

Dartmouth College Oral History Project
The War Years at Dartmouth
Interview with John Van Raalte '48
By Mary Stelle Donin
June 9, 2008

VAN RAALTE: My father came here.

DONIN: And he was class of...

VAN RAALTE: 1918.

DONIN: Were there other students in your class who had fathers here from the class of 1918?

VAN RAALTE: Yes. There was Johnny Wood.

DONIN: It would be easy enough to find—

VAN RAALTE: Yeah, John Wood, but he didn't graduate.

DONIN: So, when you were growing up, was Dartmouth the only focus?

VAN RAALTE: Not really. I went to a prep school, which was a feeder for Princeton University, and my closest friend Bill Danforth was a—his father was a trustee of Princeton. Of my prep school, twenty-seven—thirteen or fourteen went to Princeton, and I was sort of expected to go to Princeton, because of Mr. Danforth and there was a lot of pressure on me to go to Princeton, because everybody from my prep school went to Princeton. But I wanted to go somewhere different, and so I wanted to try Dartmouth, although I had never been in New England in my life.

DONIN: Had you ever seen Dartmouth before you applied?

VAN RAALTE: Never been in New England.

DONIN: You grew up in the Midwest?

VAN RAALTE: St. Louis, Missouri.

DONIN: Oh, yeah. Your father, I assume, had told you stories about Dartmouth.

VAN RAALTE: Yeah. He liked it and he used to come back for his reunions and he told me about it. So, I also applied to West Point, where I had a principal appointment, because I was on—I did a lot of horseback riding when I was young and I knew the US Olympic equestrian team. I was sort of their protégé for a while—jumping team. So, I wanted to go to West Point to be on the Olympic team, but then the war came along and that was the end of the Olympic team, the end of the horses. I have ridden all my life.

DONIN: And were you able to ride when you came to Dartmouth?

VAN RAALTE: No. I shipped my horse to—I went down to a stable in Woodstock to see if I could ship my horse here, but the facilities were not very good and you couldn't get over there. The gas rationing—there was no way to get around. So, I shipped my horse to New York, where my family had moved, to Scarsdale, New York, and kept her there.

DONIN: So at least you saw her on holidays and breaks when you went home.

VAN RAALTE: That's correct.

DONIN: So tell us about your arrival at Dartmouth. Did you—I gather the class of '48 arrived at sort of—

VAN RAALTE: Well, I'll tell you. It's an interesting story. I drove to New York with my mother, because my father had moved to New York. It was during the war and he was in the building business and had no building in St. Louis. He built apartments and he couldn't do any building and his friend who he'd roomed with at Dartmouth—Marty Strauss—was the president of Eversharp, a pencil company. And he was very friendly with some people, mainly at Lehmann Brothers, who said that they were looking for a president of a very large construction company called Thompson Starrett, which was a well-known, old company that built things like the Woolworth Building and so forth. So, he said—so, he moved to New York to work for Thompson Starrett, where he became president. So, they moved to New York. My sister was at Pembroke, down at Brown, and so they said they thought they'd try New York and it was during the war. So, we drove—my mother and I—to New York, and then we came up on the train—

DONIN: To White River Junction—

VAN RAALTE: —and I'll never forget: we had a classmate by the name of Eddie Shipper, and Eddie's dad was a great guy—they were from Alabama—and he had—everybody took him to lunch and was very hospitable to all of our—we had about five or six of us: Eddie, and myself, and I don't remember the others. And we came up on the train to Dartmouth.

DONIN: Got off at White River Junction?

VAN RAALTE: Got off at White River Junction. Mr. Shipper got a cab and we came over. And, anyway, that was my introduction to Dartmouth. Then I roomed with a fellow in Richardson Hall, on the third floor, next to Sonny Drury and Colin Stewart, who were two fellows from Hanover, and both skiers. And I roomed with a fellow by the name of Roger Tenney from Rockford, Illinois.

DONIN: Did they tend to place you guys with roommates who were geographically—

VAN RAALTE: Had nothing to do with it.

DONIN: Oh, okay.

VAN RAALTE: Well, except I think they roomed together because they knew one another and asked to room together. They had graduated from Hanover High. But the rest of them were from all over. We had Severinghaus from Wisconsin; he was at the end of the hall. So, we roomed in Richardson. So it was a pretty dispersed group. So we roomed in Richardson. There were three halls that were utilized for civilians. The rest were V-12 navy, which was the biggest V-12 navy program in the United States, here at Dartmouth. They had about three thousand, as I remember properly.

