

An SfAA Oral History Interview with Art Gallaher Jr.
Between War & Restudy of Communities

Art Gallaher, Jr. served as president, secretary-treasurer, treasurer and board member of the Society. Art was an important source of wise counsel for the leadership of both the Society and the American Anthropological Association. He was the first winner of the Society's Sol Tax Award for Distinguished Service and recipient of the AAA's Presidential Award in 1989. He received the PhD from the University of Arizona, where he was a student of Edward H. Spicer. That department named him as a distinguished alumnus in 1989. Art Gallaher, Jr. spent the largest portion of an academic career as a highly successful administrator. In this capacity he served as chairman of the anthropology department, Dean of Arts and Sciences and he capped his career as Chancellor of the University of Kentucky. The interview treats his discovery of anthropology during his war time service, his intellectual influences in anthropology and aspects of his carrying out an important restudy of an American community. The interview was done and edited by John van Willigen.

GALLAHER: [I was raised in a] small cow town, [in] Western Oklahoma. Grew up, like all kids in that area knowing you're gonna leave. No such thing as staying there. It was ranch country, it was frontier. When I grew up, in the thirties. We moved from Camargo, that's when I grew up. We moved from Camargo in 1942, and that was because of the war. War was like a big dipper, it just stirred everything up, and people started moving for jobs. My dad had a job with a steel company in Oklahoma City. He wasn't working in Oklahoma City, but they wanted him to go to California. I started my high school, the senior year, in California, at Gardena, which is a suburb of LA. Gardena High. And right after I got started, couple -- probably a couple of months into the senior year, the company wanted to transfer my dad again. At that point, my parents went into a panic because I'd gone to the same school for eleven years, and here in my senior year, and everybody at that time was looking right into the military because there was no other option. So, my dad was to be transferred again by the steel company. And, so they said [to me], "Why don't you go back to Oklahoma and settle in?" Because he didn't know -- he said, "you know, hell, if I move this time, I'll be asked to move again, maybe in six months", that's the way things were going. So, I went back to Oklahoma, but instead of going back to Camargo, as everybody assumed I would, it was my choice, so I went to Anadarko.

VAN WILLIGEN: Anadarko? Who was there?

GALLAHER: Nobody. I didn't know anybody. Didn't know a soul. And I rented a room a block from the high school, and, house, and I did my senior year there. And just before my senior year was over, my parents moved back from California. And, it was one of the most interesting years of my life 'cause I knew I was going into the military, and I thought, what the hell? Why should I go back to Camargo? So, I decided to go someplace where I knew no one, and just for the novelty of it, and it was great. Okay, I volunteered, to go into the Coast Guard at that point before I graduated, while I was still seventeen. 'Cause if you didn't, you were gonna be drafted into the Army for sure. And at that time, no one had any idea when the war was gonna be over. I graduated from high school in '43. I turned eighteen in my senior year, in March of my senior year, and graduated in the first of June. But I volunteered for the U.S. Coast Guard because I wanted to fly. I wanted to go and become a pilot. And I took all the exams, everything was great, and the last thing they tested were my eyes, and the first time I knew that I needed glasses. 'Cause you had to have 20-20.

VAN WILLIGEN: I don't think it's quite that strict anymore. (Both laugh)

GALLAHER: It isn't. Then, it was. 'Cause I think every kid in the country wanted to become a pilot.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

GALLAHER: So, all the recruiting that was going on really had to do is we don't know how long this damn war is going on and one of the things we can offer you is a good future if it goes for the next ten years or whatever. You know, you've got most of your life invested in this. Well, at that point, I decided, the Coast Guard would be a good place to go because in peacetime, they're concerned with saving lives rather than taking them, for Christ's sake. And, 'cause I knew when I went in the Coast Guard that going into the new amphibious thing, was almost a dead cinch. And it turned out that way. [Anyway] the first time I ever heard the word "anthropology" was in Guadalcanal, from a second lieutenant in the Marines, who had a degree in anthropology. I think it was from Columbia.

VAN WILLIGEN: You ended up on one of these landing craft, or something --

GALLAHER: Well, no, I went to boot camp, incidentally, in Brooklyn, New York. And, the Coast Guard sent me to signal school. And right out of signal school, I was assigned to an APA. That's an amphibious attack transport [ship], the Joseph T.

Dickman. It was 550 feet long. It was a liner and it was converted to make it an amphibious attack ship. Which meant we took on Marines, rather than Army. I don't know why; but we always worked with Marines. The ship left the States before I got aboard it, and went into the Italian and French invasions. Went in the North African invasion, too. It was in Europe, I had already been assigned to it, so the orders were left for me to go aboard a sub-chaser in the North Atlantic. And I spent three months on that sub-chaser and almost died. It was in the wintertime, 100 foot long and waves about 30 feet high. I got sick and finally got transferred off of it. They were loaded with sound gear and they were wooden. [An] anti-magnetic issue with the German submarines. We patrolled in the North Atlantic, out of Newport, Rhode Island. Rough, rough duty. I got off of that, then, and about the time I got off of that, the Joseph T. Dickman came back from the Normandy invasion and when it dry-docked in Boston, I went aboard it, then. I'd been assigned to it all this time, but it's the first time, took me almost 10 months to get aboard it. We left on Christmas Day for the Pacific because the European theatre was winding down. We left, went up to San Francisco and picked up three thousand Marines there. It took us three weeks to get to the New Hebrides.

