

Dartmouth College Oral History Project
The War Years at Dartmouth
Interview with Bob Tirrell '45
By Mary Donin
February 12, 2008

DONIN: How is it you came to choose Dartmouth?

TIRRELL: That I honestly can't remember. I think somehow or other I heard of it. I know my folks were trying to push Amherst. And I think it may have been a rebel against that. I liked what I found.

DONIN: Right. Had you actually seen—been to the campus before you arrived?

TIRRELL: No, no.

DONIN: Wow! That's very brave. Very brave.

TIRRELL: Mm-hmm.

DONIN: So you arrived here in the fall of 1941.

TIRRELL: Yes.

DONIN: And were able to enjoy your first term, anyway, as a regular college undergraduate somewhat.

TIRRELL: And I was definitely not ready for it.

DONIN: Oh, well, you weren't the only one I think. Do you remember your sort of first term here, what dorm you were in, meeting your roommates?

TIRRELL: Yes, yes. I was in Topliff.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

TIRRELL: 110 Topliff.

DONIN: Uh-huh!

TIRRELL: Which is on the first floor in the very back, right-hand side as you're going down the hall.

DONIN: I see.

TIRRELL: And my roommate was Charlie Rowan, Moose Rowan. Who has passed on.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

TIRRELL: And we had absolutely nothing in common.

DONIN: Oh, well, that often happens, doesn't it?

TIRRELL: Yes.

DONIN: And did you go out for any sports?

TIRRELL: No, no. I didn't go out for any sports. After I came back, I managed the wrestling team, and I knew nothing about wrestling at the time.

DONIN: I bet you learned a lot.

TIRRELL: I learned a lot.

DONIN: Yes, yes. So when you were here in that first term, your president was Ernest Martin Hopkins.

TIRRELL: Mm-hmm.

DONIN: Do you remember your matriculation ceremony?

TIRRELL: Yes.

DONIN: Do you!

TIRRELL: Yes. And I remember one comment that he made, and that was he told us if you knew how to think, we could give you your diploma today.

DONIN: Oh, interesting. He said that to you or in a speech?

TIRRELL: No, in a speech.

DONIN: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

TIRRELL: And that stuck.

DONIN: Yes, yes. So your freshman experience: I mean you had to wear the beanie that we were taking pictures of.

TIRRELL: Oh, yes. Mm-hmm. And you had to go around and help the upperclassmen move.

DONIN: So that really was true?

TIRRELL: Oh, yes. Oh, definitely. Definitely. And in fact actually I remember one day I had worked with somebody, and then I started out— I was trying to get over to have breakfast. I kept getting caught by somebody, you know. And finally somebody made a comment; he said, “You’re working for me. Go on, have your breakfast.”

DONIN: Oh, isn’t that nice. Someone took pity on you.

TIRRELL: Yes. Right. Mm-hmm.

DONIN: Yes. So they really did sort of stop you in the street, you know.

TIRRELL: Oh, yes. That’s right.

DONIN: Hey, ’45, carry my bags or move my furniture.

TIRRELL: That’s right.

DONIN: Oh, my goodness!

TIRRELL: There was no meanness about it. I mean this was just the thing that was expected.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. And this went on for the first whole term then?

TIRRELL: No.

DONIN: Just in the beginning.

TIRRELL: There were other, what you might say little hazing affairs, you know. But nothing except to try to get you into the feeling of being in this college.

DONIN: Being part of Dartmouth, right.

TIRRELL: Yes.

DONIN: And you dined separately from the upper classes?

TIRRELL: We were over in what is now Collis.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. The Freshman Commons they called it?

TIRRELL: The Commons, uh-huh. Freshman Commons.

DONIN: And how did you find the teaching here when you were brand new?

TIRRELL: I think I was probably more overwhelmed than anything else.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. Do you remember any of your teachers that first term?

TIRRELL: Not that I can...

DONIN: None that really made an impression on you. You were too busy adjusting.

