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**The Vietnam Archive
Oral History Project
Interview with Gerald Hickey
Conducted by Ty Lovelady
Date: Unknown
Transcribed by Blair Barnhill**

NOTE: Any text included in brackets [] is information that was added by the narrator after reviewing the original transcript. Therefore, this information is not included in the audio version of the interview.

1 Ty Lovelady: Okay, sir?

2 Gerald Hickey: Yeah?

3 TL: That does sound a little better now. Okay, my first question is, what led you
4 to first become interested in the study of Vietnam and in the Montagnards in particular?

5 GH: Well, see, I was a graduate student in anthropology at the University of
6 Chicago, and that was in the early '50s, around 1950-51. I had Professor Fred Egan, E-G-
7 A-N, who was a well-known anthropologist. He had done quite a bit of research in the
8 Philippines. He started out with American Indians and then moved to the Philippines. I
9 was taking his course on ethnography of Southeast Asia and I got interested in the subject
10 of—most of his students who were going to Asia wanted to go to the Philippines, and I
11 really didn't because there were too many people going to go there, and besides I had met
12 some of the first Vietnamese who came to this country in 1950. They were at a student—
13 well, there was a house in Hyde Park near the University of Chicago where the students
14 would meet. It was run by a group of lay missionaries from Belgium. They were Catholic
15 ladies and all very, very bright. They were all getting their doctorates at the university,
16 and the students would go there and they could cook and do things. I was invited to a
17 couple of the things there and I got—these were the first students who really came to the
18 US, and they were supported by Father Emanuel Jacques, and his idea was that they
19 would come here, study, and also work for their education so they would learn about the

1 idea of work. They were from upper class families in Vietnam. I had some contact with
2 Vietnam with this house and the lectures they were giving, and the meetings they were
3 having, but anyhow, I got into the literature at the University of Chicago library and I got
4 very interested in Vietnamese culture, and not just the Montagnards, but Vietnamese
5 culture, and I started doing research on it and reading books. Then I did my MA (master's
6 of arts degree) on Vietnamese kinship. It was not a dissertation, it was a paper, which is a
7 much more informal document. I used the students in Chicago as my informants. I sat
8 down with them, we worked out genealogies, and what the terminology was in
9 Vietnamese, etc., etc. Of course, the Vietnamese keep genealogy books, so I got involved
10 in this, and I did the MA, the paper, and got it completed, and Professor Egan liked it. His
11 big interest was kinship at that time. Excuse me, (coughs) I still have remains of a dry
12 cough.

13 TL: That's okay.

14 GH: So, in 1953 I got my MA at the university, and I also got a fellowship from
15 the Groom, G-R-O-O-M, a private foundation, to study in Paris to do research on
16 Vietnam. In March 1953, I went to sail to France. I went to England first because the ship
17 I took landed in Liverpool, and I went down to Paris and began working at the Musee (?).
18 I got very interested there in their collection on the Montagnards because they had a lot of
19 monographs and material on the Montagnards and photographs, and they had been done
20 by largely not professional. The French didn't have a lot of professional anthropologists.
21 They had only one, Georges Condominas, who was still in Vietnam working on the
22 Mnong Gar tribe there, but the rest of the things were done by administrators and military
23 people, and they were kind of memoir and things. I started going through them and I got
24 very interested in these people. When I left Paris I took a whole briefcase full of notes on
25 Vietnam back to Chicago and I started working on it. Then, I finished up—well, I had a
26 chance—what I wanted to do was to go to Vietnam, but the problem in 1953-54, was that
27 the Dien Bien Phu had just taken place. The French were getting ready to leave
28 Indochina, but nobody would give a grant to go to Indochina, nobody, Ford, no one. They
29 all said it was too dicey, it was too dangerous.

30 TL: So this didn't matter if you were going to go to the South or the North—It
31 didn't matter which part of Vietnam, they still wouldn't give a grant.

