

Dartmouth College Oral History Project
The War Years at Dartmouth
Interview with Barbara Dent Hinman (spouse of Richard Hinman '45)
By Mary Donin
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DONIN: Okay, Barbara, so I guess we'd first like to hear about how you and your husband met initially? When did you first know each other?

HINMAN: Oh, well, it probably goes back to Kimball Union Academy when Daddy would go down to help the coaches with their soccer and lacrosse teams and things. And then I knew Dick as a freshman when he came to Hanover. He was a fresh young man full of life, sparkle. And then he went off to the war. And, you know, we didn't correspond or anything during those times. I corresponded with lots of Dartmouth students when they were off in the service. But I didn't correspond with Dick.

DONIN: Oh, how funny!

HINMAN: Well, for some reason, you know. But there were boys that were in the Air Corps in England, boys in the Tank Corps in Texas. And it was—I suppose they enjoyed keeping in touch with Hanover. It was something that was peaceful and quiet, and they liked hearing about what was going on at the time.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: And some of them didn't come back to college, didn't finish their education at least at Dartmouth. But some did come back. And as you have said earlier, they were different people. They weren't always looking for the good times, which they had looked for as freshmen. And they were much more serious and focused. But Hanover was interesting during the war. It was almost like being on half time. It was sort of shut down. Things were very quiet. There wasn't the excitement of revolving students coming and going and all their activities. Daddy was very involved with—he took over helping with the Outing Club at that time. Went to the head of V-12 and said you've got a lot of students that aren't busy enough doing things. So, you know, they could get involved with the Outing Club and it wouldn't have to be leave time for them. It could just be part of their activity. They wouldn't have to take their leave. And I can remember him running, going out and running Oak Hill because there was no one else around, around the ski tow weekends sometimes.

DONIN: And that's because the teams that he was coaching, the lacrosse and the soccer teams, they weren't here—I mean there were no teams.

HINMAN: You know I don't remember that.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: There was football certainly. Tuss McClaughry was here as a coach during the War. And I don't know if Daddy's teams were—it seems to me they were because I don't remember him not coaching at all. So I think they were active. But he coached spring and fall. So winter was a time he could be off. He'd been in the First World War, so I think he was very interested in people involved in the military and keeping them busy. And he hired Jim Broderick's mother—well, Peg Broderick was her name—and set up a USO for the students.

DONIN: Oh....

HINMAN: It's now—oh, it was where the dining hall was. Not Thayer but the first dining hall. There on the corner of Main Street where Collis is.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: And that was the USO for the boys that were in the V-12 here.

DONIN: Oh, nice.

HINMAN: What else? There was—it seems silly.... I know there were spotters for enemy aircraft in Hanover. [Laughs]

DONIN: Really?

HINMAN: Yes. You know the whole country was very involved in this war. Which is so different from today's conflicts.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: You know there was gas rationing. Sugar, meat, shoes, all those things. So life was very quiet and slowed down.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: But it didn't seem like a hardship. It was part of what was happening in life. And everyone was accepting of it. You didn't hear a lot of complaining about, oh, I can't go so-and-so because my tires were all worn out.

DONIN: Right.

HINMAN: Or what have you.

DONIN: Right.

HINMAN: So it was a time when the citizens were really involved in what the whole nation was involved in this conflict. Very different from the way these wars are handled today. And the way we're involved—which isn't much really.

DONIN: No.

HINMAN: Other than complaining about them.

DONIN: Right. But we don't suffer the rationing and all of that.

HINMAN: No, no. There really is very little involvement. Unless you have relatives in the service, you really aren't involved much with it other than listening to the dissidents and the newspapers on both sides of the conflict. But at that time everyone was pretty much behind what was happening in the world.

DONIN: Do you remember Pearl Harbor?

HINMAN: Oh, sure. I do. I know just— It's like the death of John Kennedy where you always remember where you were. Yes, I was walking down in front of the Commons, and it was a snowy afternoon. For some reason people were hustling towards the Hanover Inn. Someone said what had happened. And I went in there, as a young girl, just to hear more about what was going on before I walked on home. Yes, I remember Pearl Harbor well. The shock of it, really!

