

Dartmouth College Oral History Project
The War Years at Dartmouth
Interview with Burton Elliott '48
By Mary Donin
Newton, Massachusetts
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DONIN: I guess the first thing we'd like to establish is what made you choose Dartmouth?

ELLIOTT: Basically there were two reasons. One, my brother-in-law, who was Merton Tarlow, Class of '39, went there, and I learned all about it through him. And the second thing is their football team was fantastic then. And there was a fellow named—I can't think of his first name—McLeod.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

ELLIOTT: Who was on the team. I think he was the quarterback. And I was so impressed at what he was doing that I put things together, but mostly my brother-in-law, and I wanted to get out of the Boston area is why I chose Dartmouth. In fact I did not apply to any other school.

DONIN: Oh, is that right? Wow! So you're Class of '48. So you matriculated in what? The fall of 1944?

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

ELLIOTT: It may have been the summer. I don't recall.

DONIN: Well, at that time, it's my understanding, they were running full time; they were running around the clock.

ELLIOTT: Yes, it may have been the summer. I know I graduated in the spring of 1947.

DONIN: You finished early, yes.

ELLIOTT: Because of the summer courses.

DONIN: Yes. Right. And I assume you had just gotten out of high school in that spring?

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: And of course the war was on. So when you matriculated, were you—You were going in as a traditional undergrad student?

ELLIOTT: Yes. I tried to get in the V-12, but I turned out to be 4-F.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

ELLIOTT: So I did not.

DONIN: So you were one of the rare—

ELLIOTT: Yes. About 250 of us, something like that.

DONIN: —traditional undergrads.

ELLIOTT: Right.

DONIN: How did Dartmouth feel when you got there? I mean it was basically a military training school.

ELLIOTT: Well, it was and it wasn't. You know the V-12 was all over the place. But we were pretty well—not confined—but within our own element. And we ate together. Not really ate together, but we were together. We went to classes together. And the students that were in the classes seemed no different to us than anybody else.

DONIN: The traditional students, as you were, did they keep you all sort of segregated in dorms?

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: So you weren't in these dorms that were turned into like ships, as they were described?

ELLIOTT: No. Actually when I first got there I was in what was called Crosby Hall, which is now Blunt.

DONIN: Uh-huh. And that was your freshman dorm?

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: And your roommate then was a traditional undergrad as well?

ELLIOTT: Two roommates.

DONIN: Two roommates. Uh-huh. So the college sort of mixed you up with the military training? Or were you really sort of segregated?

ELLIOTT: No, we weren't mixed up with the military training.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

ELLIOTT: But we were mixed up with the military personnel in classes and other activities.

DONIN: Right.

ELLIOTT: It wasn't like boot camp really.

DONIN: Well, they were taking traditional classes as well because they were training to be officers, is my understanding.

ELLIOTT: Right.

DONIN: Uh-huh. And did you eat in the mess hall, as they call it?

ELLIOTT: That was a problem. We did not have too much access to the mess hall. So we had some. But I think I remember working at a place called the Streamliner Diner.

DONIN: Oh!

ELLIOTT: We said, "The Streamliner Diner, nothing finer." And I worked there, and I got free meals.

DONIN: Oh, great! Yes. Was that downtown on Main Street?

ELLIOTT: Yes. It was in that little alley where the Everything But Anchovies is.

DONIN: Oh, yes, Allen Street, I think it's called.

ELLIOTT: Yes, I think it was on Allen Street.

DONIN: Uh-huh. And my understanding from talking to other alums at that time is that a lot of the classes were being taught by teachers who weren't necessarily teaching their own subject because, you know, a lot of the faculty had also signed up and joined the military as well. So there are stories of, you know, a math teacher trying to teach English or whatever. Did you experience any of that?

ELLIOTT: No, I did not.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

ELLIOTT: I found all my professors were professors on their subject and quite good.

DONIN: Uh-huh. And did you experience any feeling of being sort of—I don't know what the right word is. But since there was such a small minority of you all there, the traditional undergrads, did you feel that some of the services that normally would have been available at Dartmouth were not because it was wartime?

ELLIOTT: Yes. But I didn't know the difference, don't forget.

DONIN: Sure.

ELLIOTT: Because I hadn't been to any other school.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

ELLIOTT: So, you know, I accepted what I got as pretty much the norm. We did have use of the gym and the athletic facilities. And we did have teams. You know it was fairly normal. It was just that there was another element of student there.

DONIN: So there were athletic activities going on then?

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: Against—I mean were there football games against other colleges and stuff?

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: Wow! So they were able to field enough teams to keep competing.

ELLIOTT: If I remember correctly.

DONIN: Yes. Oh, interesting. So what were the activities that you enjoyed the most, of your extracurriculars?

