

This is an interview with Philip Stafford conducted by John Van Willigen, for the Society for Applied Anthropology Oral History Project on February 11, 2005. The audio tape is archived at the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky Library.

[Begin Tape 1, Side 1]

STAFFORD: Do you want me to . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: No.

STAFFORD: . . . say something here?

VAN WILLIGEN: No, it's . . .

STAFFORD: Still moving?

VAN WILLIGEN: Yeah, it's, we're all . . . it's . . . the eleventh of February 2005 and this is John Van Willigen talking to Philip Stafford. ah . . . part of this Phil, will be kind of autobiographical and, and then I'd like to spend sometime talking I, to me that the project of the Evergreen project is a, a really remarkable . . . and I'd like to spend . . .

STAFFORD: Mm-mm, sure.

VAN WILLIGEN: . . . quite a little bit of time talking about how that . . . developed and key elements of that, but first I wanted to ask about how you came to anthropology.

STAFFORD: Well . . . I p . . . I entered through archaeology, actually . . . when I was in junior high school.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: I was interes . . . I was one of these kids I enjoyed reading about Egypt, and the Aztecs and Maya and [clears throat] and . . . I had a great-grand-father, Charles Bartlett, who was an amateur archaeologist up in . . . along, he worked along the Des Plaines River in Northern Illinois, and he was a Indiana School man, school, school Principal authored in books on Indiana history for children and worked for Scribners at some point as a children's editor and, it, it's . . . it's an interesting story that when my, when my, he died before I was born, but when my grandmother . . . his daughter came to live with us when she was in her eighties, with Alzheimer's disease and . . . she, she passed on and she willed me this little, sort of feminine secretary desk and, and we wondered why that would go to me rather than one of the girls in the family.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: And we opened up the desk and inside was the, I, was this . . . an, an art object that I still, obviously, treasure as a, as a, unfinished pipe made out of quartz, just beautiful coloring and . . . it, she had recognized my interest in that stuff and so I was sort of bequeathed this and, and that you know, I, I li . . . I tell that story sometimes because I, I attribute some of my interest in, you know, those kinds of incidents and when I was in junior high school I t . . . tape recorded a couple of elderly people in the neighborhood and, and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: This is in . . .

STAFFORD: . . . I sort of was . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: . . . Northern Indiana, somewhere?

STAFFORD: Yeah, right, yeah, and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: In, in a small town.

STAFFORD: In, in Hobart, Indiana, which is where I grew up and my folks had moved down from Chicago. They lived in Hyde Park, near the university, and were active in the community there and wanted a . . . small town opportunity for their kids.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: And so we moved to Hobart in 1948, a year before I was born, and grew up in an old farmhouse, built in the 1850s and Hobart was a great little town to grow up in, a lot of history, it's, it's, it while it is still a bedroom community for the steel mills, it's own founding goes back to the late 1840s and so there was a good deal of history in the town that was, that was v, valued in . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: So people . . .

STAFFORD: . . . our family . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: . . . worked at US Steel and [inaudible]

STAFFORD: Yeah, my dad worked at Inland Steel . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Oh, I see.

STAFFORD: . . . for forty-two years and, and he was . . . he was, so it was a very comfortable, secure kind of existence and . . . we had, you know, creeks to run in, and skate on, and, and baseball, little league baseball and the whole, you know, we, complete independence on our bicycles and so it was a great stable . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: . . . and secure upbringing.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right, right.

STAFFORD: And, and . . . but I was a, I, so I was interested in history and, and when I went to . . . college, I went to the University of Chicago as an undergraduate and . . . intended on getting a degree in

anthropology . . . you know, entering through archaeology, and I quickly really shifted over to social cultural, partly because of the political climate at the time. This is 1967 when I . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: . . . went to school.

VAN WILLIGEN: Not within the department but in the country.

STAFFORD: In the country, yeah, and I, I couldn't see the relevance of . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Sure.

STAFFORD: . . . archaeology to, to what was going on around the country and . . . so I majored in cultural anthropology as an undergraduate there, and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Who were some of the . . . teachers at anthropology?

