

Dartmouth College Oral History Project
The War Years at Dartmouth
Interview with Buol Hinman '46
By Mary Donin
October 17, 2008

DONIN: You were just telling me a little bit about your family name because it is so prominent here at Dartmouth as well as in New Hampshire. Can you just give us a quick summary of what you told me?

HINMAN: It started with my father's family with three brothers all came here for a period of 1900 to 1914. Then their offspring started coming in 1930. I was the last one out in '49 of the consecutive string of there being one here. I was the 12th of the two generations.

DONIN: Amazing. Twelve Hinmans.

HINMAN: When I got my first Dartmouth banner, I thought it was spelled wrong. I thought it was D-O-T rather than D-A-R-T-H.

DONIN: Dotmouth. [Laughter]

HINMAN: The old New England folks.

DONIN: The old New England folks. So what's your first memory of seeing Dartmouth? Did you come to football games and all that sort of thing when you were a kid?

HINMAN: Yes. My brother was here from '38; started in '38, and he was the class of '42.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: Then we started coming up then to be here. We had tickets to the famous Dartmouth-Cornell fifth down game.

DONIN: Oh, famous!

HINMAN: And didn't come because the weather forecast was for snow. And my brother said, "Don't bother. They're going to get killed." So we didn't come.

DONIN: That was fall of 1940.

HINMAN: That's right.

DONIN: Oh, gee.

HINMAN: Classic. Sportsmanship.

DONIN: Yes. Truly. So you were very comfortable when you finally arrived on the doorstep here to matriculate.

HINMAN: Yes, I cheated. I had my brother's senior jacket, and I took the numerals off, numbers off of it, and I wore that around, and nobody bothered me. Other classmates were getting recruited to move furniture and things like that.

DONIN: So you didn't even have to wear the beanie, the freshman beanie.

HINMAN: That's right.

DONIN: [Laughs] I'm surprised they didn't catch you somehow. What dormitory were you in?

HINMAN: Gile.

DONIN: Gile.

HINMAN: 113 Gile. Roomed with Andy Bullis.

DONIN: Did you have any friends coming with you that you knew?

HINMAN: Roman friends were Bill Prince and Fred Caswell.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HINMAN: Both '46s. I've forgotten where Bill lived. Fred lived in Richardson. I was in Gile. Also that term we had a Navy instructor friend here who was a Rome boy, who had gone on to Annapolis and was instructing the first Navy group.

DONIN: Uh-huh. Yes.

HINMAN: They were becoming officers in the Navy.

DONIN: Right.

HINMAN: We could go down there and get a beer.

DONIN: Is that right?

HINMAN: Down to his house then.

DONIN: Yes. So can you describe what Dartmouth was like when you arrived here in the fall of 1942? It must have been— You were arriving in sort of batches, weren't you? Groups were arriving at different times?

HINMAN: Right. They started—there was a term offered in the summer.

DONIN: Right.

HINMAN: I didn't sign for that. I came a few weeks early to try out for the football team before school started. That was fun. I got to eat with all those famous football players at the training table down at Ma Smalley's. Good time.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: Then the rest of the class came in for matriculation to start the regular term.

DONIN: Right. At that point the school was running year round. They were having classes going all summer because of the—

HINMAN: That's right. They had started it with that—as far as I know—that summer of '42.

DONIN: Yes, exactly. So do you have memories of the matriculation ceremony with President Hopkins?

HINMAN: Yes. Everybody, we're all there. I've forgotten the name of the building over in the Administration Row. And we'd go up, and he's sitting there, and he's signing our matriculation papers and got a nice family greeting. He was a friend of the family's. Everybody ahead of me had smoothed my path. [Laughs] I enjoyed meeting him very much. He was a wonderful, wonderful man.

DONIN: I think this was up in Parkhurst Hall, wasn't it?

HINMAN: That's it. Yes, yes, yes.

DONIN: And did you have any idea of what you wanted to major in when you got here?

