETZKES: Oh, some, of course, in the dormitory there, Clark and Lewis Hall.

INTERVIEWER: But they weren't built until later.

BOETZKES: Well, pretty soon after, pretty soon after. But oh, they lived in various ways. They were all poor. We were all poor. There were no millionaires in Seattle.

INTERVIEWER: Were there many co-eds?

BOETZKES: What?

INTERVIEWER: Were there many co-eds?

BOETZKES: Co-eds?

INTERVIEWER:

BOETZKES: I know them still, those who are alive. They meet me and say, "Oh, Miss Boetzkes." They were fine women. Miss MacDonnell (?) was a librarian. Do you remember her?

INTERVIEWER: No.

BOETZKES: They were fine women, they were fine girls. Bess MacDonnell's sister, I mean Cora MacDonnell's sister, Bess MacDonnell, married Judge Ronald (?), she was more of a flirtatious type. She stood under the clock in Denny Hall there at the entrance hall and she had her boy friends. And so was, oh, what is her name, Perry, Perry, she never married. They were fine girls. What they did, flirting, what I said "flirting," they just laughed,

they were friendly. But oh, my what they see now. No way any-  
 thing like that. They were fine girls. They brought up...they taught me,  
 as a New Yorker, they taught me how to bake bread, they taught me how to  
 wash -- I had never washed.

INTERVIEWER: What?

BOETZKES: Laundry. I had never done anything. They taught me those  
 things, we used to have a little, what did we call them, sort of lunches  
 -- uh, picnics! They'd bring their nice, homemade bread. Oh, I knew them  
 all. I knew them all and we were so friendly and I was teaching. And then  
 I went to Paris, I was still in the French Department, I wanted, I think, to  
 get diploma there, or something. Somebody ? And I came back  
 home, had a little sorority started and I said to the  
 girl MacDonnell, I said, "No, I can't be , there are so many of  
 the Kappas and so many of the others and they were all so friendly to me."  
 I didn't

Dr. Kane, before Dr. Kane left, do you remember Dr. Kane? He said to me, "I have  
 built this up to 7,000 students, and now I have to go." Political, you know.  
 Blethen had given the Chimes and Dr. Kane had accepted the money and he had  
 to leave. He said, "I have built it up to 7,000."

INTERVIEWER: What was the trouble? Why did he have to leave because of that?

BOETZKES: Mr. Blethen, the editor of the Times, he got his money from the  
 red-light district. Just think, that's what politics was, in those days.

INTERVIEWER: Because Kane accepted this, he was disapproved of, is that it?

BOETZKES: Yes. He was such a fine man. He came across campus and said,  
 "Now I have built it up to 7,000." Well, naturally the campus grew and grew.  
 There were so many of the assistant or vice presidents, like Thomson, Dean

Landes was President for a while, Winkenwerder (?) in the Forestry Dept., he was, I think, acting President for a while. It grew and grew. But, then the quadrangle was started, that sort of gave it more of an academic , you see.

INTERVIEWER: Are you at all in touch with the University now?

BOETZKES: More or less. I get some... I have a card, so I can park. I get a ticket. I get free, I just say, I would like to see...it's for the play or something, I am a retired professor. I have taken some of the discussion courses. At present I can't get to the campus any more very well, I don't like to walk so far.

INTERVIEWER: Of course.

BOETZKES: And there are many things I would like to go, but I'm just getting a little bit beyond that.

INTERVIEWER: Do you keep in touch with the University by television?

BOETZKES. Oh, sure. I am very fond of it. I feel I had a part in it.

INTERVIEWER: Of course.

BOETZKES: I am a very loyal person.

INTERVIEWER. I understand that you gave a scholarship.

BOETZKES: Yes, I did that.

INTERVIEWER: When was that?

BOETZKES: Just now. It's just concluded now. I gave the \$10,000, beginning of the year. A month or so ago. I did that out of loyalty. I had very happy years, you see, teaching. I was a young person and to me it was a very different experience from what I had before. I loved this life, the mountains, the lake. We had a canoe, my sister and I, we loved this country. Yes, I have a great loyalty. I feel I am part of it. Dr. Kincaid, I mean, Dr. Kincaid has of course a much more distinguished record. I mean, he has

done great things. I mean, he deserved more... he deserved to have a building on the campus now, because he was really the backbone of our university in those days. Yes, I have very great... I am sorry for, I am

I am more German than I ever was, I think, in my feelings. I don't have many German friends, but I have feelings. I have no connection with the German Department, though.

