

**An Interview with Professor Alvin W. Wolfe,
Past President of the Society for Applied Anthropology**

**Conducted by
Kevin A. Yelvington
Department of Anthropology
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in Tampa, Florida, November 9, 2009**

Transcribed by Ginger Johnson

Note: The following transcript reflects minor edits for style and clarity by both Wolfe and Yelvington and thus there is a slight variation from the audio recording.

The Interview

KAY: It is Monday, November 9th, 2009, in Tampa, Florida. This is an interview with Alvin W. Wolfe, Professor Emeritus at the University of South Florida. The interviewer is Kevin Yelvington, Department of Anthropology, University of South Florida and it's about Professor Wolfe's role as past president of the Society for Applied Anthropology. We have some questions here that Al has already seen and so we will go right to the questions. First, thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed. It's important for the history of the discipline, especially for applied anthropology, as you know.

AWW: I understand. And one thing I would suggest is anybody who reads any of these interviews of past presidents should remember that there are full archives of the Society preserved in the federal anthropological archives, Smithsonian Institution.

KAY: Smithsonian. Right.

AAW: I don't remember the exact title, but it is the official anthropological archives in the Smithsonian Institution. Every officer is supposed to put his or her papers in there and I'm sure most of them have. I did.

KAY: Oh, OK. All right, that's where you put your papers? OK. All of your papers by the way or...?

AWW: No, all of the papers relevant to the Society for the period that I was Secretary, President-Elect, and President.

KAY: OK, great.

AWW: In the '70s.

KAY: Right. It's the National Anthropological Archives.

AWW: That's it.

KAY: Yes, it's in Suitland, Maryland. I've worked there before.

AWW: Oh, I'm sure you have.

KAY: Yes, you get a shuttle at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History and it takes you across the river.

So we have several questions here and the first one is, How did you first come to anthropology? And why did you become an anthropologist?¹

AWW: Well, I've thought about that and think what happened was that it was in my military experience. In 1945, I in training to learn Japanese language and culture. That was in preparation for potential landings that we might have to make in Japan. But then the war ended and we discovered we didn't need Japanese language. Americans were interpreting. The Japanese were didn't pose any language problems for us because it seems that many of them spoke English and they were very cooperative. Let's put it that way. But the important thing there is that I did learn Japanese language and culture. Coming from Nebraska I didn't know much about other cultures at that time. The way we learned language, it was a very relativistic approach that they took even though it was an Army specialized training program. That, I'm sure, affected me. There I met *nisei* Japanese, that is Americans who were *nisei*, second-generation immigrants, who had been in the camps, in the relocation camps. So I really got a very good picture of Japanese culture and the experiences that they had had. So I think I was kind of ready for that and then in the Army after a series of training experiences in tanks and airborne I finally broke my leg and got put into an office. That's what I was trying to avoid, working in an office, because I had a few semesters of college and they tried to put me in an office right away and I was just 17, 18 years old and didn't want that. Anyway, finally I did end up in an office, having broken my leg in a parachute jump. I was given the assignment of working in the Personal Affairs Office at Fort Benning. Personal Affairs Office is an office where they try to help soldiers that are having all kinds of problems, family problems, personal problems of all kinds, not psychiatric, but social problems. So, I had an interesting view of various soldiers' lives in doing that. Then when I got out I went to the University of Nebraska on the G.I. Bill and had to get a job, because although the G.I. Bill

¹ An earlier published interview with Wolfe delves into the questions of his training in anthropology and motivations to become an anthropologist. See Kevin A. Yelvington, "An Interview with Alvin W. Wolfe," *Practicing Anthropology*, Vol. 25 No. 4 (2003), pp. 42-47.

was good it didn't pay enough to live on. So I had to get a job and got a part-time job in the Nebraska State Historical Society Museum which was a museum that was directed by a gentleman who was a lay archaeologist. He wasn't a professional but he had so much experience and was so interested in the Pawnee and the ancestors of Pawnee, proto-Pawnee as we called them, that he was like an anthropologist. He was director of this museum and he took an interest in training me to be a museum aide. And that's when I started taking anthropology courses at the University of Nebraska, and I was attracted to anthropology and enjoyed it very much. I guess that would answer the questions, wouldn't it?.

KAY: I think so, yes. And the anthropologist was A.T. Hill?

AWW: Yes, that was A.T. Hill and John Champe was the chairman of the department there. John Champe was a very scientifically oriented archaeologist and that was earl. That was in the 40's. So many archaeologists were more like A.T. Hill, just digging.

KAY: Right.

AWW: But Champe was a very scientifically oriented person. He did that before many others. He learned it at Columbia University under Duncan Strong. And anthropology at Nebraska was very serious. We used as an introductory text [Alfred] Kroeber's *Anthropology*, and I'm sure that you've read that. But it's not the kind of thing you'd expect for an introductory anthropology course. But that's what we used. I read other things later. I read Herskovits and that was a much better introduction. But I enjoyed Kroeber, although it's organization is so strange, you know. I did learn a lot from it. I think he had a very vast understanding of human cultures and kind of holistic view of culture that I thought was very good although the book was terrible to read. But it really had a lot in it. Then [Melville J.] Herskovits of course. I was very much taken with Herskovits's book, *Man and His Works...*

KAY: ...Yes, that's published in 1948....

AWW: ... and the relativism that he presents there, cultural relativism and how he understands it. He also is scientific although he's not always credited with that, but I think he always viewed anthropology as a science despite the fact that he was very humanistic and emphasized things like art, and religion and culture. I mean non-material culture was important to him. Symbols and...

KAY: Right, right.

AWW: So, what did you ask me [laughing]?

KAY: No, no you're fine. I was just asking about how you first came to anthropology and this is all, this is all part of it. So you read Herskovits as an undergrad?