DONIN: Right. Was there a sense that the students were all going to rush out and enlist at that point?

HINMAN: I don't know that that was a sense of it, but that's what did happen. They all joined programs: V-12 or V-7. I certainly don't know the names of all the programs that they got into. But they really did. As a whole group, they really did get involved. And I don't know if they went because they wanted to be in the Air Corps or the Marines or what and were afraid they'd be drafted if they didn't sign.

DONIN: Right.

HINMAN: So there was a great exodus of— Well, they didn't leave right away. But they did sign into these programs and waited to be called into them. Yes.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. And that's when the college started going year-round. I mean they didn't stop classes in June. They went on through the summer.

HINMAN: Well, they did. Yes. Dick was here in... I don't know, '42, I guess, probably. Probably the summer of '42 his class was here. Most of them. And they probably—some of course enlisted early.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: Even before Pearl Harbor. But most of them probably didn't go off until after the end of '42 or somewhere in there, when it was really— I'm sure you have statistics on how many were left in school, what the enrollment was at Dartmouth during those years. I have no idea what it was.

DONIN: Well, you know, in '43 was when the Navy arrived to start running the big training program and really took over the campus. Because I think there were not very many traditional undergraduates left.

HINMAN: Students here.

DONIN: Now I wonder if your father, was he called upon—we were just talking about this with Dick last night—that a lot of faculty were called on to do different things than they traditionally did.

HINMAN: Yes.

DONIN: Was your father called upon to do teaching in addition to coaching?

HINMAN: Not that I remember now. The funny thing about Daddy was he was a Scotsman who came, and he taught French when he first came. Can you imagine that?

DONIN: Oh!

HINMAN: A Scotsman teaching French? What that accent must have been. I don't think he taught long.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HINMAN: And at this point you were in high school.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. So there was none of this sort of taboo of town-gown mixing. That was okay?

HINMAN: Oh, I don't know. Does that exist today? It was not at all evident in my growing up. Or if it was— My mother had grown up in Hanover. And my grandmother had grown up in Hanover. So I was from both sides. If there was any feeling between the two, I wasn't aware of it, no, at all. You read about it back in history about the one of the president's wives wanted to cut off part of the town and make it part of the campus. [Laughs]

DONIN: Amazing.

- HINMAN: Living in Hanover was like living with one big family; it really was. The Tansi Brothers who ran the fruit store were as good friends as any of the professors or anything else. It was a wonderful, warm community.
- DONIN: And it seems that the staff and faculty of the college often took students in, whether it was young women who were visiting—
- HINMAN: Yes.
- DONIN: Or whether you had students living with you.
- HINMAN: Yes, that is true. That's true. They boarded students. And, yes, they were asked to Carnival Weekend or what have you to take houseguests in. Which is something they've tried to involve people in lately. But I don't think it's been that successful. But it has been. I mean living in New London, we've been asked to host people.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- HINMAN: Yes. Parents of graduates or what have you.
- DONIN: It creates a nice feeling.
- HINMAN: It does. It does. It involves everyone.
- DONIN: So let's go back to this relationship with this young man.
- HINMAN: This young man. Well, when he first— I was a skier—that was my love—as it was all my friends. And when Dick came back, he had a car. And he did like to ski. So that was a great motivator for our friendship. And Dick came to my senior prom. I think he probably graduated and was maybe in Thayer School.
- DONIN: Senior prom at Hanover High?
- HINMAN: At Hanover High School.
- DONIN: Oh, amazing. See, I can't imagine that happening today. Maybe not. Maybe I...
- HINMAN: Yes. Do you have children in school?
- DONIN: Yes.
- HINMAN: And is there a great separation between college students and high school?