ELLIOTT: Well, I often say I majored in Outing Club. [Laughter] Because I loved that. And I had been going up to Maine and New Hampshire for summers anyway. Which is another reason that I went to Dartmouth. And I spent a lot of time at Outing Club. I was—I ended up head of winter sports.

DONIN: Oh!

ELLIOTT: So I was sort of running the ski meets, which led to one very interesting experience. At the end, I think my last year, the war was over. And we had international teams come. We had the Swiss ski team at one point.

DONIN: Oh.

ELLIOTT: And they came and competed, and they were wonderful. And there were women in it.

DONIN: Oh!

ELLIOTT: And we had a great time, and I learned how to drink glühwein.

DONIN: Glühwein?

ELLIOTT: It's some kind of a wine drink, a hot wine drink. [Laughs]

DONIN: Uh-huh. It sounds good.

ELLIOTT: Which is very— Yes, that was a lot of fun.

DONIN: Now where was the team skiing at that point?

ELLIOTT: Well, they were skiing—the jump was on the golf course. Is it still there? I don't remember.

DONIN: Oh.

ELLIOTT: It was on the golf course. And there was a hill nearby, very nearby.

DONIN: Maybe it was Balch Hill?

ELLIOTT: No, doesn't sound right.

DONIN: Oak Hill?

ELLIOTT: Might have been Oak Hill that they skied on. They didn't go to the Skiway at that time.

DONIN: Right.

ELLIOTT: But they were pretty good. And the skiers used to go everywhere. I remember going and watching them go down the head wall, you know, on Mount Washington.

DONIN: Yes.

ELLIOTT: And there was another— There was a ski instructor at the time—I think he just recently died—and they named Malcolm.... Malcolm McGrory. Possibly. In any event, he was fabulous, a great guy.

DONIN: Huh! I wonder who he was. Well, we can figure that out. He was one of the ski instructors?

ELLIOTT: I think he was the ski instructor.

DONIN: The ski instructor. Mm-hmm. Okay. So you basically ran the ski team.

ELLIOTT: For a while. I didn't run the ski team as such.

DONIN: Right. You ran the races.

ELLIOTT: I ran the management of the activities.

DONIN: And you were in the Outing Club.

ELLIOTT: Yes. And I worked for a while with the *Daily Dartmouth*.

DONIN: Oh, was that still functioning then? They were producing a paper.

ELLIOTT: Yes, yes. And I was in the advertising department. I used to go out and collect—

DONIN: Buy ads.

ELLIOTT: Collect advertisers.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

ELLIOTT: And I worked in the library in the stacks.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

ELLIOTT: And what else did I do? All think of them.

DONIN: But it sounds like they tried to keep life as normal as possible then.

ELLIOTT: Absolutely.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

ELLIOTT: Oh, I played squash.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

ELLIOTT: And I skied.

DONIN: What were the— There were no fraternities, though. They were shut down.

ELLIOTT: They opened up the last year I was there.

DONIN: Uh-huh. After the war.

ELLIOTT: And I joined one of them.

DONIN: Oh, did you?

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: Which one?

ELLIOTT: Pi Lambda Phi. And I think I went there three times, and I was disgusted with it because all they seemed to do was gamble and drink. [Laughs]

DONIN: Hasn't changed much.

ELLIOTT: And I didn't like gambling. You know I—

DONIN: Right.

ELLIOTT: And I didn't care for what they were doing or who they were even.

DONIN: Right.

ELLIOTT: So I got out of that.

DONIN: What else was there to do for social life?

ELLIOTT: Well, I lived off campus the last year with some guys that were actually older. One of them was the star of the basketball team.

DONIN: Oh.

ELLIOTT: Ed Leede.

DONIN: Oh, as in Leede Arena?

ELLIOTT: Yes, exactly.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

ELLIOTT: In fact I had a very interesting experience with him, if you want to hear it.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

ELLIOTT: There was a campus policeman called Wormwood. Ever hear of him?

DONIN: Yes.

ELLIOTT: Well, my parents and friends of theirs and their daughter decided to join me up over Christmas vacation for a weekend in Hanover. So we went to the Hanover Inn. I decided that it would be very nice to show—Joey was her name—my dorm. So Ed happened to be around that weekend because he didn't go home. He was from Texas. And so he came with me. And we walked over to the dorm, and we went in. And I took her upstairs—I was on the second floor, I think. And we showed her the room. And all of a sudden, I heard a banging on the door. And I said, "Oh, we're in trouble." But there was a window box in the room, a great big window box. So we put Joey in the window box. [Laughter] So we opened the door, and there was Wormwood. He said, "You've got a woman in here." I said, "Oh, no, no, no." He said, "I know you have. So bring her out!" So I said, "Okay." And I brought her out. It turns out he had followed her footsteps, a woman's footsteps, up to the dorm and in.