When we left there, we still had three thousand Marines battle-ready, and we went over to Guadalcanal into maneuver. At the time we didn't know, but ultimately, we were maneuvering for Okinawa.

VAN WILLIGEN: So, Guadalcanal at the time that you were there was after it had been [invaded].

GALLAHER: U.S. was in control, but, uh, there were still a lot of Japanese on the island. On one Sunday afternoon, a friend of mine and I went off of the ship to go into the Army base in Guadalcanal. And a guy picked us up in a Jeep, he was a second lieutenant in the Marines, and we got to talking. And, he found out I was from Oklahoma. Well, it turns out, he was very interested in the Comanche Indians. The link there was with [Ralph] Linton. I didn't have any idea about anything, and that -- and he told me then that he had graduated as an anthropologist, I think at Columbia, he said. And, that he was an anthropologist and had been assigned to military government.

VAN WILLIGEN: So, he was working as an anthropologist at that point.

GALLAHER: He was -- He was working as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps in military government, and he was there because he was an anthropologist.

VAN WILLIGEN: Goodness.

GALLAHER: And he was, working as a liaison between the military and the natives that had fled into the highlands. The natives had all been coastal dwellers and the Japanese had abused them and all of that, so they had retreated, literally into the interior of the island of Guadalcanal.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

GALLAHER: And he was liaison because the military was trying to bring them back down, create friends, by giving them jobs and things like that. So, gosh, I thought that was interesting.

VAN WILLIGEN: And you ran into him by accident?

GALLAHER: By accident. He picked us up to give me a ride in and as I say, the first time I ever heard the word "anthropology" was from him.

VAN WILLIGEN: And he said that you didn't know exactly what it was?

GALLAHER: I didn't know what it was. Well, he said, "If you can get off the ship, say, next weekend, I'll come by and pick you up and take you with me up into the mountains." Okay, I got off, (laughs) we were on maneuvers. I got off, he came by, and he was in his Jeep and he had a two-wheel trailer on the back of it with a -- everything under a tarp. So, we went up into the interior, took us probably three hours to get up there --

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: -- and we got up there and the -- he was known to the villagers, when we got there. He had been there before. Well, as it turns out, uh, oh, when we took the tarp off of the trailer, it was a portable generator and the outdoor movie screen.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

GALLAHER: And he was gonna introduce the movies to these natives for the first time. And we set up the screen and, the movie was some Western with a lot of shooting and fights and horses and the whole bit. And the natives loved it. They also were very curious, they came back, burnt their hands on the projector 'cause it was

pretty hot. They went around behind the screen and found out that you could see the image from the other side as well as the front. So, I spent two days up there with him. And on the way back down, I said, you know, "This is really interesting stuff," I said, "Um, what -- what can I read?" And so, he said, "Well," he said, "I would suggest that the first thing for a guy like you to read would be, Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture*."

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

GALLAHER: And that was -- but he gave me -- gave me that source at about the time he got me back to the ship. Well, that night, I went down to the ship's library and damned if there wasn't a copy of *Patterns of Culture*. And I remember looking in it and it had been donated by some women's club someplace (laughs) because they were stocking every outpost they could with books, you know? And so, I read then over the next three months, I guess, I must have read *Patterns of Culture* about five or six times. Great start.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes, I think so.

GALLAHER: And at that time, I became really a configurationist. Later, I understood that word because of Ruth Benedict was looking at culture wholes.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: Well, as soon as we got back to the States after Okinawa. We went in San Francisco and, I went across the Bay to Berkeley. Never been in Oakland before. Went across the Bay to Berkeley and went to the library, University of California library in Berkeley and asked the woman at the desk, I said, "You know, I've read one book in anthropology, it's *Patterns of Culture*," and I said, "I want something else to read." And she said, "Just a minute," and she called over a girl who was about twenty-one who was from Iceland, from Reykjavik, Iceland, who had in fact got caught in this country when the war started.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: You know, Iceland was neutral during the Second World War. But she was a student at Mills College. A student in languages. And, she was coming over to Berkeley, she worked in the library and she also was taking anthropology courses at Berkeley. So, I told her what I had read, the circumstances under which I had read

it. And she said, "Well, the next book you've got to read," she said, was Ralph Linton's *Study of Man*. So, the second book I read in anthropology was *Study of Man*. My ship was turning around and going back and we were going to Manila. So, I told her, I said, "You know, I really, I can't check this out," I said, "I'm going to be out of the States now for another two or three months." And we went to Manila to pick up the first load of prisoners liberated by the Philippines operation.

VAN WILLIGEN: These are American military?

GALLAHER: They were from Bataan, the Bataan Death March. The reason we were sent out there is because the ship that I was on was specially equipped, when we landed troops, we always hung around to take on casualties. Because we had four operating theatres on each ship. And, so they sent us out to -- to bring the first load of the Bataan Corregidor prisoners on.

VAN WILLIGEN: Um-hm.

GALLAHER: Well, she said, "I'll check it out for you," so she checked out Ralph Linton, *Study of Man*, and she said, "I'll re-check it," 'cause she worked there. (Both laugh) She said, "Don't worry about it. How long do you think you're gonna read it?" Well, hell, I must have read *Study of Man* about five times on that trip. So, I read, uh, I was thoroughly versed in Ruth Benedict and Ralph Linton. Those were my first two contacts with anthropology.

