MORGAN SWAN: Welcome back to Hindsight is 20/19, the podcast where we look at 250 years of Dartmouth’s history through 25 objects from the Library’s archival collections, one object per decade. I’m Morgan Swan and I’ll be your host for this episode.

Believe it or not, Dartmouth men in the early 20th century were into scrapbooking. In a big way. Mind you, this was before highways, or video games, or, you know, co-education. Dartmouth really was a college in the wilderness back then and, so, every Thursday night, the men of Dartmouth would gather together in small groups for a raucous night of scrapbooking. They would bring out a week’s worth of all of the random clippings and ephemeral souvenirs that had documented their lives at Dartmouth to date, and into their scrapbook it would go. These weren’t just any old scrapbooks, however. They were called “membooks,” a term most likely derived from the word “memorabilia” that was stamped on their cover. Any incoming student could go down and purchase one at the local stationery store in Hanover. Large and bulky, bound in green cloth, and filled with page after page of blank brown paper, a student’s membook was meant to capture all of the small details of his college experience that couldn’t be expressed solely through his curricular pursuits.

Here in Special Collections, we have dozens of Dartmouth membooks. Most students would have one large book that contained all of their college memories, but some needed several membooks to catalog their college experience. One student in particular, Fred Harris, member of the class of 1911 and founder of the Dartmouth Outing Club, amassed more than half a dozen books that they filled with bits and pieces of their college life. Although Fred’s books *are* fascinating, *his* memories aren’t the focus of this podcast. Instead, the object for this podcast episode is a membook that was created and owned by Howard Burchard Lines, a member of the class of 1912, known to most of his friends simply as “Rainey.”

Rainey Lines was well known and well-liked at Dartmouth, and he had an impressive portfolio of extracurriculars while in Hanover. He was the circulation manager of the Jack O’Lantern, Dartmouth’s student humor magazine, an editor of the Dartmouth yearbook (the Aegis), and the manager of the Dartmouth Gun Club. He also was a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity, the Webster Club, the Cercle Francaise, and the Round Robin Literary Society. As one can imagine, Rainey’s membook reflects his wide-ranging interests and is filled with many documents and photographs that provide evidence of his enthusiasm for sports, social dances, and the theater. This in itself is relatively unremarkable, given that most Dartmouth men at the time were similarly inclined.

However, Lines’s book contains a few hidden gems that set it apart from the run-of-the-mill membook. In amidst the fraternity dance cards and newspaper clippings about Dartmouth sports accomplishments, Rainey pasted in two slips of paper that seem unremarkable to the eye. It’s when you begin read them that their importance strikes home. The first is a Western Union telegram that simply reads, “Safe on board Car-pay-thia – Lines. 7:45 pm.” For some of you, perhaps that simple word, “Car-pay-thia,” stirs a distant memory; for others of you, it might bring an electrifying shock to your system. If neither describes your experience, then the second piece of paper might make things clearer for you. It’s a small blue card, pasted over the right side of the telegram, and it says the following:

“Office of the Surveyor….

Port of New York.

Admit within Customs lines….

on pier of Steamship Titanic….

Miss M. Lines and One.”

Okay, I’m guessing that the phrase “Steamship Titanic” rings a bell for you. The “M. Lines” mentioned on the custom card stands for Mary Lines, Rainey’s sister, and the plus one was undoubtedly his mother, Elizabeth. Wait a second, you may be asking, what’s going on? Why is the Titanic showing up in the membook of a Dartmouth student, next to the usual hum-drum ephemera of college life? And what’s the telegram all about?

To find out, you need to know a little bit more about Rainey Lines. Although an American who was born in New York, he moved to Paris with his family while still a young boy. His father, Dr. Ernest H. Lines, was a member of Dartmouth’s class of 1882 and had been sent to France as medical director of the New York Life Insurance Company. After attending the Anglo-Saxon School in France as a boy, Rainey followed the footsteps of his father and came to Dartmouth. He spent the majority of his vacations during college with his grandparents and so usually saw his immediate family only in the summers or on other rare occasions.

However, in April of 1912, Lines’s mother, Elizabeth, and his seventeen-year-old sister Mary were traveling to the United States from Paris to attend Rainey’s graduation as a member of the Dartmouth class of 1912.They boarded the *Titanic* in Southampton, England, and occupied a cabin on the B-deck, which would have meant a first-class berthing. It also meant that they were among the first passengers to depart the ship via lifeboat when it began to sink. Several hours later, Elizabeth and Mary were rescued from the freezing waters by the *RMS Car-pay-thia*, a transatlantic passenger steamship run by the Cunard Line and the first ship to respond to the *Titanic*’s distress call.

After being rescued, while still on board the *Car-pay-thia*, Mary wrote a letter to her friend Helen. In it, Mary relates her still-vivid memories of the tragedy, proclaiming, “Oh! My darling, what a horrible thing, this enormous ship engulfed in the little space of two hours. And the cries of the dying as it sank!! For there are only 700 saved out of two thousand, I believe.” Mary goes on to say that she will “never forget this sunrise; the sky clear as a glass of water, the sea calm as a mirror, and the enormous icebergs surrounding us, white as swans. Then, all of a sudden on the horizon, these two stars…but steady stars that didn’t fade and that soon appeared as ship’s lights. How happy we were. You can’t imagine it. God has shown a miraculous clemency and mercy towards us.” Two days later, the *Car-pay-thia* reached New York and so the Lines women presumably made it to Dartmouth to see Rainey graduate.