TIRRELL: Let's see. Well, they put me into.... I'd had basic chemistry that really didn't take at the time, in high school, in the last year of high school. And they put in this advanced thing. The problem was that the teacher I'd had in high school was actually a physics teacher.

DONIN: Oh, my. But teaching chemistry.

TIRRELL: Teaching chemistry because they didn't have anybody else. I mean it was a small school.

DONIN: Yes.

TIRRELL: And it was more than I could really handle. Let's see. It was in Steele. Richardson, it was Richardson.

DONIN: Oh! Good memory.

TIRRELL: But I mean you were strictly a number because there must have been well over a hundred people in that class.

- DONIN: Oh, my goodness! So it was an introductory kind of class.
- TIRRELL: It was straight—it was introductory. It was chemistry without a lab.
- DONIN: That's tough. And you had a very big class, I gather.
- TIRRELL: At that time it was the largest class they'd ever had.
- DONIN: Yes.
- TIRRELL: Yes, and I think it was 700—
- DONIN: Forty, I think, or 50.
- TIRRELL: Somewhere in that vicinity, yes. Uh huh.
- DONIN: Did you know at that point that you were headed toward the medical profession?
- TIRRELL: Well, let's say it had been pushed a little bit. I have a grandfather that was—and a great-grandfather—both of which were physicians. So it was sort of pushed along. But I ended up in dentistry.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.
- TIRRELL: Which I thought was much better for me really in the long run. I'm just not that sharp, so to speak. Or be able to move ahead.
- DONIN: Right, right. What was your social life like that first term?
- TIRRELL: Practically none.
- DONIN: Yes, I mean you couldn't get into the fraternities at this point.
- TIRRELL: No, no. The only thing that you had was related into what your class would happen to be doing.
- DONIN: Right.
- TIRRELL: And getting to know where the buildings were, getting to know...start to get to know who you were. This was the big advantage of having Freshman Commons is that you had a chance to meet them.

DONIN: Sure. You had activities... Like for instance the Outing Club, did you join the Outing—do anything with the Outing Club?

TIRRELL: No, I didn't. I did come up for the... Well, we went up to the...

DONIN: Moosilauke?

TIRRELL: Moosilauke, yes.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. That tradition's been around a while.

TIRRELL: Yes.

DONIN: Yes.

TIRRELL: But I was not an outdoor person.

DONIN: Mm-hmm. So now we move to December 7th.

TIRRELL: Yes.

DONIN: Towards the end of the term.

TIRRELL: Right.

DONIN: Where you were?

TIRRELL: Well, I had gotten up. It was Sunday morning. And I'm more or less—if I pay for something, and we paid for our meals there, I take advantage of it.

DONIN: Sure.

TIRRELL: And that would have been drilled into me by my father. You know if you pay for something, you get your money's worth.

DONIN: Yes.

TIRRELL: Anyway, so I went over. And as I can remember it, there wasn't snow at that time like we have today. [Laughs] But we did have cold in that winter. Walking into it and somebody had the radio on. And Roosevelt was speaking to Congress. And that's the first that I had heard of it at that time. Of course at that time, I mean being a 17-

year-old, as I was at that time, it didn't mean much. It had no overall significance.

DONIN: You didn't feel personally impacted by it at that point.

TIRRELL: No.

DONIN: Right. You were too young.

TIRRELL: Mm-hmm.

DONIN: Right. And did President Hopkins address the school at that point?

TIRRELL: I don't remember. I don't remember. I don't think so. I can't seem to remember anything of that kind.

DONIN: Right.

TIRRELL: But I do know from the overall experience that there were guys that pulled out and went in.

DONIN: Right.

TIRRELL: Because the vast majority of the class were 18-year-olds.

DONIN: So they were able to enlist.

TIRRELL: Yes. Well, they were not only able to enlist, but I mean they had registered.

DONIN: Right. Well, they knew they were going to go off.

TIRRELL: Mm-hmm.

DONIN: So you went home for Christmas break. When were you going to turn 18?

TIRRELL: Well, my birthday's in June.

DONIN: Oh, well, , you had a way's to go.