AWW: Yes, I was probably a senior by the time I got that, and I didn't major until I was a senior. I had gone in expecting to do law, but at Nebraska pre-law is done in the business school and that's no place to do pre-law, believe me. Accounting? No thanks. Business Organization was a requirement. That's not too bad if it's a good course because the field of management has developed a lot and I'm still using those ideas. You, you're so young you wouldn't understand how much things have changed in anthropology and business since the 40's. In philosophy, maybe there has been progress as well but I don't know about it, but mathematics has changed a lot. I had a view of mathematics at that time which was very narrow, you know like arithmetic, geometry, statistics also, but a kind of narrow compared to what I'd do later. On the issue of applications, I always wanted to do something applied, like law would be that in fact.

KAY: Right.

AWW: So I was interested in that. Anthropology didn't express itself as applied in those days. Nobody talked much about that.

KAY: Right. The Society for Applied Anthropology only dates to '41.

AWW: But I wanted anthropology to be useful and so I kind of compared it with with mathematics – that it would only be academic – whereas anthropology ought to be useful.

KAY: Right.

AWW: I made that comparison because my brother, who's just a bit older than I am, and he and were always in contest a little bit, he studied mathematics, got his bachelor's and M.A. in mathematics, and I always chided him: "What's the use of mathematics? You should study something useful like anthropology," even though there was no, almost no, applied anthropology at that time. It wasn't until then that I learned that the only uses for anthropology at that time were in teaching. If you studied it, you had to go on and get not just a master's but get a Ph.D. and go into teaching. That bothered me some but I went ahead and took it anyway because I loved anthropology. That was about it.

KAY: You were not aware of the anthropologists that worked for the war effort, like in the OSS [Office of Strategic Services]?

AWW: Strangely not at the time.

KAY: Sure.

AWW: I don't think so.

KAY: Ruth Benedict and Japan?

AWW: Yes, I had to be aware somewhat of that. They did not use Ruth Benedict's work in the training.

KAY: But I don't think it had been done by then.

AWW: Maybe it wasn't.

KAY: Well, I don't know, it...

AWW: ...But when I read it, it didn't surprise me.

KAY: Right, because I know there were a number of anthropologists that worked for different aspects of...

AWW: ...Oh yeah, Clyde Kluckhohn, his book *Mirror for Man*, when it came out it...

KAY: Right, right. I mean a bunch of them, Margaret Mead, Carleton Coon...

AWW: Oh, Margaret Mead became a hero for me a little bit later when, ah,...well maybe we should go more in sequence? [laughing]

KAY: Sure.

AWW: I'm thinking that out of that I went on the graduate school at Northwestern. And the reason that I chose Northwestern was simply that I thought Herskovits's book was so good, that's the place I wanted to, I wanted to study more with him.

KAY: Right

AWW: But, there was also another thing. I was sold on archaeology. I loved archaeology. I loved the fieldwork. I loved the fieldwork much more than the analysis and I knew that that's all I cared about at that time, or I cared about it so much that if I went to a school that was recommended to me – Michigan was recommended because of its great archaeology program – if I went there I wouldn't have done anything other than archaeology. I wasn't really impressed with what they called ethnology, just the study of various cultures. I'm more interested in the theory of it than in the mere descriptions of cultures. So I chose Northwestern. I was kind of naive I guess to think that I could just go wherever I wanted, especially since I had no money [laughing] but the G.I. Bill. But, well, I did well in undergraduate work and graduated with Phi Beta Kappa honors and so when I approached Herskovits about admission – it was in the summer after I graduated, I didn't do it beforehand – he admitted me right away. I don't know why exactly except that's what happened [laughing] and I was pleased to be there and because of my focus on archaeology I got a TA-ship, Teaching Assistantship, and he had me teach archaeology the very first, not the first quarter, the second quarter I was there.

KAY: You had your own class?

AWW: My own class. It was horrible [laughing]. But that's what happened.

KAY: So you went to Northwestern to work with Herskovits and did you know at that time that he had an equivocal, shall we say, relationship with applied anthropology?

AWW: Yeah, well, I read *Man and His Works* and that come through there. But I was kind of living in two worlds. Anthropology, and my interest in application was not so strong that it would prevent me from learning something. I just wanted it to be useful. I didn't have any real understanding of professional applied anthropology except I was always pleased when I would read more about it.

KAY: Right. So when you went to Northwestern was the idea that you would become an archaeologist? A professional archaeologist?

AWW: No, I wanted to be a full anthropologist. That's why I went there because he had no archaeologists. I was the archaeologist [laughing]. He taught and there was no archaeology in their graduate program at all, although I think he always somewhat thought of himself as a four-field person because his *Man and His Works* certainly touches on prehistory. But he wasn't really interested in professional archaeology. And I still was, but I guess what I wanted to do was get a master's there. I think that's what my aim was, get a master's there and then go on and get a Ph.D. in an archaeology place. That didn't work out because I got sold on Africa and culture and, well, African cultures I guess, under Herskovits.

KAY: Right...

AWW: And Herskovits pushed us along so fast, or pushed me along so fast, I didn't have time to think about much really. I was there first thing, we may be off the subject of applied anthropology, but the first thing that happened was they didn't have a master's program at Northwestern. Herskovits expected his people to come in, he expected his students to come in from a bachelor's degree to come in and go directly to the Ph.D. I don't know that I even knew that when I went there, but I learned it quickly and he pushed one along very fast, full steam courses, and he had me ready to go into fieldwork after just two years. I went there in '50 and by June of 1952 I was scheduled to go to Africa. Amazingly fast. It was a quarter system, full-time studying in a quarter system, you could move along pretty fast and get a wide range of courses.

KAY: What courses did you take with Herskovits?

AWW: Theories of Culture, a course, kind of a seminar, on Africa, and a seminar on preparation for fieldwork. I think that's all, those three. I had other good professors there. For example, Francis Hsu. He was a very interesting scholar who had studied with [Bronislaw] Malinowski.

KAY: Bascom?

AWW: Bill Bascom and Dick Waterman, who later came to, much later, came to the University of South Florida, and he's probably one of the reasons that I'm at the University of South Florida, come to think of it.

KAY: And there was a linguist, right?