I've thought of many times how fortunate I was, because it really it cast anthropology for me in very specific directions. As I said, I was a configurationalist; I wasn't a particularist.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: In fact, I got bored reading all that stuff on Papa Franz Boas and needle cases and stuff like that.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right, right.

GALLAHER: So, I went to the University of Oklahoma, I entered university --

VAN WILLIGEN: Did you have the idea, at this point, that you were going to be an anthropologist?

GALLAHER: Well, I knew I was interested in it but I really didn't know -- I didn't know at this point when I was going to get out.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

GALLAHER: And I had grown up thinking that probably I would do something, in petroleum. See, Oklahoma's a petroleum state you have to take [studies in this area].

VAN WILLIGEN: Okay.

GALLAHER: That was almost a statement of how you attest to your virility.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes, I see.

GALLAHER: So, I entered the University of Oklahoma as a petroleum geology major.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

GALLAHER: Still fascinated by geology, but not petroleum.

VAN WILLIGEN: Um-hm.

GALLAHER: And that field began to change almost the day that I entered at OU in 1946.

VAN WILLIGEN: So, you were working towards a BS in petroleum?

GALLAHER: A BS in petroleum geology. Best petroleum geology department in the world, as a matter of fact. But I found out I was interested in historical geology. It was hard rock geology and some things that had nothing to do with petroleum. And so, I was [in it for] two years. But I always had anthropology in the back of my mind. But like a lot of people, I didn't have any idea of whether or not you could make a living at this.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

GALLAHER: At the end of my sophomore year, I decided I don't want to work as a geologist in the oil business. I was virtually ready for a degree, at that point.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: So, I shifted over to the anthropology program at the University of Oklahoma. University of Oklahoma had a department of four people classic model at the time --

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes. One of each. (Laughs)

GALLAHER: One of each. They were having problems hanging on to a physical anthropologist.

VAN WILLIGEN: Who were those people, do you remember?

GALLAHER: Karl Schmitt was handling cultural anthropology. Actually, Karl was trained at the University of Chicago as an archaeologist. Chairman of the department was Bob Bell, Robert Bell, who was an archaeologist, University of New Mexico graduate. The linguist was Paul Garvin. Paul Garvin later had a reputation in the computing. He was a refugee from Czechoslovakia, fresh out of research in Oceania. A new Ph.D. in linguistics from Indiana. OU had a long tradition of linguistics, anthropological linguistics. And the time that I was there, in my senior year, a fellow by the name of [Russell W.] Newman, physical anthropologist, was there, came there from Berkeley. They couldn't fund the lines, so he went on to work for the government at Woods Hole, Massachusetts. I did a bachelor's degree and a master's degree.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes, I noticed that your master's thesis was on Seminole Freedmen? What you had in Oklahoma were people who had been removed from Florida.

GALLAHER: I'd grown up with Indians had a maternal grandfather who was part Indian. I knew Indians my whole life and was around them. I wasn't all that fascinated with the exotic, Native Americans. [I was] very interested in it, but, [it was] not something that brought me in anthropology like an awful lot of the generation before me. I was primarily interested in minority relations [and] ethnic attitudes.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

GALLAHER: I was interested in a hell of a lot of things that anthropology really wasn't covering at that time, including social stratification.

VAN WILLIGEN: Was that department quite traditional in its orientation?

GALLAHER: Yeah, it was University of Chicago, it was quite traditional. I didn't have traditional interests, though and Karl Schmitt recognized that.

VAN WILLIGEN: So, was this department a -- um, dominated by Native American studies?

GALLAHER: No. It was the very classic, it represented the four-field introduction to anthropology, basically.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

GALLAHER: Incidentally, they did a very good thing, though, when I went over and declared a -- a major, Bob Bell, the chair, said, "You know," he said, "we don't have very many majors here." But he said, "And you ought to give it a serious consideration about the decision you're making." And that was just before I started my junior year. And so, he said, "We'll have a meeting with the faculty and you can tell us what you're interested in, and we can explain to you some of the things you may not know about anthropology." And they did, and they did a very good job. That was very helpful, at that time.

VAN WILLIGEN: To give you kind of a realistic basis for making the decision?

GALLAHER: Whole thing's was based in realism. Little over three hundred anthropologists, professional anthropologists at that time, working in the United States. That was it. And what they said, "You seem to be interested in race relations an awful lot," and then they said, "You know, we got a sociology department here is much better-known and bigger than we are."

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: And I said, "Well, I -- I intend to take sociology courses."

VAN WILLIGEN: You've had a long and productive relationship or attitude towards sociology.

GALLAHER: Oh, God, yeah. One of the reasons John [W.] Bennett and I always got along so well, 'cause John came out of that, really interested in the interstitial areas

between anthropology, cultural anthropology, sociology and social psych. And that's where my interests were, at the time.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

GALLAHER: But I took a lot of courses and so -- but -- but back to the -- the departmental interview. They told me, he said, "Well, now, you understand that if you're gonna major in anthropology, cultural anthropology, don't look back until you get the Ph.D."

VAN WILLIGEN: Um-hm.