TIRRELL: Mm-hmm.

DONIN: So you were able to complete your whole freshman year.

- TIRRELL: Yes. Well, I finished two years.
- DONIN: Ah-huh! Great. Yes. And did you enlist, or were you drafted, or what did you do?
- TIRRELL: Well, I enlisted in the Navy as such. But was not called up.
- DONIN: So I was just looking at your lifeline here in the 50th Reunion booklet. You started in '43 then, after two years. I see. Okay. And can you tell us how that happened? I mean, was it at the end of your sophomore year?
- TIRRELL: Shortly thereafter, yes. I was called in.
- DONIN: And did you assume that you would come back here after you finished your duty? Was that sort of the standard assumption that everybody was working under?
- TIRRELL: Well, at that particular time, we had had no other considerations. Yes, it was you'd feel you were going to finish out. I mean both my parents were college graduates, good schools.
- DONIN: Right.
- TIRRELL: MIT and Wellesley.
- DONIN: And when you left here, then the Navy was beginning to run their training schools here, their training program here, V-12 and the indoctrination program.
- TIRRELL: Yes. Mm-hmm.
- DONIN: But you weren't part of that.
- TIRRELL: No, they really didn't get started into that, I don't think, until about the second year.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- TIRRELL: Of course we went over the summer, directly over the summer; we had a third term.

DONIN: After your first year then—so in the summer of '42, they started running year round.

TIRRELL: Mm-hmm.

DONIN: So you stayed here.

TIRRELL: And that's where I met my wife.

DONIN: Really!

TIRRELL: Yes. [Laughs]

DONIN: Amazing.

TIRRELL: Yes.

DONIN: What was she doing here?

TIRRELL: Well, she went to Colby Junior.

DONIN: Oh, I see. So you were socializing down there?

TIRRELL: No, I had two roommates at the time. At Green Key we had a... Well, one of them had a girl he was bringing up. I had a girl that I wanted to—would like to bring up, and she went to Colby Junior, too. And this was during the summer. When I invited her, she wrote a letter right back and she said she didn't feel that she should come unless Peg could come. She was spending part of the summer with her over in Maine, and they were classmates at Colby Junior. And so we said, Well, we had the third—the second roommate—who was a relatively shy individual type of person. We put pressure on him, and he finally agreed because we were going to pal around together as six people, you know. Which worked out pretty well. The only thing was that of all of us, I was the only one that got a bride out of it. [Laughter] But that was not right out of that time. I mean that was just the introductory.

DONIN: Oh, so this was Green Key in the spring of your....

TIRRELL: No, this was Green Key in the summertime.

DONIN: Oh they had Green Key in the summertime. I see, in the summer of '42.

TIRRELL: In August.

DONIN: So by the time you graduated, you had completed more than two years of credits, I would think.

TIRRELL: No, no.

DONIN: No? Not graduated. I mean when you left to go to the Navy, you'd completed more than two years of credit.

TIRRELL: By the end of the second year, they felt that I hadn't reached the stage where I could stay, up until I had a little bit more effort.

DONIN: Oh, I see! Oh, well, tell us more about this.

TIRRELL: Well, I really I did not know how to study. I just was not into it.

DONIN: So your grades weren't measuring up.

TIRRELL: The grades were not measuring up.

DONIN: You were having too much fun with your social life maybe, was that it?

TIRRELL: Mmm. I don't think so. I think it was basically I just didn't know how to study.

DONIN: Yes. Of course in those days they didn't have all the support for students that they have now.

TIRRELL: That's right.

DONIN: Did you get called into the dean's office for this?

TIRRELL: No. Just a...I think it was a letter. So I started in at Temple, which was near where we lived and to see if I could change things around a little bit. That was when the letter came: We want you.

DONIN: Oh....

TIRRELL: I went off on February 23rd. February 23rd, the day after Washington's birthday.

DONIN: Nineteen forty-three.

TIRRELL: 'Forty-three. Mm-hmm. Because I retired out of it on March 23rd in '46.