DONIN: Unbelievable!

ELLIOTT: And he heard our voices through the door. So Ed and I got—I was lucky I didn't get evicted from college. We got on social probation because he was so important to the basketball team. [Laughs]

DONIN: Oh, he was your ticket away from that.

ELLIOTT: Yes, yes, he saved me.

DONIN: [Laughs] So the women were not even allowed into the rooms at all?

ELLIOTT: No. Absolutely not.

DONIN: But if you were living off campus?

ELLIOTT: Well, then I wasn't.

DONIN: Oh.

ELLIOTT: But the other thing was—that was my freshman year.

DONIN: Oh!

ELLIOTT: But the other thing was that I didn't, you know, it was vacation time, and there was nobody in the dorm. I thought it would be all right. I didn't try to break the rules whatever.

DONIN: So Wormwood was on duty.

ELLIOTT: Oh, he was a menace to everybody.

DONIN: Somebody said he was the only—that Dartmouth had one policeman or security person.

ELLIOTT: He was it.

DONIN: He was it.

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: Must have been a busy guy.

ELLIOTT: Well, don't forget there weren't that many civilian students.

DONIN: Right. That's true. And he was only in charge of the civilians, not the military.

ELLIOTT: He was only a menace to the civilians.

DONIN: [Laughs] So what was your—Did you socialize with the military guys that were all training?

ELLIOTT: Yes, we did to some degree. They had their own dorms. But, you know, other activities. I don't recall them. But I do remember meeting some of them and being with some of them. Some of whom later ended up in our class.

DONIN: Sure.

ELLIOTT: When they came back from the army.

DONIN: They wanted to enroll as regular students after the war.

ELLIOTT: Yes, they wanted to finish up, right.

DONIN: Yes. So were you there for like V-E Day and V-J Day?

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: Wow. Pretty exciting.

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: Marching all over the Green and stuff?

ELLIOTT: I don't remember the details, but that's where I was.

DONIN: So when you matriculated, Ernest Martin Hopkins was the president.

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: But then you saw the transition to John Dickey?

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: Two presidents.

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: And any memories of them in particular?

ELLIOTT: Well, I don't know if I should say this, but I will. I liked John Dickey a lot better than Ernest Martin Hopkins. [Laughs]

DONIN: Yes, well, one thing I was going to ask you about. We'll follow up— Yes, I've got another question about that. Can you explain why?

ELLIOTT: Well, first of all, Hopkins seemed like a very hard, harsh person. And he wasn't one you could talk to. And I remember Dickey was just the opposite. And I do remember going to these, I don't know, social events he had at his home, the garden parties or something like that, we were invited, and I enjoyed those very much. And I could speak to him as a human being.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

ELLIOTT: And I could not do that with Hopkins. And I do remember there was a sense of—I'm Jewish—and there was a sense of anti-Semitism.

There were quotas then. But there was anti-Semitism on the campus. And that didn't seem to affect things when Dickey came on. If you want, I can tell you an experience I had with that.

DONIN: I'd like that.

ELLIOTT: I was working in the stacks. And one of my classmates, who was a friend, was also working in the stacks. One time for our High Holidays, there were services in the chapel. I asked him to cover for me because I said I couldn't be there that day. He said, "Why not?" And I told him why not. And he said, "Are you Jewish?" I said, "Yes." He never spoke to me again.

DONIN: Oh!

ELLIOTT: The whole time I was there. [Laughs]

DONIN: Oh! Well, it's his loss.

ELLIOTT: Whatever.

DONIN: His loss. Well, you know, there's—I think there's documentation not just about the quotas, but that Ernest Martin Hopkins actually, you know, wrote an article in support of these quotas. I think it was for *Time* magazine.

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: That has been dredged up in the past and has made a lot of people unhappy. But I think it's well documented that there was definitely—not just at Dartmouth—but it was....

ELLIOTT: Oh, I know. It was everywhere at that time.

DONIN: Right.

ELLIOTT: Not everywhere, but the Ivy League and private colleges.

DONIN: Sure. And the fraternities were practicing—

ELLIOTT: Oh, all segregated. Totally segregated.

DONIN: —all sorts of segregation.

ELLIOTT: I don't know whether they are anymore. But they certainly were then.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

ELLIOTT: They can't be now. There are too many diverse people around.

DONIN: Right. Did you know about that when you went to Dartmouth?

ELLIOTT: Sure I knew. I was part of the quota.

DONIN: Yes. Was it actually discussed at admissions interviews and stuff?