1 GH: Well, the South—most of the fighting in the Indochina war was in the
2 North. There was fighting in the South, also, and Dien Bien Phu, of course, was in the
3 North. When I was in Paris, the communist students, the Viet Minh students had a big
4 celebration. They invited me to it at the Maison Indochine to celebrate the victory over
5 the French. I went politely, had something to eat and something to drink. I was also
6 invited by the Bao Dai group. He was the emperor, and his group were right-wing people
7 who were very, very active in Paris. They invited me, and I went there. I was trying to
8 split my time. I didn't want to identify with either side too prominently, but anyhow I
9 managed then to meet, through Father Jacques, I met Wesley Fishel, who was a very
10 good friend of Ngo Dinh Diem. They had met in Japan after the war. Fishel was in the
11 service, and they were inviting Southeast Asia leaders to Japan to get them ready for
12 independence. Diem gave a contract when he set up the government in '54, and then in
13 '55 they promulgated the Republic of South Vietnam. He and Fishel worked out a
14 contract where they could—Fishel was at Michigan State then, and they would supply in
15 their school of administration, people to do research on administration to help set up a
16 government in South Vietnam. Up to that point they were not ready for any kind of
17 independence. The French really didn't get them ready for it. So they were setting things
18 up in Saigon as the capital city. Well, Saigon was not a capital city before. Hanoi was,
19 and Hue was the old imperial capital. Anyhow, I went up to Michigan State and met with
20 Fishel and since I had done research in Paris, he was very interested in having someone
21 who knew something and had background in Vietnam. Fishel was a very, decent, nice
22 man. I really liked him very much. He was a very good scholar, and he was from the
23 University of Chicago, also. He agreed to hire me and I went up to Michigan State in '55
24 to late '55 and early '56 to do an orientation and start working on Vietnamese language.
25 Then in March '56 I went to Vietnam and worked with the Michigan State group, and
26 Fishel said, "What we are going to try and do is have you gain experience in the rural
27 areas," because the people who were there with Michigan State were all in
28 administration, then there was one group in police work or national security. They didn't
29 really want to leave Saigon. They were sort of very busy and had fairly decent housing.
30 David Cole was another grad student in economics at Michigan, and David and I were
31 given the task of doing research in the rural areas, which we liked. We really loved it. I

1 had an absolutely marvelous time. We went everywhere by road. Nobody flew in those
2 days. The war had ended. There were little pockets of Viet Minh here and there and you
3 avoided them, but it gave me a chance to go around and endlessly take notes on South
4 Vietnamese society, and then I was very happy to go to the Highlands to begin to work
5 with the Montagnards. Then in '58 Jim Hendry, who was with the Michigan State group,
6 and I set up a study of a Vietnamese village. My interest still was primarily Vietnamese
7 culture. We set up a study for a village study. Village studies were kind of “in” at that
8 time in anthropology. They had done them in Japan and in Burma and in Thailand there
9 was a group working on a village. So, we went down, we selected the village, and we got
10 the permission from the government to do the research, which we did. It turned out to be
11 very fortunate because the villagers were very, very interesting people. They were very
12 helpful. So, Jim and I worked very hard. Initially we couldn't stay in the village very
13 much, because the insurgency was beginning, and some of the groups were coming out of
14 the Plain of Reeds in the Delta, and going into the villages down in the southern delta
15 where our village was located near the Mekong River. We worked it out, though, and
16 nobody bothered us. We went there every day and collected data, then the people liked
17 us, they started inviting us to all the weddings, funerals, the ceremonies at the *dinh*
18 temple.

19 TL: So you became part of the village, then?

20 GH: Huh?

21 TL: You became part of the village.

22 GH: Yeah, and we were—we even had Vietnamese clothes made for some of the
23 ceremonies at the *dinh*. They said, “Would you please make *ao dai*, and wear the proper
24 clothes?” I said, “Yeah.” We were going along with everything they wanted. They were
25 terribly nice people, very hard working, and very entrepreneurial. It was fascinating. Jim
26 and I had a great time. We split up. We had our assistants working with us. In the
27 morning he would go one way, and I would go the other. We'd meet back at lunch, and
28 we ate with the teachers who were being given prepared food by the cook. We sat and
29 they had very good food. The southerners are very good cooks. That worked out quite
30 well. Meanwhile, I was going back to the Highlands contacting some of the young
31 Montagnard leaders I knew there, and they were very upset at the way they were being

1 treated by the Diem government, the southern Vietnamese government because the
2 Vietnamese had no experience working with the Montagnards. They French had kept the
3 Vietnamese out of the Highlands, and they had administered it from the south. By and
4 large, they left the Montagnards alone in the villages. They didn't try to change them or
5 do anything to them. The people were very upset because Diem started moving some
6 Vietnamese from the lowlands into the highlands, and they contended the people in the
7 highlands that their land was being taken without their being dealt with in any way, and I
8 really began to identify with the problems they had because I think it was real. The
9 Vietnamese, with all due respect, had a very dim view of the Montagnards because they
10 were very different from the Vietnamese. As I've said in my books, the Vietnamese were
11 too chauvinistic and too nationalistic. We've got noise outside. Can you hear me all
12 right?