- DONIN: Absolutely.
- HINMAN: Well, of course there weren't girls on campus.
- DONIN: Right, right.
- HINMAN: In those days. Which maybe made a difference. Maybe the boys were interested in the high school girls because they were girls in town.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- HINMAN: And today you have coeds.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm. That's true.
- HINMAN: That may be the difference. But there was no— Oh, goodness we were such friends with everyone. You know the captain of the football team or the manager of the football team or swimming or what have you, we were all on a very friendly basis. And I don't mean romantically involved. It was like brother and sister sort of relationships.
- DONIN: Did you go to parties in the frats?
- HINMAN: Oh, no, I wasn't allowed to do that by my parents until I was probably a senior in high school.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- HINMAN: No, that would have been taboo. And woe be to me if I'd been doing that behind their back. It's a very different era where there was great respect for your parents and the rules that they had set. And I don't think we very often deviated from what they expected of us.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- HINMAN: One thing I remember about the war years was a student at Dartmouth at the time of Pearl Harbor was Takanobu Mitsui, whose family were the Mitsui industry of Japan. And so he was interned on the campus and Pudge Neidlinger, the dean of students, was his guardian. And he couldn't leave Hanover. We thought that was so strange, that here was this student, just because he was Japanese was all of a sudden interred here for the duration of the war. He eventually committed suicide.
- DONIN: Oh, isn't that sad!
- HINMAN: Isn't that? I mean it was long after college years. But I'm sure he went back to Japan to his family and business or what have you. I don't know

his history after Hanover. But that always sort of intrigued us all. It was a connection with the war and the Japanese.

DONIN: Sure. How did he end up becoming—

HINMAN: I have no idea. He was just here, you know. And I don't think he was even noticed until the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor. He was just a student, and I don't think anything was thought much of him. He was a Japanese, and there were Germans, you know, all kinds of people here. So I have no idea what prompted him to come to Dartmouth. Probably some person was responsible for it. But all those people you could question are now gone. So anyway, I was great friends with the dean's twin daughters, Susie and Sally Neidlinger. And we were always intrigued because Takanobu had to check in with the dean at his home. He had to make his presence known. It was sort of a connection with the war.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. So did you and Dick get married before he came to Thayer?

HINMAN: No, we were married in 1948. I went to Colby Junior for one year. And then we were married in June of 1948. I was young. I'm surprised my family let me marry.

DONIN: But that was sort of standard in those days, wasn't it? I mean it wasn't young in those days to get married at that age.

HINMAN: No, no. But... I guess not. A lot of my friends were married, you know, around that time.

DONIN: Sure.

HINMAN: Either before or after I.

DONIN: And Dick was certainly well known to your dad. He was...

HINMAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I mean there was none of— Of course Dick's family were connected with Cardigan School and so Hap Hinman was on campus daily. No, they were—it was nice because you did know each other's background, you know, family. I often wonder when girls and boys meet, whether it's the Internet or in New York City, I think of their lack of knowledge of each other's families. And I would think that would put a burden on marriages, you know.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. [Laughs] No, no, that's perfect.

HINMAN: But anyway, so we did marry, and Dick was out of Thayer School.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HINMAN: And he was in the training program for International Paper Company. And we traveled I guess for a year from different mills and sites. And then he was in New York City so we established our first home in Rye, New York.

DONIN: Hmmm. Nice.

HINMAN: And from then on had babies and raised a family.

DONIN: And came back to New Hampshire.

HINMAN: Came back to New Hampshire, yes. Well, Dick was born in New Hampshire.

DONIN: Right. I mean your roots were both deeply, deeply here.

HINMAN: And our children all had filtered in here. So it's worked.

DONIN: Mmmm. Definitely.

HINMAN: Yes. It's nice to come home to. Where are you from?

DONIN: New York, Westchester County.

HINMAN: Oh, Westchester.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. Yes. Not far from Rye.

HINMAN: No. I probably told you what I have to say about Dartmouth.

DONIN: Are we done? Do you think we're done? I can turn it off. Let's see. Memories of President Hopkins, President Dickey?

HINMAN: Not really.

DONIN: You were too young.