ELLIOTT: No. But it was clearly the policy that was made aware to everybody.

DONIN: Right. Did you become friends with any of the other Jewish kids?

ELLIOTT: I lived with two of them. Yes.

DONIN: Oh, they put you together in the dorm?

ELLIOTT: Yes. That was another thing they did. [Laughs] Heaven forbid we should contaminate the others.

DONIN: Is that right? Did you experience other acts of anti-Semitism?

ELLIOTT: No. Not really. I think that was about it.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. So nothing from the professors or—

ELLIOTT: Certainly not the professors. And, as a matter of fact— Oh, another reason that I went to Dartmouth was there was a professor called Lewis Silverman.

DONIN: Yes.

ELLIOTT: You know the name?

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

ELLIOTT: He was a cousin of mine.

DONIN: Oh.

ELLIOTT: And he was there. That was another reason that I went, because I had great respect for him. In fact I had a very interesting experience with him. He and his fellow professors, a bunch of them, including Robinson the math professor, had a sort of a string quartet, or a string group. And they used to play once a week or once a month at his house. And I used to go over and listen to them. It was wonderful. And his wife used to walk around with these little thimblefuls of wine. [Laughs] I don't know if you've heard this before.

DONIN: No, no.

ELLIOTT: It was really very, very nice and very interesting. And he was really a good mentor for me.

DONIN: Nice for you to have someone there like that.

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: Did he sort of take you under his wing in terms of protecting you from this anti-Semitism?

ELLIOTT: No, he didn't need to. I really, no, I hadn't experienced it until that one experience, and I didn't experience it after.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

ELLIOTT: In fact, while I was there, my father made a donation of an Ark, a portable Ark which I don't know if it's still there or not, but it was in Rollins Chapel for many, many, many years.

DONIN: Wow, that would be interesting to see.

ELLIOTT: It might be there. Or it may be over at the Hillel House.

DONIN: It could be at Hillel. It could be in the Hood, depending on—

ELLIOTT: I don't think it's at the Hood.

DONIN: No? Maybe it's at Hillel.

ELLIOTT: No, because I've been active with the Hood.

DONIN: Uh-huh. Okay.

ELLIOTT: Want another interesting experience?

DONIN: Yes, definitely.

ELLIOTT: I took a course in film with an instructor, and I don't remember his name, who'd just come back from the war, after the war ended. And he was an Air Force pilot. And he was trying to get his pilot's license. So he used to go over to the Lebanon Airport and fly regularly to get his hours. And he used to take me over there sometimes and let me fly with him. [Laughs]

DONIN: Is that right?

ELLIOTT: Yes. I loved that.

DONIN: Oh, I'm sure it violated all kinds of safety rules, though.

ELLIOTT: Well, maybe they didn't have them then. Who knows?

DONIN: Yes, they didn't. A lot less rules.

ELLIOTT: Yes, they didn't have liability clauses and all that stuff.

DONIN: Right. That is a great story. Now did you need to take a Great Issues course when—

ELLIOTT: That started at the end of my period, and I didn't have an opportunity because I went to Thayer School for my last year.

DONIN: Oh, so you did the... So it was three years of regular undergrad and then one year of Thayer?

ELLIOTT: Yes. I didn't go on with Thayer.

DONIN: Uh-huh. Did you come out with some sort of master's degree?

ELLIOTT: No.

DONIN: Or was it just a regular—

ELLIOTT: I would have, had I—

DONIN: Stayed on.

ELLIOTT: I just came out majoring in engineering.

DONIN: I see.

ELLIOTT: That's what they called it.

DONIN: Right. So you didn't get to do the Great Issues course.

ELLIOTT: No.

DONIN: Uh-huh. So once you entered in the fall of '44, you went year-round? You went year-round, throughout the summer.

ELLIOTT: Yes. I didn't take any terms off.

DONIN: That's pretty rigorous.

ELLIOTT: It was a good place to be in the summer. [Laughs]

DONIN: A great place to be in the summer, yes. So you were able to—

ELLIOTT: Especially with the Outing Club.

DONIN: Yes. So you finished... When did you say—the summer of '46? Forty-seven.

ELLIOTT: 'Forty-seven.

DONIN: Right. What did it do to—what do you want to call it?—class unity, to have the class, you know, all sort of split up with some people going into the military and some people leaving early like you? Did you feel—Was there a sense of class unity? I mean did you identify with the class of '48 while you were there?

ELLIOTT: Yes. But I only identified with 250 of them.

DONIN: Right.