13 TL: Yes, sir. I can still hear you.

14 GH: We've got endless noise anytime a window is open. Some people would say
15 that they were racist. They were in many ways. There was no getting around it because
16 they looked down on these people. They were a darker color. The Vietnamese valued
17 lightness, you know, a lot of people in Asia do, and of course, the Vietnamese didn't like
18 the Cambodians, or the Laotians, or any of them, the Thais or anybody. Of course, the
19 Montagnards were—the men would wear loin cloths in those days and the women didn't
20 wear anything above the waist. All of this was anathema to the Vietnamese, who were
21 covered, covered, covered. The women have to keep their arms covered, etc. Anyhow, I
22 worked with the leaders. I got to know them and it turns out that they all knew one
23 another because they had all gone to the French schools together. They were a very—I
24 was very impressed with the Montagnard culture. It was the way I was with the southern
25 Vietnamese culture because the Montagnards were very independent people. They made
26 everything that they needed. They didn't want anything from the outside at all. They
27 grew cotton. They wove their own clothes. They made their own instruments, hunting,
28 the knives, the spears, everything, and they did all the farming themselves. They were
29 very good farmers like the southern Vietnamese were incredibly good farmers. I really—
30 it was a joy to work with these people. In the meantime I was buying books all the time,
31 and I made contact—in Saigon, of course, out in the street, if you had a book stalls all

1 along the boulevards. Then I got to know a couple of young Vietnamese who were book
2 dealers. They would look for books for me, and I got very good at what books I wanted
3 but, of course, it was not easy to do because a lot of—the French didn't do big editions.
4 They only did, maybe, five hundred or a thousand books. Some of them made their way
5 in the book stalls and book stores but not that often. It would take a while to gather, say,
6 the *Bulletin des Amis du Vieux Hue*, which I sent to you folks, was very hard to find. I
7 was trying to get a whole collection of it, but I never did do the whole thing. The L'école
8 Française, the French studies group, and the Indochinoises group and all that. I was a
9 member of the Société des études indochinoises at the local museum, which the French
10 ran still, and they had a very nice collection at the museum, so I spent a lot of time over
11 there. It was very quiet in the botanical gardens, big trees all around, and very quiet. The
12 people running it were very, very helpful. It was a joy to work with them. So I started
13 collecting books here and then the word gets around. Some of the families of the
14 Vietnamese wanted to leave and they were selling their collections, so I would negotiate
15 with them. Next thing you know, I started—my apartment in Saigon was filling up with
16 books. I also had a shop in Rue Catinat where they would do book binding. So books that
17 were in bad shape, I would take over there and they would bind them, and they had very
18 nice leather covers, and they would put my initials on the end of the book and all that,
19 and I would select a color and they would do it. It worked out very well, really. It was
20 fascinating, the whole thing.

21 TL: That kind of leads to my next question.

22 GH: Huh?

23 TL: This kind of leads me to my next question. It was during this time period
24 when you began collecting the books that you donated to the Vietnam Archive?

25 GH: I'm sorry. I can't hear you.

26 TL: I'm sorry. It was at this point where you started collecting the books that you
27 donated to the Vietnam Archive.

28 GH: Well, I had the books at my apartment and then I shipped them to the US. I
29 had them here in Chicago, and I used them until very recently. Actually, I got a lot of
30 research done from those books because when I decided to do an ethnohistory of the
31 highlands after I left Vietnam—I had really kind of started on it before. I did my

