

Dartmouth College Oral History Project
The War Years at Dartmouth
Interview with Robert '43 and Joyce Fieldsteel
By Mary Donin
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FIELDSTEEL: I really don't remember why I chose Dartmouth. I know that the minute I learned about Dartmouth's location and saw the pictures of where it was, I knew that this was the school for me. I never worried about the academics because that was its reputation. And I knew I would get a good education here. Although I must say at that age I don't think I was that concerned about a good education. [Laughs] I was really thinking of where I could go to school and where I would have a good time and where I would enjoy it.

DONIN: Where did you grow up?

FIELDSTEEL: I grew up in New York City, which was the reason I loved the location of Dartmouth College. And I went to a New York City high school. And I still don't like New York.

DONIN: [Laughs]

FIELDSTEEL: But that's the hand that you're dealt. And I know the first time I saw Dartmouth, I just—I couldn't believe that I was as lucky as I was to be able to come here.

DONIN: Did you come visit the college?

FIELDSTEEL: No, I didn't. I'd gone to NYU for a year. And had gotten into other very good—it was a very good scholastic school, and I'd gotten into other good scholastic schools. But I knew they were not for me. And I wrote to Dartmouth. It was too late to apply there. And they said try coming as a transfer student. We take very few. But I decided that's what I would do. And as it turned out, they took only three transfer students into the sophomore class. A strange coincidence: From my first day in class, I got there early because I didn't know where it was going to be. And there was somebody sitting on the floor next to the class door, and I came up, and I sat down next to him. He was the second of the three transfers.

DONIN: Amazing.

FIELDSTEEL: It was really amazing. And we wound up by being roommates.

DONIN: Oh!

JOYCE: You also should say that you were a year young, you were very young.

DONIN: I guess I was very young, and I looked even younger. Every girl I met thought of me as a kid brother. [Laughter] It drove me crazy. But from the minute I got here, I loved Dartmouth. I loved everything about it. And I was as happy as can be.

DONIN: What dorm were you in that first year?

FIELDSTEEL: I started in South Mass, and there's a funny story about that: I only was there a few months when the number two transfer and I decided that we had a lot in common, and we met a third guy. And there was a very nice room for three people in Richardson, and we decided we would take it. It was available. And so we moved into there, and I stayed there for the rest of my undergraduate years. But I was sidetracked. There was something— Oh, South Mass, when my older son applied to Dartmouth, and they have the usual raffles for rooms, the dormitory he was assigned to was South Mass. And he stayed there for a few years until he moved into his fraternity house. Third child, our youngest son, came to Dartmouth and applied for a room. He also wound up in South Mass.

DONIN: That's amazing.

FIELDSTEEL: I still remember coming up and someone saying to me, another parent, "What is this dormitory like?" And I said, "I think I've got the mortgage on it." [Laughter]

DONIN: That's great. Now, what were the—do you remember the names of your two roommates, these two transfers?

FIELDSTEEL: Yes. The other transfers, one was Mel Fenichell who died just a year ago; and the third one was I can't remember his name, but he came from California.

DONIN: Wow. Mm-hmm.

FIELDSTEEL: And he was a nice guy. We never really became very friendly with him; we just knew who he was. But the third roommate was John Hyde, who was in the class of '43.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. Now, let's see, you arrived here then in the fall or the summer of '43?

FIELDSTEEL: I arrived here in the summer of '40.

DONIN: Sorry, '40, right. Right, right.

FIELDSTEEL: The summer of '40.

DONIN: So there was no military training going on at that point.

FIELDSTEEL: No military training at all. I think the draft started the following year.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

FIELDSTEEL: Something, I guess—I did the following year. And of course we didn't give it any thought because there was no—they didn't draft students. But there was—the war in Europe was on. No question. And we knew that there would be...we would eventually wind up in a war there. I think everybody felt that it would happen eventually. And there was sort of a feeling on the campus of, well, it's going to happen. Let's have a good time. We just didn't know how or when. And the thing I remember so strongly about war and this campus was that the campus was very, very Republican. Enormously so. They did a poll, and I still remember the numbers. The student body was 88 percent Republican. It was 92 percent Republican; the faculty was 88 percent Republican. But that was before the Franklin Roosevelt third term. And that may have had some influence on it. But it was a very conservative campus. And we really went about our business sort of isolated here. On Sunday, December 7th, I remember so clearly, studying for an exam. And I think I must have been in Baker, maybe in one of the carrels up in the Tower Room. There was another guy I knew who was in my class, who was also studying for an exam. And he was pre-med. So we didn't have anything in common. I was an English major. And we stopped at one point, and he said to me, "You know I've got to take a lot of exams because I'm going home for Christmas next week." And I said, "Why is that? It's very early. Vacation doesn't start then." He said, "My family originally comes from Maine." He said, "But they

live in Hawaii.” And he said, “I’m going home for Christmas.” And he said, “Look at my tickets.” And he unfolded all of his railroad tickets to the West Coast. And he said, “Then I’ll take go take a ship and get off at Honolulu. My parents will meet me, and they’ll take me home to Pearl.” And I said, “What is Pearl? Where is Pearl?” He said, “Oh, that’s Pearl Harbor. That’s where our fleet is based.” He said, “My father is a rear admiral. He’s the paymaster of the Pacific Fleet.” And, you know, I thought that was interesting. And we studied a little more. And then I went downstairs. Mel worked at the reserve desk which was in the basement. And I went down to get a book, and met a friend on the way. And he said to me, “You’ve got to do something about your roommate. Somebody’s going to kill him. He’s down there telling everybody that we’re at war. He’s lost his mind.” So I ran up, and I said to him, “What is this that you’re talking about?” He said, “Nobody knows where it is, but the Japanese have hit Pearl Harbor. And we’re at war.” And I said, “Pearl Harbor.” Two minutes before I’d heard it for the first time. And I ran back upstairs and met the guy I was studying with, Robert Shattuck. He was not there. Somebody must have found him and told him and taken him out.