- ELLIOTT: Approximately.
- DONIN: Did they all go year-round as well? Did the whole 250?
- ELLIOTT: I don't know. I think so. I remember most of them being there. I'm not positive that they all did. They didn't have to.
- DONIN: No, they didn't have to. But my sense is that, from these interviews, is that once the war was over, these students were pouring back, not just at Dartmouth but to colleges everywhere, all over the United States. Pouring back in order to get on with their lives, so to speak, and finish their education. Plus they had the challenge of all these V-12 and V-5 students. A lot of them wanted to come back and finish their regular education at Dartmouth so that the place was sort of bursting at the seams. Did you have that sense that it was really full?
- ELLIOTT: Well, I don't think they allowed any more people than the 2,000 they normally had.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- ELLIOTT: No matter how many wanted to come back. But the interesting thing was that I, in my class now, I'm very, you know, I have been active with my class ever since. And a lot of the people that are now my friends in class, I didn't know when I was in college because they either had gone off to the war or they were part of V-12 and joined in.
- DONIN: Oh.... So these friendships have developed since you graduated?
- ELLIOTT: Yes. Because of reunions and other things.
- DONIN: Yes.
- ELLIOTT: And I go up there. Almost every month we have—Our class has a lunch in Norwich at the inn.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm. Do you guys distinguish between the traditional undergrads and the military guys?
- ELLIOTT: Now?

DONIN: Yes.

ELLIOTT: No.

DONIN: You're all just class of '48.

ELLIOTT: But most of them graduated in '48. I chose to get out in '47. So I actually never went to my graduation.

DONIN: So you never had a commencement then?

ELLIOTT: No, I didn't have a graduation.

DONIN: Well, I think that was probably the case with a lot of them at that point.

ELLIOTT: I got a diploma.

DONIN: Sure. And you took the same number of courses.

ELLIOTT: Oh, yes.

DONIN: But they were just— You speeded them up.

ELLIOTT: I just compacted them because I— I probably took three summers there then because that would have given me the equivalent of two semesters.

DONIN: Right, right.

ELLIOTT: And I remember— But I think they started— Did they start overseas travel during that period? They might have at the end.

DONIN: I don't know. You mean the foreign study programs that they were doing?

ELLIOTT: Yes. They might have done it at the end.

DONIN: Yes. I don't know actually.

ELLIOTT: But I didn't have that opportunity.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. So have you got some more stories you want to share?

ELLIOTT: Well, let's see. There's— Well, I'll tell you about a couple of professors.

DONIN: Oh, good!

ELLIOTT: In fact there was an article in the last alumni magazine about Rosenstock-Huessy.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

ELLIOTT: And he was fabulous.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

ELLIOTT: He opened my eyes totally to a whole different way of thinking. You know, as opposed to practical pragmatic thinking.

DONIN: He was a history— sorry, philosophy.

ELLIOTT: Philosophy, yes.

DONIN: Right.

ELLIOTT: And I knew nothing about philosophy up 'til then. And that was an extremely valuable experience. As was engineering because the engineering really taught me to think logically and how to solve problems. How to get from A to B without zigzagging. Or zigzagging when you needed to. [Laughs]

DONIN: When you matriculated, did you know you wanted to major in engineering, when you started?

ELLIOTT: I sort of did, yes.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

ELLIOTT: And probably the reason I didn't was that at that time, at the end of the war, there were these tens of hundreds of thousands of engineers coming out. And there weren't any jobs. And so I ended up going in the family business.

DONIN: Did you come out with a degree in engineering? But you just didn't pursue it?

ELLIOTT: No, I came out with a bachelor of arts with an engineering major.

DONIN: Oh, I see.

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: But you knew that there weren't going to be any jobs out there, so....

ELLIOTT: Well, that's what the impression was.

DONIN: Yes. And what was the family business?

ELLIOTT: It was the jewelry business.

DONIN: Uh-huh. Well, your education served you well even in the jewelry business probably.

ELLIOTT: Another one I loved—I can't remember his name, but he was so popular there. Comparative literature.

DONIN: Oh, really....

ELLIOTT: I wish I could remember his name. That was an eye-opener to me because I read stuff I would never even have thought of, you know. Dos Passos and Hardy. All these people that I never even heard of or thought of. He was just marvelous.

DONIN: Well, that's what you're supposed to do in college, right?

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: It's great. Open your mind to—

ELLIOTT: It is. Right.

DONIN: Now in your 50th reunion, your 50th reunion write-up, you also mentioned Herb West made an—

ELLIOTT: That's the guy!

DONIN: Oh. He did comparative literature?

ELLIOTT: Comparative literature.

DONIN: Great. Yes. Herb West.

ELLIOTT: That's the guy.

DONIN: You said he made an avid reader out of you.

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: Great. And the two men that you mentioned for giving you a real appreciation for nature were Ross McKenny—

ELLIOTT: Oh, yes!

