

**Oral History Interview of  
Jim Goss**

**Interviewed by: Daniel U. Sánchez  
October 15, 2014  
Lubbock, Texas**

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## Transcript Overview:

This interview features Jim Goss, who discusses his experiences in graduate school at the University of Chicago and among the Native American tribes of the Great Basin.

**Length of Interview:** 01:07:45

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Transcript Page</b>	<b>Time Stamp</b>
Graduates U. of Oregon, moves to Chicago	5	00:00:34
Early days as linguist/archaeologist at U. of Chicago	7	00:10:49
Fieldwork at U. of Colorado	8	00:21:15
Experience compiling first southern Ute dictionary, time on reservation	10	00:29:03
Returns to U. of Chicago, paper on Great Basin	12	00:44:13
Kurdish interests, decision to focus on American Indian languages	13	00:52:06
Works on dissertation, hired UCLA	14	01:02:36

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### Keywords

Archaeology, Ute language, Native American culture, Great Basin, linguistics

**Daniel Sanchez (DS):**

My name is Daniel Sánchez, today's date is October 15, and we're in Lubbock, Texas, and it's 9 AM in the morning, and that's why I had a brain lapse there. And we're interviewing Dr. Jim Goss, this is part of a series, and this is number four in the series with Dr. Goss. Jim, good morning.

**Jim Goss (JG):**

Good morning.

DS:

Well, I think we pretty much left it off with you returning to your graduate work.

JG:

Yeah, let's see, when we stopped last time, I had just graduated from the University of Oregon with honors, and I had won a three-year fellowship, National Endowment For—can't remember the name of it—National Defense Education Act Title Four Fellowship, which was a three year fellowship to the University of Chicago. And it was part of the Congressional concern that science research was getting ahead of us in Russia, so that they better put some money into educating scientists. So, I was fortunate in timing to be ready to apply for one of these, and it took me through my graduate work at the University of Chicago. So, now I'm in Oregon, graduated, working on the ranch during the summer to get a little money ahead for the trip to Chicago, and Dr. Cressman at the University of Oregon knew that I already had a wife and one child, and he also found out that I was expecting another child a month or so later, in July of 1960. And he gave me some sage advice; he said, "Well, if you want to be a professional anthropologist and get your graduate school, quit having children." And I agreed that that was probably a good idea, since it's expensive to try to go to graduate school with a wife and two children. So I worked that summer on the ranch, and got ready to go to Chicago in August, and we didn't have many worldly possessions at that time, we'd been living for two years in veterans' housing in the University of Oregon, and generally with cast-off furniture and things like that. So I had to change my life a little bit—I was going to have another child, and going to be moving to Chicago, so I couldn't really do it in my Porsche. So I traded my Porsche off on a Triumph station wagon, and I got a little extra money in the trade, since the Porsche was a lot more valuable than the new Triumph station wagon. And had to make some other arrangements—I had a beautiful Palomino horse named Modoc on the ranch, and I knew I was going off to graduate school for three years or so, so I thought, "I better sell the horse, and not depend on my dad to take care of my horse," so I sold my Palomino. So, this was a very sad transition, trading off a Porsche and my Palomino for a wife and two kids and a trip to Chicago (laughs). But we loaded up a truck with what we had, and so my dad volunteered to help me move, and I drove off to Chicago from Oregon in a Triumph station wagon, and my dad was following me in a Ford truck to Chicago, to make the move. So, we got to Chicago, and I'd been