AWW: Yes there was. There were two. I knew one linguist there, a very young man who left there and went to California and did very well, and then there was a woman who came there from Michigan, I believe. I remember the linguistics courses. We learned a lot, but it didn't have any long standing influence on me, I don't think. Well, on Herskovits's attitude toward applied anthropology, you asked something about that, it's true that he did not think that there should be a profession of applied anthropology. He was, in that sense, he thought you should use anthropology to learn about things and then in your private life you apply them, whatever you've learned, including anthropology. He did things like try to integrate parts of Evanston, Illinois, well maybe Northwestern University itself, although he did that through African students. It was easier to integrate African students into the school than it was to get African American students. And in Evanston, Illinois, that was a terribly segregated place and, as I recall, Africans and African-Americans were not even supposed to be in there, in Evanston, in the evening, at least on one side of the elevated railroad track. I'm pretty sure that was true. And Herskovits use to work at that but not as a professional anthropologist. It bothered me, his attitude bothered me afterwards, when I became very interested in applications and that mostly through, aside from that general use, general feeling that whatever we learned should be used and be put to use and for the better – [laughing] obviously, not just to sell things, but to improve the world.

Many years later, in 1960, when the winds of change were sweeping down over Africa, independence was coming to these colonial territories – and believe me it came as a surprise at the time. Even the British, who were as broad minded as any colonialists, thought it would take several hundred years before there would be self-government at a national level. They always believed a little in local government, but that didn't mean much. Anyway, as that kind of release from colonialism spread down across Africa, it used to be called the “winds of change” and the winds of change stopped abruptly at Congo. I didn't mention that I had done fieldwork in the Congo.

KAY: Right. Still Belgian, the Belgian Congo.

AWW: Belgian Congo. And then, that was in '52-'53. I should clarify a little bit. While I was there, obviously it was the Belgians who ruled that with pretty much an iron hand and they, the Congolese, were not organized, they were not educated. The Belgians did not permit education at a higher level, there were only I think eight college-university educated Congolese men or women from the Congo. They were all men who were educated at the college level and most if not all of those were educated in religious institutions. They were priests. They weren't expecting anything like independence and they stopped it. That's what I was about to talk about. They stopped it and I wanted to find out why. I'm leaping ahead too much. I wanted to mention

that while I was there, there was no talk of independence and the Belgians ruled it so firmly. I wanted to figure out what they thought of that – what the Belgians thought they were doing. I was studying Ngombe culture, a traditional culture right in the swampy forests on either side of the Congo River in the northern part of the Congo. And I wanted to understand the Belgian colonial system a little better so I applied for, and I got, a Fulbright to go and study in Belgium after my one year in the Congo, 1952-53 in the Congo, and '53-'54 in Belgium at Louvain University studying colonial policy. It was an eye opener. I learned a lot about how they did that and that would be a book in itself, which I didn't write by the way [laughing].

KAY: There's different, there were different colonial styles of government, the British and the idea of indirect rule, for example, the French with assimilation policies. So Belgium was different still.

AWW: Yes, and what they did was organize corporations. This was – I didn't understand it fully at the time – a corporate-run society. They had had certain corporations like the Cotton Company and the Mining Company. There was not just one of them but there was a huge one: Union Minière du Haut Katanga – the Katanga Mining Company. And the Transportation Company. These were essentially private companies that ran the Congo. You know, Congo began as a private institution. It was the corporation that King Leopold established, the International Company of Central Africa. They didn't call them corporations in those days. It was Company, and he owned it, with shares owned by other people as well, by British. It was not a Belgian thing, it was a King Leopold company. The company owned Congo. They got the recognition of it as a state. It was a corporation. They got it recognized as a state by President Chester A. Arthur of the United States in 1884. He recognized the flag of the company of the Congo as the flag of a friendly power. That gave Leopold the the right to sit in on the International Conference because he was then the boss of a big company, of a big country. So all of this was of course of great interest to me. I was trying to understand the traditional culture, but I also wanted to understand this system by which the thing was managed. Then, leaping forward to 1960, when the winds of change were stopped, I concluded that these financiers who were controlling it didn't want to give the money to the new government that was elected. They had an election and Patrice Lumumba was elected Prime Minister and they wouldn't give him money to run the government and that was the end of that. An army officer was recruited to run the new government. The CIA was involved. And that was the beginning of Colonel Mobutu's half-century of rule. America deserves a lot of credit for building up the Congo in the first place with King Leopold years ago, and then tearing it down much later. Now we could get to discussing serious applied anthropology because as a result of that, that analysis, my understanding of how the Belgians ran the Congo and my understanding of the way corporations operated in, not only in Congo itself but in all of southern Africa. There was a quite a different approach in Southern Africa because the British didn't use their corporations as so much a part of the government as the Congo had, but I saw all of these corporations – mining companies, railroad companies – integrated in a network which I call a “supranational network.” Those corporations had ties across national boundaries. I recognized this network before anybody had used the term “multinational corporation.” I don't know where they were. These other people were sleeping or something because nobody else had made this kind of interpretation. I did a series of papers and at that time

I was moving – I'm talking about 1961 now – moving to Washington University from Lafayette College where I had been teaching. At Washington University, John Bennett was there, an applied anthropologist, not in the sense of a practicing anthropologist but he was interested in the uses of anthropology.

KAY: And who had been in Japan.

AWW: Yes that's true.

KAY: He had been in the postwar configuration there for a long time.

AWW: That's true. And he saw some of my work on the corporations, how the corporations were running Congo and had a great influence on Africa, and he wanted me to give a paper at the meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology in, I think it was Kansas City. It must have been 1962, I suppose, and it turned out to be not just a paper and a session but a plenary session at a luncheon of the whole group. The meetings were smaller in those days but they were not less important. Margaret Mead was there, all the top people were there, and John Bennett, as the organizer, was very respectable. He had been president of the Society for Applied Anthropology but at this point he was like program chairman or something and he asked me to do this at a plenary session, a talk on my ideas about supranational integration, the evolution of a supranational level of integration. Margaret Mead was much taken by this talk and she came up to me and we talked a little bit and she said you have to publish this, and she said you must publish it in our journal, *Human Organization*. And so she arranged it right there. She wasn't the editor but you know she could arrange much.

KAY: Sure.