DONIN: Wow, three full years.

TIRRELL: And that was on the West Coast.

DONIN: In California?

TIRRELL: Yes. Mm-hmm.

DONIN: So how is it you came back to Dartmouth?

TIRRELL: Well, I had managed to acquire some credits, enough that I could come back.

DONIN: Points they called them.

TIRRELL: Yes. And they were much more open at that time for the older students to come back. Realizing that you had grown up a little bit during those years.

DONIN: Right. And you were a better student when you got back.

TIRRELL: Apparently. [Laughs] Enough to get through.

DONIN: Right. A lot of people have said that.

TIRRELL: Mm-hmm.

DONIN: That they were much better students when they came back.

TIRRELL: Well, the thing that I realized, talking about Charlie Rowan, he had a preparatory year at Phillips.

DONIN: Oh, yes, Exeter

TIRRELL: Exeter. Mm-hmm. Yes.

DONIN: Right.

- TIRRELL: And I came out of a high school. And in high school, going through high school, I was in three different high schools.
- DONIN: Oh, my.
- TIRRELL: One in freshman year. One in sophomore year and I finally got two years in a row in another school. I put a lot of the blame in not knowing how to study in that...It didn't have any continuity. Each year you would spend time finding out what's the school all about. Who were the people and where do you stand?
- DONIN: Right. Exactly. That's important stuff when you're that age.
- TIRRELL: And you don't realize it at the time. But it does take that long a period of time to really get settled in.
- DONIN: So you were unprepared for the rigors of Dartmouth.
- TIRRELL: Right, right. Uh huh.
- DONIN: Right. So when you came back in '46, at that point did you know what you were going to major in?
- TIRRELL: No. Well, yes and no. I had gone into the Navy and actually requested, out of boot camp, to go into the Hospital Corps. Figured this was one way of finding out, do I like it or not?
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- TIRRELL: And at that time, if you even showed an inkling that you wanted to be, they took you. The boot camp was out in Sampson, which was in Geneva, New York, in the springtime, and it was a little on the chilly side out there. Sampson's long been closed since then. But it was a Navy boot camp. From there down to Virginia. Oh, if you had good grades there, you had the option of going to any of the places that were available, if you had grades of a certain amount. Well, I happened to have kept those grades there. The thing was, you had options of different places that were recruiting at that time. The closest one to home, which I was looking at, was Virginia.
- DONIN: Ah-hah.
- TIRRELL: Of any of them. All the rest were either west or south. Nothing in this area at all. So I went down to Virginia—Portsmouth, the naval

hospital there. And I was there for a while. And then tried...Then got into college for—gee, what did they call it? V-12, yes. V-12. And I applied for it, was accepted, and sent to Hampton-Sydney College in Virginia.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

TIRRELL: I don't know if you know Hampton-Sydney.

DONIN: I've heard the name, yes.

TIRRELL: It's a great college, it really is. I enjoyed my time. It's a small college. It's practically as old as Dartmouth. It was founded in 1776.

DONIN: Wow.

TIRRELL: Patrick Henry was one of its major instigators as a school. It was an all-male school and still all-male today. Small school. But to me it was a miniature Dartmouth.

DONIN: Oh, interesting. So you were doing your V-12 training there?

TIRRELL: Yes, for—I was there for one term. But they did not let me stay. From there I went back into the naval hospital in Norfolk itself for a while until they thought that maybe I would make a good marine. And sent me down to Camp LeJeune for training down there, in the Hospital Corps because all the medics of the marines all came from the Navy. So there I went through the basic training that they felt that we needed.

[War narrative omitted]

DONIN: So after the war, you come back from Hawaii.

TIRRELL: Well, we kind of came back from Guam.

DONIN: Sorry. Come back from Guam, of course.

TIRRELL: Yes, right.

DONIN: And did you know at that point that you were going to be welcomed back to Dartmouth? Had you been in touch with them?

TIRRELL: No.

