

Dartmouth College Oral History Project
The War Years at Dartmouth
Interview with Clint Gardner '44
By Mary Stelle Donin
October 14, 2009

DONIN: Okay, Clint. The first thing I guess I'd like to find out from you is how is it that you ended up choosing Dartmouth as your undergraduate college?

GARDNER: Well, I was at Exeter, and many of my classmates at Exeter were going to either Harvard or Yale. In fact Harvard was the largest selection typically in those days though that's no longer the case. And I remember discussing the whole issue with my father, and he didn't use these words to me, but he implied that he thought that Harvard was excessively bookish, and I was already bookish, and excessively intellectual. I was already excessively intellectual. So he thought maybe it would help to go to a place where skiing and the outdoors and fellowship were important components which they would not be at a place like Harvard. So that's why I applied to Dartmouth.

DONIN: Did you go visit it before you decided?

GARDNER: Yes. Yes. We visited.

DONIN: And what was your sort of initial reaction to it? Do you remember?

GARDNER: I can't say that—probably my subsequent reactions will over cloud any memory I have—I must have liked the environment and the looks of the place, the woods. I think that having come from Larchmont, New York, a sort of developed suburb which still had some of its old trees, but still the sense of being in the country was reassuring to me. I liked that.

DONIN: Did you consider yourself an outdoorsy kind of person that would be able to engage in all the offerings?

GARDNER: I felt I was about to become that. I'd skied a little bit at Exeter, but there were no hills, really, close to the school.

DONIN: Did you know anybody or was there anybody in your family who'd come before you to Dartmouth?

GARDNER: One of my father's very good business friends, Bill Towler—I don't know what class he was, but at least 20 years before—had gone to Dartmouth. And he turned out to be the person that interviewed me.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

GARDNER: And I think my dad's positive impressions of Dartmouth were partly gained through what Bill Towler had told him about the school.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. So how was it when you arrived? So this was the fall of 1940.

GARDNER: Well, it was extremely exciting because the fall of '40, I think France had just fallen.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

GARDNER: And the sense that doom was about to overtake not only Europe but perhaps the whole world was very widespread. So there were very interesting articles in *The Dartmouth* as well as, of course, the national press. But right on campus, I detected a ferment which I'm not so sure has ever been repeated. It was so intense. The people invited to speak were distinguished people, governor of New Hampshire or in international affairs; I think people from the State Department or whatnot were on campus to talk about the dangers of how to keep—there was a strong desire to keep out of the war.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

GARDNER: And I was inclined initially toward pacifism under the influence of friends I formed very quickly in the Dartmouth Christian Union. And I became active in the Christian Union in my freshman year, partly because I admired these people and their judgment, and I hoped for my own reasons, too, I was inclined to think I would be a pacifist. Instead, I quit Dartmouth at the end of my freshman year—actually not even completing a course I should have—but left and volunteered for the Army within six months. So I changed from this ferment of what in the world should we do was alive on campus then, and that's how it ended up for me. I enlisted in the Army within about a year.

DONIN: So this was in the spring then of '41?

GARDNER: Fall of '40, and in '41 I enlisted in the Army.

DONIN: Right. Uh-huh.

GARDNER: It was in June actually I got in. I went over to Rutland and went into the Army.

DONIN: And was that common among your classmates?

GARDNER: No. It was quite unusual to drop out at the end of one's freshman year. And I remember freshman Dean Strong being very helpful when I went in to see him because to say I was going to drop out of college without giving any warning or anything was quite unusual for both my family and the college. I describe the things that brought me to that in some books I've written relating to this big time. One was called *D-Day and Beyond*, which the library may or may not have. And in fact just last year I published one which also recounts precisely the story of the moment in which I decided to leave college and why.

DONIN: Did this have anything to do with your connections to the William James Camp?