in communication with the housing office at the University of Chicago, and they said they had a nice place waiting for me just right for a family of four, a two-bedroom place. And so we got there and went to the housing office and they gave us an address and told us how to find the place. We went and found it and it was a third-floor walk-up, in a tenement that was about to fall down. And my dad and I both agreed that I couldn't move my family into this place. I found out that the University of Chicago was one of the biggest slum landlords in Chicago, and they were putting a lot of their married students into substandard housing. And so I went back to the housing office and said that we couldn't move into that one, and so they had a representative take me to two more places, and they weren't any better. So my dad and I went and looked on our own and we found a nice apartment complex on the south side of Chicago that would be a reasonable place to live in, at about 83<sup>rd</sup> & Cottage Grove. And it was going to be about a hundred and fifty dollars more than what I was planning on paying for rent, but we decided that that's about the best we could do. So I signed a lease for that for a year, and my dad and I went and bought some furniture, just basic furniture for the apartment, so we could get started there. And I signed a contract for the furniture to be delivered and paid on time, I made a down payment. And my wife and two kids were still in Oregon, and they were supposed to come after I found a place, and got the furniture in. So my dad went back to Oregon, and I waited for the furniture to arrive; we scheduled my wife and two kids to come on a certain date. We got two days before my wife and kids were supposed to be there, and still no furniture, so I went to the store and I found out that they hadn't approved my contract. But they hadn't let me know, and so there I was, without beds or anything for the family. So the beginning of my time in Chicago was a little bit traumatic. I argued with the furniture store that I thought that this was all approved, and [they] said "No." [I] said, "Well, my father co-signed for it, and he has a good financial record in Oregon, and you have all the information, why didn't you let me know? [They] said, "Well, it's clear off in Oregon, you know, and we don't know whether you're good for this or not." So I talked to the salesman that sold me the furniture, and he was outraged that the credit people hadn't let me know. And anyhow, Joe Weissman, a very nice gentleman, who was the furniture salesman, said, "Well, I have confidence in you, and I'll co-sign for you." So I made my first friend in Chicago, Joe Weissman, a nice Jewish fellow who was a salesman of furniture. And he co-signed for me, the salesman that sold it to me co-signed it for me. So, I began to feel a little better about Chicago, that there were some friendly people in Chicago. And anyhow, I waited the day my family was to come into O'Hare, and the furniture didn't come, and the furniture didn't come, and all of a sudden, I realized that I wasn't going to be able to get to O'Hare in time if I waited for the furniture. But I said I had to wait for the furniture, so I waited for the furniture. So it finally came, and I was an hour late getting out to O'Hare to pick up my family. The O'Hare airport was just six years old, but it was already—well, they claimed it was the busiest airport in the world at that time—so my wife and a year-and-a-half son, and two-month-old daughter were waiting in O'Hare airport in this mob scene for an hour, with no me. And, of course, no explanation would help her anxiety about the whole thing. So, she never got over it I don't think. (laughs)

DS:

Wow.

JG:

But these are some of the trials that you go through, making moves like this. So, that was my introduction to Chicago, and anyhow, we got settled and we had a couple of weeks to get things settled down before classes started in May. When I got enrolled in the university, I found out that besides the grant from the government, the National Defense Education Act, the tuition was rather high at the University of Chicago. I didn't really have any idea what the tuition would be when I went back there, but it wouldn't sound very high right now, given the rate for tuition these days, but the University of Chicago, of course, was a private school and their tuition was very high. And the Chicago Foundation actually came through with an addition of the payment of the tuition, above and beyond the living expenses of the fellowship. So, I ended up getting supported a little better, actually, to the level that I could afford the apartment that I'd contracted into. So we ended up getting settled pretty well. And we got settled in our community in the south side of Chicago, and they had a community action group that was very active in voter registration then. And anyhow, as soon as we moved into this place, we had people knocking on our door to register us to vote. Now this is 1960, when voter registration was really starting to move as a civil rights—the Students for a Democratic Society were active with the University of Chicago, and these voter registration people knocking on doors were with that group. So I got acquainted with some of those people very quickly. And, of course, that is the fall, that November, that JFK was elected, so things were sort of coming together in the civil rights at that time in Chicago. And the courses were good, that I registered for, and I found out that I was, in many cases, way ahead of some of the students in graduate school at the University of Chicago. I was, of course, four years older since I'd been four years in the Air Force, and then I'd been doing research in archaeology, and especially Russian archaeology, for two years at the University of Oregon as an undergraduate, so I was all geared up for it. So the first semester, things kicked off very well. The papers I wrote for seminars and things like that all—well, they were “A” papers, and things were going along very well. In one of my archaeology courses, they wanted a term paper on some international archaeological sequence, and so I wrote a paper on upper Paleolithic Archeological sites in southern Russia, in the Don River Basin. So I published two papers in the *Anthropology Tomorrow* journal, the graduate student journal at the University of Chicago; and these were my first publications. So I published one article called “Kostyenko IV and the Don Basin Upper Paleolithic,” and another one, an annotated bibliography of the primary literature on the Upper Paleolithic Sites of the Don Basin in the USSR. All from my research in the Russian archeological journals that had essentially already done. So I was getting the jump on these things, and of course—well, I have to say that my professors were impressed, since they didn't have any other archaeologists reading Russian or anything like this. And so the coursework went great that first year at the University of Chicago. And I got along well with my instructors, and I guess, well, they all got to know me pretty well. And then I was looking for