AWW: So she encouraged that. Well, it obviously needed some editing. I had it edited to go to *Human Organization*. The editor of *Human Organization* at that time was Robert Smith, who was at Cornell University where *Human Organization* was for many years. He went to Japan during that summer when I finished this up and sent it in. He had to go to Japan, so he left his editing duties to William Foote White, who was a wonderful anthropologist and more applied than most certainly. Not knowing that the manuscript was intended to be published, he sent it out to readers. And one of the readers he sent it to was a friend of a man who was serving as assistant to the chairman of American Metals Climax, one of the companies I had identified as a part of this powerful network. He said: "Oh, we mustn't publish this. Don't publish that." They didn't publish it. And so, well, I kept working on it. I think I'm off the subject...

KAY: ...No, no it still has to do with applied anthropology...

AWW: [laughing] ...somewhat, political applied anthropology now. Though they didn't publish it, that paper got sent to some people in the mining industry and they were getting upset. I had done some other things that would upset them too, like other papers, many papers that were published in less professional journals like *Africa Today*, *Liberation*, and *Toward Freedom*,

those kinds of anti-colonial, anti-neocolonial by this time, journals. We're in the early '60s and this paper got talked about at a geological, applied geology, mining industry conference in the southwest United States – you know, where there are a lot of copper mines,

KAY: Right.

AWW: And that came back to me in a strange way. Spencer Olin, the chairman of one of the big chemical companies in St. Louis, Olin Mathieson, of course, concerning my attacks on big business, sat on the board of trustees at Washington University. So the chancellor of Washington University called me in and said: “Alvin, Mr. So-and-So tells me that you're publishing things like this and, um, what are you doing as an anthropologist?” I explained to him what I was doing and my view of anthropology was a broad one, this was anthropology for me, and it really is, but not many people recognized it. That's economics...

KAY: Right. Maybe sociology.

AWW: Yeah, they didn't even mention that. Well, anyway so he asked about it and I explained to him what it was and he said OK but I didn't have tenure at that time [laughs] and he didn't threaten me with anything at all, and he just wanted to understand it so he could explain it to other guy. The chancellor's name was Thomas Eliot. He was an Eliot of the Harvard Eliots. Eliot was a very good scholar, a political scientist, and a good chancellor. Anyway, what happened then was I got attacked by Clarence Randall, a world-renowned financial figure, international financial advisor to President Eisenhower and subsequently to President Kennedy, in an address to the African Affairs Society of America. Randall accused me of spearheading a “scandalous attack among the representatives of Afro-Asian countries in the United Nations against the mining industry of Southern Africa, and by implication against the entire mining industry of the West” (*New York Times*, April 4, 1963, p. 44). It is hardly surprising that Clarence Randall was a friend of Spencer Olin. According to the *New York Times*, “Clarence B. Randall, former chairman of Inland Steel Company,” said “a highly articulate two-man team” had charged that Africa is “being looted” by a “Cape-to-Katanga team” of “malefactors of great wealth, including several large corporations. “He identified the men as the Rev. Michael Scott, an Anglican priest and Dr. Alvin W. Wolfe, assistant Professor of social anthropology at Washington University, St. Louis.” Michael Scott was speaking in the United Nations, he had some kind of authority to speak for the peoples of South West Africa.

KAY: Namibia.

AWW: Yes, Namibia. Then South West Africa, which was then under the complete control of South Africa as a trust territory. That's how the United Nations got into it because it was a trust territory and they were obviously not doing the right thing. So Michael Scott was some kind of spokesman for them and he used some of my materials that I had published in these other other works, *Africa Today* and *Toward Freedom*, those two. So this other gentleman, Clarence Randall, was a major international financier who had helped broker the deal for the Volta River Dam Project in Ghana and that was under [Dwight D.] Eisenhower, I believe, and was now, at

this time, '63, he was the international financial advisor for [John F.] Kennedy in the Executive Office as a special advisor. And he said that I was responsible for this, bringing down the whole West. It made me feel pretty good.

KAY: I'll bet!

AWW: My sister, who was living in New York City at the time, saw the article in the in the *New York Times*. She said, "What are you doing [laughing]?" Anyway, that that got a lot of attention. But you know anthropologists never did buy my ideas on the evolution of a supranational system!

KAY: You started on talking about this by taking about Herskovits and his attitude toward applied anthropology.

AWW: Right.

KAY: So he was still alive at this time...

AWW: Yes he was. He did not support me even the slightest on this. He didn't even say "That's good work [laughs]." He didn't oppose it because it was true. See, I came out and said it. He was one who was very cautious about what he said. I wouldn't have been able to go to Congo had they had any idea I would come out like that. He had arranged it. I was the first American anthropologist to do full fieldwork in the Congo. Before that there were those people who were studying pygmies back, earlier. I can't remember who they were.

KAY: Colin Turnbull?

AWW: Not Turnbull. That was much later. But anyway, and there was Alan Merriam who was just studying music. He was going around recording music, and he was not studying culture, not doing full ethnographies. And Herskovits arranged for me to go there by talking sweetly to both the Minister of Colonies and the Foreign Minister of Belgium. He had contacts that he could use that way and that made it possible. I'm not too critical of him because that's the way he worked and he did so many great things. I never did get angry at him, just a bit peeved that he didn't help.

KAY: Right.

AWW: And no other anthropologist helped either, except Margaret Mead and John Bennett. Sociologists did. That paper that was not published in *Human Organization*, I should mention it was a very applied anthropology paper and still very anthropological. It was subtitled: "Evolution of a supranational level of integration." Well it got published when, giving up on *Human Organization*, Alvin Gouldner, who was a top sociologist of that day, helped me get it published in *Social Problems*. Gouldner certainly had some personal and professional problems a little bit before he died. But he was really a very good sociologist. He was chairman of the

department at Washington University, a sociology/anthropology joint department, and he got my paper published in *Social Problems*. You would expect *Social Problems* to deal just with individuals, individual social problems or criminology or something. But he got that published. It was entitled “The African mineral industry: Evolution of a supranational level of integration” [*Social Problems* 11(2) (1963):153-164].

KAY: Right.