GARDNER: What happened was that after leaving college, the thing that I did immediately was to prepare to join Camp William James, which I did within a matter of weeks. And there's an interesting story in connection with that. Dorothy Thompson had come to the College and given a talk. Because that was a great moment for the College. March 3, 1941. I'll read this right from the book: "The columnist and foreign correspondent Dorothy Thompson, a close friend of Professor Huessy." I was very smitten by Rosenstock-Huessy who was teaching social philosophy at the College. And you couldn't get into his courses normally as a freshman, but you could audit them. And a friend in the Dartmouth Christian Union had suggested that I audit them. Anyhow, I went. A close friend of Professor Huessy comes to Dartmouth to give a talk in Webster Hall. I'm writing this as of March 3rd, '41. "Half the College is on hand to hear her impassioned plea that young Americans show the same fortitude the English are showing in the face of Hitler. Among causes she asked us to support is Camp William James, which has just lost its federal funding." Of course I explain in the book that Rosenstock-Huessy, with some Dartmouth men and some Harvard men, had just formed an experimental CCC camp, initially in Sharon, Vermont, and later in Tunbridge. And I had met some of these

people, including particularly Paige Smith, who was one of the—the fact that he had been captain of the wrestling team as well as a very distinguished English student, a poet, he was well known as a poet on campus, struck me as such a wonderful combination that I was inclined to join anything that he thought was good.

DONIN: Was he a classmate of yours?

GARDNER: No, he was Class of '40. In any case, right after Dorothy Thompson's talk—the room was just aflame. She was an extremely powerful speaker. And I've never seen the campus so agitated and interested in one speaker. Anybody who went to hear her will remember that talk because she brought home to us what the war was about to do. I mean March '41 you could feel that we were about to— Pearl Harbor hadn't happened, but I'm sure that Roosevelt, I'm sure Lend Lease was already underway. And Europe was going right down the drain. I mean the Nazis were taking over, and it looked like England would fall. It was very unclear whether all of Europe wouldn't become a Nazi stronghold with no strong ability to ever retake it.

DONIN: Was there a lot of sort of argument on campus between the sort of isolationists and the—

GARDNER: Yes, there were. There were speakers on campus who were America Firsters. And people – I'd say the voices were at least as loud among those who said we should stay out as among those who thought we should become involved. So it was a pointed issue. And I as a pacifist, at that time, until about a year later I changed my mind and volunteered, but needless to say the tension for me was even higher because I had religious and other grounds for wondering what I would do. And felt that we were very likely to be drawn into the war.

DONIN: So is that what caused you to drop out of school?

GARDNER: Yes. On May 29, 1941, I decided to leave the College. And I describe my experience in 405 Gile Hall where I stayed up all night actually thinking about what I should do and what not. And right after that I went in to see Dean Strong the next morning at ten a.m. on May 30th of '41. And he assured me that my leaving the College wouldn't put me in poor standing. The College would consider taking me back. Or it would be very likely to be willing to. And he mentioned that Robert Frost had done the same thing. So there

was company; that I need not feel I was in bad company. And then I shortly thereafter joined Camp William James, became the camp secretary; got to know everybody involved in it very much. And those two things—the decision to quit college and the summer, the balance of that year, spent in Tunbridge—were probably the, certainly the formative moments of my life. Though being in the Army and what happened in the Army for me was very significant, too because I had four years in the Army.

DONIN: Right. I read the profile of you in the *Valley News* last spring. Who helped you sort of reach this decision to drop out? Were there students or professors?

GARDNER: No, nobody. There was nobody I discussed it with at all.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

GARDNER: I decided to do it entirely on my own.

DONIN: And did you finish the credits for that term?

GARDNER: Actually I was missing.... That particular night was still the night...about two days later I was to take my final exam. I'd taken my exams in everything except the French course. So I didn't get credit for a French course that I didn't take the exam for, which was quite irrational. But I decided that night, having spent perhaps—having been up all night—I would do something irrational.

DONIN: And at that point, were you dropping out specifically to join the Army?

GARDNER: No, I was dropping out to consider becoming an ongoing pacifist.

DONIN: Right.

GARDNER: I'd actually been a pacifist only in my mind for a period of four or five months, since meeting the pacifists in the Dartmouth Christian Union.

DONIN: That was my next question: Your colleagues, your fellow members of the DCU, as they called it, I guess....

GARDNER: Yes.

DONIN: How were they breaking down, along what lines were they breaking down?

GARDNER: As I recall, the two or three people who were the leaders of the Christian Union, all three of them, were planning to be pacifists.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

GARDNER: Robins Barstow was one of them I happen to remember.

DONIN: And did you have a faculty mentor or advisor?