field work for the summer, and I had a connection with another professor, Jim Clifton, who was with the University of Colorado then. Jim Clifton had been the teaching assistant in the first class that I took at the University of Oregon, with Dr. Cressman. And when I got that undergraduate National Science Foundation Fellowship, he offered me a corner of his office for me to do my research in. And Jim Clifton was from Chicago, and he and I were both on the Korean G.I. Bill, me as an undergraduate, and him as a graduate. And Jim graduated with his Ph.D. in 1960 at the same time I graduated with my bachelor's. And now he was working for the Tri-Ethnic Research Project out of the Institute of Behavioral Sciences at the University of Colorado, doing field work on Southern Ute Indian reservations. And the Tri-Ethnic Research Project was financed by the National Institutes of Health, and it was a study of the interrelationship in the Tri-Ethnic community; the interrelationship between the Indian community on the reservation, the Hispanic community which was descended from the early Spanish colonial frontier time, and the Anglo-American community. So, this sounded like an interesting situation to me, since I was interested in different cultures, and different languages. And Jim Clifton knew my abilities as a linguist as well as an anthropologist, and he wrote me a letter and said, "We'd really like to have somebody come and describe the language, since nobody's described it, and would you like to come out and do that for the summer, a summer project? And it might lead into a Ph.D. project." So I said "Sure," and so, after courses were over at the University of Chicago, I loaded up and went to Colorado. And I had planned to take the family, but my major professor at that time said "Well, you'll get a lot more work done if you just go out there by yourself." And so he talked me into leaving my wife and two kids in the apartment on the south side of Chicago while I went off for the summer in Colorado. It wasn't very fair, but that's the way anthropologists do things, that's how anthropologists do field work, and we have to make those kinds of adjustments. So my wife and two kids stayed in Chicago for the summer, and so I didn't have to stay in Chicago for the summer. I didn't have to be there for the heat and for the thunderstorms, and actually a tornado came right down 75<sup>th</sup> Street in Chicago during that summer. We lived on 83<sup>rd</sup>, and a tornado came down 75<sup>th</sup> into the lake, just a few blocks away while I was gone. So that was a little bit traumatic too; we stayed in touch on the phone, and wrote letters, and cards. And so we worked it out, but it's stressful being the wife of an anthropologist who has to do field work, and I understand that. So anyhow, I headed for Colorado, and I stayed at the University of Colorado at the home of the professor who was the director of this project, Omer Stewart, and got filled in on what the project was all about. And this was the first time I'd been to Colorado, so I headed down to the reservation which was by Durango in the southwest corner of Colorado. I stayed the first night at Fairplay, in South Park, which is at eleven thousand feet, and I realized the change in altitude can really cause a lot of fatigue. I really was worn out by the time I got there; ready to stay a day. And so I stayed a day in South Park, and began to get acclimated to the change in altitude. And of course I'd be working all summer between seven thousand and nine thousand feet, so there was a little adaptation to that. So that was the beginning of my field work, and as I'd planned to come to the reservation, Jim Clifton—who was the field representative for this project—had suggested that I write to the tribal council and get a place to live, and make all