AWW: [laughs] But that, see that was in sociology and social work not anthropology. So I was kind of giving up on anthropologists at that time. I just decided to do what they liked, which is non-political. And so I studied art and asked why some societies produced more and better art than other societies. That they ate up and I published that in '69. See I had to get tenure [laughs]. I had to drop this thing that anthropologists weren't really interested in. I wasn't going to get fired for writing these things, I was going to get fired for not writing the other things.

KAY: Right, and not writing enough, right [laughs]? I know how that works. So Herskovits influenced you, Kroeber influenced you...

AWW: [laughs]

KAY: ...and others. The idea of holistic anthropology, four-field anthropology, you yourself brought to this an interest in applied anthropology and found that there were some anthropologists at this time developing this as a professional interest.

AWW: Right. Especially Margaret Mead...

KAY: ...who had worked in the war effort. Yes, exactly. And so then your interest within that applied focus with the supranational system and so on, that was probably too early on for them to appreciate the significance of that. Perhaps?

AWW: It seemed to be.

KAY: Right. So is that what you see as your, as your major contribution to the discipline?

AWW: Oh, absolutely. That and network analysis, which I didn't mention till this moment. The reason, and that is a part of it, it's the relationships among those corporations and countries that make up a network and it's that network that makes these things possible. None of those individual entities could accomplish anything if they didn't have the support of a network. I had used just a little bit of network analysis in my studies of the African people, the Gombe. I saw their system of organization as network too. It is, of course, but anthropologists had not been using networks formally. They started when [A.R.] Radcliffe-Brown used the metaphorical idea of network in his Australian work, but anthropologists just didn't pick it up very much.

KAY: Yeah it wasn't until the British ones, as you know, in their work on the Copperbelt in what is now Zambia a little bit after your fieldwork.

AWW: But then they didn't use it for corporations.

KAY: Right.

AWW: I mean not networks of corporations.

KAY: Not at all, not at all. I meant individual networks. You talk about [J. Clyde] Mitchell and some of the others, [John] Barnes and [Bruce] Kapferer and those folks.

AWW: Right.

KAY: But that's later, that's later than your work.

AWW: The other thing that came in here was I used Julian Steward's idea, not so much of ecological systems, but of the hierarchical ordering of sub-systems within a larger system. Anthropologists were beginning to talk even at that time of bands tribes, chiefdoms, states, but they never really developed it that much. I thought Julian Steward did a fine job of explaining how evolution actually worked. You know, there was a time when there were no tribes [laughing] there were only bands, little roving bands of some kind or another, and whether they were hunting bands or gathering bands they were not organized even at the level of tribes.

KAY: Right.

AWW: Then we see archaeologically that there are systems that we can identify above the level of bands. By "above" I don't mean that they are better. They're just different and larger. And then, you know, as Steward points out, I think he did this at least in the '50s and maybe even earlier, Julian Steward, that as these things develop you don't lose everything from these lower levels but the lower level gets integrated into the system at the higher level and then the higher level has its sphere of influence and the lower level continued the element system. Sub-systems in the lower level continued to operate but they are influenced by what's above. The same sort of thing happened later and later and later again, but anthropologists gave up once the state developed. Once the state was there, that was the pinnacle and they didn't stop to think, "Well, if that's the way evolution works, then something more could be happening." That's what I saw actually happening. It was like observing evolution in process, seeing these corporations operating in the Congo and southern Africa, dealing with states, integrating, establishing a system at a higher level. Sure you had the United States government, strong and pushing its weight around but there's that system still developing that is larger than the United States.

KAY: Right, right, but the Steward and the evolutionist perspective, that's not a Herskovitsian view of culture.

AWW: Absolutely not, except that Herskovits touches on it in *Man and His Works*. I think he mentions it.

KAY: Yes, but I mean it seems like that was heretical thinking for Herskovits.

AWW: I had to find that. I had to find a way of understanding what I saw, what I was observing, and I found it in Steward. I read other things trying to understand it. I read some of Marx, I read some of other kinds of evolutionary things. White, Leslie White was of course Marxist, but I didn't see anything that really made clear what was happening, and not only what had happened up to that time. What I saw was a prediction of how it would go in the future.

KAY: So that's in terms of major theoretical influences and contributions. I don't know if you want to talk about getting more toward the applied stuff, and the idea of internships for applied anthropology...?

AWW: Absolutely. But that came much later. Much later. Yes, it seems a whole life between what we were talking about and the internship idea. Well, maybe not so far come to think of it. At Washington University, in my effort to deliberately set this other problem aside while I worked on things I had to do to get tenure [laughing] – I did get tenure by the way – I was in this mode, this mode of doing what people wanted done, so I got a grant with the help of Lee Rainwater who was a sociologist studying poor working class, the poor especially. Working class families was his specialty. In the middle 1960s President [Lyndon] Johnson began to fund projects to fight poverty. Sociologists and anthropologists knew something about poor blacks. A lot of people were studying that and they thought they had a lot of knowledge on poverty in general. Poor Italians moving into the slums, poor immigrant Jews, there were ghetto studies when there were a lot of immigrants and they didn't have any money, they didn't have much money. But nobody seemed to know anything about white, non-ethnic populations, non-ethnic whites. So, Lee Rainwater and I developed a proposal to study the poorest whites in St. Louis. So how would we find those who were not ethnically identified, not Italian, not Hispanic? We used census data. We got a nice grant and we developed a way of studying it. Lee mainly had the contacts to get the grants and I think I, more than he, developed the way we were going to do it. We knew we wanted to use an ethnographic approach and we knew we wanted to use graduate students so we developed this protocol, had about nine graduate students who were assigned to this project and we wanted them to be doing full-time participant observation in the neighborhoods where these poor whites lived. So we selected a large census tract that had the poorest whites and hired graduate assistants whom we admitted to the program to do this. We explained to them: This is what we want you to do: One semester full-time in the field, one semester full-time studying, then another semester in the field and another semester full-time out. We also used survey methods during two occasions during those two years. We didn't want them associated with the university while they were in that participant observation mode and it worked pretty well. So that, you see, begins to tie in with internships in my mind.

KAY: Sure.