GARDNER: I'm not so sure. I don't think—I'm not so sure that freshman had faculty mentors at that time.

DONIN: No, I meant the DCU. Did that have a faculty—

GARDNER: Oh, it undoubtedly did. And unfortunately I've forgotten who it was.

DONIN: It wasn't the guy's name....

GARDNER: Maybe the head...maybe the College chaplain.

DONIN: Was it George Kalbfleisch?

GARDNER: Chamberlin.

DONIN: Oh, Chamberlin, Roy Chamberlin.

GARDNER: Senior, yes. He had a son named Roy Junior, who went to Camp William James, by the way.

DONIN: Right. Oh, interesting.

GARDNER: He was another Rosenstock-Huessy enthusiast.

DONIN: Uh-huh. Now at that point I guess you weren't even considering what your major was going to be, freshman year.

GARDNER: No, probably not. Though I was so impressed with Rosenstock-Huessy that whatever I chose as a major would have been affected by his work, I think.

DONIN: So can you describe, you know, other parts of your freshman year. Did you engage in sort of typical Dartmouth...?

GARDNER: Yes, I engaged very actively in two or three activities. I'd gone on the freshman hike up Moosilauke, and that had very much impressed me. And I just was delighted with the friendships and the whole experience; an extremely formative two or three days. So meeting the seniors who were leaders there, they immediately became role models for me. When I was planning—

[Pause]

GARDNER: Oh, I was discussing my extreme interest in the Dartmouth Outing Club. And I took the initiative to form a freshman group within the Outing Club to give us some sense of pride. And we called it the Frontier Crew, I think it was called. And this enabled us to write off the people that make patches. We got a little design; we got a patch and put it on our jackets or whatever. And I think we offered to help clean cabins, Happy Hill and other things. You know we tried to identify a small group of ten or 20 of us in this inner group. So I was very active in my freshman year in the Outing Club. Went to activities and helped do things and helped get other people to do them. I also joined *Jack-O*. I'd been active in the literary magazine at Exeter, *The Review*; I'd been one of the editors there. And I checked in with *Jack-O-Lantern* and was impressed very much with the people that I met there. And I was invited to write for that, which was pretty good in my freshman year. And I contributed—I wrote several articles. I know there was one in the last issue of the year because I have a big pile of old *Jack-Os*, and I'm in there.

DONIN: Great. And what would you consider was your major sort of social group there? Was it your dormitory friends or your friends in DCU or on the *Jack-O*? Or was there another social group that we haven't mentioned yet?

GARDNER: I suppose that the group living on the top floor of Gile was the social group I think of first. There was—I remember Ted Mortimer and other people who were in rooms nearby. And I think just people from proximity became close friends, though I do recall liking very much—I didn't know only these more or less people who were simply near me and were likely to be of my age vintage—but I also liked very much the seniors in the Dartmouth Christian Union and the Outing Club and *Jack-O*. So I'd say those—Since they weren't social peers, I would say they were people I enjoyed being with and

I particularly enjoyed the sense that they didn't look down on me as an unimportant freshman.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. Were you at all tempted or approached by any fraternity to join?

GARDNER: They didn't do that in the freshman year.

DONIN: Oh, that was sophomore year then. That's right.

GARDNER: Yes, it was only the sophomore year that you became involved in fraternities possibly.

DONIN: Right, right.

GARDNER: I did later join Alpha Delta when I came back to Dartmouth after the war.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. And what was your impression of or memories of President Hopkins himself?

GARDNER: Well, I guess the best thing to say is that my recollection was extremely positive. When he spoke at Dartmouth events or when we heard what he was doing, all I can say is that I was impressed with his leadership and delighted with it. Other than that, I can't say that I met him or interacted with him except in a very nominal way at perhaps some large gathering.

DONIN: Matriculation or something.

GARDNER: Maybe.

DONIN: He signed your card and probably shook your hand.

GARDNER: I'm sure.

DONIN: Uh huh. Was he engaged in the debate about the war in any public way?

GARDNER: I don't recall. It's possible that he took a position as to the war, as to whether we should or shouldn't be involved in the war. But I don't think he did.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

GARDNER: Maybe other interviewers will have different recollections on that one.

DONIN: Right. Exactly. And did *The D* come out and take a stand? Were you working for *The D* freshman year?