GALLAHER: Said it, uh, "Now," he said, "Archaeology, you can go out sometimes, and we wouldn't advise people to go in to just working for the Park Service."

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

GALLAHER: So, I said that, uh -- Don't look back until you get the Ph.D.

VAN WILLIGEN: Um-hm.

GALLAHER: And then they said, "And when you get the Ph.D.," they said, "it's going to take you probably four or five years to get a job." 'Cause everything was academic. So, I thought, "What the hell, I'll just put that behind me, I'll just forget about it." (Laughs) Because at that point, I was really fascinated with anthropology. I was interested. I'd already had a couple courses. But I really did appreciate that advice.

VAN WILLIGEN: I don't understand exactly what your position at that point, you're saying that you thought I won't go ahead with the Ph.D. or I will go ahead with the Ph-

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GALLAHER: No, I accepted the premise of the Ph.D. I mean, I understood that. So, what I did then was to move over to anthropology. Karl Schmitt sort of took me under his wing. He recognized that I had all kinds of interests that were not conventional. And basically, I came to a point, I was taking a lot of sociology courses and found sociology a hell of a lot more germane at that point [of] understanding things than I was getting out of anthropology. Uh, anthropology was still dominated very much by exotica.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: But when I got down to it, I found out that I really liked viewing the world through a cultural lens more than the social. I was more comfortable looking at culture than I was looking at society. And sociologists were just beginning to gear up for their empiricism.

VAN WILLIGEN: You discovered sociology through anthropology.

GALLAHER: I worked with Lew [Lewis M.] Killian, you know, in sociology. Lew Killian ended up at Florida State University, he was from Florida. He was at OU. And he was very interested in race relations. At that time, had an enormous federal project, on American reaction to disaster. That was, boy, a big thing. He put together a team of researchers. That was as an undergraduate. And what we did, any time there was a cyclone or a flood, (laughs) we descended on them, trying to collect data.

VAN WILLIGEN: So, that's like those, um, uh, storm-chasing meteorologists.

GALLAHER: Yeah, they're doing just now like that. (Laughs) Well, we were doing the same thing except pretty crudely.

VAN WILLIGEN: Oh, I see.

GALLAHER: One of the most interesting, fascinating things that happened, though, is in the -- in, I guess it was when [my wife] Dixie and I were married in somebody's church. I was still working with Lew Killian's project when I was working on master's degree. And damned if Oklahoma didn't have a slight earthquake. (Both laugh) Great. I'm sitting there in the building, and all at once I say to myself, "This is an earthquake." My second response was the geologist telling me we can't have one in here. (Laughs) I went to go on the other side of experience, so I have -- and a lot of other GIs, went under the tables and chairs. Well, Lew Killian just lamented, "Damn," he says, "if we'd just known that, we could have locked all the doors," (laughs) 'cause everybody went into the streets. And incidentally, I was developing an interest in application at that point.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: And Karl Schmitt says, "Well, you're gonna have to take -- You're gonna have to do something in community studies," he said.

VAN WILLIGEN: Well, already, if you look at the experience with the Marine, that was a kind of an applied [experience].

GALLAHER: Yes, it was.

VAN WILLIGEN: It's very difficult for me to take this [disaster research out of the context of application?].

GALLAHER: Yes, and you shouldn't. I was well-oriented toward the application of social science to human problems. These [sociologists] had more to offer, as well as the social psychologists. Social psych had a real guru at that time, a Turk. Sherif was the fellow's name, Muzafer Sherif. He was the guy who did the Robbers Caves experiments in social psych later. But he was from Turkey and he could hardly speak English. And so, I went over and audited his course. They were into that at OU at the time. I don't know whether he -- at that point, he was setting up the Robbers Cave thing, which became real famous. But hell, he'd come in the class with his textbook, (laughs) his wife was a social psychologist and she obviously had translated the manuscript for him into English. And he would read from his textbook. That was it. Couldn't ask him questions, you couldn't do anything, he couldn't understand English at that point. Now, he was learning -- he was working like hell to try to do it, but I -- I didn't feel I had the time. (Laughs) And I was more interested in [sociology], you know, I was really turned on to theory in sociology. I think -- you know, it still bothers me that anthropologists are -- we're so piss-poor in theory, you know? (Laughs) We don't even know what it is, I think.

VAN WILLIGEN: Don't get me started.

GALLAHER: But Karl Schmitt recognized, Karl told me a couple of times, said, "You ought to be in philosophy." (Laughs) He said, 'cause I was really interested in philosophical issues. And if I hadn't been so fascinated with anthropology, I would have probably just tilted over without the foggiest notion of where in the hell I was gonna go with it.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: But the whole idea of working with the kinds of ideas, and you know, after I got into administration, I really found out how disappointed I was in the direction philosophy was going. But Karl Schmitt got me started really into social anthropology. He said, "Your interests are really more social anthropology than

cultural," and then, there was a difference. You know, when I went to the University of Arizona my degree was not in cultural anthropology. It was in social anthropology. They drew that distinction. And Ned [Spicer] and those guys from the University of Chicago, were they were social anthropologists.--

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes, occasionally people would say American social anthropologists.

GALLAHER: Right.

VAN WILLIGEN: Bronislaw Malinowski was at Arizona, right?