- DONIN: So you got in touch with them.
- TIRRELL: Well, this was in the springtime of '46.
- DONIN: Yes.
- TIRRELL: And essentially the contact came after you got home. And then you had all the summer before you started back in the fall.
- DONIN: Right. Because they'd stopped the summer terms at that point.
- TIRRELL: Yes, and I think I...if I remember right, I took a couple of courses through the extension Wisconsin, which was the active university that was doing extension programs.
- DONIN: Uh-huh! Interesting. Yes. So when you came back here in the fall of '46....
- TIRRELL: Yes. Mm-hmm.
- DONIN: Right? Fall of '46. There must have been a deluge of veterans like yourself showing up on the doorstep of Dartmouth, in addition to of course the class of '50 was just matriculating for the first time.
- TIRRELL: Yes. Mm-hmm.
- DONIN: It must have been a big crowd of people here.
- TIRRELL: Ah, not necessarily. Well, there was a crowd of people, yes. But I think that the... I have no idea how the college went about it, but I think that the college gave preference to their undergraduates first. And then whatever was left over beyond that then became the other new class. And of course with the GI Bill, a lot did come in and were able to come in. And it was a great GI Bill. I mean ... Well, I had about a year and a half to go. And at first I didn't figure out how to do it. My dad figured it out much, much better. He broached it, and I said, Oh, that's great. Because you had—I was over three years, just over three years, put it three years. I was given 48 months of education available if you played it right. Which was that you used it only for tuition and paid the rest of it yourself. At the same time, you were also getting a stipend for living.

- DONIN: Sure. So you had the GI Bill plus you had the stipend for living. Where were you living?
- TIRRELL: Well, I mean you could use your stipend I mean if you were in a dorm, you could pay your rent, so to speak.
- DONIN: Right.
- TIRRELL: And anything—you could buy books with them. I mean whatever you wanted to do that was associated with your education, you could use.
- DONIN: Right, right. Now did you have to get...Did you get a job while you were here?
- TIRRELL: No, I didn't. No, I didn't. But we came back in, and I was just looking for the degree. At this time Peg and I, we'd been corresponding for a year and a half. Then we got back and really got to know each other as people, you know, which became great. And she was working. Her dad was a dentist. And he broached the subject of would you be interested. I mean he knew I was taking a premed. And would you be interested in dentistry. And I said yes. I had thought I would. I did not think that I was meant to be a physician. And so he went to work, and he had contacts. And he got me into NYU.
- DONIN: Oh, great! To the dental school.
- TIRRELL: Dental school. Mm-hmm. And actually the four years that I put in dental school there was the longest time that I was ever in a school.
- DONIN: Mmm. All in one place.
- TIRRELL: In one place on a continuing basis.
- DONIN: Right.
- TIRRELL: As I say, went through, graduated and so forth, and got accepted at NYU. Again, the dental school there, the vast majority of them were GIs. We were the middle to late twenties that were in that school.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.

TIRRELL: And NYU, it was...The buildings were old. They were really old as such, in the middle of Manhattan. And I was going back and forth. We got engaged in '47, on Valentine's Day.

DONIN: Hmm. Nice.

TIRRELL: But we put off being married until after I'd gotten one year of dental school finished.

DONIN: Right.

TIRRELL: So this coming June will be 60 years.

DONIN: Oh, my goodness!

TIRRELL: We've been married.

DONIN: Congratulations!

TIRRELL: Thank you.

DONIN: It's something to be congratulated for, in this day and age especially.

TIRRELL: Well, it was the best thing that ever happened to me.

DONIN: That's great.

TIRRELL: I can say that.

DONIN: So let's go back to Dartmouth. Did you ever actually get to have a graduation ceremony here?

TIRRELL: Yes. Mm-hmm. At the Bema.

DONIN: So you graduated. Up at the Bema with the class of '47.

TIRRELL: Well, in '47, that's right. The class of '47.

DONIN: But you still identified with the class of '45.

TIRRELL: The class of '45, yes. The matriculation class remains your class.

DONIN: I see. It must have felt a little funny, though, because you were all mixed up.