GARDNER: No. I sort of hung around *The D*. But I don't think I actually wrote for them. I knew many people on it because the *Jack-O* was in the same building.

DONIN: Right.

GARDNER: I think *The D* printed a great many think pieces on it. I'm not so sure *The D* itself came out. I remember—his name will come to me in a minute when I'm not trying to get it—there were two or three seniors who were the pundits on the war issue.

DONIN: Okay. And what about sort of engaging in sports of any kind? Did you?

GARDNER: Well, let's see. I was involved with track, I recall particularly, which is the one area I'd done anything significant at Exeter. I was a runner in the 100-yard dash and the broad jump. And I'm trying to recall...I'm more aware of my involvement with sports at Exeter than I am at Dartmouth in my freshman year. I don't think that I...I did whatever one was required to do. But I don't think that I...I don't recall exactly what I was involved with.

DONIN: And was it expected that students all turned up for sporting events, you know, Dartmouth sporting events, whether it's the football team or the hockey team or whatever?

GARDNER: I'm not so sure I'd say it was expected. It was taken for granted by our freshman class that that's the sort of thing we would do. But I don't think it we felt it was being—a college administrator expected us to do it in that sense. Or would look askance at us if we didn't. But I think that the mood at Dartmouth at that time was that involvement with and supporting anything that represented the College carrying the flag for itself was important. And I do recall going to all the football games. And I recall being present at the famous fifth down when—was it the fifth down? Yes.

DONIN: Against Cornell?

GARDNER: Yes, against Cornell. I was standing only about 30 feet from the goal line at the time that that happened. I was down in the track for some reason. I was either handing out *Jack-Os* or doing some promotional type of thing. So I was very near the event. And was utterly horrified when this happened. And I was delighted when Cornell—I think its president actually helped lead the move to undo the Dartmouth loss.

DONIN: A great statement by Cornell, don't you think?

GARDNER: Yes, I thought it was very impressive, that.

DONIN: Yes, that's gone down in history as a pretty big deal. So it sounds like you had, I mean, as normal—whatever normal is—you were able, the Class of '40 was able to enjoy a relatively normal freshman year, albeit with this sort of black cloud of the war hanging over everything.

GARDNER: Yes, I think we were fully engaged in our enthusiasms in sports and activities.

DONIN: Traditions.

GARDNER: And yes.

DONIN: Did you wear a beanie?

GARDNER: I'm sure we did, yes.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

GARDNER: And I remember the snow sculpture and things like that being important to us. As a matter of fact, I was a bit of a star snow sculptor because there was a dormitory competition.

DONIN: Yes.

GARDNER: And I created a very large and fancy sort of snow sculpture. I was the leader in putting the team together. And I drew the plans for the sculpture. I went over to the library, by the way, and got a picture of how some famous artist, Leonardo or somebody, had drawn a horse, because I wasn't sure of the proportions of a horse. So I found this classic drawing from the Renaissance and learned how

long the legs should be in proportion to the body and so on. Which you never think about unless you have to actually draw one or sculpt one. So I drew this life-size horse with a guy skiing behind him. But except the guy skiing had fallen, and he was skijoring, letting the horse pull him. And his skis had gotten twisted, and he was looking up at the horse. And the horse had his neck looking back at him, and the horse was sort of laughing at this guy who had fallen behind him. And this won the dormitory prize.

DONIN: Amazing. We have a huge collection of snow sculpture photographs. I have to go back and see if we have a picture of that.

GARDNER: You really should. And if you can't, I can find a picture for you.

DONIN: So this was the Gile dormitory, right?

GARDNER: Gile dormitory. And I was the sculptor, with the help of the library, which is important to note. And the guy fallen down behind him was as important as the horse. And it was in all at least life sized.

DONIN: Yes, the quality of sculptures...

GARDNER: We tried much harder and we were disappointed in... I was disappointed in what happened to *Jack-O*. In later years it was no longer a significant, it seemed to me, a significant effort, literary or humor wise and similarly sculpture and similarly attendance at football games and perhaps other facilities has been disappointing to me to see that for whatever reasons much of the dynamism we had then has not always been present since.

DONIN: Right. You're not alone in that thought.

GARDNER: Of course not.