So, we only had about a hundred and fifty in our class. Twenty-five had come in February, including Alan Epstein and a few others who I don't remember. But the rest of us—about a hundred and twenty-five—came in July of 1944, and they lived in Wheeler, Richardson, and what's now the—Crosby it was then—and it's now the administration building, as I recall. Is that Blunt?

DONIN: Blunt.

VAN RAALTE: It's called Blunt now. Anyway, that's where the three—the civilians roomed.

- DONIN: I see, okay. So, all the other dorms were occupied—
- VAN RAALTE: All the other dorms were occupied by the navy.
- DONIN: How did you feel being surrounded by so many military people?
- VAN RAALTE: Well, we were pretty close-knit group. [Laughter]
- DONIN: I should say.
- VAN RAALTE: And we stuck together and they stuck together. We didn't socialize with the navy at all. They were older, and we didn't know them, and we really were a pretty close group.
- DONIN: So, were there any traditional undergraduate upperclassmen?
- VAN RAALTE: Yeah, a few in Wheeler, who had come in in '47, but they were either 4-F or didn't go into the service for some reason. So, there were a few of them in Wheeler who were class of '47. I don't remember any—maybe a very few, other than that.
- DONIN: So, did you get treated to all the sort of traditional freshman torture? You know, did you have to wear the beanie and carry the furniture for the upperclassmen?
- VAN RAALTE: No.
- DONIN: No?
- VAN RAALTE: We did not. We were a pretty independent group. [Laughter]
- DONIN: Yeah, I should say. So, this was in '44, so—
- VAN RAALTE: Summer of '44, and everybody was pretty well assured that they were going in the service.
- DONIN: Was your sense that you were going to sign up or be drafted before you graduated, then?
- VAN RAALTE: Everybody knew they were going to be except the ones that were 4-F, like Sonny Drury, who had diabetes; we knew he wouldn't go in. But, everybody else that I knew either went in the army or the

navy. I went in when I was seventeen, before I turned eighteen. I had finished a year at Dartmouth when I was seventeen.

DONIN: When you got here, when you originally got here, then you were sixteen?

VAN RAALTE: No, I had just turned seventeen, and then I finished the summer semester, and then one fall semester, and then I signed up in January, because my birthday was in February. So, I signed in in the navy before I was drafted, because it wasn't eighteen.

DONIN: Right. So, they had these accelerated classes going on at that point, didn't they? So you started right in—

VAN RAALTE: Well, we took a whole semester in the summer, just the way they do now, I guess, and then a semester in the fall.

DONIN: And that was it. Then you signed up.

VAN RAALTE: When I went in the service, I had finished one year. Then I went in the service until I came back in August or September of 1946.

DONIN: Did you take sort of the traditional freshman classes that first year?

VAN RAALTE: Absolutely. English. Professor Booth, Ed Booth, who was a classmate of my father. He was the class of 1918 also.

DONIN: The classes were just for the civilians. You didn't have any military guys in your classes, did you?

VAN RAALTE: Yes, some we did. Yes, we did. I remember engineering drawing was mostly military. Some of the ones were just the civilians, like the English, and some of them were mixed, but most of them were mixed, I think.

DONIN: Yeah, well they were trying to offer them, I think, sort of a combination of liberal arts and military.

VAN RAALTE: That's correct, but some of them were strictly our freshmen. English, as I remember, was strictly for freshmen.

DONIN: Did you know what you wanted to major in at that point?

VAN RAALTE: No, I did not. I didn't really—I always loved history, and I took a lot of history courses, but not so many then the first year. It was more afterward.

DONIN: Yeah, when you were trying to get your requirements out of the way, probably.

VAN RAALTE: Right. That's exactly right.

DONIN: So, off you went in—so you signed up in January '45 and when did—

VAN RAALTE: Went to Great Lakes Naval Training Station, and I went into the radar program to be a radar operator. And I went to school in Chicago to be a radar operator, and then the war was over and they didn't need any more radar operators, but they wouldn't let you out, so they sent me to Hawaii, and from there I went to the Philippines. Actually, the war was still on then.

DONIN: Well, yeah, there it was.