INTERVIEWER: Not ever?

BOETZKES: No.

INTERVIEWER: Do you with the French Department?

BOETZKES: No, I have no connection that way with the University. Well, they just have outgrown me or forgotten me or whatever. And for a long time, you see, I was away. I taught at Hunter College and I traveled and I had really no connection with the University for a long time.

INTERVIEWER: When did you come back to Seattle?

BOETZKES: I have lived in this house 30 years. My mother died in '26. Then I started traveling most of the time, and Hunter College, and I came back from a trip around the world and I was staying at the Wilsonian and it was cold, it was August, and I had been in the tropics. We had no sunshine and I bought this house, 30 years ago. I have lived here ever since. But the University has..., as you well know, the start of it, the growth of it, it is very interesting. These young professors like...they were all... Thomson, Dean Thomson, who lived right there...and Haggett and Savery and Padelford...

INTERVIEWER. They were your neighbors, right here?

BOETZKES: Well, I bought this afterward. They were all gone by that time, they were all gone and dead.

INTERVIEWER: I see.

BOETZKES: Dean Thomson lived there for a while. I often saw him on the street, trying to walk, and he was almost gone. But we were friendly, the students, we were such good friends, they were good friends, the students.

INTERVIEWER: You have happy memories.

BOETZKES. Yes. But I didn't like McMahon. They had personal contacts with . The McMahons, they had friendly relations with the students, they loaned money to them. They didn't give it. But I had no private...I mean, I didn't ask them to my house, but I had friendly relations, they'd ask you questions and I would say, "I'm only a woman, don't take my advice." The boys wanted advice, many of the boys. Or the girls. We were all friendly.

INTERVIEWER: Did many of the teachers marry in those days?

BOETZKES: Not supposed to.

INTERVIEWER: Not supposed to?

BOETZKES. The public school teachers, you know, if they married, they were... they had to just quit. I don't know whether we were too well-behaved or too reticent or, I don't know. I always liked Dean Roberts. He never married. I, let me see, whom else did I like? But now, they didn't think of marrying. Miss Raitt didn't marry. Miss Denny, Grace Denny, still living up there, she didn't marry. I don't think any of them married. Mrs. McMahon was already married. I think, yes, they came from the high school. None of them married.

INTERVIEWER: I'm afraid I'm tiring you, so thank you very much.

To Prof. Eugene C. Elliott and Prof. Ryan.

Dear Sirs:

In regard to your letter of December 10th, 1969,  
I like to say that at the age of 92, I have no means of transportation to get to the Communication Building on the Campus for a conversation about my connection with the University of Washington. An interview at my home would be the easiest for me, if that suits your purpose.

If you have no record of my connection with the University of Washington, I can give you a brief outline, that is what you want.

Before the turn of the century, in 1899, I came to Seattle with my family from Barnard College, Columbia University in New York. I entered the University of Washington as a Junior, when Dr. Pierrepont Graves, a Classic Scholar from Columbia University, was President.

I was born in Würzburg, Bavaria, Germany, in 1877. My Father, a Doctor of Medicine, from Columbia College, New York, was engaged in post-graduate work at the Clinic of the University Hospital in Würzburg. During the first fifteen years of my life I stayed in Germany and attended the Höhere Töchter Schule in Düsseldorf on the Rhine until my family moved back to New York. Here I prepared for Barnard College at the Packer Collegiate Institute in Brooklyn, N. Y. At Barnard College, I specialized in Greek and Latin and French, which I had studied from early childhood.

When I came to Seattle in 1899, the only building on the W. of W. Campus was Denny Hall where all the classes were held and which housed the library and a sort of lunchroom and small bookstore. Clark and Lewis Hall were then built for dormitories for men and women. The Law school was still downtown where the Olympic Hotel now stands. Coming from Europe and New York, Seattle seemed like a typical frontier's town to me. The City limits were at 45th Street and 14th Street, now called University Way. Unpaved Streets and boardwalks led to Denny Hall on the Campus from the terminal of the Electric Trolley Car. If I remember rightly there were fewer than 400 students on the Campus and most of the boys had to work their way through by doing all sorts of menial jobs. Soon after I came to the University Prof. Caroline Ober of the Romance Department, asked me to assist her in French and in a class of nearly 40 students I had men who later became

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prominent in civic and educational work. Dr. Henry Schmitz was an un-  
graduate student in one of my classes and later became President  
of the University of Washington.