1 dissertation in Vietnam, my doctoral dissertation, and I used the libraries and the books
2 that were available and then I interviewed a number of the people at the Institute of
3 Administration, which was being run by Michigan State, to talk about their own personal
4 situations. So, I ended up doing my dissertation in Vietnam, and it was—I made one long
5 field trip in December 1956 to northern Laos to get data on the Tai Dam, the Black Tai,
6 and the Tol people and some of the groups up there near the Chinese border because they
7 figured, and my study was going to be social systems of northern Vietnam, which would
8 be largely highland people, Thai speaking people, Mao and these other groups, and then
9 the Vietnamese themselves up in that area. I went up there and stayed at Nam Tha, and it
10 was fascinating. I had a very interesting time. It was kind of crazy in a way because they
11 were having their big *grande cérémonie* they called it, to swear loyalty to the Laotian king.
12 So some of the Laotian royalty came up there and the representatives of all the tribes
13 were all housed all around the place. There was a teacher there who spoke French. He
14 was a Tai Dam and we announced to the villagers and he translated for me. Anyhow, I
15 got that work done and got the dissertation written, well, when I went back to the States I
16 did the dissertation, the maps and everything at the University of Chicago. I continued to
17 work, and then eventually what I did was use the books—I did the village study and I was
18 teaching at Yale when I went back the first time to the US after a couple of years in
19 Vietnam. I was working on literary Vietnamese with Huynh Sanh Thong , the professor
20 who was writing a dictionary. I met him every week, all alone. We'd go over 3x5 cards.
21 He knew Chinese, so he knew the Chinese roots of all these Vietnamese expressions and
22 words, and that's when I got a lot of work done, and I wrote the village study. I had a
23 small apartment near the university, near Yale, and I worked at home, and the press said
24 they were interested. So I took it over there and Jane Olson and the editors were very nice
25 people to deal with. The nice part about those days is that the people I dealt with were
26 remarkably nice people. At the University of Chicago, our faculty, they were ladies and
27 gentlemen, and at Yale, it was the same thing. Yale University Press was not big the way
28 it is now, and the people at the press were extremely nice people, and very professional,
29 and very hardworking, and very fair. It was a joy to work with them. I'm afraid none of
30 this is true anymore.

31 TL: That's a shame.

1 GH: Anyhow, I was very lucky, and they decided to do *Village in Vietnam*, the
2 book on the village. Also then, I continued working and I was doing an ethnohistory of
3 the highlands and I used every available source I could find. I had a lot of them all
4 already in my collection, and the Yale library, they had a very good Southeast Asia
5 collection. I used his French Bulletins, *Bulletin de l'École française*, I knew all of them,
6 and dug out data on all the events of the highlands and any mention of the highlanders in
7 Vietnamese history I would record and put into place. It worked out, but meanwhile I was
8 using the books—when I look at it now, I certainly used a lot of sources for those books.
9 I sent all of them to—you have them at the archives now.

10 TL: We certainly appreciate it.

11 GH: Huh?

12 TL: We certainly appreciate having them. They are a great source.

13 GH: I think they will be put to a good use down there, really. You're going to get
14 people coming visiting. You know better than I. You will come have people doing
15 research there and they will rummage through the collection. Then when I went back to
16 Vietnam, I worked exclusively then in the highlands. Of course, the war started to really
17 pick up. The insurgency became a full scale war in 1965. By that time I had worked very
18 closely with the Montagnards. I was trying to—their leaders wanted me to be a liaison
19 between them and the American mission, and as much as I could with the Vietnamese
20 government, and I said, "All right." They said, "You're not going to leave, are you?
21 Everybody else is leaving," and I said, "No, I'll stay," reluctantly. I did stay, but it was
22 very dicey in the highlands during the war, extremely. I got caught in two big, big, big
23 battles, and I was almost killed in one of them, at a Special Forces camp.

24 TL: Was that the Nam Dong Special Forces camp.

25 GH: Yeah. Oh, that was a horrendous situation, but I didn't complain, because I
26 thought, "Well, you're staying, and you know it's dicey, and it's dangerous. So you have
27 to live with it. Don't blame anybody but yourself." The Montagnard leaders I worked
28 with were very, very decent people. We were trying to get them a ministry, eventually, of
29 their own, a representation in the city of Saigon with some kind of clout in the central
30 government, and eventually we did get that. What I tried to do, also, for years was to get
31 them land titles because I knew there was going to be a situation eventually where they

1 would need the titles, and even if the communists won the war—which they did—the
2 Vietnamese are very legalistic and they may just honor the titles, but I could not get it
3 done. The Vietnamese played every game going to prevent it because they didn't want
4 the highlanders, the Montagnards, to have titles to the land. Part of the problem was that
5 the Vietnamese leaders, the generals, all wanted to get the retirement land in the
6 highlands and have coffee plantations. It was not easy. I had people in the government
7 who were helpful, and I had the American mission, by and large, was very helpful. The
8 embassy even formed a Montagnard committee and they asked me to be on it. I was the
9 only non-government person on it because we were against all the forced relocations and
10 some excessive bombing by the Americans and, of course, the communists were
11 attacking villages at night. Oh! It was a horrendous scene to see what was happening to
12 the Montagnard culture in these villages and the people. A lot of Montagnards were
13 killed and a lot of them went as refugees. Anyhow, I stayed and I worked and I still was
14 collecting books during that period. Down in Saigon I'd spot books here and there and
15 my book dealers would bring things around and I'd get them and put them in the shelves.