TIRRELL: No, not necessarily. No, the majority of people that were coming back at that time were previous students.

DONIN: Right.

TIRRELL: The vast majority.

DONIN: So it was all a big jumble. It didn't really matter.

TIRRELL: No, it didn't make any difference. You were—you mixed with whoever you happened to mix with.

DONIN: Right.

TIRRELL: You were just aiming toward that degree.

DONIN: Right.

TIRRELL: And the graduation as such. And then you would go on. These were mature students.

DONIN: Right, right.

TIRRELL: Anyway, and the students were—they were there to learn.

DONIN: Right. Different attitude than when you were a freshman.

TIRRELL: Very much so. Very much so.

DONIN: Right.

TIRRELL: And I presume probably the faculty probably recognized it, too. I mean they saw it. And they were able to push things more than they would have been otherwise.

DONIN: Sure, sure. Well, they were probably just as anxious for you to get processed through.

TIRRELL: Yes.

DONIN: For you all to get on with your lives. How did the college deal with... How how did they deal with this, you know, you had these incoming traditional civilian undergrads who were just doing their thing without any military experience, especially the class of 1950 that was just getting started there.

TIRRELL: I think there were relatively few right at that time.

DONIN: Uh-huh.

TIRRELL: I think that there were relatively few. In other words, the first two or three years there were mainly GIs that were coming back.

DONIN: So there were very few sort of traditional, 17- and 18-year-olds right out of high school.

TIRRELL: That's right. Mm-hmm.

DONIN: And—

TIRRELL: They probably had some, but I mean probably they, to a large extent, because they were limiting how many they were going to take, probably they had the cream of the crop.

DONIN: Right. I bet they did. Well, so for instance in your dormitory, was it mostly GIs that you were living with?

TIRRELL: Oh, yes.

DONIN: Those last two years.

TIRRELL: Mm-hmm.

DONIN: Yes.

TIRRELL: Yes.

DONIN: Where were you? Were you back at Topliff?

TIRRELL: No, oh, no. I can't even remember what...it seemed to me I moved from one to the other.

DONIN: What was your social life like when you came back?

TIRRELL: Basically it was study.

DONIN: Yes.

TIRRELL: It was study. The only other thing of a social activity was to try to get our fraternity started back again.

DONIN: Oh, so you joined a fraternity.

TIRRELL: I joined a fraternity in the fall of '42.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

TIRRELL: Sigma Phi Epsilon. Which at that time was just a catch-all fraternity. In other words, the leftovers that were interested.

DONIN: Right.

TIRRELL: And now the national has turned it around and made it the top right here.

DONIN: Oh, isn't that terrific.

TIRRELL: Yes. It is the number one fraternity on campus.

DONIN: Oh, that's great.

TIRRELL: And, oh, I guess about ten, 15 years ago, they had a national president who was a Greek, a Greek person. And he went back to the Greek philosophies.

DONIN: Oh.

TIRRELL: And he promoted an idea. It is that the Greeks had the philosophy of a sound mind in a sound body. And that's what he promoted. And so he got us started. And this is on a national basis now. Their idea is that you have to have a sound body to have a sound mind. And the two of them work together. And that anybody that comes in is expected to do certain things. And one is you're expected to be certainly academic. But you're also expected to be involved in physical activities in some way. You're expected to be involved in the social aspects of your community and so forth and have outside interests as well. The chapter that is here, down on Wheelock, took

that right from, practically from the beginning, and they went to work on it.

DONIN: That's great.

TIRRELL: And I just got our booklet from the national yesterday. And I was looking it over, I started looking it over. The chapter here has a 3.61 average—this is last fall.

DONIN: Fantastic.

TIRRELL: That's an average. And they have 93 members in the fraternity.

DONIN: That's amazing. It's terrific.

TIRRELL: And they are tops in the country, you know.

DONIN: You should be proud.

TIRRELL: Oh, I am. I know I'd never make it. [Laughter] But they have a goal. And they have established what they call a wheelhouse. And the goal is that what is required for Phi Beta Kappa.