DONIN: Oooh.... Was his family impacted?

FIELDSTEEL: Well, they were. His mother was a doctor, his father was a rear admiral. And he had a younger sister. And as I found out later, his mother stayed on. His younger sister was sent home immediately with many of the civilian parts of the family to the family in Maine where they lived. But it was a very sobering thing. I don’t remember whether it was that day or the next day, there was a meeting of the college. And President Hopkins announced that the college would run around the clock from then on. That after this Christmas vacation, we would go 12 months a year and try to graduate as many people as possible. And that is what we did. And the Navy really did not have much of a presence on the campus at that point. I don’t know when we knew that they would be coming here. I think that was a year later. But they were not here. And frankly it was a very delightful place to be. [Laughs]

JOYCE: Tell them about Nobu.

FIELDSTEEL: Yes. One of the people in our class—another coincidence—was a guy by name Takanobu Mitsui. His nickname was Nobu. He was the heir to the Matsui family, which was the most important family in

Japan, and probably one of the richest in the world. And his father had gone to Dartmouth. I think he was in the class of '15 or something like that. And we all wondered what was going to happen with him. Well, we found out very quickly that he was in the charge of President Hopkins, and just was confined to the Hanover Plain. Which was okay. And he was a very reclusive kind of a person. Nobody really knew him very well. The following summer I picked up the *Daily Dartmouth*, and he had written a letter to it. And in the letter he said that there were a lot of rumors about him he would like to put to rest. And he spoke about—I don't remember the exact dates—that several weeks before Pearl Harbor his family had ordered him to come home. And he consulted with his three guardians: one was a classmate of his father. One was the family banker. And one was a member of the family. And he said he did not want to go home, and they all agreed that he should stay. And he said rumor number two was that very shortly before Pearl Harbor, he was ordered to come home again, and he again consulted with his guardians and decided he would not leave. And rumor number three was that he had a berth on the _____, which was the diplomatic exchange ship, to go home after Pearl Harbor, and he again refused to go. Then he said, But I've been watching my classmates—my schoolmates—since then, and I see lots of black market activity and lots of griping about rationing, and everybody wanting to get a good spot in the Army, Navy, or Air Force, and what they want to do, not what they should do. And I'm beginning to wonder whether I made a mistake. Which took a lot of courage. Well, many years later—we had very close Japanese friends who lived where we lived. And we'd never discussed schools or anything like that. And one day I was on the train with Kichu, the husband, and I said to him, Kichu, what did you do—you and Jari, his wife—do during the war? And he said, "Well, we taught Japanese to American naval officers at Yale and at Columbia. I said, "Well, I know somebody who taught at Yale. I said his name was Takanobu Mitsui. And I went through this whole big story. And his eyes kept getting larger and larger. And when I finished, he said to me, "The third guardian, the family member, was me."

DONIN: Oh!

FIELDSTEEL: "And the last time you saw him, which was coming down for Thanksgiving," he said, "He was on his way to our house because he spent every vacation with us."

DONIN: What a small world!

FIELDSTEEL: It's such a small world. And he was so threadbare. We were on the train, and it stopped at New Haven, and he got on. Immaculately dressed but frayed cuffs. It was such—

DONIN: Terrible! Terrible!

FIELDSTEEL: And we've met people who just moved into Canada who knew him very well.

FIELDSTEEL: Yes, knew him in Japan.

DONIN: In Japan. So what became of him? So he left here?

FIELDSTEEL: He left here. First when he went home, his father wouldn't receive him. He said he was a traitor. Evidently, they had made up because our friends, the Gilsons, knew them. Said that they both, father and son, came to a Dartmouth Club meeting in Tokyo. And Ben Gilson said he has seen the Japanese bow. But he said when that Rolls Royce pulled up and all the Matsuis stepped down, he said the bowing scraped the ground. [Laughter]

DONIN: So he actually— Did he ultimately graduate from Dartmouth?

FIELDSTEEL: Oh, he graduated from Dartmouth. We all graduated, those of us who went through the summer, graduated in December of 1942 instead of June of '43 because we made up a full term. Instead of graduation ceremony, we had a graduation dinner at Thayer Hall. And Arthur Hays Sulzberger, who was the publisher at that point of the *New York Times*, came up and was the speaker.

DONIN: Oh.

FIELDSTEEL: It was very nice, and I imagine a little bit bittersweet. And afterwards everybody left and went home. And I went into the Army exactly one month later. I was drafted. I was a combat infantryman during the war. And the Hanover story continues because being a combat infantryman, when the war was over, I had loads of points. And I came home. My division was the first full division to come home. And we got home in September. Joyce and I were married five days later.

DONIN: Oh, wonderful! Very nice. You must have been very glad to have him home.

JOYCE: Yes.

FIELDSTEEL: Well, we came back and began the front part of our honeymoon. And I went over to Tuck School.

DONIN: Well, we met here.