16 TL: I was going to ask you—

17 GH: I absolutely loved that collection.

18 TL: Are there any particular books within this donation that you would like to
19 discuss?

20 GH: I can't hear you.

21 TL: Are there any particular books that you donated to the Vietnam Archive that
22 you would like to discuss?

23 GH: Ones I particularly liked?

24 TL: Yes.

25 GH: That whole—the *Bulletin des Amis du Vieux Hue*, which is in the first page
26 of the report that you folks sent me. All of those are really—Father Cadière, Leopold
27 Cadière started that journal in the 1920s, and it was one of the best journals in Vietnam.
28 The French did a lot of very good scholarly work in Vietnam. They really did. He, I
29 think, Cadière was the best ethnographer in Vietnam of anybody who was there. He
30 collected very interesting information. He was a remarkable researcher. He was a
31 prisoner of the Viet Minh for a long time and kept on house arrest for a couple of years,

1 but he stayed and he worked, and the journal is extremely helpful. It's got very detailed
2 descriptions of historical events, coronation of various emperors and all those sort of
3 things. There were a lot of others—when you run through the whole thing, the French
4 journals were very interesting. The one on (??) the about the French military force in the
5 highlands, and then there were provincial monographs that were very useful because they
6 gave you soils, they gave you population, and by and large the French did very good
7 work there. They really did. The things came out in their books and their monographs and
8 their journals. Then *Southeast Asia* started. That was a quarterly of an American and
9 English one, and that was quite good. I just looked at these books, and I thought, “Well,
10 there's no point in my keeping them because no one in my family is interested in them,
11 and we've got to make them available.” I contacted the people at the Vietnam Center, and
12 also got word from Mark Bradley that he would like to get some of the books on
13 Vietnam, they were written in Vietnamese. He reads Vietnamese. He got an appointment
14 at the University of Chicago on history, and he starts there in the fall. His wife got an
15 appointment at Madison, University of Wisconsin at Madison, and she's a scholar of
16 Cambodian Buddhism, and some of the books I had on Buddhism, also, I put in a box for
17 them. Most of the stuff I had I sent to the archive. So, there it is, and I was very pleased
18 within weeks to get a listing of what I sent because I didn't keep track of all of it. I didn't
19 have time to catalog, and I'm the only one working on it. I have to do it without any
20 assistance, and I was so pleased when I got the letter from you folks with the listing of all
21 of the books, and the journals and everything.

22 TL: Well, it was certainly our pleasure. I certainly enjoyed going through the
23 boxes and seeing all of them.

24 GH: You know, I can't hear you too well.

25 TL: I just said that I certainly enjoyed going through the boxes and looking at
26 them. It is quite a treasure to have.

27 GH: It is quite an interesting collection, I think, and I know you folks would be
28 happy to get it, and you could put it to good use, I hope.

29 TL: Oh, absolutely.

30 GH: What I did raise the question, when I talk to people when I received the
31 letter and all that—you have the cover letter and then the release and all that. What I

1 would like to do, and I have mentioned this, is to get some idea of what the collection is
2 worth for tax purposes. I know that's a problem. Most people don't like to give any kind
3 of, quote a price because they think they might get in trouble with the IRS (Internal
4 Revenue Service) over it, which is always a possibility. Then some people mention to
5 me, "Well, some of those books will be worth ten dollars, some twenty." But it's not the
6 books, it's the journals and that. I'm not quite sure how much they would be worth, you
7 know?

8 TL: That's something that we can't do, but you can certainly find an appraiser to
9 look at them. The Vietnam Archive itself, can't do that.