HINMAN: Probably economics.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: Probably at Tuck School. Had hopes of going into the family business.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: Worked out all right that way. I never did have a major.

DONIN: Oh, you never did?

HINMAN: No.

DONIN: Why?

HINMAN: Didn't need it. I gambled. If you— I went down to Tuck and inquired: Should I go for guts to get the marks to get in? Or should I take economics in case that'd help me going to Tuck. And they said you'd better get the marks. So I came back and took art, astronomy, and public speaking one term.

DONIN: I see.

HINMAN: Summer term. It was a good time. And it got me in, and I got to Tuck School.

DONIN: And that was the program where you could start—you could go to Tuck for your senior year, is that right?

HINMAN: Right, right.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HINMAN: It was three years. If you can do the three years— Normally a major starts in the senior year, and I didn't need it, assuming I was going to be good enough to get into Tuck.

- DONIN: Right, right.
- HINMAN: And I took that gamble. I would've had to go like hell—pardon me—I would've had to work hard to catch up on the economics major if I'd needed it. But it worked out, and I got in. It worked.
- DONIN: Now what were the classes like that you remember? Were the teachers good?
- HINMAN: After the war?
- DONIN: Well, no, let's—
- HINMAN: Before the war and what have you.
- DONIN: Yes, let's go chronologically sort before you went into service.
- HINMAN: They were all real impressive. It started off with—you had to have a science major. I picked chemistry. Professor Scarlett, as a large class, he calls your name, you stand up. He said, "Okay." Then he goes to the next name, he called, the guy stands up. He knew your name from then on, and it was a large class with 50 people or more.
- DONIN: My goodness.
- HINMAN: And he could call you right off. I stood up, and Buol Hinman. He said, "I want to see you after." I got up to him afterwards, I said, "You wanted to see me, sir. Yes, sir." He said, "I've had all the Hinmans that have been here, and there was only one of them that was any good." He said, "I hope you're the next one."
- DONIN: Oh, dear!
- HINMAN: [Laughter] He was a classmate of Uncle Harold's. And it worked out all right. He was a wonderful guy. The history professor married a high school classmate of a class of ten people from northern New Hampshire who was my father's class. Got along well with him. But they knew their subjects. They knew us. They knew we were all facing going off to war, and they were good to us. We were pretty good to them.

- DONIN: I assume some of the professors themselves, or the younger teachers anyway, probably had to face going off to war as well, didn't they?
- HINMAN: I didn't have any of those are the time. I had some of them afterwards who had been through it. Came back after the war, most of the faculty were probably scared of us. We'd all been trained to kill.
- DONIN: Yes.
- HINMAN: Didn't matter what service you were in, the first thing you learned was how to kill somebody else, whatever form you used.
- DONIN: Mmm.
- HINMAN: And we all got along all right. They were glad to get rid of us. They were trying to push us all through as fast as they could because we were overcrowded.
- DONIN: Well, they accelerated. Yes.
- HINMAN: Everybody was mixed up from all the classes. I had a cousin there from '41. We used to call him the oldest living undergraduate. And they did a wonderful thing in that after— When it came to graduation, you could pick what class you wanted to be associated with.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- HINMAN: Our class of '46 is made up of fellows that came in that summer term, left after that summer term, and they're still '46s. Fellows that came in like I did, the fall of '42 and would have graduated in '46 can be '46s. Fellows who came in in Navy programs and graduated, actually the real '46s, graduated in the class. And other fellows who were here graduated at different times, could say they wanted to be in the class of '46 because they had most of their friends were guys who said they were '46. So we had the largest class probably with the greatest mixture.
- DONIN: A big mixture.
- HINMAN: Of fellows who with friends that they never went to school with.

DONIN: Right.

HINMAN: Through the alumni groups and units and such. It's fun.

DONIN: What did it do to your sense of sort of class unity to have such a diverse group.