VAN RAALTE: Yeah, and then I went to Hawaii. I went through radar school there. In Chicago. Then I went to Hawaii and there I was shipped to the Philippines in the amphibs, and our unit was the one that was supposed to invade Japan—the unit they put me in—and I was in charge of keeping the electrical circuits. I was—Well, it's another long story. I don't know if you want me to tell this.

DONIN: Yeah.

VAN RAALTE: I had been shipped out to—as a radar man, and I got to the Philippines, in Cavite which is in Manila Bay. And they didn't need any more radar operators, even though this unit was—that was when the war was over, in August, 1945. And I was wandering around and I didn't know what to do or where to go, and I walked into the electrical shop where they maintained electrical systems for the landing craft, and the third electrician in charge—the third class—says, "I know you." I said, "How do you know me?" He said, "I'm from St. Louis, and you're the little guy that rides in the horse show in the big jumping classes. And my wife always made me go to the horse shows when I was in St. Louis." So, he says, "What are you doing?" I said, "I don't know what I'm doing." He said, "You're going in here with me, and you're going to be an electrician and work with me." So I was put in charge of keeping the electrical

circuits of alternators, and generators, and batteries in all of these boats on the—not all of them, but most of them—that were scheduled to go into Japan, and eventually don't, after the war was over. But that's what I did for about six or eight months. I still maintained those boats until I came home. In the spring of 1946, they shipped me back.

DONIN: And what was your understanding, that you could come right back to Dartmouth?

VAN RAALTE: Yeah, that's what I wanted to do. In fact, I went to the officer and I said, "I gotta get out of here." I was then shipped back to Seattle, and they didn't know what to do with me, and I said, "I gotta get out of here by August." I went to the officer in charge and I said, "I gotta go back to college." And I said, "You can let these other guys stay as long as you want, but I gotta be out of here by August." And they discharged me.

DONIN: They discharged you.

VAN RAALTE: Yeah, at the end of July.

DONIN: Great. So, when you got back here, everybody must have been returning.

VAN RAALTE: Everybody was returning.

DONIN: Yeah, that was a real huge influx of students.

VAN RAALTE: Huge influx.

DONIN: Yeah, and they were running out of space, I guess, on campus.

VAN RAALTE: Yeah. And I lived in North Mass. I believe and I lived there two years and then I was in the fraternity a year: Sigma Nu.

DONIN: When did you get rushed for the fraternity? Was this before the war or after?

VAN RAALTE: After the war, when I came back in the fall.

DONIN: So, were you able to complete all your coursework and graduate on time in '48?

VAN RAALTE: No. I graduated in June of 1949. I had three years left, from '46 to '49.

DONIN: Were you ever tempted to switch your class and become a member of the class of '49?

VAN RAALTE: Never, never. Now, some of them did. Eddie Leed did. Eddie Leed was a very good friend of mine and he was a great basketball player. I never figured out why he did that. I've never still to this day, and I'm still friendly with him. I still talk to him. He's a very successful oil man and lives in Denver, Colorado. And I never figured out why he did that, except he was in Phi Delt, and all his friends in Phi Delt were in the class of '49, and it was a fraternity thing.

And Alan Epstein went back to the class of '47. Why he did that I don't know, but his fraternity—Pi Lamda, I think—most of the people there were '47. So, I don't know why they did that. I still haven't figured out why.

DONIN: Well, maybe you've got the answer, that these migrations that took place between classes—

VAN RAALTE: Their friends.

DONIN: —was based really on who your fraternity brothers were and what classes they were in.

VAN RAALTE: Right. My activity primarily in school when I came back was squash and tennis. I was on the squash team for three years and tennis team for two years. And I traveled quite a bit with the teams, and I was down at the gym every day practicing, so Red Hoehn was a very good friend of mine. So, I really was involved more with the people on the team—Dave Kerr, one of my classmates, was on the squash and tennis team with me. We're still good friends.

DONIN: Great.

VAN RAALTE: Mike McGean was on the team with us. He was a '49. He and I always competed—not the top spots, but the four and five spots.

DONIN: He was known for being a figure skater, wasn't he?

VAN RAALTE: He was a figure skater at the time, but he was also on the squash team. But his wife and he were national figure skating.