10 GH: Excuse me?

11 TL: I said the Vietnam Archive can't appraise the books, but you are certainly
12 welcome to find somebody who can.

13 GH: Well, I would appreciate that if they could look at that and give me an idea.
14 If they require a fee, I could work out a fee for them.

15 TL: I was going to say, that's something that you'll have to set up. We're not
16 allowed to do that.

17 GH: Any connections for that at all, none.

18 TL: No, I don't have any.

19 GH: I could simply say they're worth a couple of thousand bucks, and I don't
20 think that's exaggerating. I would say two or three thousand dollars.

21 TL: Oh, I'm sure that it probably is in the thousands.

22 GH: In the thousands, I would think, yeah. But I don't want to overdo it because
23 the IRS gets very annoyed and that's when they do an investigation of you.

24 TL: Well, you can take that deed of gift that we sent you to an appraiser and if he
25 would like to send somebody on site to look at them, they can do that, as well. It's just
26 that we can't do it personally.

27 GH: You can't do it personally.

28 TL: No, legally we can't do that.

29 GH: You don't have anybody down at Texas Tech who can, do you?

30 TL: No. No, Sir.

1 GH: Well, because they would have to know what they books were and what
2 they are about and all that.

3 TL: Right. Now, if they did want to look at them, we could provide the books and
4 have them look at them for you, but—

5 GH: Well, I suppose if I say three thousand dollars, that's not too much, is it?

6 TL: I honestly wouldn't know. I wouldn't think so, but I wouldn't know for sure.

7 GH: I'll have to talk to my CPA (certified public accountant) who's a good friend
8 of mine, anyhow, and work out some kind of a price on it, an estimation. But anyhow, do
9 you have any more information that you need?

10 TL: I was just going to ask you a couple more questions real quick. When did
11 you first hear about the Vietnam Center and Archive?

12 GH: Well, when it started out, I knew Doug Pike quite well. Doug was an old
13 friend from Vietnam days, and when he left Berkeley and went to Texas—I had used his
14 collection at Berkeley. I had stopped there a couple of times and Doug showed me what
15 to do and where to look for things, which I did. I knew it was a very good collection
16 because he was the only one who, literally, was saving newspapers and all the rest of the
17 current things then, and it was being neglected at Berkeley. He was in a rather dreary
18 place on the edge of Oakland and when Doug went down there, he suggested that I come
19 down and try to give a paper, etc., etc., and all that. When I did get down for the meeting
20 a couple of years ago, Doug was ailing and I went over to see him every day, and then he
21 died right after I left Texas. I knew his collection was being used and I thought, “Well,
22 this is going to be the center—as an archive center.” None of the departments—Cornell
23 used to have a very—I was up at Cornell for three years, and they had a very good
24 collection at the library up there, but then the program fell apart, and the program that I
25 was a part of at Yale fell apart. So, Southeast Asia programs don't have a very strong
26 history in our society, I'm afraid. They had a great potential, but they hadn't really
27 worked out. So, it seemed to me that Texas was the only one doing anything about a
28 serious collection of materials for an archive. That's why I decided to send it all down
29 there, and I talked to people on the phone, and Doug had recommended that anyhow. I'm
30 quite happy with the way it's going so far, frankly, Mr.—

1 TL: You can feel free to call me Ty. We are certainly happy about it, as well. Do
2 you have any other research or any other Vietnam-related projects that you are involved
3 with right now?

4 GH: No, I'm not involved in any project. The only thing I'm doing now is taking
5 photographs from the war and my period in Vietnam from 1956 on, and I'm putting them
6 in three albums with some captions. I do the captions for them all. I don't think they're
7 going to be very interesting for outsiders. Well, maybe they will. I don't know.

8 TL: They definitely sound interesting to us.

9 GH: Huh?

10 TL: They sound interesting to us, that's for sure.

11 GH: I don't know because they would have to be copied and all that. I'm not
12 through it anyhow. I'm still working on it. That's the only thing I'm doing. I'm not a
13 member of any associations. I had a bad run in with the University of Chicago. I was all
14 set to go there as a research associate, and Professor Egan and Norton Ginsburg,
15 Professor Ginsburg, who had both been on my committee when I got my doctorate, I had
16 arranged money in a place—Fred Egan wanted me to work there because he was working
17 up materials from the mountain province in the Philippines, and historically these people
18 are connected, they have linguistic connections and other connections. I was all set to go
19 there and leave Vietnam, and the anti-war thing started on the campus. They were all
20 screaming and shouting and all that, and Fred wrote and said, "We had an election," and
21 he said to the people on the faculty—I put all this in *Window on a War*. I documented the
22 whole thing in there.