FIELDSTEEL: We met here.

DONIN: Oh!

FIELDSTEEL: Oh, I should backtrack.

DONIN: Okay.

JOYCE: It is rather important.

FIELDSTEEL: [Laughs]

DONIN: I should say so.

FIELDSTEEL: In my senior year, in that fall of 1942—

DONIN: Uh-huh.

FIELDSTEEL: I met Joyce in Hanover. She was somebody else's date.

DONIN: Was this like for Winter Carnival or something?

FIELDSTEEL: No, it was at the Fall House—it wasn't even the Fall House parties. It was a football weekend. She was somebody else's date, and I stole her away. [Laughter]

JOYCE: WE met on Buell Street. There is no plaque. [Laughter] I was staying in a rooming house with another girl. I was a freshman at Smith.

FIELDSTEEL: Uh-huh.

JOYCE: And my father had gone to Dartmouth. He was in the Class of '23. And my mother had gone to Smith. And my parents had their engagement party at the old Woodstock Inn. And I came here the first time when I was 15. We pulled into the inn, my mother and I, and of course all those Dartmouth boys, and I fell in love with Hanover. One look at Dartmouth Row, and I said I'd never marry anybody but a Dartmouth man. [Laughter] And I was 15 years old.

FIELDSTEEL: And you were repeating history.

JOYCE: Yes, yes.

DONIN: That's amazing.

JOYCE: Uh-huh.

DONIN: So you were a freshman, and you were a senior.

FIELDSTEEL: I was a senior.

DONIN: An accelerated senior, too.

FIELDSTEEL: Well, I would've been a senior anyway because that was our senior year; it was the second half of it rather than the first half.

DONIN: Right, right. I see. So you graduated, and off you went to war. And you stayed at Smith, Joyce?

JOYCE: Yes. [Laughter] _____ did not like that.

DONIN: Oh, dear.

JOYCE: I had a wonderful education, but they were not very understanding about the war. And my father was in the Air Corps intelligence. And Bob went overseas. And he came back. Our wedding was postponed seven times because he was in Truman's own division.

FIELDSTEEL: The Potsdam Conference took place, and Truman wanted the honor guard to come from the 35th Infantry Division, which was mine. So our return was delayed and delayed and delayed for the Potsdam Conference to be over. And bringing 15,000 people home on a ship was a great logistical thing. We came home on the Queen Mary, wasn't it?

JOYCE: Fourteen thousand four hundred and forty-one; he was the one.

DONIN: Amazing.**

FIELDSTEEL: It is amazing. But we came up on our honeymoon, and I went over to the Tuck School. And I said I'd always planned to come as a graduate— See, Dartmouth used to have a 3/2 program, and my father was very wise. He said, "I don't want you to do a 3:2." He said, "You need a four-year good liberal arts education, and that's what you're going to get." And I said I'd always planned to come to Tuck School. I don't remember whether they even asked me what my grades were. [Laughs] They must have. I must have told them that I'd graduated with honors in English. But that was the only honor I had. My honors were having a good time, I think.

DONIN: [Laughs]

JOYCE: Well, we went to Harvard, too.

FIELDSTEEL: I went to Harvard on the way, and they said they didn't have a class starting until sometime in March. And I said thank you very much. I really wasn't very anxious to go there. It was another setting.

JOYCE: Well, we had no place to live. We went on a honeymoon. Bob's father loaned us his car. My father was in Japan. And we just got married, and we didn't know what we were going to do.

FIELDSTEEL: In those days, having lived through the war, especially as much combat as some of us saw, you didn't think of anything like that. You thought of the important things, and to us that was the most important thing. Anyway, they were wonderful. And they said, We have a class—we're still on the Navy timetable. But the Navy is not going to be here. This will be the first civilian class the Tuck School has had after the war.

DONIN: Oh.

FIELDSTEEL: And we have a class so far of 20-some-odd people.

JOYCE: Twenty-nine, I remember.

FIELDSTEEL: Twenty-nine, that was the total.

JOYCE: Yes.

FIELDSTEEL: And you will be one of them. And I was thrilled. And I still remember, I said to them, I have a problem. And they said, What's the problem? I said, "I'm married, and where I will live?" Because in those days Tuck School had its own dormitory attached to it. None of the other Tuck places had been built. And he said, "Oh, don't worry about that. Go up and see Max Norton. He'll take care of you." Well, I knew Max Norton was the bursar of the college. And I went up—came out and told Joyce. And she burst into tears.
[Laughter]

DONIN: Tears of happiness.

FIELDSTEEL: Yes. We went over to see Max Norton.

JOYCE: Whose daughter lives at Kendal.

FIELDSTEEL: Kendal's lovely. He was so unbelievably wonderful. He told—he said we have taken the college's best dormitory for this purpose, Fayerweather Hall. And we're converting it into apartments for married students. And he told me what they would be and what it would cost. I still remember: \$57.50 a month.

DONIN: Amazing.

FIELDSTEEL: And he said the kitchens aren't here yet, but they're on order. And he said, "You should get them—we have pictures of what they'll look like—should be here in January." Well, they didn't arrive 'til March.

JOYCE: Tell what he said to you.

FIELDSTEEL: He said—I said... I couldn't get over it. I said, "This is the most wonderful thing I've ever heard. This is just beyond anything I ever expected." And he said, "But you are our returned children." And I can never say that without having the tears come to my eyes.

DONIN: Yes.