AWW: These people were students. They were learning a trade, participant observation, that would be useful to help not these individual families but the system in improving ways to fight poverty. I could go off on a long tangent on that but that went from '66 to '68. We all had a falling out at Washington University in sociology and anthropology, everybody within each of those disciplines were falling out with one another. The networks were crashing [laughing]. In 1968, this project entitled "The Soulard Project" just finished. Many months of participant observation and several months of surveys. Not written up, just finished, the end of the work. So I went to the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee where I was very happy. There were all these people. There were 11 or 12. I said there were nine. There were nine of these fieldworkers then there were higher level assistants who were supervisory staff. So we just never got that written up believe it or not. But it was good [laughing]. And that, you see, kind of leads to this internship business in a sense. At this time anthropology was falling into a problem of producing too many graduate Ph.D.'s for the number of jobs that were available. The universities had grown and anthropology had grown within them so it produced a lot of students but then the growth of the departments became less in the '70s and there was a problem with finding jobs for these anthropologists. They never thought much about applied anthropology. They almost didn't consider them anthropologists, the ones who weren't in academic positions. I attended, in 1972, a big conference sponsored by the American Anthropological Association on employment. We began talking there about employing applied anthropologists, employing a lot of these people in a lot of applied settings and still thinking of them as anthropologists. I should mention Sol Tax. He was wonderful in all of this. His view of anthropologists was that a person, a person could take one course in anthropology but if he was the right student, he or she was the right student, with the right mind and the course was the right course that student could be an anthropologist. He was not building boxes, he was just taking the persons as they were and he had a wonderful way. He fostered communication of various kinds, fostered in me this notion that we can do a lot more. And at the same time – we're getting up to 1973 now – the department at the University of South Florida was beginning to think about a master's program. They only had an undergraduate program at that time, they wanted a master's program and, in the process of applying for that, they had to show some specialization. And Kushner, Gilbert Kushner, decided to focus on applied anthropology in the application. He had also been involved in some of these conferences on employment that were sponsored by the AAA and SfAA. So, he began thinking about internships and he and I got to know each other in the process of these conferences and our ideas kind of meshed. He was interested in developing internships and I was, from another perspective, for I had become active in SfAA, I've forgotten exactly when I had been a member of the Society for Applied Anthropology.

KAY: You said you probably joined in '62 when you presented that luncheon talk.

AWW: Yes, but it didn't amount to much until this time of internships. Then soon as I got really interested in internships as a way of training any kind of anthropologists, not just applied. In the Soulard Project in St. Louis – 1966-1968 – we had started out with just doing ethnography and somehow that came to look like an internship to me. Anyway, as soon as the M.A. program was approved, Kushner hired me to come to USF to be coordinator of internships and about that same time I was also actively trying to develop internships for the Society for Applied Anthropology.

Here we were. Another important thing is that Kushner's internships were for a master's program whereas up to that time many of the professional anthropologists, that is the anthropological leaders, did not think highly of master's level people so we really had to build that up to say that these are really anthropologists. So I was doing that in the Society as well, as a member of the Board of Directors of the Society, and then later as Secretary of the Society. And then, later, as President as well. One of the hottest things we did as President of the SfAA was on the subject of programs and accreditation. Both Gil Kushner and I realized that there was no accreditation of programs or certifying of individuals in applied anthropology. We worked hard at that. I associate that with Kushner also because while I was active in the Society's upper levels, that is, in the Society for Applied Anthropology, he was working here at USF – he wasn't an officer in the Society at that time – and we had a committee on studying accreditation and certification and it made a lot of proposals but there were a lot of academic anthropologists nationally who didn't like that at all. Even though they liked applied anthropology they didn't think we should do certification and accreditation of programs. So, there was a lot of discussion but it didn't come to fruition and to this day, and that was 30 years ago, it still has not come to that. But the idea of internships certainly has developed. And that's been accepted and I think USF was one of the first ones, especially at the master's level. In 1976, we got a good grant from the National Institute for Mental Health. From '76 to '81' we had a five-year grant, a training grant that included fellowships for training in applied anthropology at the master's level. That was really something to train anthropologists to work in the mental health field – mental health or related fields. That was a good time when mental health studies of all kinds were community related. We convinced NIMH that we could help individuals best by working with the community and we could obviously have healthy communities if we had healthy people. It wasn't just psychologists involved. It was much broader.

KAY: I see. So you were involved in SfAA over the years. You said you were part of this SfAA employment conference and what else? What else did you do? What other official involvement with the SfAA leading up to becoming President?

AWW: Perhaps my responses about my involvement with SfAA during those years were not very clear. While serving as a member of the Board of Directors of SfAA in the late 1960s, I became interested in developing internships to help the job situation of anthropologists. In 1971-72, the AAA sponsored several meetings focusing on jobs for anthropologists and I attended those as a representative of SfAA. Gil Kushner, who was already thinking about developing an M.A.-level degree program in applied anthropology, participated in those meetings, and my interest in developing SfAA internships nationally began to meld with his. I became Secretary of SfAA, and I joined Kushner at USF as coordinator of USF's internships in applied anthropology. My success in winning a five-year NIMH Training Grant for the Applied Anthropology Internship Project helped our program and was certainly instrumental in the campaign to win election as President of the Society for Applied Anthropology. Once I became President, I appointed Kushner as chair of a committee to study and advocate for accreditation of applied programs and certification of applied anthropologists. I can't remember anything else outstanding at that time.

KAY: You were elected president in what year?

AWW: Must have been 1976. We had one-year terms in those days. I was President-elect in 1977-1978 and President in 1978-1979.

KAY: What made you decide to run for President?

AWW: Oh, God. I think Kushner pushed me into it.

KAY: You think Kushner pushed you into it?

AWW: I think so [laughing]. It was a matter of this: They [the SfAA] were moving in a direction that I thought was good. The internship idea was more, more than just that simple idea of internships. We were talking about developing the Society so the Society would fund internships. And promote internships. There was a lot to it. It wasn't a simple matter. So that also would have been part of the decision. I thought I could do that better by being President. And also we were interested in building up our program here. We had a lot of good publicity and good, you know, prestige from that mental health grant which gave us the funds to bring people in, bring in the top applied anthropologists from all over the country, to come and advise us but at the same time we could show them what we were doing and kind of sell the idea of internships. So it all fit together very well.