DONIN: Oh, yes.

TIRRELL: 3.15 is what they're looking at. And they list those who average a 3.15 or better.

DONIN: So was that the center of your social life, so to speak, when you came back?

TIRRELL: Yes. Mm-hmm. Well, it was about the only social life I had beforehand. And our problem when we came back is that the house that we had had, which is...well, it was taken over by Mary Hitchcock. Because the head of the—

DONIN: The hospital?

TIRRELL: No, not the hospital. The head of the fraternity governing body was a physician. And the hospital wanted that—

DONIN: That house?

- TIRRELL: —house because it was right across the street. They wanted it for nurses.
- DONIN: I see.
- TIRRELL: In there. And of course the war came along and so forth. And he was able to convince the governing group with the alumni to sell it to the hospital.
- DONIN: Oh, so you lost your house.
- TIRRELL: We lost the house. And this angered me very much.
- DONIN: When you got back.
- TIRRELL: While I was in service when I heard about it.
- DONIN: Yes, yes.
- TIRRELL: I mean we had no say in the matter, nothing at all. Now when we came back, we had a dilemma. The dilemma was that on the national basis, as long as we had a member on the campus, we had a chapter. For the college, the college says unless you have a house, you're not a chapter.
- DONIN: Oh, dear.
- TIRRELL: So that creates a problem.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- TIRRELL: Well, one of our members, class members actually, Jerry Farrell, decided that we've got to see what we can do about this. And we met in one of the rooms here. And I think it was, I don't know where it was. Over in Parkhurst or somewhere, one of the buildings over there. And he said, "Let's look around and see if there's something where we can rent." Well, we did. That's right, they call them the house committee, the house committee. So he was able to find a house that they could rent, which was down on School Street. We, on the basis of... To pay the rent, everybody that was in the fraternity that was on campus had to live there.
- DONIN: Oh, yes.

TIRRELL: Yes.

DONIN: Good.

TIRRELL: Which we did.

DONIN: Yes.

TIRRELL: I think that there were probably about, I guess probably eight or nine of us, something like that. It was about as much as the house would hold. It was just a house. And we had a lease in it for, I think, it was two years, two or three years. Which they kept going. Well, our dear house committee at that time did not renew the rent—did not renew the lease.

DONIN: Oh, dear.

TIRRELL: And they were.... So the only thing that we could, that happened with that—By that time we were gone. We were gone. So I mean that didn't help anything either.

DONIN: Uh huh.

TIRRELL: Anyways, they were right across from Zeta Psi on North School Street. And as I say, we graduated. Then whoever owned it, says, "I'm going to sell it and you can either buy it or I'm going to sell it." Well, they had nothing to buy with, you know. Fortunately.... Well, anyway, an interesting item is that I have a younger brother.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

TIRRELL: And according to him—he's seven years younger—he came here, he graduated. He came here because I came here. And he joined the fraternity. And I never knew that until long afterwards. He said that he was one that happened to find out that 11 Wheelock was available for rent, I guess from the college. And he mentioned it. But I guess he wasn't a full member at that time. But he happened to mention it; it was at a group meeting. Well, they weren't going to do anything about it because they didn't feel they could do anything until push got to shove, you know. And they decided that they'd better do it. Of course he never got any credit for even introducing it. So they moved into 11 Wheelock. And again a fraternity that really had no—they were leftovers.

DONIN: Right.

TIRRELL: You know. And hung along for a good many years until, again, this idea of the balanced man was what they called it.

DONIN: Balanced men?

TIRRELL: They called it the balanced man.

DONIN: Uh-huh. Hmm.

TIRRELL: And it took off—or took off here anyway. And whoever was probably on the house committee and the faculty and so forth that might be involved with it started to work with it. And they promoted it. And then one of their things is that they now—they don't have to go out and really solicit.

DONIN: Right, right. Now I'm sure people want to join.

TIRRELL: They want to join.

DONIN: Right.

TIRRELL: And they are interested in whoever is in there: what are you doing? What is your philosophy? What can you do? And it's been great for here.