DONIN: —and John Rand.

ELLIOTT: Yes. John Rand was the ski instructor.

DONIN: Oh, he was the ski instructor.

ELLIOTT: And Ross McKenny was the Outing Club guy.

DONIN: Oh, great!

ELLIOTT: And he was just like—he was a total woodsman.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

ELLIOTT: He used to wear these plaid jackets all the time.

DONIN: Yes.

ELLIOTT: He was marvelous. That's probably one of the reasons I loved the Outing Club so much, between him and John. They were such wonderful people.

DONIN: Now, did you spend a lot of time at Moosilauke in those days?

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: Nice. And John Dickey loved it there as well.

ELLIOTT: Yes. That's why I said I majored in Outing Club, it seems.

DONIN: Yes. That was your favorite activity?

ELLIOTT: Well, it was.

DONIN: Were you an outdoorsy sort of person before you went to Dartmouth?

ELLIOTT: To some degree.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. Because of your summers spent....

ELLIOTT: Yes, because of the summers. And I used to go up to Maine with my father occasionally and the lakes.

DONIN: Right. So what else have I forgotten to ask you about— Did you write for the *Jack-O-Lantern*?

ELLIOTT: I don't think so.

DONIN: No?

ELLIOTT: No. I don't remember.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

ELLIOTT: My picture is in the *Jack-O-Lantern*.

DONIN: Is it!

ELLIOTT: Yes. In fact I have it here.

DONIN: Oh, why? Why was your picture in it? You must have had—

ELLIOTT: It had to do with a group of us from the Outing Club in a Jeep. No, a T-model Ford truck.

DONIN: Right. Did a lot of students have cars in those days? Probably not. I mean after the war, did a lot of students have cars?

ELLIOTT: I don't— Maybe after the war. I didn't. In fact I remember hitchhiking all over the place. I used to hitchhike down to Colby.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

ELLIOTT: Because I had a date down there. In fact I went down one weekend, stayed over—there was no place to stay. I ended up staying in jail. [Laughs]

DONIN: You're kidding.

ELLIOTT: I'm not.

DONIN: You slept in the jail?

ELLIOTT: Yes. [Laughs]

DONIN: That was the only available bed in town?

ELLIOTT: Yes, it was. [Laughter] It was a girls' school.

DONIN: Yes.

ELLIOTT: And I remember hitchhiking was no problem in those days because everybody did it.

DONIN: Sure.

ELLIOTT: And it was safe.

DONIN: Yes.

ELLIOTT: So we didn't mind that.

DONIN: And there was no highway. You were living in Boston at that time, your family was?

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: So there was no highway to get up there at that point, was there?

ELLIOTT: Well, there was. I think it was Route 4 or something.

DONIN: Uh-huh. Oh, I see.

ELLIOTT: Yes, it went through.

DONIN: Yes.

ELLIOTT: There was a way to get up there obviously.

DONIN: Right. Now what about Winter Carnival? Did you enjoy that?

ELLIOTT: Yes, I loved it, and I was active with that. And I was involved with our statue building and all that kind of stuff.

DONIN: And I guess the statue building in those days was really a great competition between the fraternities. They each had one on their lawn.

ELLIOTT: You know, that's what I don't remember. I do remember this enormous one in the middle of campus.

DONIN: Sure. Which they still do.

ELLIOTT: Yes. And I honestly don't remember the others.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

ELLIOTT: They may have been there. I do remember when I slept in Wheeler—not Wheeler, Chase is it? What was one of the—there were three relatively new dorms together behind Dartmouth Hall.

DONIN: Oh, not the Fayerweather's, but I know what you mean. That grouping of three. I can't remember their names.

ELLIOTT: Yes. I had a corner room in one of those with a roommate. One night we decided— Oh, I was able to buy a used—I don't know whether it was used or not—but an army sleeping bag. So I decided to sleep outside and try it out one night, see if it was warm enough. Well, there was a blizzard. [Laughs]

DONIN: Oh....

ELLIOTT: And I woke up totally under the snow with a little air hole, a reed sticking up. That was a nice experience. [Laughter]

DONIN: Good thing you didn't get frostbite.

ELLIOTT: Yes, well, the sleeping bag worked.

DONIN: Yes. Now there are a lot of stories out there about when the GIs came back to campus, how they were treated. Did you feel they deserved any sort of special treatment? I mean, one particular alum was saying that even though he came in as a freshman right out of the service, they tried to make him wear the freshman beanie. Oops. I have to turn this tape over.

ELLIOTT: Are we going too long?

DONIN: Oh, no, not at all. You can never go too long. Have you had enough yet?

ELLIOTT: No. I mean I'm still....