In 1902 I got my Master's Degree in Latin under Dr. Thomas  
Kane, who soon after became President. In 1903, while I was studying in  
Paris at the Sorbonne, I had a call to change to the German Department

which was being organized under Prof. Reeves. The Honor  
Society of Phi Beta Kappa started a local chapter and with  
12 recent graduates I was invited to join. I became Assistant  
Professor of German and during my sabbatical year in 1908-  
1909 I had a fellowship at the University of Chicago  
in the German Department where I studied towards my Ph. D. in  
Philology under Dr. W. Cutting and many other fine Professors  
like Dr. Wood, and Dr. Prosh in Gothic and middle High German  
and Dr. Pietch in Old Provençal and Old Spanish.

The Alaska Yukon Exposition was held in Seattle in 1909  
, located right on the University Campus and many new buildings  
were erected such as Meany Hall, Bailey Hall, later the  
Architecture Building, the President's Residence which had  
been the New York Building, Anderson Hall and some other  
temporary buildings like the Oregon Building where the  
German Department and the Law School held their classes.  
Later the German Department moved to Raitt Hall.

I stayed in the German Department as Assistant Professor  
under Dr. Fred Meisner as Chairman till 1918 when the U. S. A  
joined the First World War. With one class in German left, I was  
transferred to the French Department under Dr. Frein. In  
1919 I resigned from the University of Washington.

Later I taught German in Hunter College in New York, where I  
continued my studies for the Ph. D. degree at Columbia University  
and at the University of New York. During my years of teaching  
German, I edited two German College Texts with D. C. Heath  
and Co. One was the novel "Die Burgkinder" (with notes and  
vocabulary) and the other "Abschied from Paradise" by  
Frank Thiess a contemporary German writer. "Die Burgkinder" was  
by Rudolf Herzog, who was Historian during the First World  
War to Emperor William II. Since I left Hunter College, I  
traveled extensively all over the world, spending my time  
sketching and writing. I have written several books on my  
travels and historical subjects and Biographies.

For the last 30 years, I have lived near the University.  
I draw no retirement pay from the university since I left long  
before such a system was installed. Recently I have given a  
scholarship of Ten thousand Dollars to the German Department in

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[Boetzkes Hall]

memory of the early years when I was connected with the German Department. .

Any other information you would like to have about my connection with the German Department of the University of Washington, I shall gladly furnish. Of the older retired Faculty members and colleagues, still living, I recall in a friendly way, Prof. Trevor Kincaid and Prof. Grace Denny of the Home Economics Department.

Sincerely Yours,

*Otilie G. Boetzkes,*  
Otilie G. Boetzkes.

5619- 16th Ave. N. E. January 4th, 1970.  
Seattle, Wash.  
98105

1. Name of Interviewer. Sorry I did not include the interviewer's name throughout the body of the transcription. I did not see it on the box until after I had finished the typing.
2. Gaps. This was a very difficult tape to transcribe -- not so much because of Miss Boetzkes' accent as because of the quality of the tape and because the words and sentences had a tendency to trail off.  
  
I had to leave many gaps, despite having listened many times to every difficult passage and having listened to the whole thing straight through a second time.
3. Factual Comments:
  - a. Page 2. 1848 was a revolutionary year in Europe and especially in Germany. Karl Schurz was a famous revolutionary, who later came to the U.S.
  - b. Page 4 - "these Backuses" no doubt refers to the prominent Seattle Backus family. On page 7 Miss Boetzkes mentions her "nephew LeRoy Backus from The Highlands" and on page 17 her "nephews in The Highlands." It sounds as though her sister married into the Seattle Backus family and lived in The Highlands. Perhaps that is why Miss Boetzkes came back to live in Seattle.
  - c. Page 13 - Lurline Simpson, according to the 1980-82 General Catalog, received her B.A. in 1920 from UW. The incident mentioned must have happened in 1917 or 1918, when Lurline Simpson would have been still an undergraduate.
  - d. Page 16 - Dr. Meisnest. I myself took German from Dr. Meisnest at UW sometime during the period 1926-1928.

Eileen Niven