DONIN: OK, we get to your decision in the spring of '41 to drop out. So can we, despite the incredible experience you had during the war, can we jump to your return to Dartmouth?

GARDNER: Sure you can jump to that if that's part of your project.

DONIN: Yes, it is. First of all, when you left, you left on the terms that you would be welcomed back, you said.

GARDNER: Not specifically. He said that you needn't assume that you wouldn't be welcomed back. I think he was smart enough not to make a commitment. So when I applied to come back to Dartmouth after the war, I didn't say, you know that you've already promised me this. Rather I said, Will you take me back? And they were taking back all kinds of people who had left for various reasons.

DONIN: Sure. Had you stayed in touch at all—I mean despite what was going on in your life—had you stayed in touch at all with the College or with colleagues, classmates, or whatever? Written any letters home or anything like that?

GARDNER: I wrote regular letters home. But they were to my family. Let me think if I wrote to any classmates in the Dartmouth Christian Union or elsewhere. I think some letters I wrote to friends in Camp William James and stayed in touch with them. And some of them had Dartmouth connections.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

GARDNER: But they weren't classmates. So I don't recall during the war being in touch with classmates. But I do recall, since my family had moved to Norwich, an awareness of what was happening at the College was conveyed to me by them during the war.

DONIN: Oh, I see. Right. Was that just a coincidence that they came to Norwich?

GARDNER: Well, my father had a big job in New York, and when he was fired from that job in the late '30s just before my senior year at Exeter. The family found it expensive to live in the New York area, and Dad was looking around to do something in a less expensive place. So they looked around at college towns and settled on Norwich, not just to follow me to Dartmouth but because they liked Norwich as it was. And they met Professor Huessy very early on because they'd known that I'd just left—I'd left college just shortly before they decided to come up to live here. So they kept me informed of the fact that the College had the Navy program and other things.

DONIN: Did you stay in touch with Professor Rosenstock-Huessy?

GARDNER: Yes, I sent him letters from where I was posted. And when I became commander of the Buchenwald concentration camp, I sent him a long letter describing that.

DONIN: So what were the circumstances of your deciding to return to Dartmouth?

GARDNER: Well, let's see. I think even before I left the Army, in my last six months before I got on a ship in Marseilles and came back to the States, I assumed that it would be better to finish college than to attempt to start a career without a college education. So I'm sure that as soon as it became—shortly after I reached home, I assume I went over—I don't recall the day—but I'm sure within weeks I must have gone over to Dartmouth and made inquiries as to whether and how one could get readmitted. And I found the welcome just overwhelming. I even learned that I could use my officer's candidate school experience of only a few months, that they'd consider that a college course. And it was certainly at least as demanding as any college course.

DONIN: And at that point—so we're talking about 1946?

GARDNER: Now let's see. I got out of the Army—or rather I came back from Europe—the end of '45. So it would be in early '46 that I went over to the College and probably entered, I'm sure, in the spring of '46 I was back in college. I might have to check a record to make sure exactly what date, you know, when the term began, that sort of thing.

DONIN: And I think at that point the College was still running on this sort of accelerated schedule.

GARDNER: Yes. They allowed you to continue to study in the summer. So I finished the three years that I was missing or needed, they allowed me—I was able to finish in two years.

DONIN: Mmm.

GARDNER: By studying in the summer.

DONIN: Through the summer. And at that point I guess you had to choose a major.

GARDNER: Yes. And I chose philosophy for a rather interesting reason. Rosenstock-Huessy taught social philosophy, and he was really as much or more an historian than he was a philosopher. But his

history was so distinctive, that it fit better into a philosophy department.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

GARDNER: In any case, one of the main reasons that I decided to major in philosophy was that I knew I wanted to take the four courses that he taught. And I thought that being closer to him and the philosophy department would be more interesting to me than majoring in history or some other field. I might have majored in English—because the skill as a writer, both at *Jack-O*, which I re-founded after the war. You asked what I did right after coming—shortly after coming back on campus—I called a meeting to re-found *Jack-O*, both get a business staff and an editorial staff, because I was one of the few people who'd been in *Jack-O* before it closed down during the war. There were a few others. But in any case, I took the leadership. And I remember Bob McLaughry became our circulation manager, son of the football coach. And forming that was one of the main things that was exciting for me. And I also hung around *The Dartmouth* and did some writing for them.