- DONIN: Yeah, that's what I gather.
- VAN RAALTE: But I think he did more of that after he got out of college than he did when—his wife was very prominent in that. But I think he did more of that after he got out.
- DONIN: So, how was it when you came back? I mean, it was a whole crowd of not just the guys like you who matriculated here, but also a lot of these V-12 guys wanted to come back here as well.
- VAN RAALTE: A lot of them did come back and a lot of them were placed in our class. And we tried to welcome them and integrate them in the class, and I think we've done a pretty good job of that.
- DONIN: Were they—at first, though, was there a real sort of distinction made between those of you who matriculated—
- VAN RAALTE: I think there's always been a little bit of distinction, yeah. I think we always have felt we were the original '48s and they were imposters, and there was a little hard feeling. Like, Jim McLaughlin always felt that, like—he was active in our class, as you know, for a while. Not anymore. But, he always felt there was a rift and I think he created part of the rift when he was involved, because we tried not to have a rift, and I think his bringing that up quite often was not a good thing.
- DONIN: What caused the rift? I mean, his feeling that—
- VAN RAALTE: Like he was going to have a meeting up here of the V-12s—or V-5s. He was a V-5, I think. And he was going to have a big something in Hanover and we said that was—we didn't think that was a good idea. We wanted to be a class and we didn't want to have a rift of the navy guys and the civilian guys, and I think that he always felt he wasn't quite part of the group.
- DONIN: Do you think that was true of the rest of the class as well?
- VAN RAALTE: No, I don't. Like Russ Carlson, who will be here this weekend. I mean, he was brought in in the navy and I don't think he ever has felt separated from us in any way. I think it's a personality thing.
- DONIN: I certainly know other people who have said that they never felt any distinction between those that were military—

- VAN RAALTE: No, I never tried to distinguish in any way. I know everybody in that book, and they were original '48s. We were a pretty close group.
- DONIN: Sure. Well, you were such a tiny group.
- VAN RAALTE: Yeah. And we were very friendly.
- DONIN: Some of you arrived in March, apparently, a very small number.
- VAN RAALTE: Very small number came.
- DONIN: What? About thirty-five or forty came in March? Who were those that came, that early group? Why did they come in March? It seems like a funny time.
- VAN RAALTE: I guess they had finished their high school credits and they wanted to get started in college and get as much college before they were drafted.
- DONIN: Yes, that's true. That's a good point. They could get some credits under their belt. So when you arrived in '44, you had one president, and then when you came back, you had a different president. So, your class straddled Ernest Martin Hopkins and John Dickey.
- VAN RAALTE: Oh, yeah. I was inducted by Ernest Martin Hopkins and Mr. Strong. What was his first name?
- DONIN: Robert Strong.
- VAN RAALTE: Robert Strong. I remember him very well. And then we came back and Dickey was here, and Eddie Chamberlain. So, it was a different environment.
- DONIN: How so?
- VAN RAALTE: Dickey was all over the place. You know, he knew everybody, walked across the campus. Ernest Martin Hopkins was sort of an austere figure and he was quite old at that time, of course. And he was not involved with everything the way John Dickey was. And then they started the Great Issues course, which was a wonderful course, incidentally. And that was in the Dartmouth Hall with the navy guys. I mean, everybody was involved in that—oh no. That was after the war, that's right.

DONIN: So you took that in your senior year, the Great Issues course, right?

VAN RAALTE: Yeah.

DONIN: And I gather he assigned—everybody had an assigned seat that they had to show up in so that if you didn't know show up, they knew that—

VAN RAALTE: I think that's right, as I remember vaguely now. Yeah. But, I enjoyed the course so much. We had great speakers. I remember we had Nixon up here once.

DONIN: Right. He brought some pretty impressive characters—

VAN RAALTE: He brought some terrific impressive people.

DONIN: Yeah, to campus. Sort of a reflection of his State Department connections, I think.

VAN RAALTE: Yeah, that was a very wonderful course. I don't know why they don't still do it. I think it would be a good idea.

DONIN: When you came back in the fall of '46, Dickey must have had a real challenge in the sense that he was matriculating—you know, he had a new incoming class of, you know, seventeen-year-olds coming in as freshmen, plus this amazingly diverse group of upperclassmen who were a mixture of traditional, you know, college students like you—the group that came in in July—but then all these military guys that were coming back.

VAN RAALTE: That's correct.