these arrangements, and also get permission through the tribal council to do this field work. So I had written, and I'd followed up the letters with phone calls, left messages—they were never answered—and I found out that that was sort of standard policy with the tribal council and the reservation. So, when I got there, I went to Jim Clifton's place, and he went with me while we went to the tribal council building, and the tribal chairman was just so glad to see me. He said he'd gotten all my letters—he hadn't answered them, but he'd gotten my letters, and my phone messages—but he hadn't answered them, but he'd got them, and said was real glad to see me. And he arranged for me to come on that Thursday and present my plans to the tribal council. So I went up in front of the tribal council—the first time I'd gone up before a tribal council of an American Indian tribe—and there were eight council members. And they had me stand in front of these eight council members, and they had a spotlight pointed on me, and they asked me questions for about half an hour, about why was I there, what did I want to do. So I had to explain that I'd been asked to come and describe the language that I'd already done some research on—the Ute language—and found out that it was related to the Aztec language in Mexico, and belonged to a big language family called the Uto-Aztecan language family, and included groups like the Hopi, and the Tarahumara, and the Huicholes, and so on. So I gave them a whole outline of where their language, the Ute language, fit into a larger language family, and that the Ute language hadn't ever been described. Nobody had come up with an alphabet, nobody had written the grammar of the language, or anything like this. So, they were interested in whether I was going to write a book. And one of the council members said, "Are you going to write a book?", and I said "Well, I don't know that I'll write a book, but I'll write some descriptions of the language, and the beginning of a dictionary and things like this." And he said, "Well, if you write a book, I'd sure like a copy of it, even if it would cost five or six dollars." And I said, "Well, I don't know if we could get a book on the grammar of your language published, I don't know how much it would be in demand, I don't think it would be a best seller"—and I think I convinced him that I wasn't going to make a lot of money on writing a book. But they, of course, had had lots of people coming and asking questions and writing books and going off and doing different things with the information they got. So this was 1961, and before I left the council meeting, I assured the council, I promised the council, that anything I wrote about—their language, or their culture—and published, and any of my manuscripts that I wrote, I would see that they got copies for their tribal archive, and that I'd return essentially everything that I did for the tribe for their approval; that I didn't have any hidden agenda, that I was going to do this hopefully for their benefit. So I made a promise to the tribal council in 1960, and as far as I can get a record, promises by anthropologists—I never ran across another promise like that, a definite, clear promise to an American Indian tribe, by an anthropologist, but I did make that promise. So I tried through all my years of research on the Ute reservation to fulfill that promise. And as I wrote different things, I would bring them copies back to the tribe, back to the tribal council. The tribal chairman, from time to time—well, they went through three or four tribal chairpersons—the things I sent generally went up on a shelf behind the tribal chairman's desk, and that was the archive. But from time to time, things disappeared—that is, people would

walk off with things like that. So, there were several times when the tribal chairman would ask me for another copy or something, because somebody had walked off with something, and I did that. So from that time on, I kept in touch with the tribe on the progress of my research, and sent them everything along the way. So now, JFK was president, and another interesting thing that happened then, in 1961, is that JFK appointed a new commissioner of Indian Affairs, and he was a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Chicago, named Philleo Nash. And he worked in government offices in many different divisions, and he was an anthropologist that had done a description of an American Indian Language for his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago. So Jim Clifton and I were both—I was at the University of Chicago, Jim Clifton had been an undergraduate at the University of Chicago, and Philleo Nash was coming as a new commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1961. So I was part of the group that took Philleo Nash, the new commissioner on his first tour of the southern Ute Indian tribe, with the tribal council and Jim Clifton. So that first summer I was there, I met the commissioner of Indian Affairs, and we had a nice visit, and all alumnuses from the University of Chicago, so I made a good friend there. Now before I left the reservation, one thing I promised the tribe was that before I left the reservation in 1961 to go back to Chicago, I would leave a result in their hands of what I'd done. So the last couple of weeks I was on the reservation, I sat down with my old Royal typewriter and typed out mimeograph masters of a short dictionary of the southern Ute language. And so before I left that first summer, I wanted to leave something in their hands, and I'd been working very closely with the tribal chairman, and the tribal secretary. And the tribal secretary and I put this together. I actually typed the mimeograph masters, and we ran off this twenty-one page short dictionary of the southern Ute language. And the tribal secretary cranked the mimeograph machine while we did this. We ran it in five-hundred copies, which was the number of the tribal members at that time. There were five hundred tribal members on the tribal roll at that time. So before I left, I left a short dictionary of the southern Ute language, this mimeograph thing, in the hands of every tribal member, and fulfilled my first promise that I'd show them what I did the first summer. And it was based on work with a tribal elder named Virgil Red, who'd been a tribal chairman, and then the grandson of Buckskin Charlie, who'd been the chief of the southern Utes when they were put on their reservation back in the 1890s. So these two people—Virgil Red and Antonio Buck Jr.—were nice enough to spend time with me to try to teach me their language. So I worked with them through that summer with a tape recorder, and went through word lists, and then I collected tape recordings of them telling stories, and then we'd go through the stories told in Ute and translate them into English, and then I'd go through point by point and break the Ute up into words, and I developed a practical alphabet for the language. So, this was the beginning of a practical alphabet, and the beginning of a dictionary—just a start, but I wanted to show them something before I left. So this was really a wonderful device, because as I gave them to people, I asked people that still spoke the language to go through it and see what they thought about it, and if they had some comments on it, positive or negative, to let me know. If they had words they wanted to add to it, write it down on a margin or someplace, and then "I'll be around next summer, and see what y'all have to say." So that was the beginning, and in that first summer,