FIELDSTEEL: And the college continued to be—they were so wonderful. They had to expand into South Fayerweather. They didn't take North then.

But what they didn't realize, when the next term started in March, the world came back all to college. And the place was filled with people.

DONIN: Married couples.

FIELDSTEEL: Married couples all over. And they were— I had one friend who married a girl in Ireland and brought her over. And she thought she was coming to some lovely bucolic spot. Well, he got her a bucolic spot. He rented a place in a barn. [Laughter] And the marriage did not last. But it was a very exciting time right after the war because you had a mix. It was mostly older students. The people in our dormitory went from I think Sandy McGreevy was the oldest; he was in the class of '38. And he decided while he was in the Army that he wanted to become a psychiatrist, which is a good thing because he really needed it. [Laughter]

JOYCE: They were the only rich ones in the dormitory, and they had good food.

FIELDSTEEL: And we would all smell when they had steak. Everybody would sniff into the halls and say, "The McGreevys are eating." [Laughter]

DONIN: Well, I assume you were here on the GI Bill.

FIELDSTEEL: We were all here on the GI Bill.

DONIN: Yes.

FIELDSTEEL: But they spent more than the GI Bill. You had to supplement it. There was no way. When we first came, the GI Bill gave you \$75 a month for a married couple. And that changed after just a few months.

JOYCE: _____.

FIELDSTEEL: And then we all went to \$90 a month. But we all, no matter how rich our families were, we all—or how poor they were—we all had the same feeling: We weren't children anymore. We were adults. We were married. And we were making our own way. We never felt badly about taking the money from the government because that was the government's way of saying thank you for what you've done. And we understood that. But we all lived on very strict

budgets. And we had the envelope system. Some of the people, like Swift and Virginia Barnes, who were here two weeks ago for their 65th reunion of the class of '42—there were five or six couples that were very, very close. And they were one of them. And Joyce and I are the only ones alive today.

JOYCE: No, Pat Carey.

FIELDSTEEL: As couples. In other cases either the entire couple is dead or one of them. And we had a wonderful reunion with them up here. And we all did the same thing. We lived poor. We didn't think of it as being poor. We were happy. Toward the end of the month we would very often pool everything we had and have community dinners. And everybody did something except one wife who was very unpopular, who always volunteered to do the baked potatoes. [Laughter] There's one in every crowd.

JOYCE: I wasn't even 21 when we were married.

DONIN: Oh!

JOYCE: Bob was my guardian. I didn't know anything about anything. My mother always had help. I didn't know how to cook. I didn't know anything. And we had a hotplate because the kitchens weren't there. And you put your milk outside the window. They didn't have homogenized milk, and the top would freeze.

FIELDSTEEL: And the cream would rise. And the little paper cap would be sitting on it.

JOYCE: We had this hotplate. And I remember saying to Bob—well, I had a frying plan. I don't remember what I cooked; something meager. All of a sudden all the lights went out.

DONIN: Uh-oh.

JOYCE: And everybody ran out. It was a fuse.

FIELDSTEEL: And we ran out with everybody else.

JOYCE: We didn't know what it was. It happened again.

DONIN: Oh!

JOYCE: And then Bob and I, we ran downstairs.

FIELDSTEEL: The third night.

JOYCE: The third night.

FIELDSTEEL: We looked at each other, and we said, "I think it's us." And Joyce said, "We'd better go out in the hall and yell with everybody else."
[Laughter]

JOYCE: The garbage room, where the women did not go, one of the men named the Rose Room. And we still call it at Kendal—it's the Rose Room. And some of the other people have adopted that name.

DONIN: [Laughs]

FIELDSTEEL: But we had such fun. We would go on picnics and parties. And it just was a wonderful way to be. But the interesting thing was that at Tuck School there was Dick Blanchard, Swift Barnes, and myself, were very close. And none of us had done that brilliantly in college before. But when we came back as grownups, we went through with straight A averages. We all graduated *summa cum laude*.

DONIN: Oh!

FIELDSTEEL: The highest distinction.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

FIELDSTEEL: Because we were adults, and it made such a difference. And I think that's what happened with so many of the returned veterans. They were no longer schoolboys. And this was a growing up.

DONIN: Indeed.

JOYCE: And a couple of the ones who came back were in very, very bad shape emotionally.

DONIN: I'm sure.

JOYCE: Terrible.

DONIN: Experiences from the war. They can make you grow up. They can also, I think, change you forever.

JOYCE: They suffered terribly during the war.

FIELDSTEEL: And you saw things that were really—that we saw during the war that somehow or other at Dartmouth it just didn't fit. But everybody fit in.

DONIN: Right.

FIELDSTEEL: And it was— It was a lovely—it was a family.

DONIN: Okay. Now, so was your entire class at Tuck, were they all GI's? Or were there any sort of traditional students?

FIELDSTEEL: They were all ex-GI's. There was not one traditional student in the class. Not all Dartmouth. We had a couple of Harvards we sort of tolerated. [Laughs] But, no, they were all older. And it was a very mature class.

DONIN: Now, the people in Fayerweather, were there any undergrads who were married? Or was it all graduate students?

FIELDSTEEL: No, all graduates....

JOYCE: No.

FIELDSTEEL: Oh, no, they were all undergraduates practically. What happened was that people either were drafted or volunteered or left or were kicked out.

JOYCE: Yes, a couple were.

FIELDSTEEL: A couple had been kicked out, and the college was wonderful. They realized these were kids, and their back—Dick Blanchard for example was in the class of '41. And I think is the most brilliant person I have ever known in my life.