DONIN: So that you had a big range of both—

VAN RAALTE: Oh, well that was true, even in '44, as I remember. I remember the two guys that roomed next to me: Martin Brusse and I can't remember the other guy's name. They were both from Denver, and they were both very good skiers, and they both had been in the Tenth Mountain Division in Italy. One of them might have been wounded and got discharged. I mean, they were a little older. [...]

DONIN: So did your social life revolve around the fraternity when you got back?

VAN RAALTE: Never.

DONIN: Really?

VAN RAALTE: Never. I was never a big fraternity guy because I was more involved in my tennis and squash and I was traveling a lot on the weekends. And I lived in the fraternity my senior year, but I had more friends like—Dick Weaver was my fraternity brother—he was a Sigma Nu—but Lanny Brisbin, who was my roommate before I went into the fraternity. He was a Sigma Chi. My life was more involved with my friends that I had made my freshman year.

DONIN: Oh, that's interesting.

VAN RAALTE: Like Dick Weaver and Lanny Brisbin. We were very close, all of us. Jim Schaefer, who I did room with, just became Alumni Council representative. My life was never too involved with the fraternity. I was friendly with them, but it wasn't my life.

DONIN: It was really about your friends from freshman year.

VAN RAALTE: And my tennis and squash.

DONIN: Oh, yes, of course. You know, when you have a team that you can identify with and socialize with—

VAN RAALTE: And you're traveling with all the time.

DONIN: Yep. Makes a big difference.

VAN RAALTE: Yeah.

DONIN: What did all the military guys do for social life? I mean, they were older. They weren't invited into the—Were they rushed for the fraternities?

VAN RAALTE: Some were, yeah. Sure. Quite a few of them were. The ones that participated—I mean, we had some military guys in our class, if you look at our yearbook, and I didn't know them. They just came here—some of them were married—they just graduated in the class, but they had nothing to do with the people in the class. In fact, two of them just died. I can't remember their names.

- DONIN: So there was really no opportunity to get to know them, at that point?
- VAN RAALTE: No. Well, you might. Some of them we got pretty friendly with, but most of them I would say were pretty aloof.
- DONIN: Well, especially the married ones, I think.
- VAN RAALTE: Oh, the married ones, yeah. They weren't involved at all, but some of them who weren't married participated in different teams and were—you know, we were quite friendly with them.
- DONIN: And I assume by then they had reintroduced all the sort of social traditions and the weekend activities. You know, Winter Carnival and Green Key.
- VAN RAALTE: Well, that was all strong after the war.
- DONIN: Right. That all came back.
- VAN RAALTE: Sure.
- DONIN: Right. And was it your sense that they were feeling welcome to participate in those sorts of things?
- VAN RAALTE: Absolutely. I don't think there was any prejudice to them to not participate, but I don't think a lot of them did participate.
- DONIN: Do you think you were a different student when you came back, in terms of, you know, focus or motivation?
- VAN RAALTE: A little bit. I was always pretty interested in studying.
- DONIN: And when did you decide on your major? When you got back?
- VAN RAALTE: Yeah.
- DONIN: What was it?
- VAN RAALTE: Economics. And then I wrote a senior thesis. I got very interested in investment banking, and I went down to Tuck School and there was a very famous investment banking case where they were sued to break up the investment bankers by the federal government. And I read the whole case. They had a transcript of it in the Tuck School

library, and I found that was the most interesting business, because you were trying to raise money to help and build businesses. So, I told my father I wanted to be in the investment banking business. Well, he had been raised with a fellow by the name of Wilbur May of May Department Stores. They were from St. Louis. And he said to Wilbur, "My son wants to go into investment banking." [Laughter]

And I had worked on Wilbur's ranch in the summer of 1947 when I got out of the navy. Well, the next year he had a ranch in Reno, Nevada, and since I'd ridden all my life, I got a job as a cowboy on his ranch. So, we were very friendly and he knew me very well. That ranch became a museum, incidentally. And anyway, so he said, "Where do you want to go? Goldman Sachs or Lehman Brothers? Because we're on the board of both. Mr. Sachs is on the board of May and so is Mr. Lehman." On the board of both. So, I interviewed both and I liked Goldman Sachs better, and they were nice enough to offer me a job. And so I knew where I was going when I got out of college.

DONIN: And, I'm sure being a veteran was a big plus, as well.