GALLAHER: He was at Arizona. They were still talking about Malinowski when I went out there in '52.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

GALLAHER: But Karl Schmitt's the guy who got me pointed in some right directions. I was also very influenced by Paul Garvin in linguistics. Garvin was a brilliant son of a gun. Bizarre personality, but a really bright guy. I took I took reading courses with Karl. He gave me a reading course in social anthropology. And he gave another reading course in community studies.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: And, when I approached him with the notion of doing a [thesis], I said you know, "I'm really interested in the Seminole Freedmen." And he said, "What do we know about them?" Well, we didn't know a damn thing about them. And, uh, he says, "Well," he said, "why don't you go down to Wewoka, Seminole County, and see what you could find out." 'Cause we didn't know where there were any Seminole -- any blacks still identifying as Seminole freedman, or any Seminole Indians still identifying blacks as far as the tribe. Most of the Seminole Freedmen were dispersed. They were in what in the Southeast, the Creeks call towns. Dispersed settlements. But, in the Seminole tribal organizations there were two bands in that structure that were Seminole Freedmen. You know, Dosar Barkus and Caesar Bruner bands. So, I started out then not knowing whether there were really even any Seminole Freedmen still alive.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: So, what I ended up doing was a census [and] found over five hundred people who identified as Seminole Freedmen.

VAN WILLIGEN: They were in one county?

GALLAHER: In Seminole County, yeah. They had been removed with the Indians, they were considered tribal members. So, I found them there, and what I did then was ended up doing sort of a survey, when my real interest was actually ethnic identity, how people identified ethnically. Incidentally, my master's thesis has spawned three doctoral dissertations at OU. (Laughs) Two of them in anthropology and one in history. Karl Schmitt was always trying to get me to send it to the American Ethnological Society, but I was moving on to other things.

VAN WILLIGEN: I wanted to focus on that because your later work. Your dissertation at Arizona is a classic, from my perspective. [It] fits in that classic body of community studies.

GALLAHER: It does. And that's when I discovered Spicer.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: And I was by then -- I was a structural functionalist equilibrium guy except I had serious questions about mutual dependency as the driving force for dynamics in that theory. And I was inclining, and this was my sociology background, I was inclining toward tension management as a more realistic explanation for dynamics. [For the] things that were happening within structures and functions.

VAN WILLIGEN: What was that course in the community studies? Can you recall any of the things that were prominent in that?

GALLAHER: That's where I met Spicer's *Pascua*. [*Pascua: A Yaqui Village in Arizona*]. I was fascinated with Spicer's *Pascua*. Not because of the Indians; I was fascinated. I think, one of the best things Spicer ever did because he took a hypothesis out of structural functionalism out of Radcliffe-Brown and tested it as it moves in space. Yaquis from Northern, Mexico to Tucson. And, you know, you've read *Pascua*, you know what it is --

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: -- and I thought that was absolutely, totally, beautifully done. So, I was interested in that, and, - there's several others. *Saint Denis* was one of those, *Tepotztlan* was another. They covered a wide area --

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

GALLAHER: -- but I wasn't -- when I went to Arizona, well, first, uh, Karl Schmitt said, "Maybe you ought to go to Harvard."

VAN WILLIGEN: Um-hm.

GALLAHER: And -- And -- And not do anthropology at Harvard, but do social relations.

VAN WILLIGEN: Sure.

GALLAHER: That -- That institute was getting tremendous attention at that time, especially [Clyde] Kluckhohn and [F.S.C.] Northrup. -

GALLAHER: And Karl said, "Just listening to you and your interests," he said, "maybe you ought to go to Harvard." I considered doing, a doctorate in social relations at Harvard.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: And I really was turned on by Kluckhohn. Kluckhohn was the closest thing to theory that I was getting out of anthropology. Then -- and [Robert] Redfield came along with community stuff, and I began to tilt in that direction, too. But, who was interested in the Southwest got in touch with Kluckhohn, who he knew, told him about this guy that was working with him with his own master's degree and that I was interested in the kinds of things that social relations people were into. Kluckhohn wrote back and said, "gosh he sounds really good," I mean, he would really enjoy the program. But he said, "I've got to tell you," he said, "I'm not gonna be around much for the next three or four years." 'Cause we were finishing up -- he was finishing up the Navajo stuff. And at that time, the comparative values project was just getting underway and he said, "I'm going to be in the Southwest" because he was the grand honcho in all of that.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

GALLAHER: And incidentally, I think, one of the most beautiful things done in anthropology was *Modern Homesteaders*, Evon Vogt. [*Modern Homesteaders: The Life of a Twentieth-Century Frontier Community*, 1955] God, that's a fantastic book. That's my community, I grew up in Western Oklahoma, in that kind of community.

Well, its ethnography, but it's not -- it has nothing to do with conventional anthropological ethnography. It's a tremendous piece of work. That whole series on Navajo that Kluckhohn is absolutely fantastic. I would have given anything to work with Kluckhohn. But he said very honestly, he said, "You know, given the nature of the institute they'll go into anthropology and bring somebody out," but he said, "I can't guarantee that it'll be the kind of thing that your students are gonna be all that interested in." So, I decided to go to the University of Arizona, primarily because of Ned Spicer.

VAN WILLIGEN: And you knew about Spicer ahead of time?