JOYCE: I agree.

FIELDSTEEL: And the nicest. Absolutely wonderful. He was kicked out. He was just so bored with all his courses here, he flunked them. They

flunked him out, and he went into the Air Corps, and he came out as a bird colonel and lots of experience, and he knew just what he wanted to do. And he had a wonderful, wonderful career. He was one of the triumvirate of Swift, Dick, and myself.

JOYCE: They were killed. He was piloting their own plane, and they crashed into a mountain in New Jersey about ten years ago.

DONIN: Oh!

JOYCE: And we were all just devastated.

DONIN: A terrible loss.

FIELDSTEEL: Awful. But he— That was— Everybody, there were so many people who had not gotten their degrees. And the college was really wonderful. They took everybody back. I knew somebody from before, I will not mention his name, who was a dope and should never have been taken by the college in the first place. He was in the class of '44, I think, and flunked out. Then he came back, and he flunked out again. [Laughs] He just was dumb! And should never have come here in the first place.

DONIN: [Laughs]

FIELDSTEEL: But most of them were good examples of what it was like: the contrast between young people—makes you wonder—young people going to college and older people going to college where you know what you want to do.

DONIN: Hmmm. Was the college able to accommodate this collection of sort of mature GI's along with the undergrads who were still—

FIELDSTEEL: Yes, they seemed to. Now the summer of '46, we didn't have anyplace to go. And so we stayed here during the summer.

JOYCE: Which was not a difficult choice.

FIELDSTEEL: It was ideal.

JOYCE: We all stayed.

FIELDSTEEL: Not all, but many of us.

JOYCE: And our friends.

FIELDSTEEL: And we took courses in the undergraduate school because we did not— I don't remember whether Tuck—Tuck did not have the traditional second year starting in the summer. So they may have had people catching up. But I don't really remember. But we took several courses—I took several courses—in the undergraduate school. And I was very impressed by the way they were able to keep both the older students and the younger students together. And I think they were much more selective in the younger students that they took. They had to be very selective. They didn't have that many spots for them. So they took the top people, and it was wonderful. Actually it was marvelous.

DONIN: Did you find yourself socializing with the undergrads?

FIELDSTEEL: No, no. My socializing was all done—well, we were married. And so the socializing with us was with other married couples. And some of my prewar college friends who were back as bachelors before they married, we would see them. But not as much. The real socializing was—there was not much mixing. And there was a strata also. There were—some of the people that I knew in my class who were married came back with children. They did not live in Fayerweather. They lived in—I think Bob Field was one of them.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

FIELDSTEEL: He and I always sat next to each other in class because of our names. And he had a lovely wife, and I think they had one child, maybe two, while he was back. They lived somewhere in that other place [laughs] downtown.

JOYCE: Sachem.

DONIN: Sachem Village?

JOYCE: No.

DONIN: Or Wigwam Circle?

FIELDSTEEL: Well, they started with—Sachem was the one next to the Catholic church, I think.

DONIN: Right.

FIELDSTEEL: That was the first.

JOYCE: It was so badly insulated that in the winter the babies' hands started to freeze, and they had to move the people out while they insulated.

DONIN: Oh.

FIELDSTEEL: They weren't insulated at all. And then they built Wigwam. I don't know how the college was able to do it, but they had problems getting living places for all of the people.

DONIN: Right.

FIELDSTEEL: But they managed. And I think everybody was just so happy to be here.

JOYCE: Oh, and when we first came back, we lived—we had two rooms in Middle Fayerweather, and I do have pictures. And we had two single bedsteads, and we had ordered a bed from Macy's. I remember my grandmother treated us to a suitable bed, and it hadn't arrived. So I—Peggy Sayre had gone to Smith, and I went over and introduced myself, and she loaned us two mattresses and the bedding, which Bob carried back. And she...

FIELDSTEEL: Mattresses on my head. [Laughter]

DONIN: She was the manager of the Inn back then.

JOYCE: Her husband was—

FIELDSTEEL: Her husband was Ford Sayre. And she—they were lovely people.

JOYCE: Lovely.

DONIN: So all of Middle Fayerweather was married couples at this point.

FIELDSTEEL: Oh, yes.

JOYCE: At five o'clock in the afternoon you could hear a pin drop. [Laughter]

DONIN: Great! That's great!

FIELDSTEEL: The weekend that I graduated from Tuck was 30 days before our first child was born.

DONIN: Oh!

JOYCE: Yes. All the cameras were trained—

FIELDSTEEL: Every camera was trained on Joyce. [Laughs] Our apartments all had small bathrooms that were just half bathrooms; there was a toilet and a sink.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

FIELDSTEEL: And they were very tiny. The shower rooms were on each floor, and they alternated—men on one floor, women on the other. And we lived on the second floor, which was the men's shower room. Women's shower room was the first and the third. And Joyce was nine months pregnant, and she went up to take a shower with this big—my bathrobe wrapped around her. And she met a group of young people who were coming in. It was graduation time. And one of the couples in the dormitory was having a party for a lot of the single people and their dates. And they looked at Joyce. God! [Laughs] And I said to her, You ruined more guys' weekends. [Laughter]

DONIN: Oh, that's great.

JOYCE: And they started calling Middle Fayer the contagious ward because so many of us had children.

DONIN: Right. Did you stay there then after the baby was born?

JOYCE: Well, the baby was born right after graduation.