HINMAN: I was too young and not involved. There were certain people that were friends of Daddy that—I mean he raved about, like Professor Mecklin. And I was just looking at that book on the Eye Institute. And Daddy and Professor Ames used to fish together. And then there was a great of group of coaches that were so friendly, such nice people. But, no, I don't have.... Well, I knew Pudge Neidlinger well because of his children.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. Now what did your mother do here during the war? She was raising children, I assume.

- HINMAN: Mother was a person who loved work more than homemaking. And she worked for a number of years—a lot of years—at the Dartmouth Athletic ticket office.
- DONIN: Oh, yes.
- HINMAN: Her dad had owned the jewelry store in Hanover. My great-grandmother's house is still there in Hanover.
- DONIN: Where did you grow up? What house did you grow up in?
- HINMAN: I grew up on School Street, which is—our house has just been demolished.
- DONIN: Aw.
- HINMAN: [Laughs] I didn't know anything about it. And I walked with a friend. Of course the backyards used to go way up to the police station. Now they're all parking lots and what have you there backing up to those houses. We lived right next to the Episcopal rectory.
- DONIN: Oh, next to Edgerton House.
- HINMAN: Yes.
- DONIN: Oh, it's that house that was taken down.
- HINMAN: Yes. That was my grandmother's house originally. And I can't think of—then Daddy and Mother, after we were, Jean—I had one sister, Jean—and I were married, Daddy and Mother sold that to Jimmy Campion and they built a house in Norwich.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- HINMAN: But it was....
- DONIN: Now, Dick couldn't remember the names of the restaurants. When he came back from the war, there was no dining services. The Commons had been taken over as a mess hall.
- HINMAN: He used to eat—I heard him telling someone just the other day that he used to eat in Eastman's.
- DONIN: Oh.

HINMAN: There were Eastman's Drugstore and Putnam's Drugstore. And then there was Mack's, which was where—Campion's was there, where Gap is now.

DONIN: Uh-huh. And Mack's was sort of the predecessor to Lou's, is that right?

HINMAN: No, Lou's was here.

DONIN: Oh, was it?

HINMAN: Yes. The professors used Lou's a lot. I don't know if the students ate at Lou's. I don't know that. I have no idea where they were eating.

DONIN: And the inn had a coffee shop, didn't it?

HINMAN: The inn had a marvelous coffee shop that looked out over the main street, and it was a great gathering place for professors and people. I walked in there one day after Dick and I became engaged. And Pudge Neidlinger was in there with a group of people. And as he was leaving, he said, "If you ever want a way out of the engagement, come over to the office, and I'll show you the records." [Laughter] Ahhh. I mean that sort of typifies the whole feeling of Hanover in that era. It was a very friendly atmosphere.

DONIN: And there was only one policeman in town in those days.

HINMAN: Right, Andy Ferguson.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: And when it was time for me to get my driver's license, Daddy called Andy and said he was sending me over to the police station to take my test. So Andy took me around in the car and passed me. And that was how you got your license in those days.

DONIN: A lot easier.

HINMAN: One policeman and then one college campus policeman.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: So it was not a crime-filled area.

DONIN: No, hardly.

HINMAN: Oh, dear.

DONIN: And I've heard stories that they used to use the—I guess there was one taxicab in town that was a station wagon that also doubled as the hearse. Do you remember this?

HINMAN: No. The Rand Funeral Home, which is still—they lived across the street from our home.

DONIN: Which is where it still is now.

HINMAN: Yes, yes.

DONIN: It still is there now.

HINMAN: The Rand Family had the funeral home; then they had a furniture store on Main Street.

DONIN: Oh.

HINMAN: They had the two businesses.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: And [laughs], oh, dear. Funny, funny memories.

DONIN: What about the market? Was there a food store on Main Street?

HINMAN: Yes. The Hanover Co-op was where the bookstore is today.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: The bookstore was up where the Dirt Cowboy Restaurant is. That was Dave Storr's bookstore was there for years.

DONIN: Oh.

HINMAN: Phoebe, his daughter, ran it after her dad died. She ran it for years. And then she sold it to whoever has it now.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: Which is a chain, isn't it or something?

DONIN: Yes. Barnes & Noble.