GALLAHER: I knew about him because of the *Pascua*. And I was really fascinated with the way he handled structural functional theory in the field. *Pascua* was a test of a basic hypothesis. And I thought it was beautifully done.

VAN WILLIGEN: I always felt that Spicer theoretically was a kind of a skeptic, you know? He was sure of it, but he wasn't a true believer, exactly. You know, it's sort of discovery-oriented, I think.

GALLAHER: No question, I tried to get Ned a couple of times, after I graduated, to do a book on theory. Because I learned a hell of a lot of theory with Ned. I went to Arizona, with knowing a number of things. And one I was still interested in structural functionalism but I didn't want much to do with mutual dependency theory and equilibrium. - I was already over into something that was just beginning to be defined as tension management theory in social science.

VAN WILLIGEN: So were there any other places you were considering besides Harvard and Arizona?

GALLAHER: I thought of New Mexico. Again, I liked the Southwest. I knew anthropology was big in New Mexico but I didn't have any idea, and that would have been a mistake to have gone there. [Frank C.] Hibbens and [Florence] Hawley and

those people. They were fighting. You know, when I first went to Arizona, there were two or three students who finally bailed out of that department and came to Arizona.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: I went to Arizona for Spicer. I didn't go out there because of all of the Indians, and its history, or any of that. I went there because of Ned, but I went there and my first meeting with Ned, I figured the outline to him of that I wanted to do, and he said, "Great, do it."

VAN WILLIGEN: And so, you had an idea when you first met with Spicer about your research interests, you talked about doing a restudy? I see, that's really interesting.

GALLAHER: He said, "That's great," he said "well," he said -- You had to back up a bit. One of the things that I really was interested in was short-term processes of culture change. I wasn't interested in evolutionary [theory] the historical groups of theory in anthropology. I thought we should have moved beyond that a long time ago.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: So, I was interested in short-term processes and there was damn little being done, hardly anything. I learned more from, peripherally in sociology about short-term change than I was learning from anthropology. So, I was interested in short-term process. I was interested particularly in how this impacted on social stratification. Culture change interested me very early.

VAN WILLIGEN: Sure.

GALLAHER: And let me tell you, I have some problems with Ned Spicer on this know, Ned Spicer was involved in the SSRC seminar on acculturation and culture change. Those guys didn't come up with much, you know. But, culture change was big when I went into this field. Everybody was talking culture change and very honestly, it's one of the things that people outside of the field identified. The sociologists in there [were saying] you guys are really into the right thing, how other cultures change. Well, we weren't doing anything much in that area, and what people were talking about to me came through as, "We need to know more about the actual dynamics of culture change." So, I got interested in short-term process at that point. And that got me over into Linton, it got me over into Redfield.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: I learned a lot about this from Ned Spicer. In Plainville, I was absolutely taken with [this] because I thought to myself, if I'm going to be interested in short term process, I need to work for baselines. So, the restudy thing popped out.

VAN WILLIGEN: So from the need for a baseline that the idea for the restudy [came].

GALLAHER: Restudying, yeah.

VAN WILLIGEN: The other theme or the other angle is a methodological issue having to do with, you know, did West did it right or not? [Carl Withers wrote *Plainville, USA* under the pseudonym James West. Both names appear in the text of the interview.]

GALLAHER: Yeah, My assumption was that anthropologists were ethical people. My assumption was always that. However, when you do a restudy, why, I mean, you got to find out what the hell is really [going on]. [If] the first guy was close, or right, or just goofin' off. And fortunately, in both the Irish thing, and in the Plainville, I came out with renewed respect, but with different kinds of questions about the original studies. Oscar Lewis [author of a restudy of a study of a Mexican village done by Robert Redfield] died before he and I ever got together. We got together on the telephone and we got together in the mails. He had done *Tepoztlan*, and, I was really impressed with Redfield's thinking. And I always attributed his thinking to being non-anthropological. His father-in-law, [Robert E.] Park, in Chicago, sociology. And he came out of law, and he and Kluckhohn both, uh, all those guys came out of something else into anthropology. I wasn't really interested in improving methodologies. I was interested in using - in something that I felt I could trust. I knew I had to check it. But the Plainville thing, I thought was very good because in Plainville there were two very definite interests. One, I always felt from the very beginning in anthropology, we're spending too much time with pre-literates. Culture seemed to me as a viable concept, (laughs) in complex societies as it did in simple societies.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes, I recall earlier in our conversation, you said you weren't interested in the exotic nor, Native Americans as exotics, that resonates with what I hear you saying. Plus, your ambivalence about the boundary between anthropology and sociology.

GALLAHER: Yes. There's some areas that you're either talking about culture or society. That's the boundary. Otherwise, it's just like this.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

GALLAHER: You end up at the same place.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right, right, right.

GALLAHER: But when I went to Arizona, I told Ned Spicer I wanted to do a restudy. He said, "Just give it some thought," he said, "You're gonna be around here for a year or two before, so don't make that decision right now."

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

GALLAHER: I'd pretty much made it, though incidentally, I got interested in a couple of problems at Arizona and that had to do with industrialized community. By then, I was pretty much influenced by Everett Hughes in sociology. Who thinks anthropologically as a sociologist.

VAN WILLIGEN: So, where was Hughes? In the East Coast somewhere.