HINMAN: It's been tough, but they've—Chippy Coleman and Tom Adams have pulled it together and held it together.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: They're the glue that holds us kind of together. But those guys do a good job.

DONIN: I assume there were some members of your class, I mean who originally matriculated with your class in the fall of '42, who did the same thing. They opted to migrate to a different class because they came back here and became....

HINMAN: We lost some. We gained more than we lost.

DONIN: And some of them were not traditional undergraduates who started here like you did as a civilian freshman. But they wanted to come back here after their V-12 training.

HINMAN: Yes, the Navy sent them here.

DONIN: Yes.

HINMAN: It wasn't a choice of theirs.

DONIN: No.

HINMAN: To a large extent. And they—No, you get here, you like it, you love it, and you want to come back.

DONIN: Exactly.

HINMAN: It sells its charm.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

HINMAN: Very liberally.

DONIN: Let's talk about— So see your freshman year was sort of a traditional year. I mean the war was on, but in terms of what you accomplished during that first year, you took classes, and you participated in—

HINMAN: Yes, that was normal.

DONIN: Yes. In sports, did you do any sports?

HINMAN: Football, that's it. Tried it out. Walk-on.

DONIN: Yes, you were a walk-on. Now I know you couldn't actually join a fraternity in freshman year. So what was your social life centered around? Was it centered around your football team or your dormitory or—

HINMAN: Going to the movies when you could.

DONIN: Yes. At the Nugget, right?

HINMAN: Yes, yes. The original Nugget.

DONIN: And did you take any of those road trips to visit the other girls' schools and stuff?

HINMAN: No. Oh, yes, yes. I went to Colby once.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HINMAN: I'd forgotten that.

DONIN: Yes. Did you have a part-time job?

HINMAN: No.

DONIN: I guess a lot of kids had a part-time job.

HINMAN: No, no. Very lucky.

DONIN: So it sounds like freshman year was a pretty traditional year for you.

HINMAN: Yes, it was.

DONIN: Now what was your status of the military service?

HINMAN: I got drafted.

DONIN: Which year?

HINMAN: Christmas vacation of '42.

DONIN: Oh!

HINMAN: So I had that one term in. The draft board said if you finished a term before the time of you get your notice, we'll take you if you haven't started another one. If you are—if you get your notice and you are in a term that has not concluded, we'll defer you so you can finish that and get on to the next one probably. A lot of my high school friends—Dartmouth accelerated and sped theirs up so I could be drafted. So I went home for Christmas and came back with a truck and took home my furniture. [Laughs]

DONIN: Wow!

HINMAN: And made a little money moving other furniture for other guys, running around campus with a truck.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: And went home and went in the Army.

DONIN: And how many years did you spend in the Army?

HINMAN: Thirty-three months.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HINMAN: Texas, Africa, and Europe.

DONIN: My goodness. You came back a different person probably.

HINMAN: Yes, I think we all did. It was wonderful to be back. I'd had 15 hours' credit for having done one term. Came back, and you needed 20-some hours to be able to join a fraternity. Came back, and I got six hours' credit for basic training. They added that, and that gave me 21 hours. And what other schools did you go to? I

went to road grader school. What's that? Road grader. They've got a book this thick of other military courses, and they can't find it. So I didn't get any more credits.

DONIN: Oh. But that was enough to join a fraternity at least.

HINMAN: That's right. So I only had that one term as a freshman. I was legally classed as a sophomore.

DONIN: Wow!

HINMAN: I joined a fraternity.

DONIN: Which one did you join?

HINMAN: It was Sigma Chi back then.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: It's coed Tabard now.

DONIN: And was that a family fraternity that others before you in your family—

HINMAN: It's strange, yes. All the other 11 ahead of me all were Sigma Chis.

DONIN: Wow! [Laughs]

HINMAN: It think it's because they'd had a brother there. And carrying over a class, a latter class said, hey, my kid brother's coming. This kind of thing. There's a lot of it. And by the time the next one came, they'd already made mutual friends. This bit going on. And you already knew a bunch of guys that were in that fraternity, and I was glad they picked me.