DONIN: That's when you wrote the series on Buchenwald.

GARDNER: I wrote the series on Buchenwald.

DONIN: Right. And so five years later you must have found the College changed in many ways.

GARDNER: Yes. I found that the College was much more aggressively intellectual. I had some impression after my Exeter education, which had been very, very intellectual, that Dartmouth wasn't quite as challenging as I had hoped it would be. I didn't get extraordinarily good marks—I was just a B student—possibly because I was so active in things like *Jack-O* and side activities. But in any case, even as a B student, I was inclined to pursue intellectual ideas more aggressively than my average compatriot at the College. And was delighted to find the College becoming more that way. And it was obvious. You could feel President Dickey was leading the College in a direction of getting faculty who were—maybe fewer faculty who were old Dartmouth people and more outsiders and things like that.

DONIN: There was now a large contingent of military or ex-military students.

GARDNER: Yes. As a matter of fact, some of us were still in uniform. I recall I hadn't been—the Army hadn't, they gave you something like three or four months after you returned home that you hadn't been decommissioned completely. So I was actually attending classes in uniform. I was the first—actually I was a captain at that point. I was decommissioned as a captain. And I remember there were lieutenant colonels and I think maybe even colonels, particularly in the Air Force, were high rank, came fairly young. So there were several of us wearing a uniform. Not for many months, but the first few months of '46.

DONIN: Did you feel you were treated differently than the civilians that were on campus?

GARDNER: No. Though I do recall feeling and hearing that the professors enjoyed having some older students with a little more experience behind them. That they personally found teaching people who had actually been in Europe and seen the great cathedrals and had the experience of war and seen the Nazis and all this up close and things like Buchenwald, gave them people who were not so thoroughly inexperienced as most of the freshmen and sophomores and whatnot that they would be teaching.

DONIN: Did you feel that you were a better student when you came back?

GARDNER: Oh, vastly better. I felt that this—it even occurred to me then that it would be a good idea not to finish college at 21. That if you took a year off or began.... Sometimes people take a year off between high school and college. And sometimes they take off or work. Take a year abroad during college or something. I do recall feeling that if you could be still studying a little bit at age 22 or 23 instead of finishing it all up at 21, that might be a very good idea.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. And you were proof of that.

GARDNER: It seemed to me that that was the case.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. It's a common theme that's emerging from these interviews that those who went off and did their military service and came back, many of them felt that they were more focused, better students. How was it being in the classroom with—I mean I assume many of the classes were a combination of people like you, veterans who'd done their service, combined with these....

GARDNER: I don't recall any tension in the classroom. We were probably at most, 25 percent of a class. But we were usually a significant portion. So I don't recall that there was any tension which between, let's say, probably sophomores or juniors might have been...I doubt I was in class with many freshmen because I was taking more, usually courses that were more commonly taken by people beyond freshman year.

DONIN: Sure, sure. And at this point President Dickey had started the Great Issues course.

GARDNER: Yes, I was extremely interested in the Great Issues course and delighted that we had senior people in the US national life coming on campus. It was quite exciting.

DONIN: Great way to introduce issues.

GARDNER: I remember Arthur Wilson who was a professor. Among the professors I liked especially besides Rosenstock-Huessy were John Gazley and Arthur Wilson, those two in particular. And I remember Wilson took leadership on the Great Issues course.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. The focus of the Great Issues course really was sort of Dickey's belief that he wanted students to take one issue and see different viewpoints on it. Is that right? By reading the *New York Times* every day?

GARDNER: Well, I'm sure that we were expected to take, you know, look at both sides of questions. I'm more impressed by the fact that the great issues of the day might not have surfaced as much—wouldn't have surfaced as much—in our college life just by taking a group of average courses. So the main thing for me was the postwar issues, the emergence of the Cold War, the relations with Russia particularly interested me. And one of the things that perhaps the Great Issues helped since the Cold War themes would have brought speakers to campus on that issue, was that early on in my years of returning, I decided that my career would probably take me hopefully into the State Department or something of international relations. So in preparation for that, and partly because Rosenstock-Huessy had interested me in Russia, I founded the Russian Club. This was another thing that I actually took an initiative. I re-founded the *Jack-O*, and I founded the Russian Club by caucusing with a number of those of us who were in first or second year Russian. And we had monthly meetings at which we

spoke only Russian. Libby and I had married by that time. And I remember she would sit cautiously in a corner of the room unable to understand anything. And we met at Norwich homes usually. Lydia Hoffman-Behrendt, a pianist, very distinguished pianist from Europe, from Germany, lived in Norwich. And she had a Russian connection, I think, through her mother. And we met at her home and usually had similar attractive venues.