DONIN: Oh, you said that.

JOYCE: And he got a job the next day.

FIELDSTEEL: Yes.

JOYCE: After the baby, which was helpful.

FIELDSTEEL: Yes. We, well, we knew we were going to get something, but we got what we wanted then. We left about two weeks later.

DONIN: Uh-huh. So it all came together at the same time.

FIELDSTEEL: It all came together very well.

JOYCE: The day we left we felt like the bottom had fallen out of the world. We never wanted to leave.

FIELDSTEEL: We said, we'll be back. [Laughs]

DONIN: Yes. And you knew. So, Joyce, I want to know what your life was like, your daily life was like here. When Bob was going to class, were you able to work?

JOYCE: Oh, I had a brilliant business career here.

DONIN: [Laughs]

JOYCE: I majored in government. I was fit for nothing. And there was another couple, Joan and Eric Barradale, and Bob had known Eric before. And Joan's mother had gone to college with my mother and so on. And we decided we would go over to the college and see if we could get jobs. And we presented ourselves, and we said we are the wives of returned veterans. They said, "Hello. Can you type?" No. We couldn't do anything. [Laughter] We were not hired. But Johnny Piane, who owned the Dartmouth Co-op, had known my father and had given my father a job, and they had remained friendly. And Madeleine and John Piane and my parents knew each other. With _____ I got a job. I worked—I made 50 cents an hour, and I worked three afternoons a week. I made two dollars a day. The first day I broke something that cost two dollars. [Laughter] And I worked for a few months, I made six dollars a week, and the boys would come in, and they would look at me, and they carried girls' clothes, too. And they'd look at me and say, "Well, she's sort of your size but a little bigger here," and so on. But they were wonderful to me. And I met Posey Piane Fowler recently.

DONIN: Oh!

JOYCE: And told her—we reminisced. But that was my wonderful career. And then the second year I was pregnant and not feeling too wonderful in the beginning. But we had our own lives. It was just a wonderful, wonderful time. Our husbands, many of them—Bob couldn't go anyplace where there were crowds. He would get up and have to leave. And we had—one week we went to the movies, which was 50 cents each. One week we had a ticket to the diner. You got ten—you paid ten dollars, and you got ten 50....

FIELDSTEEL: You had nine dollars, and you got ten dollars' worth of food. And every other week we had a pork chop dinner for 50 cents on Allen Street.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

JOYCE: But we had—

FIELDSTEEL: It was fun.

JOYCE: We didn't need anything. And in the summer we bought a car. It was a big mistake because it ate up everything. But we had a wonderful time, and we went on picnics. And I have some pictures. And then a couple of the girls were pregnant and had babies and left. So it was just a wonderful, wonderful life. And in the summer I was able to go to class with Bob a couple of times. I was not able to audit anything.

DONIN: You weren't allowed to?

JOYCE: No.

FIELDSTEEL: No. But if it was a lecture class, a lot of the women came and sat in.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

FIELDSTEEL: And no professor ever said no. They were very—I think they were flattered.

DONIN: Mmm. Mmm. Yes.

JOYCE: And of course we had all the advantages of the college. We went to all the games.

FIELDSTEEL: This building became the movie theater.

DONIN: Right. Because The Nugget burned—

FIELDSTEEL: The Nugget burned down during the war. And this was the movie theater.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

FIELDSTEEL: And it's funny. There are so many coincidences. We have a neighbor at Kendal who said that his transforming incident at Dartmouth—he was the class of '44—came at a lecture that he heard at Webster Hall. And I was at the same lecture. It was Dorothy Thompson speaking. And he was so impressed, it changed his life. I was impressed, but it didn't change my life.

DONIN: So you were here with both President Hopkins and President Dickey.

FIELDSTEEL: We were at the beginning of President Dickey, and he was wonderful. He was everything— And I've spoken to so many people who were here throughout his tenure, and many professors who now live at Kendal or here. He was a wonderful man. Just marvelous.

JOYCE: And he started the Great Issues courses, and I remember auditing some—not auditing, but going to some of those. And it was just a wonderful intellectual atmosphere. And we went to all the football games and hockey games and basketball games. It was just wonderful.

DONIN: So generally the wives at this point were not working then, earning—

FIELDSTEEL: Some of them depending—there weren't that many jobs. The ones who got jobs were telephone operator, stenographer. She'd been a telephone operator before. Stenographer. But that was basically it. There weren't that many jobs.

JOYCE: Those of us with good liberal arts educations didn't get jobs.

DONIN: Right.

JOYCE: So.... And I do not have my degree from Smith. I went back. I lasted four days after we were married.

DONIN: You went back?

JOYCE: I needed 16 credits to graduate.

DONIN: Oh.

JOYCE: One semester. I had mononucleosis and couldn't go one summer because I was accelerating also. And I had to be with him. I was anemic and so on. And my mother didn't speak to me for a while. But I've never regretted it.

FIELDSTEEL: It was very wonderful. [Laughter] She can't hear this so it's okay.

JOYCE: I didn't know it. But I was the class baby for my father's class of '23.

DONIN: Oh.

JOYCE: And they had their belated 20th reunion that first summer.

FIELDSTEEL: It was all reunions, all the classes that hadn't had their reunions—

DONIN: Oh, yes, right.

FIELDSTEEL: —came to make up for their reunions. And the class of '23—1943, they were not going to have a reunion.

DONIN: Yes.