DONIN: But did it feel funny to be a sort of older experienced, mature veteran in a fraternity setting?

HINMAN: No. I never knew it any other way.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: We were all veterans in there, I think.

DONIN: Really!

HINMAN: I think so probably.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: Everybody'd gone somewhere doing something. If you were new to the school or something, you couldn't be one; you still had to meet that sophomore requirement.

DONIN: Sure.

HINMAN: So younger fellows started coming in.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: Before I got out. But there was a lot of bridge playing. I didn't play bridge, but it was fun to watch them. Good parties.

DONIN: Is that where the center of your social life was when you came back?

HINMAN: Yes. If you didn't have anything to do, you went over to the fraternity.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. But did you ever live there?

HINMAN: No. Never did. Lived in the same dorm my father did, in Wheeler. Then the first year in Tuck, moved down to Tuck and was there in Tuck for two years.

DONIN: How did you find the schoolwork when you came back? Was it harder, the same, easier?

HINMAN: I probably learned to study a little better.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: But, you know, the farther you went, the more difficult it got. And then the easier it got too as you were used to handling it.

DONIN: Right.

HINMAN: But, you know, it was there, you took care of it.

DONIN: Did you find that the—

HINMAN: Great Issues was the only one that bothered me.

DONIN: You didn't like that one?

HINMAN: I didn't like the speakers.

DONIN: Oh, really.

HINMAN: Too many socialists.

DONIN: Really!

HINMAN: Lewis Mumford, guys like that.

DONIN: Uh-huh. They didn't balance it between different—

HINMAN: I didn't think so, but I was quite conservative. Fortunately, still am.
[Laughs]

DONIN: Did you enjoy the process, though, of reading the newspapers and comparing, you know, the coverage of these different events versus, you know, traditional sort of lectures?

HINMAN: Didn't pay much attention to it.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

HINMAN: It was a course that was forced on us. It wasn't one we chose. It was a little bit disappointing. You had Dean Acheson, secretary of state, he comes up as a speaker. Well, boy, that really ought to be something. He went through—he presented a lecture that you could outline just right down in a row, A, B, C. And things like that. And it was disappointing. And Mumford, you know, when you finally learn the way we should be. The only question I ever asked, “Well, what’s the right way?” “Socialism.” He said it right out. They were looking for a common intellectual experience, to quote John Sloan Dickey. And we had it, and we probably benefited from it. Today... Maybe we learned how to read newspapers. I don't know. Today what you read in a newspaper and you know anything about, you see all the mistakes in the presentation. If you read something that

you don't know much about, you take it as gospel. And that's where we get stuck.

DONIN: When you were here before the war, obviously it was President Hopkins.

HINMAN: Right.

DONIN: When you returned, it was a new president, John Sloan Dickey.

HINMAN: Yes.

DONIN: Did you ever have reason to meet him or have any interactions with him?

HINMAN: He said hello. [Laughs] They were different. Football weekends like this there would be a president's reception or something like that. And you'd go with your parents. My father arguing with him. It was a question of going coed.

DONIN: Oh.

HINMAN: And my father was one who didn't want them to go coed. This is a men's school, and we're going to need men's schools just like the country's going to need women's schools that don't want men. Dickey said, "Well, we have to give everybody a choice." And Dad says, "Well, you've taken a choice away from them, whether they want to go to an all-male school or not." And that ended the conversation. Dickey couldn't respond to it. [Laughs]

DONIN: So they were talking about going coed way back when then. Or was this later on towards the end of his—

HINMAN: This was later on, I think. I can't date that.

DONIN: Right.

HINMAN: That's my trouble.

DONIN: Right. Did you sense that you were treated differently, maybe with more respect or admiration or gratitude by the civilians on campus who'd not been able to serve their country for whatever reason?