23 TL: Yes, sir. I've been reading through that book.

24 GH: What?

25 TL: I have been reading your book, *Window to the War*.

26 GH: I think I was very badly treated at the University of Chicago. It was very
27 unfair, incredibly. Not only that, Fred made anything—if I did papers for RAND, and I
28 didn't do anything classified, I sent him copies of everything, and he assured the people
29 of the faculty that I was not doing any secret research. They immediately said, "Oh, he's
30 working for the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) on secret research." None of that is
31 true. It only showed me what a paranoid group of people these anti-war people, a lot of

1 them, were, and they weren't very rational, either. I know they were against the war. I
2 was against the war and I had a solution to the war. I'm the only one I know in academia
3 who had a worked out solution to the war. A process of political accommodation leading
4 to a coalition government. I testified before Senator Fulbright in 1971 and presented it. I
5 think it made sense and I still do, but they wouldn't listen to it in Washington, and the
6 people in Washington didn't have any idea what they were dealing with. They were
7 totally ignorant, and so we lost the war.

8 TL: So you had the problem with the people in Washington—

9 GH: Huh?

10 TL: You had the problem of the people in Washington not listening to you, but at
11 the same time the anti-war movement, people involved with that, were against you just
12 because you were working there?

13 GH: Yes, exactly.

14 TL: So you had problems on both sides.

15 GH: Well, the fact that I had been in Vietnam was enough for them to condemn
16 me. They had no idea what I was doing, and when Fred made everything available, even
17 the reports on the Montagnards and these RAND papers and things, he made them all
18 available in his office, and not one person in the faculty came to look at them, not one.
19 There was no money from the department, no space or anything like that. When they
20 voted my appointment down, and this went through the academic world because they
21 love scandals and when someone gets condemned everybody enjoys it enormously. I hate
22 to say that but it's true. They said, "Well, there is money involved." The chairman of the
23 department told *The New York Times*, "There was money involved, there was space
24 involved, and we all looked over the material and decided that it really wasn't valuable."
25 None of that was true. He lied outright to the reporters from *The New York Times*, lied.
26 He was disingenuous and got away with it and nobody complained. Meanwhile, I was
27 made an outcast. When I did come back to the US I couldn't get a job teaching anywhere.
28 Tom Kirsch and George Kahan at Yale, or at Cornell, wrote to me when this thing
29 happened in Chicago, and they said, "We're so shocked at what's happened. We want
30 you to come to Cornell for at least a year and we will give you a visiting research
31 associate—visiting professorship." So, I went there for two years, actually. Then

1 fortunately from there, I went to the Wilson Center, and I went to other places where I
2 had fellowships that were writing fellowships, but as you know, fellowships don't pay
3 very good money, twenty thousand, thirty thousand. This is if I wanted vast amounts of
4 money, but I would have liked to have a nice income to get a—I'm in a one bedroom
5 apartment, jammed into it sort of thing, and you become an outcast and literally, they all
6 go after you. Boy, some people are just delighted. There were people who sided in with
7 me, and tried to get me jobs, and I could not get a job anywhere. I said, "To hell with it."
8 I said, "I'm an outcast, and I will just do things my own way, on my own time, etc." So, I
9 quit the associations. There was no point in belonging to them. They weren't going to
10 treat you fairly anyhow, or give you a fair shake. It was a very disillusioning thing to
11 happen. But I'm not bitter about it because what happened is I got a lot of writing done. I
12 published seven books. The people I knew teaching, they were head of the department,
13 etc., etc., got very little, if any, writing done because they were dealing with students and
14 committees and that sort of thing. So, I got a lot of writing done which is what I wanted
15 to do, and I'm not bitter about it at all. It's a very interesting way things work out.

16 TL: That is a positive way to look at it.

17 GH: Huh? What?

18 TL: That is a positive way to look at it.

19 GH: Well, it's the only way to look at it because that's the way it turned out, and I
20 got those books published and that's what I wanted to do. I want to make a contribution
21 there, which I hope I did. There it is.

22 TL: Okay, I only have one more question for you.

23 GH: Yes.

24 TL: Are there any other materials in your possession that you may want to donate
25 at a certain point, or would you possibly be interested in being part of our oral history
26 project?