DONIN: Okay. This fellow that was recently out of the army and was just matriculating as a freshman. Except he was 24 years old—22 years old instead of the traditional 17 or 18. And they tried—some upperclassmen tried to get him to wear a beanie. He said, "I'm not wearing any beanie." Or they tried to get him to—I guess the other thing you're supposed to do is carry furniture for the upperclassmen.

ELLIOTT: I didn't know that.

DONIN: You didn't know that?

ELLIOTT: Nobody carried my furniture. [Laughs]

DONIN: You were supposed to get the freshmen to carry the furniture as an upperclassman.

ELLIOTT: I don't remember that.

DONIN: So—

ELLIOTT: And I don't remember the mistreatment of anybody.

DONIN: Right. No. I mean he was saying generally that they were accorded a great deal of respect and thanks and all that sort of thing.

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: But did you have any sense of that, that they were treated somehow differently or set apart because they were in the service?

ELLIOTT: No.

DONIN: Because you were still pretty much still with your original class.

ELLIOTT: Probably. And then I was at Thayer for the last year or so.

DONIN: Right.

ELLIOTT: That's probably when most of them were integrating back in.

DONIN: Yes. That's true.

[End of File 1, Beginning of File 2]

DONIN: So you graduated in—

ELLIOTT: 'Forty-seven.

DONIN: 'Forty-seven, after a compressed four years.

ELLIOTT: Right. And I have been very active with the college ever since and my class. I was the head class agent for 25 years.

DONIN: Oh, my goodness!

ELLIOTT: Before I dropped out. And I was the— let's see— Well, yes, the 25th year out to the 50th year out.

DONIN: And the head class agent is in charge of the fundraising for the class? What do you do...

ELLIOTT: No, I was the bequests and trusts, they called it.

DONIN: Oh, yes, right.

ELLIOTT: And I was head agent at one point.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

ELLIOTT: And then I was the president of the class bequest and chair for a while. They gave me a little award with a lovely plaque I have upstairs, and a little story. You know, this is your life type of thing.

DONIN: Oh, right. That's nice.

ELLIOTT: And let's see. I had two sons there: one, Richard, who I think graduated in about '78, something like that. And John, who graduated I think in '86 or '87.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

ELLIOTT: Oh, yes, I've been very involved with my class ever since, which is good. And I do go to those lunches and stuff like that. But in addition to that, I've been very much involved with the Hood. And I got our class—I don't know if you're familiar with the Space for Dialog at the Hood?

DONIN: Yes.

ELLIOTT: Well, I started that with Derek Cartwright.

DONIN: Oh, wonderful!

ELLIOTT: And we got our class to support it. And I and Don Smith have also supplemented the support.

DONIN: Oh.

ELLIOTT: And I was the one that got the class of '67, with the help of Brian, to endow it.

DONIN: Oh, terrific.

ELLIOTT: It's now endowed between class of '67 and the Reis couple for almost a half a million dollars.

DONIN: That's wonderful.

ELLIOTT: And it will go on forever.

DONIN: Oh! And it's a terrific opportunity for the students to be involved in setting up those little exhibits.

ELLIOTT: Absolutely. Yes. I can consider that my legacy for Dartmouth.

DONIN: That's fantastic! Yes.

ELLIOTT: Yes, I love that.

DONIN: I remember when that was begun a few years back, what, five years ago maybe?

ELLIOTT: About five—no, it's at least five, maybe more.

DONIN: Right. What made you think of it?

ELLIOTT: Well, because our class was very active in giving to the college. For a small class and very little money, we did a lot. We've always given those chairs every year; we replenish the chairs on the Hanover Inn porch.

DONIN: The rocking chairs?

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: I didn't know that.

ELLIOTT: They're ours. There's a plaque up for that. We were the ones that planted the garden in front of the Blunt Center.

DONIN: Oh, finally, some flowers. Right.

ELLIOTT: Well, I don't know. There are some bushes anyway.

DONIN: Bushes, yes.

ELLIOTT: They're not maintained very well. We have done a lot for sports. And we give to several— We came up with the idea, and I was not the one that came up with it, the Scholar Athlete Award of the Year.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

ELLIOTT: Is our class.

DONIN: Oh, terrific!

ELLIOTT: You know the junior male and female.

DONIN: Sure, sure.

ELLIOTT: And they love that. That's a good one. And I just felt, when I was president, that we weren't doing anything cultural.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

ELLIOTT: I said it's about time we really thought of doing something cultural or artistic. And so I thought the Hood, which didn't exist when I was there—

DONIN: Right.

ELLIOTT: But I knew the Parkers quite well; they're from around here.

DONIN: The whos?

ELLIOTT: Parker.

DONIN: Oh, I don't know that name.