KAY: Sure. Now, you've been active in other organizations at the same time.

AWW: Yes [laughing]. I'm kind of an organizations character. I mean it's got to be, again it just kind of fits in with my interest in networks and that has to do with my belief that relationships of all kinds explain much more than the individual entities.

KAY: Sure

AWW: This idea of connections is true in biology. It's true everywhere, and I just act on that principle. So I just watch relationships and develop relationships, much, as if I, if I weren't doing that I wouldn't be doing anything [laughing]. You know that kind of motive? Early on, working with John Bennett at Washington University, I became active in the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and he successfully nominated me to Fellow status in that organization. I was also interested in the American Ethnological Society. I became a board member there. I was interested in seeing how they operated. Really it was a kind of participant observation in a sense, and I think that's a very important thing in anthropology, participant observation. There are two things that are important: participant observation is one and the appreciation of the holistic systems – each of these sub-systems or each of these components are meaningless if they are not in this kind of whole.

KAY: Sure, it's in the totality.

AWW: That's what attracted me to anthropology from the very beginning I think. I don't know if that fits with what I said at the very beginning [laughing].

KAY: No, it does.

AWW: I think it does.

KAY: Sure it does.

AWW: I think I may not have appreciated fully degree to which relationships and connections are the important thing. Earlier, I didn't mention at all [Claude] Lévi-Strauss, but Lévi-Strauss's emphasis on relations rather than things influenced me I think. I don't necessarily agree, I think it's overdoing it to say that everything is binary, in fact I don't really like that, but, certainly in the emphasis on relations rather than things I do agree with Lévi-Strauss. I was going to say something about that but I can't think of what it was. Oh, for example, his structure, elementary structure of structure of kinship, not just the nuclear family.

KAY: Yes, are you thinking of his *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté*?

AWW: Yes, well, also family groups. You know the distinction between family as a group and the elementary structure, the elementary structure is much more meaningful than that group, father, mother, and children.

KAY: Right.

AWW: But there's nothing wrong with that. It exists, but it has to be seen in the context of these relationships as well and then those groups also relate. They relate through the elementary structure we talked of, but that's applying it only at one level. You have to apply that and you can take that back to Steward's ideas of levels of integration. That's what happens when you go up to the next level of integration. Lévi-Strauss seems to have done that only in a very abstract, symbolic way and not as taking that idea and building an evolutionary system on it and that's where I think Julian Steward is better on this and those things fit together perfectly for me. Going back to our discussion of Herskovits: Another thing about Herskovits: He's wonderful on the notion of relativism and his concept of culture I think is fine, but he had no conception of social structure. There's no contradiction between those. They both exist. You don't give up one thing to do the other. That's the holism part of it for me. Those are some of the ideas that I think are most important in anthropology. Except for relativism, Herskovits didn't contribute much to my ideas there. I got them from other people.

KAY: That's what's interesting. That's why I keep asking and going back to that you know. So, regarding the issues you dealt with when you were president of the SfAA, there was this employment conference that was leading up to that, and there were the internship programs – the USF and other internship programs. Were there any special, specific things that you dealt with when you were President? Controversies?

AWW: Well there was always some controversy between the AAA and the SfAA. Even though we were a separate society, AAA used to do our office stuff. What do you call that? Administrative functions. I think they published the journal along with theirs, a number of things that they did for us, and the AAA got into some problems because they were doing so much for others that they looked like a business to the IRS and the IRS told them that if you're going to do that we're going to tax you like a business, you know, publish things for them, manage memberships, whatever they did, we'll treat you like a business. So the AAA had to back off of that and they began to tell us, us being SfAA and other similar organizations, we have to handle this in another way. Either you become a part of us or we can't do it. So there was that kind of conflict between the societies and some of our people thought that the AAA was using us or trying to make us just a part of them, which would not be very much, so they drew off.

KAY: So what happened during your presidency, if I may?

AWW: Well, I don't think there was a lot right at that time. It was a continuing process for some years. It was just a little tension all the time. Then, afterwards, after my presidency, there was some more of a break. It was just an ongoing worry. The more important thing was the idea we were trying to push of formalizing the training situation both internally, developing internships within and, having the SfAA really support internships somehow with funding – getting a grant to start it. We were trying to work on it. I don't remember what else.

KAY: I know that this documentation project that we're involved in right now is something that got started during your presidency.

AWW: Yes, yes, we approved that at that time. It started in Kentucky, the people in Kentucky had the idea and they started it but they asked the SfAA for making it an official project of theirs, of the SfAA, and I think we did do that at that time.

KAY: And you also started the journal *Practicing Anthropology*?

AWW: [laughing] That's for sure. I don't know how I could have forgotten that! Yes, that was an important thing. That started really when Sol Tax came down here as one of our consultants under that NIMH program and he was talking about the importance of these people who don't become professional academic anthropologists, but they are anthropologists at heart in the world, and he thought highly of them and he said we need to be communicating with them broadly and something like a newspaper or a weekly or monthly communication would be wonderful. And we thought, "Well that's a good idea. Let's do something like that." It was discussed at a dinner at a university restaurant which was the only place we had to eat around here in those days [laughing] and then we decided we needed to do something. So it was discussed many, many times but we moved pretty quickly toward developing such a thing. We didn't go to all people who had ever had an anthropology course [laughing]. We went to people who wanted to be practicing anthropologists. It got called eventually *Practicing Anthropology*. Bob Wulff was going to be the first editor of it and then he left us at just the time when it was about ready to

come out and Erve Chambers took over as the editor. Erve was much more deliberately oriented toward practicing anthropology, the professional practice of anthropology, and he was the strongest person that we've ever had around here on that subject.

KAY: What was your response to relations between the SfAA and other anthropological organizations like AAA and NAPA [National Association for the Practice of Anthropology]?

AWW: Well, I always supported closer relations. I never wanted to break off relations. Some people pushed for that.

KAY: Separatists [laughs]!