DONIN: That's terrific.

TIRRELL: So, that's sort of....

DONIN: That's the story of your fraternity.

TIRRELL: Yes.

DONIN: Now when you returned, you also returned to a new president.

TIRRELL: Yes, Dickey.

DONIN: President Hopkins was retired, and President Dickey was just getting started after a couple of years. What was your impression of him?

TIRRELL: I can't say as I really had any particular feeling one way or the other as such.

DONIN: Had he gotten his Great Issues course going before you graduated?

TIRRELL: No, I don't think so.

DONIN: Yes, it may have been a little bit later from that.

TIRRELL: Uh-huh. Well, you know, our feeling was we were trying to get what we needed to move out.

DONIN: To move on.

TIRRELL: To move on, yes.

DONIN: Right. Now, when you graduated, did you stay in touch with any of your classmates?

TIRRELL: Well, basically Fred Schaefer and Matt Smith, who were my roommates for the early years, were about the only real ones that I stayed in contact with. A few of my fraternity brothers. Basically beyond that, no.

DONIN: I think that was the case with a lot of people.

TIRRELL: Well, we had so many things out there that had to be—that were more important at that time.

DONIN: Exactly.

TIRRELL: Now, of course, at this stage, once you reach the retirement area, then you can go back and do other things.

DONIN: Right. Exactly. Did you have a sense that when you came back to campus as a veteran that you were treated differently by the faculty or by the other undergrads who were not military? Or did you slide back into being a student?

TIRRELL: Gee, I can't answer that very well. Well, you just felt it was a job. It was a job to do.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

TIRRELL: Your job was to go to classes. Your job was to go through. Your job was to get a grade.

DONIN: Right.

TIRRELL: Or at least pass. [Laughs]

DONIN: Yes, Right, exactly. So do you think—When you left here, did you feel any sense of loyalty to your class of 1945?

TIRRELL: Yes.

DONIN: Even though you graduated with the class of '47.

TIRRELL: Yes.

DONIN: Yes.

TIRRELL: Yes. There was a pride in the class. That is one thing that whatever the Dartmouth activities were that we were in, you had a feeling that there was a camaraderie there in some form or other. Even though you may not really be in it that much.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

TIRRELL: Now even when we were in service, for example, I remember running into or meeting some way or other Dick Davis, who's long since gone, who was a class of '44 and a fraternity brother. I just read in the alumni magazine the loss of another '44 that was a fraternity brother. Now I just knew them in that fall area. But I can remember them.

DONIN: Sure. Was your sense of loyalty stronger to your fraternity brothers than it was to your classmates?

TIRRELL: Well, it was my social activity.

DONIN: Right.

TIRRELL: Yes. Well, it was really...I think I wanted to go into a fraternity because there were too many people here.

DONIN: Mm-hmm.

- TIRRELL: Overall.
- DONIN: Yes.
- TIRRELL: I wanted a smaller group. And I was not comfortable in the large group; I was just a number.
- DONIN: Right. Makes sense. That makes sense.
- TIRRELL: And I think a lot of students when they come in, they need that; they need to have a small unit that they can start to get to know.
- DONIN: Right.
- TIRRELL: Later on, I mean if they're...when they're comfortable with that, then they can move out and expand it.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm. Right. That's true. Sure. Now lots of your—a number of your classmates—came back with wives in those days.
- TIRRELL: Yes. Mm-hmm. Yes. Quite a few of them had married during the war. Or married immediately after the war. And again....
- DONIN: They were living down in Wigwam Circle and Sachem Village.
- TIRRELL: Yes, in Sachem Village. Yes. Mm-hmm. Essentially, they had their own little group there. And there again, it made a community.
- DONIN: Right.
- TIRRELL: For them.
- DONIN: Mm-hmm.
- TIRRELL: And they didn't have to look for other social activities.
- DONIN: Right, right. That seems to be the trend in talking to people. They stayed with their small social group, whether it was a fraternity group or a married group.
- TIRRELL: Yes, right.

[End of Interview]