ELLIOTT: The Hood Family.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

ELLIOTT: She was from the Hood Family.

DONIN: I see. Uh-huh.

ELLIOTT: And so I was chatting with Derek, and I went out to lunch with him. We sat in the inn and said, What can we do? And he suggested that, and I said boy, that was a great idea! And we did it.

DONIN: Oh, well done! Is there a plaque about the class of '48 gift?

ELLIOTT: Yes. And in all the publications I now have made sure that when the other class took over, that it says the class of '48 is the founding supporter.

DONIN: Great. That's nice.

ELLIOTT: I didn't want to let that get lost.

DONIN: And I'm sure all these efforts to come up with ways to fund the college is sort of a unifying force for the class, isn't it?

ELLIOTT: Absolutely!

DONIN: It helps keep you sort of focused on one another and the college.

ELLIOTT: Yes. And it always gives us a project.

DONIN: Yes.

ELLIOTT: Gives us a goal. Without that we just flounder. You know we're dissipating rapidly.

DONIN: Yes. Right. Well, although it's still a pretty big, active class, though.

ELLIOTT: I think they're probably listed at maybe 250. But for activity there's only about 150 to 160 that still participate in anything.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. How big a group is it that meets once a month up there?

ELLIOTT: A dozen.

DONIN: Nice.

ELLIOTT: More or less.

DONIN: The local—basically the local New England.

ELLIOTT: Mostly the guys that— A lot of people have retired up there.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

ELLIOTT: And they all go. And a few of us from elsewhere go. The new president of the class is here in Lexington, and we go up together sometimes.

DONIN: What's his name?

ELLIOTT: Warren Daniell.

DONIN: Oh, Jere— No, Jere.

ELLIOTT: Jere's brother.

DONIN: Jere's brother?

ELLIOTT: Oh, he's the new president of the class.

DONIN: Oh, great.

ELLIOTT: You might want to interview him.

DONIN: I'm going to, in fact. He's on my list.

ELLIOTT: Good. Are you doing Sonny Drury?

DONIN: We're still working on the technology because, again, we have a tech person in our office who's very fussy about the quality of the recordings.

ELLIOTT: Let me mention this to you: Sonny is our class historian.

DONIN: Yes, he is.

ELLIOTT: And he's got a memory like I can't believe. And every year at our major—every five years at our big reunions, he holds a gathering and talks about what he remembers went on in the class.

DONIN: I see.

ELLIOTT: So you could attend that. Because we're coming in next June.

DONIN: This coming June?

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: Is he coming?

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: Oh, maybe I should do that. I'd much rather do it in person.

ELLIOTT: Well, he'll be there.

DONIN: That's right. Exactly.

ELLIOTT: Yes.

DONIN: That is a must.

ELLIOTT: And another one—You know John Van Raalte?

DONIN: Yes. I talked to him at the mini-reunion.

ELLIOTT: Yes. He said that a friend of yours was a friend of his down there or something.

DONIN: Yes, yes. Exactly.

ELLIOTT: Well, he also has an unbelievable memory.

DONIN: Oh, good!

ELLIOTT: And he knows everybody in the class—not just events but people.

DONIN: Right. I should track him down then. I have his address because Bud Gedney gave me the mailing address.

ELLIOTT: Yes, he's in Westchester County—Pleasantville, I think.

DONIN: Pleasantville, right, right.

ELLIOTT: Yes. He was up here last week with me.

DONIN: Was he?

ELLIOTT: Stayed here, yes.

DONIN: Well, next time he comes—

ELLIOTT: He doesn't come often.

DONIN: He doesn't?

ELLIOTT: No, he came up for a business meeting.

DONIN: Oh, I see. Well, I should track him down. I go to New York often because I have family there still. So I should track him down the next time I go.

ELLIOTT: Yes, do that. Because he's good.

DONIN: Right.

ELLIOTT: He'll talk your ear off.

DONIN: Between John and Sonny, I'll have the class of '48 really well covered.

ELLIOTT: You will have it pinned down.

DONIN: Yes. Although Bud Gedney has a lot of memorabilia also that I'd love to hear about.

ELLIOTT: Yes. And John Hatheway has been totally involved.

DONIN: Yes. And I'm going to track him down, too.

ELLIOTT: Yes, because he's the one that did these—he was our project guy.

DONIN: Right.

ELLIOTT: And so he did these sporting things and all the rest, and he still does.

DONIN: I don't worry so much about the Hanover guys because I figure in the dead of winter when I can't get anywhere—

ELLIOTT: Yes, right.

DONIN: —I can trek over to see John Hatheway.

ELLIOTT: It's coming.

DONIN: Yes, it is coming. It is coming.

[End of Interview]