STAFFORD: Well, the – we had some wonderful people, they, they didn't teach that many undergraduate courses [chuckle]. But I had Fred Egan taught . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Oh! I see, right.

STAFFORD: . . . taught courses on the American Indians, I had lectures with Sol Tax and actually Clifford Geertz was there at the time but I never, I had an opportunity to take a course from him.

VAN WILLIGEN: So you took a course from Sol Tax.

STAFFORD: Yes, mm-mm.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: Yeah, yeah and he was, he was a neat old guy, really, really fun.

VAN WILLIGEN: Was there much consciousness about his involvement with action anthropology?

STAFFORD: HUUUH, you know, I, I remember talk . . . him talking about alcoholism a, among the Native American groups . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: But I, that was the extent of it – I think, I think it was a course on American Indians and Fred Egan coordinated and Sol Tax came in and gave some lectures, I believe.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: And . . . but he was pretty close to the end of his career, I think, maybe at that point. Lot of classes I had were taught by graduate students, Ellen Basso taught a course on Amazonia and that really turned me on to the idea of going to the Amazon for my, my, my

work because I was also really into Levi- Strauss and structural anthropology and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: and, and . . . David Mayberry-Lewis was writing at the time about . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Whoa!

STAFFORD: What do you call them, w . . . dualistic societies, you know, and . . . Terry Turner also, I had a couple of courses with him, he was fantastic professor and, but major influence was our undergraduate advisor, psychological anthropologist . . . [chuckle] unfortunately I'm blanking out his name right now, but very kind, took undergraduates under his wing and, and kind of took care of us and . . . but my enti . . . my focus was not all on studies at that point and s, I wasn't active in radical politics but I was active in, sort of the anti war movement and . . . going to marches and, and working for d . . . Gene McCarthy during the primaries and . . . drew a high – very high lottery number which would have probably guaranteed my going into the Army or you know, at least making a decision but, so I g . . . applied for conscientious objector status at that point. This would have been about 1969 or seventy, I guess, and went through an interview with the local draft board in Gary.

VAN WILLIGEN: Mm-mm, yes.

STAFFORD: Tried to explain why I was opposed to this war but not all wars and how . . . I wasn't . . . necessarily following the dogma of my church, I didn't belong to a peace church, although I was raised in the Unitarian Church [clears throat]. And I was rejected at the local draft board. Then . . . s . . . went through an induction physical which meant things were getting closer.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: And, but my, my, in the end my conscience was never fully tested because General Hershey put a moratorium on the draft which would have been about 1971-1972. So everybody that was in limbo with their, their particular draft status you know, it was . . . just everything was sort of put on hold and . . . so I didn't really know what I was going to do at that point. I applied to Indiana University f . . . to go to graduate school down in Bloomington, partly because by that time I was married and my wife had found a teaching job in Bloomington . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Oh, I see.

STAFFORD: . . . herself, she is an elementary schoolteacher. And so we came down to Bloomington with the idea that I would just try to go there for graduate school and so I was accepted in the department there and, in anthropology again and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Was, did you have a clear idea of, of, of focus?

STAFFORD: Well, I was still sort of entertaining the fantasy of maybe going to South America? But . . . the, while Emilio Moran was there had done work in Brazil, it, the, I, I began to drift away from that, the, it, it didn't seem to square with family life and . . . graduate students were having a hard time finding funding to go do sort of ethnography, and . . . we had moved into a small town near Bloomington and my wife's grandparents lived in Worthington, Indiana, which is near Bloomington, and we spent a lot of time with them. They were really interesting old couple and so on Saturdays we would, we would head over to Worthington from Bloomfield which is where we were living, and we'd go to Saturday auctions and we'd, we'd go out to restaurants you know, they knew all the restaurants in the area and that was part of their life style was you know, going out to [chuckle] eat lunch and we spent a lot of time on their front porch. And I think it was the, the time on the front porch swing that I began to kind of kindle my interest in what's it like to grow old in a small town.

VAN WILLIGEN: Huh-huh, oh I see.