GALLAHER: He was then, but he, shortly after I went out there, he started doing that thing on the border, the South.

VAN WILLIGEN: So, you would see him?

GALLAHER: Didn't see him.

VAN WILLIGEN: Oh.

GALLAHER: I just knew about him. [I] met him later because he was showing up at SfAA meetings. I read everything the guy's written and I'll tell you, he's damn good. Yes, very good. But the other thing about Plainville, I mean, to me, that was a superb study because I thought the guy had done a pretty good job. I thought West had pretty well nailed that community, 'cause of [it] wasn't the same community that I grew up in, in Western Oklahoma but it was very close.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

GALLAHER: It turns out he was a farm kid from Nevada, Missouri, which is only forty miles away from Plainville. He was out of the Kardiner-Linton seminar at Columbia? That big seminar there on culture and personality was Linton and Kardiner, and that's how he got to Plainville.

VAN WILLIGEN: Is it important that he was a farm kid and you were a city, a town kid?

GALLAHER: I don't think so, no.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

GALLAHER: No, I don't think so. What he knew a lot about and what I knew a lot about even though I lived in the town, you know an awful lot about *gemeinschaft* behavior. There's nothing *gesellschaft* in it --

VAN WILLIGEN: The reason I ask is this idea I've often run into farm-raised kids in the area of community would have a kind of an outsider perspective, whereas, the town kids...

GALLAHER: The one I grew up in Western Oklahoma, you couldn't distinguish.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

GALLAHER: You couldn't distinguish. In fact, there were an awful lot of farmers or ranchers who lived in town, as opposed to living on the land. And Carl, he had done that, he came from a very, very poor background. But I thought he had done a very good job in Plainville. And I thought that's going to be a good baseline. And the second thing is, that book projected a very strong social stratification system. And one of the interests I had in short-term process, which grew out of my interest in race and ethnic interaction was in social stratification viewed as a system. And to me, that was one of the social structures that was always gonna have to be changed along with attitudes. You can change the attitudes and not change the structure and nothing happens. Jim Crow proved that to us, in fact. They just introduced a new structure. The social stratification thing in Plainville that was the thing that we did do.

VAN WILLIGEN: What was your relationship with West?

GALLAHER: West and I were in correspondence before I went to Plainville. He was a very encouraging, very encouraging. He encouraged me from a variety of vantage points. One, he was fascinated with somebody who wanted to do these things. [He] was interested in why, so I told him, I'm just using him as a baseline. I wasn't interested in what had happened to Plainville, there was an acceptance as far as I could learn from it. And he arranged to come to Plainville about three months before we left. However, he came to Plainville, he and I and Dixie met over on the lake and we spent all of one day that I was reviewing for him where we were in the project. But most importantly, I was telling him it's not people in Plainville, and 'cause -- you know, we had an incredibly difficult time getting into the -- the community because of the hostility directed toward the first work. Up until two months, we weren't sure we can do it. They were nice to us. I mean, just really nice. I mean, you know, when they come up to you and say, "God, you and your wife are really nice people, the only trouble is, you're a damned anthropologist." Well, West did what our anthropologists did a lot of at that time, he justified his existence in terms they understood, history of the community. And he was interested in the history of community. But Plainville, also [has] a notion of what history is. And it's not talking about social mobility of the mailman for example. [The person I spoke with] died, saying he would shoot the son of a bitch if he ever came back. Carl knew some of that, but he didn't really understand, I think the intensity of it, he didn't. And a copy of *Plainville, U.S.A.* was in the local library and he had not been careful enough in disguising his sources and somebody'd penciled real names in.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

GALLAHER: Anyways, Plainvillers did me a great favor. And God, I was so pleased when I sent copies of the book, my book, when one of my best informants wrote me and said, "Well, Art," he said, "them that read it trying to find out who was in it were disappointed." (Both laugh) That's 'cause I'd used pseudonyms all the way through, and contrived, and basically to hide the sources.

VAN WILLIGEN: So, you were able to recognize the names in the library version?

GALLAHER: Oh, Christ, yeah, I knew exactly who... (Laughs) But Carl, he gave me a lot of help. He said, "You need to talk to this person and that person." He said, "I'm not saying they're going to do you a lot of good, they did me a hell of a lot of good," he said.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: So, Carl we met and he hung around the town for a day or two, and, oh, Reverend Wright, who's Carl's good buddy in town, Reverend Wright brought him over and introduced him to me. (Laughs)

VAN WILLIGEN: What was your entry point in the community?

GALLAHER: Just moved in.

VAN WILLIGEN: You just moved in?

GALLAHER: We just moved in. We moved in and my explanation was I am here to study changes in agriculture and how the community has accommodated those.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

GALLAHER: And that was basically to get to any specific theoretical issue, you had to go through that other lens, first. You had to do all that. And that made sense. And the interesting thing that happened in Plainville, Dixie and I, as I say, we hung around for two and a half months, really thinking maybe this isn't gonna happen. And then, all at once, by then I had developed some real close relationships in the community. Personal. And so, I told one or two of 'em, guy who turned out to be my chief informant, who had worked with Withers, incidentally, and I told him, I said, "You know, I'm not quite sure this is gonna work." Well, whatever, all at once, the chemistry changed. The Plainvillers then began to take us in. They began to take us in, and they began to smother us. Actually, all at once, I was the assistant scoutmaster. I was given the task of representing the community in a county-wide competition, the March of Dimes, kind of thing, big deal. And I was the chair of Plainville Group. I played on the town team, basketball town team. The guys beat the hell out of me. (Laughs)

VAN WILLIGEN: Okay.