AWW: Yes. I think connections are so important they should keep making the connections and I did that in many ways. We had a whole committee that was devoted to that. I didn't think of that before but I think that was something that was during my presidency. I think we did some of that. All of the associations that have anything to do with anthropology and applied anthropology should be integrated. I mean communicating broadly and regularly. We tried to push that all the time and I think we were quite successful in that. Even just recognizing these organizations is an important thing because a lot of them, a lot of them we hadn't known existed but when we pursued it we found them and we got in touch with them and tried to keep it up. I think that's continued on even up to now. The more recent officers of the Society continue to push it in that direction.

KAY: What were the important changes to the SfAA that you've seen since you were president 30 years ago and now? Or since you first became involved in the organization in the '60s when you were just a member?

AWW: Well certainly the growth is the outstanding thing. It's so much larger now, the anthropology profession is so much larger. I think maybe at that time there were maybe a thousand anthropologists. Now there are what ten thousand, fifteen thousand? I don't know. There are many, many more and anthropology is so much more widely known. It used to be a unique sort of thing. Now I think it's much more accepted and, you know, I believe all of these things, the emphasis on training we've been talking about, not just in terms of internships, did have a broader aspect.

KAY: You mean things like a specific methodology?

AWW: Yes, yes.

KAY: Quantitative methodology, and qualitative methodology?

AWW: Yes. Except that I don't like to think of them as separate, qualitative and quantitative. I think of them, they're not that, they certainly are not one of these. What was it I said when I was talking about Lévi-Strauss? Binary oppositions. Many people speak of qualitative and

quantitative as being that kind of distinction and I don't see it that way at all. Because of my emphasis on connections I guess, no matter what you look at, you know, if you think there's an opposition there's gonna be a connection there of some kind. If it's at another level that you don't see too bad but it's there.

KAY: Right, right. And I was really referring to the sort of things that anthropologists are expected now to know in terms of, especially applied anthropologists, to be able to speak to people in other disciplines, to different kinds of quantitative analysis as well as different kinds of qualitative analysis. Think of ethnographic fieldwork with just being observation but then think of focus groups, you have rapid assessment techniques, oral history interviews, so on and so forth. Some of that can be very specialized and there are books on each of those things.

AWW: Yes, that's true. That also relates to growth too. If you didn't have the growth you wouldn't have people doing those separate things.

KAY: Specialization. A division of labor. And the last question that I wanted to ask you is this: What guidance or suggestions do you have for the future leadership of the SfAA?

AWW: Ah, well, probably they should continue [laughing]. Certainly we should not lose our anthropology, but we should recognize that the Society for Applied Anthropology began as an interdisciplinary organization. It had people who were professional psychologists, professional sociologists, professional whatnots, and we should remember that at the same time as anthropologists become, hopefully, more interested in those disciplines as well. I'm thinking, for example, of economics. We don't have enough economists in there and the reason is the economists have been going off on the wrong track, moving away from actual observation of events and just analyzing things, you know, by extrapolation instead of looking at what's really happening. I don't know what we can do about it but we should not forget that we can still observe things and try to understand them. Real things and not just...

KAY: ...Models?...

AWW: ...Well I like models [laughs]. But they should be models of real things.

KAY: Yes.

AWW: What are these things that the Wall Street people call derivatives and all that? You know, buying and selling derivatives. Ah, I don't know what that has to do with it except that we need more economists but they should be of the kind in the '60s we called... What was that distinction that developed in the '60's between classical economists and...?

KAY: The difference between, in economic anthropology, the substantivists and the formalists?

AWW: Substantive! Yes! Substantivists and formalists. Obviously all of economics has gone formalist, 100 percent.

KAY: Yes.

AWW: Anthropologists have dropped that entirely it seems to me and aren't doing, aren't even looking up there anymore. I think we need to pay attention. I know we have applied anthropologists, and the Society recognizes this, applied anthropologists in General Motors, applied anthropologists in corporations. But I don't think we as anthropologists are looking at the systems that are problematic for human beings. In other words, we're not studying the corporations. We're studying the problems within the corporations instead of studying the problems corporations create in society at large.

KAY: Right.

AWW: And I think we need to do that. I have been interested in corporate power, the power of corporations, for a long time, as I mentioned at the beginning of this interview, and especially more recently noticing that anthropologists never write about corporations. They write in the abstract about these problems or they write about things within them. If you look in the journals for the word corporation you seldom find it. It's all over my work.

KAY: Oh, yes.

AWW: They never publish it [laughs]. They did publish it, but not in applied anthropology. I have to take that back: In 1976, I did publish my supranational article in *Current Anthropology* which is an international journal. So I can't complain about it's not being published at all but it wasn't really picked up very much in textbooks. I don't see much advance in this area even in the field of applied anthropology. I see very little treatment in modern textbooks of these areas that are of most interest to me. I don't know why that is. Textbooks of course go after a market, when they find something sells they just beat it repeatedly [laughs]. I don't know.

KAY: So your suggestions for the future, for future leadership, are to recruit people like they were recruited in the past, recruit people from other disciplines?

AWW: To recruit people not as members necessarily but maintain connections with those who are doing it in some way and to use, actually to propose, to push the idea of networks, you know. Instead of focusing on society or social systems as rigidly bounded, look to the communications, emphasize those connections. I don't know how. Electronically nowadays, I guess. It would be easy to just emphasize that, spread out not by memberships but by shared ideas.

KAY: Right.

AWW: I just mentioned I wasn't very satisfied with modern applied anthropology or modern anthropology textbooks. Why don't we look at that? Why doesn't the Society review them? Are they serving us well, with our interest in applications?

KAY: Right.

AWW: I don't know, that's certainly my interest. Anthropologists have not picked up the idea of networks. We've let sociologists and organizational studies and communication take over the development of network analysis. And network analysis is not finished. It requires a lot of math and not the kind of math I derided before. It needs the mathematics of relationships. Graph theory, for example. We need to do that but of course I don't see that going on even in the Society for Applied Anthropology. It'd be so useful to do that.

KAY: Well thank you very much.

AWW: Your welcome [laughs]. Sorry we were kind of bouncing around there.

KAY: No, it's perfect. It's great. It's really important information. All of it. Thank you.