27 GH: Well, I don't want to do anything on the Oral Project, basically, no. I can't
28 think of anything right now that I would like to—I'm giving the books that I still have
29 here to Mark Bradley who can put them to very good use because he's a very good
30 scholar and he is going to be at the University of Chicago, ironically. He's leaving the

1 University of Wisconsin, and I think he'll do good work. He is a very bright chap. I think
2 his wife will do very good work on Cambodia, also.

3 TL: Okay. That's about all I have. I certainly appreciate your donation and your
4 time, Dr. Hickey.

5 GH: Well, I appreciate the fact that they accepted them and that they—(coughs)
6 Excuse me. I'm sorry. This cold catches up with me periodically. And that they cataloged
7 everything the way they did. They did it very rapidly. You must have a forest of people to
8 do it.

9 TL: Well, we have a pretty limited staff, but we saw this to be an important
10 collection so we wanted to try to push it through.

11 GH: Well, I appreciate that very, very much because I thought, "Oh, my god. It'll
12 take a year or two years before I get any kind of listing."

13 TL: We don't have them all cataloged and ready to put in our library yet, but it's
14 getting close.

15 GH: You all did a very thorough job. They really did a very thorough job. They
16 went through every last one of them and you must have people that know French and the
17 other languages.

18 TL: Well, we do have a couple of Vietnamese students on staff.

19 GH: You have Vietnamese on the staff?

20 TL: We have a couple. Yes, sir. I only read a little bit of French.

21 GH: Well, the French is fairly straightforward. But I was so glad to get it and I
22 want to thank you very, very much.

23 TL: Oh, well, thank you, sir.

24 GH: It's been handled extremely well, I think, which is nice for a change.

25 TL: Thank you. I was going to let you know, if you have any other questions for
26 us or any questions about the Vietnam Archive, please feel free to give me a call at any
27 time.

28 GH: What was awfully nice, too, is they sent me the stickers for FedEx so I could
29 mail things without cost to me. That was a big help because we took them to the UPS
30 (United Parcel Service) office here—a friend of mine that was in Special Forces came by
31 and we packed the books, got them all loaded up, took them to the UPS office, and two

1 young fellows running the place were extremely helpful, and they grabbed everything
2 and weighed it up, and sent it off. I'm glad it got there in good shape. I was really
3 worried.

4 TL: Oh, yes, everything came in—there were only a couple of books that looked
5 damaged, but they looked like they were probably damaged previously.

6 GH: I think they were damaged previously, yes. There's nothing you can do
7 about that, basically, because these books, some of them will sit around shelves for years,
8 and that climate at the library and everything, none of it was air conditioned, so the
9 worms got at it, and the climate gets at it. Books begin to fall apart after a while.

10 TL: Oh, sure. Now we have them in a climate-controlled environment.

11 GH: Yes. See, they didn't have anything like that in Saigon. Then with the
12 fighting and everything. There was fighting around the museum or the collection—where
13 there collection is held, the soldiers were hanging around in the back. They have to be
14 trusted. They'd come in to steal things and sell them if they thought they were worth
15 anything. It was dicey all around, and then when I collected some things in the highlands,
16 some of the summer institute people stored them for me, but there was a shelling and
17 some of them were just missed. They shelled all around the house that they were in, and
18 if the hit the house, it would have destroyed everything. It was dicey. Not a very secure
19 world to come do serious research in.

20 TL: I was like, that's amazing that the shells missed the books.

21 GH: Yeah. Well, look, Ty, it was good talking to you.

22 TL: It was very good talking to you, Dr. Hickey. I certainly appreciate it.

23 GH: If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to telephone me.

24 TL: Okay, and the same here.

25 GH: Hopefully we get a better connection next time.

26 TL: I hope so, too. I apologize for the connection.

27 GH: I don't know what is wrong with the phones these days.

28 TL: I don't, either. It is a shame.

29 GH: They are making great progress. I had a terrible time with RCM coming to
30 do the digital TV. God, their people sounded like they were in far China in a cave
31 somewhere.

1 TL: Oh, I know. I've had that problem, too. Well, you have a good afternoon, sir.
2 GH: Same to you, Ty, and good luck to you.
3 TL: Okay. Thank you very much.
4 GH: *Bon courage*, as the French say.
5 TL: Thank you. Bye bye.