there were just five hundred tribal members. There were actually about fifty major extended families, and while I was there that summer, the first weekend after the Fourth of July, they have their traditional sun dance. And it's a traditional ceremony that they've had since before they were on the reservation, and a lot of the people live off the reservation, but of course they come to the reservation for this ceremony. So, I was there for the sun dance, and spent time with my major consultant, Tony Buck Jr., at the sun dance, and met all his family, and ate with his family in their teepee out there. And during that first summer, one way or another—at the sun dance, at naming ceremonies that they had; that is, when some child was born, five days after the child was born, they got their first name, and the family got together and gave them their name—so I was invited to these naming ceremonies. Also, the Vietnam War was getting going and quite a few of the younger men were going off to the Vietnam War, they were drafted. When they were drafted, they were joined; there was always a going away ceremony for their warriors. I went to those with the different families. And when some of them came back from the Vietnam War, they had ceremonies that were the traditional ceremonies when warriors came back from war. They had to be debriefed by the tribe. Warfare was considered to be a very tragic affair, and there were very bad influences associated with having been to war, and they had rituals for decontamination after having killed people, and things like that. So I got involved in that—of course I was a veteran, and they invited me to join their veterans' association, so since 1961 I've been a member of their veterans' organization. And I often go back for their Memorial Day ceremonies, and they have a special veterans' ceremony, so I participate in that whenever it's convenient for me to get there on a Memorial Day. They have what's called a Ute Hero Day at that time, and I've been honored at that a few times. So in that first year I got really involved with the community, and really I knew every family, I knew the leaders of every family, and I knew everybody I'd meet on the reservation by the time I left. My first consultant was Virgil Red; the tribal council had told me that Virgil would be a very good consultant for me, and he "Wasn't doing anything right now, and why don't you go meet him?" So I said where is he? They said "Oh he's down in the basement in the tribal jail." And Virgil was down in the basement in the tribal jail; he had a little drinking problem and he had been thrown in the tribal jail, for an assault and battery charge. And anyhow, they thought he'd be a good consultant, since he wasn't doing anything but sitting in a tribal jail. And anyhow, they took me down to the tribal jail and introduced me to the keeper of the jail, a sergeant in the tribal police force, a fellow named William Thompson—he was a sergeant in the tribal police—and William Thompson was actually a son-in-law of Virgil Red, who was in the jail. And so William Thompson introduced me to Virgil, and let me in the cell with Virgil. And so I explained to Virgil that "The tribal council had sent me down and thought you would be a good consultant, and you might like to have some company while you're in jail." And so we had a little discussion about that, and he said "Well, I'm interested in the language." And Virgil had actually been a member of the tribal council, and he'd been a translator for the elders, to the Indian Bureau people and things like that. And he was actually considered one of the best speakers of the language as it should be spoken, and so it was a good choice. So the next three years, I worked a lot with Virgil, and he