HINMAN: Possibly. I don't know. You didn't recognize it.

DONIN: You didn't sense it very much?

HINMAN: Everybody was just here as a Dartmouth guy, and that was it. They all got along alright. I was a disabled Army veteran and that was it.

DONIN: And did you find the education at Tuck more challenging than the courses in the undergraduate years?

HINMAN: Yes. It was a good experience. I lucked out there too.

DONIN: Did you actually get to have a graduation ceremony for '46?

HINMAN: Yes. We—I was in the graduation ceremony of '48 because that was when I was— finally had enough points.

DONIN: Right.

HINMAN: And no major. And graduated in 1948, still short one course, an undergrad course, but I was picking that up with Great Issues or something; I've forgotten now how it worked. Great Issues was a sixth course.

DONIN: And you had to take that as a senior, right?

HINMAN: Yes. That's what got me through it. So I guess I have some admiration for Great Issues.

DONIN: It got you your degree. [Laughter]

HINMAN: That's right.

DONIN: So let's see. You were back here 33 months after...

HINMAN: I came back spring of '46.

DONIN: Came back spring of '46, yes.

HINMAN: Right. As a new sophomore. Stayed two summer terms, going on through, packing them all in as fast as I could.

DONIN: And it was very crowded. The campus at that point was really busting at the seams, I think.

HINMAN: Yes and no. One summer, I think it was '47, six Sigma Chis, six Phi Gams, and six Psi Us all lived in the Psi U house.

DONIN: Wow!

HINMAN: Because there weren't enough to fill those other two houses. And the combination of the three of us together would fill the Psi U house. So we lived in that one.

DONIN: I see.

HINMAN: We lived in that one. So there was room available, I guess. It was overcrowded. Fellows who were coming back from the classes of '40 to all the way through, all of a sudden are all back here again. And that had to load it up.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

HINMAN: A lot of folks were forced off campus and a lot of them preferred off campus, I guess. I was lucky, I always got a room.

DONIN: And you preferred to stay on campus, right?

HINMAN: Right. They had a... The priority system for room designations was the date of when you first applied, first made your application as a child was in my case. And that was how they—I always got the room I chose, first choice. When I got back, I ended up in Wheeler, in the one room and I stayed there. But they finally decided that somehow or other that was discriminatory and they tried to drop that I don't know how they plan their musical bed system now but I am sure it's all computerized some way.

DONIN: Probably. By now it is.

HINMAN: I wouldn't agree probably with the way they designed the program.
[Laughter]

DONIN: I don't know how they do it.

HINMAN: They make them move a lot. This is a... It can be an advantage and a disadvantage. You get to meet, to know a lot more people.

DONIN: Sure.

HINMAN: But you can lose track of your freshman roommate and never see him again.

DONIN: But did you keep the same roommate when you came back?

HINMAN: Yes, George Hunsicker from Philadelphia.

DONIN: Uh-huh. Was he a '46?

HINMAN: 'Forty-five. I'm not sure why they put a '45 and a '46 together, but we enjoyed it. A good guy. Now deceased.

DONIN: So did you sense that the campus was different when you came back after the war because of the wide variety of people that were on campus and huge spread of years and life experience, it was all mixed up here? I mean they had experienced, mature vets.

HINMAN: It was a more mature group.

DONIN: Yes. When you came back in the spring of '46, they were about to take in a traditional civilian class of kids right out of high school who were not facing military service.

HINMAN: No. You came back at 22, and they were 18.

DONIN: Yes, there's a big age difference.

HINMAN: Yes.

DONIN: And life experience difference.

HINMAN: Yes. It didn't bother anybody.

DONIN: And of course they had—a lot of the veterans were married, too. They came back and lived in Sachem and Wigwam and—

HINMAN: That's right.

DONIN: And Fayerweather, I think.

HINMAN: They always turned in perfect papers; their wives typed them. That made it tough on the rest of us.