VAN RAALTE: I think it probably was. But we used to drive—I was just telling Mary Ellen on the way up that we drove—she said, "How did you go to Dartmouth when you were here?" I said, "We drove up the Merritt Parkway and then went on Route 5 all the way right to Hanover."

DONIN: It must have been a long ride.

VAN RAALTE: It was about six hours. Went through Northampton. We went through, you know, all those towns.

DONIN: But you could ride the train as well.

VAN RAALTE: You could, but at that point I think I had a car and drove up and brought some others with me from New York.

DONIN: The last three years that you were here, life pretty much went back to normal. You had—in terms of campus life, I mean. Campus life resumed—

VAN RAALTE: I think so.

DONIN: Except that you had a different president: Dickey. And you said he was much more visible than Hopkins. Did you ever meet him actually?

VAN RAALTE: Oh, many times.

DONIN: Really?

VAN RAALTE: Many times.

DONIN: Did he come and watch sporting events?

VAN RAALTE: All the time. He knew me, sure.

DONIN: So, he was able to call the students by their names.

VAN RAALTE: Many of them.

DONIN: And who were some of your more memorable teachers that made an impression on you? Was there one in particular? You said you liked history.

VAN RAALTE: I loved history. There was one fellow—I'm trying to remember his name—who taught history and Slavic history. He dressed in khakis all the time.

DONIN: Dressed in khakis? I thought they were very buttoned up and formal in those days.

VAN RAALTE: No, this guy dressed like he was in the army. [Laughter] Slouchy clothes and he was a wonderful teacher. Taught modern European history.

DONIN: Did you ever go off campus for your social life? You know, go visit the girls over in Saratoga Springs or down in Northampton?

VAN RAALTE: I went down to Smith.

DONIN: Road trips.

VAN RAALTE: And Holyoke.

DONIN: Oh yeah. Right.

VAN RAALTE: I never went over the other way. I never went over to Saratoga or any of those, but I did go to Smith and I went to Holyoke.

DONIN: Right. Because by then, Homecoming—I guess they didn't call it Homecoming. What did they call it? So those were all resumed, but at that point, then, they had—Forty-six was the last summer, I guess, that they had classes in the summer. You didn't go to school in the summer when you got back.

VAN RAALTE: Never.

DONIN: Right. You got off campus in the summer, I assume.

VAN RAALTE: Well, one summer I went out to work on the ranch.

DONIN: Out to Reno, right.

VAN RAALTE: One summer I worked for my father in the construction business and played in tennis tournaments all around the east.

DONIN: So it sounds like it really was a traditional college experience once the war was over.

VAN RAALTE: Absolutely.

DONIN: Did the students have a sense that Dickey was somehow transforming things on campus at all?

VAN RAALTE: Absolutely.

DONIN: What were some of the changes, other than Great Issues, that you sensed were taking place?

VAN RAALTE: I think he tried to get more involved with everything, and I think he tried to bring professors in who were more modern in their thinking and get rid of some of the old ones who had been here many, many, many years.

DONIN: Yeah, well that's definitely one of his legacies, I think, is that he sort of upgraded the faculty.

VAN RAALTE: And he did it.

DONIN: It was an aging faculty, I think, that needed—

VAN RAALTE: Absolutely, and you had a sense that that's what he was doing.

- DONIN: So the quality of the teaching probably improved.
- VAN RAALTE: It was very good. Yeah, we took road trips down to Smith and we took down to Holyoke. I remember going down there.
- DONIN: There was a lot more support of the sports teams, too, in those days. I mean, everybody would go to the football.
- VAN RAALTE: Oh, my god. When we'd go down to a game in Holy Cross or go down to Harvard, we had the whole full stands. I don't know how it is now, but, boy, we really supported. I mean, when Joe Sullivan was going through the line, he had really the whole team behind him. I mean, the whole school behind him.
- DONIN: So the whole school would travel to see these away games.
- VAN RAALTE: A lot of them. There was tremendous interest, but we had good teams then, too.
- DONIN: Well, there was a certain advantage, I would think, to having all these slightly older military guys populate these teams.
- VAN RAALTE: Sure. Absolutely.
- DONIN: Gave you all kinds of strength and sort of physical maturity.
- VAN RAALTE: That's right. Absolutely.
- DONIN: And other kinds of maturity.
- VAN RAALTE: Yeah, that was true, but that was the same at every school.
- DONIN: That's true.
- VAN RAALTE: So, it wasn't Dartmouth. It was every school.
- DONIN: Right. They had amazing teams.
- VAN RAALTE: Yeah. Today, it's who they recruit. It's a different world.
- DONIN: Yes, it is a different world. Well, let's see. What have I forgotten to ask you?
- VAN RAALTE: I don't know if you want to know about any of the individuals.