GALLAHER: This guy from the outside, coming in here, wanting to play our game. (Laughs) I was a pretty good basketball player, but God, I took some lumps that I think were deliberate. Just to put me in my place.

VAN WILLIGEN: Okay.

GALLAHER: Oh, but I played on the town team. And the thing that I did, well, first, let me back up.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: Any time I went into the field, I did this with the Freedmen and I did it in Plainville, I cultivated some informants after I knew I was going to do the work. I cultivated five informants, to let me know, periodically, how I was being perceived in their section of the community. These people weren't together, they was dispersed over the community. And I at about three months in, they came to me, each one of them said, "We hear that people in my area you're here now to check up on old people to see whether they deserve old age pensions, now or in the future."

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

GALLAHER: God, that's deadly 'cause 50 percent of the community is 65 and over. So, what I did then was to do sociometrics. So I talked to my chief informant, unfortunately the next morning, when I went to the post office. I was confronted by an elderly woman who came up and said, "I just heard you're here to do this, is that right?" Fortunately I knew her already and I told her, I said, "That's not right." I said, "Where in the world did you hear some crazy thing like that?" She told me, I mean, that's serendipity in the field. (Laughs)

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

GALLAHER: She told me, and it turns out that the person who had told her that was the mother of my chief informant, who's not a gossip, didn't have a reputation for gossip. So, he and I then said, "Now, okay, how did -- how did my mother come up with this."

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: So, we started back. In the meantime, I felt that this can get out of hand quickly.

VAN WILLIGEN: Sounds like it couldn't be worse for that context.

GALLAHER: Oh, no. It was desperate. 'Cause I could see us being booted out very quickly.

VAN WILLIGEN: Sure.

GALLAHER: So, Dixie and I went down to the newspaper *Hermitage* in the county seat, and said -- had a weekly newspaper. The paper had been there forever, so we went back ten years and pulled out every column on Plainville on the weekly and we factored out then all of the visiting relationships that had occurred, just with particular attention paid to those that involved food rituals and involved any kind of familistic rituals. And so, when we clustered all of that and created a modified sociogram then we could see pockets here and there and then we focused, as you do in sociometrics. You focus on the interstitial areas. People pop out.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: And what happened there was, a woman, couple women, but one in particular, popped out as somebody that had more contact in this network that we were investigating than anybody else. She didn't strike either my chief informant or me as the kind of person who would do anything malicious. Again, her reputation is she was not that -- but she was a major source a potential source for information. Okay, she was an elderly woman who was caretaker for an elderly man. Elderly man was eighty-six years old lived across the street from us. He had a reputation of probably one of the most successful mule-buyers and sellers, mule entrepreneur in all of Missouri. That's a big mule state. Well, that had been his life. He was a mule entrepreneur. And that's who she was caretaking. Now, he was running a little country store there on the village square. Had horse collars and all kinds of harness and stuff hanging. And, he was virtually blind with macular degeneration. This guy, who I thought was and felt all along he was a good friend, had been very helpful. I'd spent a lot of time with him just sitting by a pot-bellied stove in the back of his store on snowy afternoons just talking, 'cause I knew he was bored and he couldn't see.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: Well, one thing I knew about old John was old John was an ultra, ultra political conservative. And he absolutely despised any government program that came to the assistance of people who hadn't managed on their own to be successful.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

GALLAHER: So, (laughs) with that kind of knowledge, then, a question came up on how -- how was I gonna deal with John?

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

GALLAHER: If that's who I suspected. Well, I had a good enough feel for the rapport I had with old John that I'm gonna just confront him. So, I went over, and the two of us sitting back at his store just the two of us. And I said, "John," I said, "I got a problem." I said, "Rumor's going around that I'm here to check up on old people." And I said, "Do you know anything about that?" And he kind of grinned, and I said, "God damn it, man," I said, "this is killing me." (Laughs) He said, "Oh, I couldn't..." He was having fun. He was introducing the rumor, having -- he's having his caretaker introduce it to Mrs. So-and-So because old John knew the clique structure. He said, "How in the hell did you find this out, that I started that rumor?" And I told him, I explained to him, I gave him an education in sociometrics real quick. (Laughs) He was absolutely fascinated. I found out, he said, "God damn, Art," he says, "we were gonna run you for office," he said. (Both laugh) He said, "You figured out how we'd do it." And he and I wrangled by, God, for two or three hours, and I knew I was not gonna convince him to stop having fun because that's where he was, and he just could believe that people would hold out against me.

VAN WILLIGEN: Wow.

GALLAHER: So, finally I said, "John, I got to work this out." And I said, "If you'll give me a ring on the telephone, let me know when you're gonna have Mrs. Carpenter without another rumor, just let me know what the rumor is and where she's going to start it." Okay. I got three telephone calls from him over the next ten days. And Dixie and I had done a good enough job with the sociograms that we knew exactly the -- how the information flow was going in the village. So, I could hit it off, and that -- and that did it. (Laughs)

VAN WILLIGEN: Wonderful story.

Further Reading

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