- DONIN: That's an advantage, isn't it? Did you socialize much with those people or mostly with your fraternity—
- HINMAN: Yes, at the fraternity. They were there. You enjoyed their company. And hopefully they enjoyed yours. But it was a good meeting place.
- DONIN: And of course at that point all the sort of college traditions were finally coming back into happening—
- HINMAN: Slowly, yes.
- DONIN: —after. When you arrived, probably some of them were being halted, weren't they? The fraternities were shutting down, when the war started. And didn't they drop some of the college traditions? I don't know. Things like Winter Carnival and Homecoming?
- HINMAN: Yes. Yes.
- DONIN: I don't think they called it Homecoming then, did they?
- HINMAN: No they didn't.
- DONIN: What was it? Dartmouth Night or something?
- HINMAN: Ah, I can't tell you.
- DONIN: Or Green Key?
- HINMAN: Yes, Green Key was in the Spring. That was a good one. You had Fall House Parties. That's the only name I ever put on it. And Carnival were the three ones you had. A good time was had by all.
- DONIN: Did you get involved with the Outing Club or any other sort of outdoor activities?
- HINMAN: No, this was a... I don't think I did. No, I wasn't in the Outing Club but I can't think of any other official kind of group or anything that I participated in.
- DONIN: Let's see if we can cheat and look at your yearbook here. Oh, I don't have your yearbook. Oh, you have it Mrs. Hinman. What does he list as his activities in his yearbook page?
- HINMAN: Not much.

DONIN: We're going to try to stir up his memory a little bit.

MRS. HINMAN: I'm in '46 here. I've got to find you.

DONIN: Yes, that's the yearbook that combines the classes, isn't it.

HINMAN: Yes. Lower right hand corner.

MRS. HINMAN: I know. There we are. It just says football. 1946.

DONIN: Oh, yes. It's interesting, though, that they got you in the yearbook even though you hadn't graduated yet.

HINMAN: That's right.

DONIN: Hmm.

HINMAN: It was a combined yearbook so they said...

DONIN: Very much so.

HINMAN: ...We've got to take these guys, and we've got to give them something to have. They've missed their own ones, so we've put them all together.

DONIN: Right. So I think we're finished unless you have other thoughts you want to share about your experience here as a student.

HINMAN: No. I've enjoyed it. Thank you very much.

DONIN: Good. I forgot to ask you. What did you think of... Did you become attached to a particular professor down at Tuck? Was there any particular class or professor that really stuck with you or inspired you?

HINMAN: You know, you have different memories of all of them but they were first class. Probably Karl Hill.

DONIN: Oh yes. He was the dean I think for awhile.

HINMAN: He became one, yes. He was one of the younger professors at the time. A good northern New Hampshire boy.

- DONIN: Oh, was he.
- HINMAN: Yes, from Lancaster. I admired him as much as anyone. There was a professor Wellman that I never had for a course who was greatly admired. There were a lot of good ones. Lou Foster. Only one of them I didn't care for.
- DONIN: That's pretty good.
- HINMAN: If I had a regret it was that Hopkins wasn't still president.
- DONIN: Why, you weren't pleased with Dickey?
- HINMAN: No, I wasn't as pleased with Dickey. I admired Dickey in what he's done for the college and all that but I didn't like the way Hopkins had to leave. And I thought he was one of the greatest people I'd ever met, ever known.
- DONIN: But he was getting on in years and his health was not good, I thought. His health wasn't great.
- HINMAN: I can't vouch for that. I don't know. I was just a great admirer of him.
- DONIN: You were sad to see his time end here.
- HINMAN: Yes.
- DONIN: Well, you weren't alone.
- HINMAN: His health couldn't have been too bad. He went on and became chairman of the Vermont Life Insurance Company. One of the lowest cost insurance companies in the country. He was a great man.
- DONIN: OK, I am going to turn off the tape then.
- HINMAN: Oh, I thought you had. [Laughter]

[End of Interview]