got out later that year, and fortunately didn't go back to jail for anything for a few years. He was eventually killed—it's sort of a tragic story, but in 1965, he was found dead on the street in Ignacio, the town on the reservation, and he'd been attacked, and mugged, and robbed, and killed on the street in 1965. An elder, just evidently killed by nobody-knows-who, just for the money in his pocket at the time. Yeah. And death was something you got used to on the reservation, because there was a tremendous death rate of people with illness. Tuberculosis was endemic on the reservation, alcoholism was a problem, and there was a very high highway accident rate, car accidents, a lot of people injured and killed in automobile accidents, usually associated with alcohol and things like that. And a high incidence of diabetes and all of the complications that come along with diabetes. Primarily from the change in diet from their traditional hunter-and-gatherer way to living out of canned goods and soft drinks and things like that on the reservation. So there were a lot of people dying—high infant mortality rate. Each year that I came back, I would miss children in families, because they had died in childhood. So there was a high mortality rate on the reservation; that was sad. When I got back from the reservation—of course I was going to be a teaching assistant, and also I was doing tutoring—and they required that we get chest X-rays, and I found out when I got back from the reservation that I had some spots on my lungs, and I had actually had a touch of tuberculosis. And fortunately, we had the teaching hospital at the University of Chicago, an outstanding facility there, and they put me on medication and high doses of calcium, which was the major medicine for tuberculosis, and the problem seemed to be taken care of, it disappeared. So, I can't take the tuberculosis skin test anymore, I have to take X-rays, but I haven't had any more problems with that. But I guess that was the beginning of my fieldwork at the University of Chicago, there on the reservation, and then back to Chicago for the next academic year. One of the term papers that I wrote for a seminar in North American archaeology was "Cultural Development in the Great Basin," and of course I'd been working with Dr. Cressman at the University of Oregon, who was one of the leading archeologists in Great Basin archeology. He was the one that had hoped that I'd go off to Chicago and become a Great Basin archeologist and come back. And so I wrote a seminar paper on cultural development in the Great Basin, and of course got an "A" on it, and sent it off to my friends at the University of Oregon, and friend at the University of Utah. And Jesse Jennings, the head of the department at the University of Utah, forwarded it to *Utah Archeology* and it was published at the University of Utah, in *Utah Archeology* in 1964. So the seminar papers that I wrote as a student there kept getting published. So my reputation was sort of on its way as a student at the University of Chicago. Another term paper that I wrote for Dr. Robert Braidwood at the University of Chicago that second year, in his course, on the Neolithic or the later archeological developments in the Middle East. I wrote a paper for him on early village farming developments in Turkmenistan. I had to do a little new research on the Russian resources on Turkmenistan at that time. So Robert Braidwood said "This is great", and that got published in the student journal, *Anthropology Tomorrow*. And this stirred me up, because Dr. Braidwood was doing continuing research in Turkey, and Iraq, just across the border, in a Kurdish area. So he invited me to join his project in Turkey, with the Kurdish people, and so I was thinking this