DONIN: And this was mostly upperclassmen I assume in the club.

GARDNER: I assume. I don't think... Well, if freshmen had been taking Russian, I'm sure they would have been in it, too. I frankly can't remember the mix. But there was whoever was taking Russian was welcome to join it, even if they were in first-year Russian because most of us were still learning.

DONIN: Right. You said you ended up joining a fraternity when you came back.

GARDNER: Yes, I joined Alpha Delta Phi.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. And did you socialize a lot there?

GARDNER: Well, I would think so. I remember one way I was socialized there was I actually went to live there for a period. I was in Richardson. And for a period of maybe six months I went and lived in Alpha Delta—in the fraternity.

DONIN: And this was before you were married, I assume.

GARDNER: No, let's see. Yes, that was before I was married. We married in my senior year.

DONIN: Right, so you had a year and a half there...

GARDNER: It's very hard to tell whether you are... Since you are doing three years in two, I can't recall exactly whether I was in my senior year or what.

DONIN: [Laughter] Right.

GARDNER: One interesting thing we did at *Jack-O*, which was rather sensational on campus—and I don't know if it shows in your records or anything you've seen as you've gotten clippings—is that

we put out a *Pravda* issue. Have you heard about our *Pravda* issue?

DONIN: Uh uh.

GARDNER: Well, this created a sensation throughout New England—well, it certainly involved the Boston FBI, for example. [Laughter] What happened is that with control of the *Jack-O* in my hands, and this interest in Russia, I decided—and the emergence of extreme tendencies in national life; McCarthy hadn't appeared, but there was still... The pre-McCarthy stirrings were there. And the College and national life were all inflamed with the fact that Russia is about to take over the world and this was the end. Just as Hitler was once about to take over the world, now Stalin was about to take over the world. And we were in a very bad way. So we put out a *Pravda* issue making fun of this national hysteria. And we put the hammer and sickle boldly on the cover, a big splash of red ink behind it and then a yellow hammer and sickle. Then we took that motif and made placards which we posted on the day it was published. We posted them all over the campus...on trees, on the pillars at the Inn, trees all over the campus, bulletin boards. And Libby made a red flag. We called her—her name's Elizabeth—we called her Betsy Rosski. [Laughter] She made the—we made the Russian national flag with the hammer and sickle and unfurled it from Robinson Hall from the second story there. And then at corner points on the campus, we had card tables with a guy dressed as an anarchist with a big black floppy hat and a long black beard selling the *Jack-O*. Next to the table we positioned what looked like a bomb. It was one of those roadside flares. So we were about to blow up the campus and the world by distributing *Jack-O* with this theme. When you opened up *Jack-O*, it was all printed on pink newsprint, and it appeared to be *Pravda*. It had the *Pravda* heading in Russian. And the *Jack-O* board were shown sitting to the left and right of Stalin in the Kremlin. And it was full of pretty good takeoffs on how *Pravda* would impact Dartmouth that morning.

DONIN: Very clever.

GARDNER: The thing sold out very promptly, I think within two days, 2,000 or more copies. And somebody within the first few hours of its appearance called the FBI and said something peculiar was happening on the Dartmouth campus and they'd better look into it. So an agent came up from Boston, and it appeared in the *New York*

Times and in the *Boston Herald* and other articles, documenting this stir on the Dartmouth campus.

DONIN: [Laughs] Great. And did you get any feedback from the administration about this?

GARDNER: No, we got no complaints even though we were despoiling the looks of Richardson. I think they were amused as much as anybody. And Libby's flag, I imagine we took it down after a few hours.

DONIN: Right, right. That's great. So when you came back to campus in '46, did you have any classmates left on campus—like you who'd done service and then come back and finish?

GARDNER: There were some '44s there, but not a tremendous number. I'm much more aware of knowing... As I said, Bob McLaughry was there to help get *Jack-O* going as our circulation manager. But it was the class of '45, Paul Caravatt—

DONIN: Oh, sure.