- DONIN: Yes, if you've got any good stories, let's hear them. There were some great stories in there about...
- VAN RAALTE: When Lanny went over—He used to drive over my roommate to Middlebury where his girlfriend—now his wife—he used to drive over there.
- DONIN: That's a heck of a drive from here, over the mountains. Especially in the winter.
- VAN RAALTE: Yeah. One time they didn't have enough money and they went through the tolls.
- DONIN: Without paying?
- VAN RAALTE: Yeah.
- DONIN: Oh, amazing.
- VAN RAALTE: Oh, a lot of stories.
- DONIN: Now, when you had girls come up here to visit for, like, Winter Carnival, there was a special house they stayed in?
- VAN RAALTE: Yeah.
- DONIN: Some social—some girls' social house or whatever. I don't know what it was called.
- VAN RAALTE: Yeah, it was something like that.
- DONIN: Mrs. So-and-so's Hostess House?
- VAN RAALTE: Well, and then there were some guesthouses back in the village. I remember putting people back up in there.
- DONIN: Yeah. And I gather some of the fraternities used to empty themselves out of their rooms?
- VAN RAALTE: That's correct.
- DONIN: And the girls would use those rooms and you guys would go sleep someplace else.

VAN RAALTE: Yeah. That's true.

DONIN: Because I guess there were pretty strict rules about—

VAN RAALTE: They were pretty strict.

DONIN: Where you entertained your lady friends.

VAN RAALTE: Yeah. They weren't too much abided by, but...

DONIN: And the name of the guy, the campus policeman—

VAN RAALTE: Wormwood.

DONIN: Nelson Wormwood.

VAN RAALTE: Yeah. Oh god, I remember him coming up. We had a water fight in our freshman year up in Richardson Hall in the top floor, and Wormwood came up. [Laughter] I think somebody squirted him or something.

DONIN: Oh, no. But the idea that there was *one* police officer for this entire campus boggles the mind.

VAN RAALTE: One policeman. Yeah and then they had Dean Neidlinger.

DONIN: Oh, yeah.

VAN RAALTE: He was not well liked, but his daughters were friends of mine. We used to ski with them all the time.

DONIN: Oh yeah. Susan and Sally.

VAN RAALTE: They were part of the gang. Since I was here as a freshman rooming next to Sonny and Colin, I knew all of the Hanover people. I skied with them. The Neidlinger girls.

DONIN: Yeah. Who else was here?

VAN RAALTE: Dent.

DONIN: Barbara Dent.

VAN RAALTE: Barbara Dent and that whole group. She married Hinman.

DONIN: She married Dick Hinman, right. I interviewed them.

VAN RAALTE: But we had a good time. We used to go out and ski together all the time. It was a great bunch of kids.

DONIN: Who else's daughter did we interview? John Mecklin's daughter.

VAN RAALTE: John Meck?

DONIN: John Mecklin. He was a sociology professor.

VAN RAALTE: But John Meck, who was the... I used to call on him and do business with him. He was the treasurer of the college.

DONIN: Yes, he was the treasurer and the lawyer, I think, wasn't he?

VAN RAALTE: Yes, very bright guy. He did a great job. He gave me a lot of business. I did a lot of business with him after the war.

DONIN: Uh huh. He was here for a long time. All the way through John Kemeny's presidency, I think, or close.

VAN RAALTE: Dick Leggatt married Dr. Gile's daughter.

DONIN: Well, there were a lot of Hanover people who—especially it seems that the girls were especially welcome on campus.

VAN RAALTE: Absolutely.

DONIN: Yeah. I interviewed Malcolm McLane, who ended up marrying—

VAN RAALTE: He married a Neidlinger.

DONIN: Yes, he did. Susan.

VAN RAALTE: I remember that. Her father was a tough guy, but he was—I shouldn't say it. He didn't have good judgment. I mean, they had a guy that was killed on the campus. You know that story.

DONIN: The fight?

VAN RAALTE: Yeah. And he told the police not to come. I mean, my god! They fired him like that. You know, right after that incident he was fired.