over—so I started studying Turkish. I took semesters of Turkish, and was studying Kurdish on my own. This gets interesting about languages, because at the University of Chicago, you had to demonstrate your ability in at least one foreign scholarly language to get your master's degree in anthropology. And then if you go on for the Ph.D., you have to study one more scholarly language—have to have two scholarly languages that you can read the literature in your field in. So I had of course Russian and German, and so I was able to pass my language reading exams in Russian for my master's degree, but then I went on for the Ph.D., and passed it in German too. And then since I was specializing in anthropology in linguistics—so it was really a joint degree in anthropology and linguistics—they said you have to have a third language. So anyhow, I was studying Turkish, so I got ready to pass the reading exam in Turkish. So before I was through I'd passed the reading exams in—well, the second year I was there I passed the reading exam in Russian, the reading exam in German, the reading exam in Spanish, the reading exam in Turkish—I was studying Kurdish, and I was starting to write my Ute grammar. And later on I did a lot of work in bilingual education, and I didn't have much patience with people who criticized bilingual education, saying that people can only handle one language in their head at any one time—and I was sitting there in graduate school shifting gears every couple of hours, from getting ready for language exams in Russian, in German, in Spanish, in Turkish, and writing grammar of an American Indian language, and picking up a little Kurdish. So in the process with my ability there, I got pretty broadly based in a knowledge of peoples of Central Asia, in that area of Turkmenistan, and the Turks, and so on. So, things just kept expanding. My problem is I spread myself too thin. I just follow my curiosities, and didn't specialize very closely. But I had to make this decision, that is, am I going to go with Dr. Braidwood this next year to Kurdistan on the border. Well the Kurds, you're hearing about them in the news now, they're our friends in the Iraq war situation? The Kurds held the mountains where Iran, and Turkey, and Iraq, and Syria all come together. And the Kurds are an ethnic group that isn't Semitic—it isn't Arabic and it isn't Jewish; it isn't any of those languages. Kurdish is actually an Indo-European language, ultimately related to European languages, and to Persian. So here you have Kurdistan, which is in the mountains, where all these come together, and they've always wanted to have their autonomy; they've always wanted to be a sovereign nation in that area. But the colonial forces at the—well, we're going here back to the Second World War—partitioned Kurdistan into these four different countries. So they've always been an oppressed minority within all four of these different countries. And the main reason that the Kurds are friendly towards the United States is that they hope that an ultimate situation will give the Kurds their own sovereignty, their own identity. So this is the hotbed of problems in that area, that's been there for years and years and years. And it's real frustrating to me that so much of our American policy in the Middle East has been based on not understanding all of the ethnic identities in the area. And well, when the Bushes went to war in that part of the world, they didn't know what kind of a hornet's nest they were getting into. So—but that's another story, that's another story. So I had to make the decision: “Am I going to Iraq and Turkey, or am I going to keep working on the Ute language?” And I decided that it was bad enough leaving my wife in Chicago while I

went to Colorado, what if I had to leave her to go over into that part of the world, with all those complexities? So I decided to stay, and so I swung my attention more towards linguistics at that stage. I hadn't decided whether I was an archeologist or a linguist at that time—I was both. But of course comparative historical linguistics has a lot to say about archeology, and pre-history, and so on. So that's what I'm interested in, really, is the linguistic side of things, and what people have to say themselves about their own history, which is a side that a lot of scientists don't get to. So I wrote another term paper for the seminar in comparative linguistics, and wrote an evaluation of all the past studies in comparative Ute-Aztec languages, and a perspective for future work. So I actually wrote a strategy for what I would like to do in linguistics with American Indian languages for Professor McQuown, the linguist there, who had worked with these languages in Mexico. And he encouraged me, and sent me back out to Colorado again. Before I went, I got my master's thesis with the phonology of the southern Ute language, and got my master's in June of 1962, and then headed back for the field, and left my wife and two kids in Chicago again. And, well actually—no, this year I didn't. I decided to take them to her folks in California, and I also took a friend of mine, who was a graduate student at the University of Chicago, named Bill Sitek, who wanted to start working with an American Indian group. So we did lock up the apartment in Chicago, and we all headed for California, and I left my wife and two kids with her family in California for the summer. And that year, I was on my second year of the NDA fellowship, and the second year of support from the Tri-Ethnic Research Project, which was supported by the National Institutes of Health, through the University of Colorado. And I had a new project, with the Wetherill Mesa Project at Mesa Verde National Park. My professor, Dr. McQuown, had been in touch with Doug Osborne, who was running the Wetherill Mesa Archaeological Project at Mesa Verde, and they were looking for somebody who could experiment with a new method called glottochronological dating, or lexicostatistics, to see if I could do a project comparing the language of Ute, and Piute, and other related languages, to see if I could come up with any estimate of the time depth of the Utes coming into the Mesa Verde area, and the Mesa Verde Pueblo people leaving it, to see if the Utes had anything to do with running these people out of the Mesa Verde National Park. So, I had support from the National Park Service, and from the National Geographic Society. So, really, that second year, doing field work, I had support from three different projects. So I did a better job of supporting my family, travelling around that year. This other student, Bill Sitek, was from Detroit, and he'd never been west of Chicago before. So it was an interesting trip, just seeing how a trip to the far west, to the Rocky Mountains, and to Colorado, and to Oregon, what kind of an effect it had on his perceptions. And on the way back from California, I had already outlined a dialect survey to do this lexicostatistical job, so we stopped at Tübatulabal in California, and then a series of Southern Paiute communities, and took word lists from different Indian communities on their languages, so I could do this project for the National Park Service. And eventually, of course, that was a publication too, published in *American Antiquity* in 1965, called "Ute Linguistics and Anasazi Abandonment of the Four Corners Area." So that was the first publication that I had in a national archaeological journal; that's the journal of the American Archaeological Society. So