GARDNER: Who was the business manager of *Jack-O*. And Paul was extremely successful. He must have had a good product because we made enough money to pay ourselves each over a thousand dollars, which was a lot of money then.

DONIN: Goodness!

GARDNER: That would have been the equivalent of 5,000 today or more for one year of work and I guess we worked at it for a little bit more than a year. So we made a lot of money. It was packed with ads. We had very good salesmen. I remember one of the ad salesmen managed to get a Windsor undertaker to run an ad. [Laughter] I thought that was pretty good.

DONIN: [Laughter] That's great. So did you have a graduation ceremony?

GARDNER: We never did. We're the famous—at least I think it's historically true because everybody tells me that it is—that there were so few people on campus in June of '44 that they didn't hold.... I think there may have been eight or ten or I don't know what. But very, very few. Because they were all off at war or incapacitated or goodness knows what. So I think we were the only class that

literally had no graduation ceremony in Dartmouth history. Other classes certainly had more interruptions and problems, but we had nobody put up a stand and have a ceremony in June of '44. Then when it came time for me to graduate in '47, actually Libby and I had arranged for me to go on the GI Bill and study in Paris where I would improve my Russian and prepare further for this imagined State Department career. And if I were to leave the College at that point, I was short half a course. But I told them that I would make it up by study in Paris if that was all right with them. And they said, "Yes. Just send us some evidence that you're studying in Paris, and we'll give you your diploma." So I got it that way.

DONIN: In the mail.

GARDNER: Yes.

DONIN: Great. So what did that experience for the whole class of '44 do to it in terms of your sort of sense of identity as a class since you were all spread around?

GARDNER: Well, it may have even helped. All I can say is that the sense of class identity seemed to be as strong or stronger than many Dartmouth classes, despite the fact that there were several years where we weren't all with each other.

DONIN: Mmmm. And that continued even after you'd all graduated and started having your reunions? There was a good sense of unity?

GARDNER: Yes, an extremely good sense of unity. I remember I presided at our 25th reunion—I presided over the memorial service. And I happen to remember Bob McLaughry recruited me for that. And Libby was somewhat disappointed in the results because before the service, everybody'd been calling her Libby. And after the service they started calling her Mrs. Gardner, thinking that I was a reverend or something. [Laughter] I was not, but we looked more formal in their eyes.

DONIN: That's cute. Now, did you have any—I guess occasionally it happened that someone would migrate to another class because they came back and they spent more time say with the class of '46 or whatever, '47.

GARDNER: I didn't know there was migration.

- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- GARDNER: I think—some '44s changed their class?
- DONIN: I don't know specifically if any '44s did. But there were other classes who had people....
- GARDNER: I had the impression that almost '44s—and I thought all '44s—kept the class number. I knew that some colleges didn't set it up that way. If you were going to graduate in '47, I think Yale made you a '47.
- DONIN: Oh, really. Wow.
- GARDNER: I think so.
- DONIN: Uh-huh.
- GARDNER: I was glad that Dartmouth allowed us to keep our real number.
- DONIN: Right, right. And I think generally speaking everybody did. But there was a little bit of migration among some of the classes because, you know, like you, you came back and spent more time with—
- GARDNER: 'Forty-sixes and '47s.
- DONIN: 'Forty-fives, '46s, yes, 47s, right.
Well, let me ask you one thing about, just in terms of your impression of how Dartmouth did with this influx of veterans coming back after the war, at the end of '45 and '46, as you did. That must have been a pretty big challenge to the College who...
- GARDNER: I think it was a tremendous challenge to the College. And I can't speak highly enough of the way both the administration and faculty handled that kind of challenge. It struck me that their flexibility and their wisdom in the way they helped us study in the summer, they were willing to keep the College open then, and otherwise arrange. I did have an advisor after I came back. But I think all the ways they handled the College life were very wisely done.
- DONIN: I gather they had a real housing shortage too.
- GARDNER: Yes, we lived... I guess you may be asking Libby about our life in the rather peculiar housing that we had to get into.

DONIN: Well, they had all these married veterans coming to town with wives and some with babies as well. But I will cover that with Libby.

[End of Interview]