So, what became of Howard Lines after his family’s narrow brush with death? Well, after he graduated from Dartmouth on a spring day in 1912, most likely with his mother and sister in attendance, and then he went on to earn a law degree from Harvard in 1915. However, by this time, World War One had commenced, and Rainey’s adopted country of France must have weighed heavily on his mind and heart. His Harvard classmates convinced him to do the responsible thing, to stay in school and finish his degree. However, immediately afterwards, he returned to France to serve in the American Ambulance Corps. Lines was an ambulance driver for nearly a year and a half and served faithfully and bravely despite frequent illnesses and injuries, including appendicitis, an abdominal injury, chicken pox, and the flu. His recovery from the last is particularly impressive, given that more soldiers died of the misnamed “Spanish Flu” than in the trenches. Every time he was laid low, Rainey bounced back and immediately rejoined his unit.

However, despite his repeated recoveries, Lines’s numerous illnesses were harbingers of a more consequential malady, one that would eventually prove to be his undoing. While on the front in the winter of 1916, Lines came down with a simple cold that rapidly developed into a case of acute pneumonia. He succumbed to his illness on Christmas Eve of 1916 and was buried on Christmas Day in a little village in the Argonne, only ten miles from the trenches. Soon after, the word came to his family that before falling ill, Lines had been nominated for the Croix de Guerre, France’s highest military honor. The medal was awarded to him posthumously.  
  
In his last letter to his friend and Dartmouth classmate, Conrad Snow, Rainey mentioned that the American Ambulance Corps was creating a college wing in their field hospital, with the hopes that American colleges would sponsor a bed for the cost of $600 a year, roughly $14,000 in today’s money. Rainey hoped that Snow, as class secretary, might be able to rouse the class of 1912 to support the effort. After Rainey’s death, Snow began pursuing his last request in earnest as a way to honor the memory of Lines; in a move that underscores the widespread popularity of Lines among his fellow Dartmouth alums, Snow reached out not only to the class of 1912 but also appealed to the classes of 1910, 1911, 1913, and 1914. Soon after, a Dartmouth bed in honor of Lines was created at the American Red Cross Military Hospital Number One just outside of Paris.

In many ways, Howard “Rainey” Lines could be said to exemplify the quintessential Dartmouth student of the 1910s. He was a man of the world, raised in privilege and given access to one of the best educations that could be had at the time. He was also well-liked, well-accomplished, and filled with a deep sense of duty towards humanity and society. Also, as so often happens in Dartmouth’s history, the personal narrative of one of its alumni, Lines, intersects with significant moments in history. Lines had personal, intimate experience with two of the world’s greatest tragedies of the 1910s; one would result in an improbably happy outcome for his family, while the other would rob a family of a son and brother, and the college of an influential and well-loved alumnus. However, in this, the Lines family and Dartmouth College were hardly exceptional; a low estimate puts the total World War One death toll at over fifteen million people. Five years after the end of the war, Dartmouth alumni funded the creation of a large monument to honor their friends and classmates who had died in the catastrophic conflict which had claimed an entire generation of young men. Fittingly, they named it “Memorial Field.”

Rainey’s membook doesn’t mention anything about the war, which makes sense, given that it was still two years away when he graduated from Dartmouth in 1912. What’s more surprising, at least from today’s perspective, is that the tragedy of the Titanic goes unmentioned, save for the two slips of paper that he thought to include in his scrapbook. They don’t even warrant a page of their own, but instead are pasted in next to a couple of fraternity dance cards and a newspaper clipping about Dartmouth pole-vaulters. Despite his family’s close brush with death, the moment doesn’t seem to have killed Rainey’s zest for life, or at least for scrapbooking every last second of his time at Dartmouth.

This podcast series is concerned with looking back through time at the long history of Dartmouth College. When undertaking this sort of endeavor, it’s always tempting to present a narrative that conveys a unified and comprehensive “Dartmouth experience.” However, to do so would be a disservice to the memory of this institution. As the membooks of Rainy Lines and other alumni can attest, there are dozens of different Dartmouths, each one experienced as deep truth by the thousands of individuals who lived here for a while and loved or hated their brief time in Hanover. Because of the membooks in our archives, we are privy to many of those very personal remembrances of the college; each one of these records of memory reveals the college in a different light, through a different lens. Also, occasionally, in the recorded memories of alums like Rainey Lines, we’re also provided with a personal perspective on historical events that shaped an entire generation. The sinking of the *Titanic* and World War One dominated the second decade of the 20th century and altered the fabric of society for years to come.

Hindsight is 20/19 is a production of the Dartmouth College Library and is produced as part of the celebration of Dartmouth’s 250th anniversary. This episode was written and directed by Morgan Swan, produced by Laura Barrett, and our sound engineer was Jay Satterfield.