that was a slick one, (laughs) that was a slick one. You always want to get that slick one in a national archaeological journal. So, I was a published archeologist by that time. So I worked the rest of the summer on the Ute language, and Bill Sytek worked on Ute social organization. And then my family flew from her folks in California to my folks in Oregon, so Bill Sytek and I went back from Colorado up to Oregon, to pick up my family, and then we all went back to Chicago for the next year. So then a fourth year, now I'm working on my Ph.D. requirements, fulfilling those language requirements, and took my prelims, of course, for the Ph.D. and so on. And then I went to the Ute reservation the fourth year, the fourth summer, with a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies, a fellowship in linguistics. So that was a full-year fellowship, and paid pretty well, so I took my family. We stored our furniture and things, household goods, in Chicago. We didn't know what our future was from there; took my family to the reservation, and we lived in a duplex on the reservation, and I continued working with the elders of the tribe on the language for my dissertation, which of course resulted eventually in a grammar dictionary of the southern Ute language. We left the reservation in September—we didn't want to stay in the high country in Colorado for the winter—and we went to Oregon, close to the ranch. We lived in Salem, Oregon, and I went back to my security at the ranch, and I had this fellowship, but I also made extra money working on the ranch, as my dad could use the help. So I got some extra salary working on the ranch. So I worked on the ranch on through the rest of that winter, and the next summer, and worked on the dissertation and worked on the ranch. Worked on the dissertation at night, and worked on the ranch in the daytime—so back to the ranch again, can't get me out of the ranch. But we had to draw the line sometime, and I hated to leave my dad on his own, since my brother had left the ranch, and I'd left the ranch, and it wasn't doing as well as it did when he'd had cheap labor. So in November, I went to San Francisco for the job fair at the annual meetings of the American Anthropological Association. And I had very good recommendations—that is, for my level, I had a very good career vita—I had publications already, and I had first-class recommendations from all of my professors at the University of Oregon and at the University of Chicago, and the job fair was pretty simple for me. I had quite a few offers, and I was invited to have breakfast with Harry Hoyer, who had been at the University of Chicago as a professor, but then had moved to UCLA, and was the major linguist in the department of anthropology at UCLA. And Harry Hoyer invited me for breakfast, and hired me at breakfast as an instructor in anthropology at UCLA. And that was my first full-time teaching job, and I was hired as an instructor because I hadn't finished my Ph.D. degree yet. I had everything but dissertation, everything but the dissertation—I had all the other requirements taken care of, and passed the prelims, but they didn't hire me as the assistant professor level yet because I didn't have the Ph.D. I took Rena, my wife, to lunch at the St. Francis Hotel, and everyone was quiet and staring at the television, and President Kennedy had just been shot in Dallas—November 22, 1963. And the triple-A meetings there at San Francisco were sort of shattered by it all. And Dr. Margaret Mead gave a memorial address. So that's the day I was hired, on the day that President Kennedy was shot. So that brings me to the next episode, which will be next week.

DS:

All right, and the continuing saga of Dr.—

JG:

That's quite a crisis.

DS:

It is.

JG:

Being hired to teach at UCLA, and President Kennedy being killed the same day.

DS:

Yeah, one high and one low.

JG:

Phew, boy.

DS:

Yeah.

JG:

That was quite a day.

DS:

Yeah, okay, so we're going to leave it there?

JG:

Leave it there for today.

DS:

All right, we sure will—thank you Jim.

*End of interview*

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