- DONIN: Yeah, I think that was John Dickey.
- VAN RAALTE: He fired him like that, because he just didn't have good judgment. He was— I always found him nice enough but he was...
- DONIN: I can't remember that kid's name.
- VAN RAALTE: Cirrotta.
- DONIN: Good for you.
- VAN RAALTE: I was almost involved in that.
- DONIN: Really?
- VAN RAALTE: Yeah. I knew everybody. Billy—well, he was a—Well, I don't want to get into the story. I know the whole story very well. Somebody punched him and he fell back and hit his head on the radiator. And the guy that punched him was kicked out, of course, and I don't know what ever happened. He was not much of a guy. They were all Delta, from the fraternity.
- DONIN: Sad story. John Dickey talks about it at length in his oral history.
- VAN RAALTE: I remember it like a book. Billy Felton was kicked out and I'll show you his picture. He was on the football team and a really nice guy. He was just in the crowd.
- DONIN: Cirrotta, was he a '48?
- VAN RAALTE: No. He was a navy guy and he was in the group. He didn't hit him, but he was in the group.
- DONIN: Guilt by association, I guess.
- VAN RAALTE: They kicked out everybody who was in the group that went up to his room. But Billy Felton was the only one in this class that was kicked out. He was captain. He was a terrific guy. [...] George Fifield. I remember we went down to Lebanon one time they had a carnival. [Laughter] He was trying to pick up some girls or something. I don't think we were very successful. He was the leader of the gang. He was a little older, I think, than some of the other guys.

- DONIN: Well, I think the older guys tended to go over to White River Junction and Lebanon quite often.
- VAN RAALTE: Yeah, and I went with them, but I... [...]
- DONIN: Now, I notice here in this Green Book that you got—your military affiliation is noted.
- VAN RAALTE: I'm surprised, but this must have been printed afterward.
- DONIN: It was printed the year after.
- VAN RAALTE: Yeah, that's why.
- DONIN: There's an explanation in the front.
- VAN RAALTE: Like me, they probably have USNR, too, because I went in the navy. I'm surprised at that. Here is Roger Tenney. He was my roommate. He went in the army, I know that, and never came back. Mouse Taylor: he was in the Crosby gang. They had a bunch of guys that were very close over in Crosby. Mouse Taylor, Hank Muller; they were all over in Crosby.
- DONIN: Well, I gather there was a lot of competition between dorms.
- VAN RAALTE: Dorms, yeah, and they had good baseball players: Norm Laird was a good friend of mine. He was on the football team. He just died, just last year. [...] Sam Katz is a very famous—He's the most famous guy in our class.
- DONIN: Really?
- VAN RAALTE: Yeah. He became—he's a doctor. He was with Dr. Enders in Harvard when they discovered the measles vaccine. He was one of the ones. And then he went down to the University of North Carolina Medical School. I think he's the head of that down there. He was the head of the pediatric division. Very, very famous, but he's the most famous guy in our class. I mean, as far as achievement, you know. [...]
- DONIN: I'm learning this talking to these classes, that some of them were assigned for their military training to different schools, and ended up going to those schools.

VAN RAALTE: That's correct. But, I don't know what happened to him. He did not come back.

DONIN: Right. Now, when you were here where did you ski? Which hill did you use?

VAN RAALTE: We went over to the Dartmouth Skiway, just beyond the golf course, but we also went up to Woodstock, and once in a while we went to Stowe.

DONIN: Wasn't there a rope tow here? Malcolm McLane talked about a rope tow somewhere.

VAN RAALTE: I think there was, yeah. It was a rope tow.

DONIN: Yeah, out in the golf course.

VAN RAALTE: But there was a rope tow at Woodstock that I remember. But they took me up to Stowe. I'll never forget that. I had been on skis about two weeks—I had never seen skis before—and Sonny and Colin took me up there with all the ski team. I think I fell down the whole hill.

DONIN: That was the beginning of your love of skiing.

VAN RAALTE: Yeah. That was something.

DONIN: Did you lose a lot in the war? Did a lot of your classmates, did they die in the war?

VAN RAALTE: I don't think we had any loss. I don't think we had one.

DONIN: Wow. That's amazing.

VAN RAALTE: Yeah. I don't think we lost one. Not that I know of.

[End of Interview]