FIELDSTEEL: But in '46 they had their 20th reunion.

DONIN: Oh.

FIELDSTEEL: And they were all _____.

JOYCE: They serenaded us.

DONIN: And you were here!

JOYCE: And all our neighbors complained. [Laughter] We got free tickets to everything. And it was quite something.

DONIN: That's great.

JOYCE: And my parents came, of course. So it was just a wonderful life. And I feel like our life is in brackets because the beginning we had we were five couples, we were so close. And we have the same thing at Kendal now. So the end of our lives.

DONIN: Wonderful.

JOYCE: The same kinds of friends.

FIELDSTEEL: And the same kinds of friendships.

DONIN: Yes.

FIELDSTEEL: It's funny. The war made everybody condense their past. And so you got to know the people so well in that short of period of time. And we all really bonded. At this point, toward the end of our lives, we're living at Kendal, which is a very vibrant place. And we all feel we have to get to know each other very well.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

FIELDSTEEL: And we have done this with several other couples. We're very, very close, very friendly. We're the only Dartmouth couple, though.

JOYCE: Yes.

FIELDSTEEL: Mary Jenkins and John Jenkins. John Jenkins was in my class, and Mary Jenkins is as rabid about Dartmouth as Joyce is because her father was on the faculty here.

DONIN: Oh.

FIELDSTEEL: And she grew up in Hanover. And if you haven't gotten them, get them because they would be a mine of information.

DONIN: What class is John Jenkins?

FIELDSTEEL: Mine.

DONIN: Oh, yours.

FIELDSTEEL: 'Forty-three.

DONIN: Oh, I'm going after him.

FIELDSTEEL: Go after him and go get Mary.

DONIN: Yes.

FIELDSTEEL: And they would be fantastic.

JOYCE: There's one other person at Kendal, John Weeks, and he and his wife lived in our dormitory. She died several years ago.

FIELDSTEEL: John is very reticent.

JOYCE: I don't know if he'll speak to you. His middle name is Thayer, that was the telephone company and many other things.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

JOYCE: He's very nice, but he's quite reclusive. So I don't know.

DONIN: Can you ask him for me?

FIELDSTEEL: Well, I'll speak to him and tell him.

DONIN: Great. And he was also in your class?

FIELDSTEEL: No, he was class of '44.

JOYCE: But they lived in Middle Fayerweather. But his—

FIELDSTEEL: He was old for his class, I was young for mine. I said to him the other day, "How come you're a year older than I am, and you're a year behind me?" He said that two years in kindergarten is what'll do it. [Laughter]

DONIN: Great. Okay, so these people are both at Kendal. Okay.

JOYCE: And Mary Masland is Max Norton's daughter. And she is lovely.

FIELDSTEEL: But she was married to a faculty member. And we have lost so many Dartmouth people who were here during the war I'm sure.

DONIN: Yes, yes.

FIELDSTEEL: But Mary Jenkins and John Jenkins are ones. They were not here as students after the war. And I think they were married about when we were. But they have always had such close Dartmouth connections because of Mary's father.

JOYCE: And Mary had a baby around when I did with Dr. Boardman.

FIELDSTEEL: Yes.

JOYCE: It was quite a time. And we take advantage of everything now that we can: Ilead and lectures and Friday night the Capital Steps.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

JOYCE: Yesterday there was a lecture at Rockefeller. So we really...

DONIN: There's stuff going on every day.

JOYCE: We are so lucky.

DONIN: Too much to choose from.

FIELDSTEEL: We find that we are the luckiest people in the world.

DONIN: So what have I forgotten to ask you about? Let's see here. I think you've covered it pretty well.

JOYCE: Oh, I did want to tell you one thing: After the war there was still a great shortage of food. And there was no rationing. But the First National was where—

FIELDSTEEL: Where Molly's is.

JOYCE: Molly's.

DONIN: Oh.

JOYCE: I think, wasn't it there?

FIELDSTEEL: Yes, just where Molly's is, right next to the—

JOYCE: But the Dartmouth Food Co-op was downtown where the bookstore is now. And we of course belong. I remember we got back \$11. That was a fortune. And somebody would go and—butter is in at the First National!—it would spread like wildfire.

FIELDSTEEL: People would get up out of class. [Laughter]

DONIN: I didn't realize there was still a shortage of food after the war.

FIELDSTEEL: Oh, a big shortage of food.

JOYCE: Oh, and I have to tell you about the slaughterhouse.

FIELDSTEEL: Well....

JOYCE: In Norwich.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

JOYCE: What was her name?

FIELDSTEEL: Mrs. Parkhurst.

JOYCE: Mrs. Parkhurst's Slaughterhouse. We talked. It was on the way up the hill over in Norwich. I guess it was a little bitty thing.

FIELDSTEEL: The configuration was very different then.

JOYCE: Then you would go in, and you would say, "I'd like a pound of hamburger." And what Peggy Blanchard always said, "With ground-up shoelaces." And you could always tell who was pregnant because the smell and everything, the pregnant girls would faint.

DONIN: In the slaughterhouse.

JOYCE: Yes. This was the front, and you'd hear the screaming, and Mrs. Parkhurst would come back all bloody. I'm not exaggerating.

DONIN: Oh, dear. Was it in the room—there was a little village there before you go to Norwich called....

FIELDSTEEL: That's where the railroad station was.

DONIN: Yes.

FIELDSTEEL: I never knew that the train went there. [Laughter]

DONIN: Really?