HINMAN: Yes, Barnes & Noble. Well, anyway, the Storrs family ran the bookstore for years and years.

DONIN: A long time, yes.

HINMAN: Yes. And the co-op was there. And there must have been another store, but you know I can't remember what it was.

DONIN: Well, who was the greengrocer? Was it—

HINMAN: That doesn't ring any bells. Oh, well Tansi's was the greengrocer.

DONIN: Oh, you said Tansi's, of course.

HINMAN: Yes.

DONIN: Right. Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: They were a wonderful Italian family.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: One of their daughters was in my class in high school.

DONIN: So the rationing was gas and sugar and—

HINMAN: Gas and sugar and tires and shoes. You had coupons. You had little booklets. And you were allowed goodness knows what. I don't know what the quantities were then.

DONIN: I think I've got some rationing cards over there in fact from the—

HINMAN: Oh, do you?

DONIN: Yes. Right in that file.

HINMAN: Then there was—Ward and Baird was a department store, so to speak. And it was where the Dartmouth Co-op—you know the athletic supply shop on Main Street is.

DONIN: Omer & Bob's?

HINMAN: No, no. The one on Main Street that sells just Dartmouth T-shirts and sweatshirts and so forth. I don't know if it's still called— The Piante family ran that.

DONIN: Here's a gas ration card.

HINMAN: Where did you—Myra Crosby, Prospect Street. She lived—Mrs. Crosby.

DONIN: And these are all.... Oh, here are the little stamps.

HINMAN: Rationing books which we appreciate greatly. Isn't that fun?

DONIN: Yes. There they are.

HINMAN: I'll be darned. How did you ever get these?

DONIN: I think these must have come in their....

HINMAN: There's Minnie Crosby again. [Laughs] Minnie worked down in the Athletic Department. She worked for the, I don't whether she was secretary to the coaches or what she... She was a character. Minnie Crosby. Oh, my gosh!

DONIN: And the men and women of your War Price and Rationing Board. Here it is. I don't know. This is from 1944.

HINMAN: Are there names on there?

DONIN: I don't know. I didn't open it up to see if there are any names. This looks like it's put out by the government.

HINMAN: Oh yeah, this is the government. Fred Page. He was a professor here. He lived down the street from us. Frederick Page.

DONIN: And I assume some of the staff and faculty, the younger members, must have been also enlisting.

HINMAN: Gee, I don't know that. Daddy I know was asked by the Army to leave Hanover and go down in the Baltimore area to coach or to run soccer programs for the Army. And that kind of—he was sent. Oh, I've talked too long.

DONIN: No, no. I'm just turning it over.

HINMAN: He was then sent by the Army to Europe to run a soccer clinic for soldiers that were still in Europe after the war.

DONIN: Oh!

HINMAN: Uh huh.

DONIN: A recreational kind of thing?

HINMAN: I suppose it was in their—I don't know. At their base, at the Army bases.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: To run a soccer clinic for them.

DONIN: Oh. Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: It was the first time he went back to Scotland after he'd emigrated.

DONIN: Oh, after he left. Oh....

HINMAN: There's a lot of Fred Page.

DONIN: What brought him to Hanover?

HINMAN: He was gassed in the First World War, and he was advised not to—you know, to find a dryer climate.

DONIN: Oh.

HINMAN: Than Scotland.

DONIN: Yes.

HINMAN: And he had a cousin that lived in Lebanon.

DONIN: Oh.

HINMAN: So he came. He had played— Priscilla Page. He had played professional soccer in England.

DONIN: In Scotland. Oh, in England. Yes.

HINMAN: Well, he'd played for the Scottish International team. But then he played for Aston Villa, which is the professional team from Birmingham, England.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: And so he was well versed. So anyway that's where he got a job. I was reading about it. I got out some obituary and articles that were written about Daddy. Just sort of seeing if that would bring thoughts back.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: And one of the articles talks about who he became friendly with and who introduced him to the administration here at Dartmouth so they hired him. Oh, dear. So I think I've probably told you all I can....

[End of Interview]