FIELDSTEEL: I never knew because we always got off at White River Junction.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

JOYCE: Are you from Hanover?

DONIN: No, no. Originally from New York, Westchester.

FIELDSTEEL: Oh.

JOYCE: And I'm from Long Island.

DONIN: Oh, are you?

JOYCE: Yes.

DONIN: So getting up here in those days was not easy. There was no highway.

FIELDSTEEL: No, but it was fun because—I keep saying fun all the time. But it was fun. Because the train had all Smith girls and the Holyoke girls on it.

DONIN: [Laughs]

FIELDSTEEL: And until Northampton, there was a social event. [Laughter]

JOYCE: Some of them stopped in New Haven, too.

FIELDSTEEL: And it stopped at New Haven. Well, there was an unfortunate.... [Laughter] The competition dropped off there.

DONIN: Right.

FIELDSTEEL: But it was really a lot of fun. And then you'd sort of go to sleep between Northampton and White river.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. So the whole trip was—

FIELDSTEEL: Oh, it was a long trip.

DONIN: Eight hours?

FIELDSTEEL: Something like—

JOYCE: Was it that long?

FIELDSTEEL: At least seven. It was long. Because they had that little dance that they always did at Springfield when the train's backing up.

DONIN: Right. They still do.

JOYCE: Yes.

FIELDSTEEL: They still do.

DONIN: Right.

FIELDSTEEL: But nobody was used to anything fast.

DONIN: Right, right.

FIELDSTEEL: We did have one very funny one happen when they opened up an airfield in Lebanon.

DONIN: Oh.

JOYCE: I'd forgotten about that.

FIELDSTEEL: And it was the first—I think it was Memorial Day—or was it in May—of 1946. And Swift Barnes was part of it; he and a friend of his and a couple of other people got money together, and they bought an airplane, and they started a thing called Dartmouth Airways. And we got a telephone call on a Saturday night that we should come to New York right away. Joyce's grandfather, whom she was very close to, had died.

DONIN: Oh.

FIELDSTEEL: And so I called Swift, and I said, "Dartmouth Airways is going to have its first flight to New York tomorrow. Do you have a couple of seats for Joyce and me?" And he said, "A couple of seats? Nobody's on it." He said, "You'll all have the airplane." And I said fine. So we went, and there was a huge party and parade at the airport. Banners and everything and bands, and it was a big do. This is the first commercial airport ever to open in this part of New England. And there were speakers. And then they announced the first trip to Dartmouth Airways to New York will be leaving....

JOYCE: It was going to Teterborough.

FIELDSTEEL: Teterborough. But they said New York. "Passengers, please board." Well, the passengers were Joyce and me.

JOYCE: And the airplane was very small.

FIELDSTEEL: The airplane had five seats in it.

JOYCE: Bob had never flown. I had.

FIELDSTEEL: I'd never been in an airplane. And they saw that I was excited. And they said, as we got up, they said—and you climbed on the wing to get in. And they said, "Turn and wave to the crowd." So we turned and waved, and everybody cheered. And oh it was wonderful. The plane took off. And about ten minutes later you couldn't see anything. And we kept going. After a while I leaned forward to the pilot, who was sitting right in front of me, and I said, "Clay, I can't see anything. What do your direction-finders tell you?" He said, "We don't have any direction-finders." And he said, "But don't worry. I'm going to follow the river." And you could see the river.

JOYCE: And he didn't have a radio or anything.

FIELDSTEEL: So I said— No, that was a different thing. So we continued on down the river. Then you couldn't see the river.

DONIN: Mmmm!

FIELDSTEEL: So he said to me, "I can't see the river." And I said— And Joyce had picked up a newspaper, and there was Smiling Jack, which

was a cartoon, and it showed him flying over mountains. And I said, “Well, I don’t know. What do you think?” He said, “Well, I think maybe we ought to go around and go back.” And I said, “Yes.” I said, “You’d better radio them.” He said, “We don’t have a radio.”

DONIN: Oh!

JOYCE: We were too dumb to be scared.

FIELDSTEEL: He turned around, and we went back. What we didn’t know is that when he landed, they announced, “The first trip of Dartmouth Airways from New York to Lebanon is now landing. And the passengers will debark.” And they opened the plane. And somebody said to us, “Smile and wave.” So we waved. And everybody cheered. And all of a sudden somebody else, “Those are the same people!” [Laughter] And Swift came up and grabbed us, and he said, “We’re going to get out of here in a hurry.”

DONIN: And it was actually called Dartmouth Airways?

FIELDSTEEL: It was called Dartmouth Airways. It didn’t last very long. [Laughter] But it was definitely the first trip out of and the first trip back to Lebanon, New Hampshire.

DONIN: Amazing.

JOYCE: And we were on it.

DONIN: Oh! But then you never—how did get to New York then?

FIELDSTEEL: I said on the way, when Swift grabbed us, I said, “Get us to White River to see if we can make the train going down.” Which is what we did.

DONIN: Oh, goodness!

JOYCE: And we had forgotten this story until we moved back here and we went to Upper Valley Co-op, and we went by the airport.

DONIN: Oh, you went by the airport.

JOYCE: And they were fascinated by this story.

FIELDSTEEL: And we told them the story.

DONIN: Yes. That's great. That is great. I think that was a short-lived company.

FIELDSTEEL: Very! [Laughter] I don't think it lived to our graduation. [Laughter] I should have asked the manager a couple of weeks ago.

[End of Interview]