STAFFORD: And . . . so I had, was putting together a committee and was fortunate in that the chair and the members of my committee were willing to entertain the thought that I could do my dissertation research you know, in our own backyard there, rather than sort of go abroad, which was kind of . . . moving against the grain of the department a little bit. It was African studies has been the primary focus of Indiana for a long time and there was kind of an expectation maybe that you'd go to Africa. And . . . but Judith Hanson was . . . my . . . intellectual mentor and she was a symbolic inter-actionist by that time I had moved away from structural anthropology and into more interpretive kinds of things and, and she was actually a student of Herbert Blumer's [Editor: Blumer, a sociologist, coined the phrase symbolic interactionism] at Berkeley and . . . she was wonderful adviser for several of us and . . . and my cohort, and unfortunately, to get back to this question we were talking about before, she, she wasn't publishing enough and she didn't receive tenure.

VAN WILLIGEN: Oh-oh, I see.

STAFFORD: And left academia and then took cancer and, and died as a young, young person in her, in her forties, I think, and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: That's now. She's died some time ago.

STAFFORD: Yeah, I'd say about fifteen-twenty years ago, and so . . . I was interested in . . . essentially the, the meaning of old age in a small town and so my dissertation work involved . . . a community study of aging in this s . . . in Bloom, Bloomfield, near Bloomington, and I was interested in the relationship between people sort of cultural conceptions about age and how those things worked out on the ground in their every day environments and so I spent a lot of time at the r . . . at, at the restaurant on the square . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: . . . talking with old guys, and, and part of the breakfast club there and I spent a lot of time nur . . . in the nursing home setting, and I was also interested in . . . solitary elders and in particular how solitary elders accomplished socialization you know, in the face of some of the isolation that they, they had to contend with. I s . . . I, I was reading [Georg] Simmel [Editor: a German sociologist] at the time on socialization and, and . . . the concept w . . . was of interest to me because of by, by definition socializ . . . sociability I mean not socialization, excuse me. Sociability is by definition a kind of egalitarian form of speech interaction and . . . describes it as a, as a f . . . as a form of talking which sort of outside variables . . . diminish in their importance in, in, in trying to achieve an egalitarian interaction. And I saw older people, s . . . in a sense seeking this and accomplishing it, in, in some, under some severe circumstances you know, and . . . you'd see people out in the cold you know, [chuckle], at the gas station and, or you'd see older people coming down to this very stark lobby in the high rise there sitting on a hard bench, just, you know, for so . . . for the sake of sociability, and . . . so I was interested in Dell Hymes was sort of, you know, is prominent at the time, in terms of the things he was writing about and so, I studied sort of forms of interaction in these various environments and tried to, to look at the degree to which old age is a kind of an in, intrusive variable, what the, what we consider it might be the sort of objective facts of old age as an im . . . intru . . . intrusive variable where, where diminished you know, in sociable settings and in the nursing home, I was, I f . . . I found the, the, the cultural ideas about competence and . . . bearing more weight than they did in other settings.

VAN WILLIGEN: Mm-mm, I see.

STAFFORD: And . . . so anyway I w . . . I, that was the focus of my dissertation. It was called 'The Semiotics of Old Age in a Small Midwestern Town,' I think was the name of it.

VAN WILLIGEN: And then, and so the, the, what I see is . . . w . . . w . . . wanting to study . . . a community in North America.

STAFFORD: Yes.

VAN WILLIGEN: And having a, it you, when you talk about the relationships with your older, like grandparents and your, I think, I think it was in-laws.

STAFFORD: Mm-mm . . . yeah.

VAN WILLIGEN: The, you, you talk about them in a very, quite positive ways, I mean their, their rich relationships, is that important part of this.

STAFFORD: It has been very important yeah, and . . . additionally the relationships that, that I have develop and the opportu . . . developed and the opportunities to see so many different ways of growing old . . . has been a very personal rewarding aspect of this, of this, you know, work over the years. I've noticed . . . when I see students coming in gerontology this is a gross generalization but, it seems as if, there's one group of people who come into gerontology because they've had these rich relationships with old people and . . . it has reinforced their interest, and other people who had not had relationships [chuckle] with old people, and it's like foreign territory an exotic territory . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: . . . that they're interested in you know, and they're, they're seeking that and . . . I also think an interest in history and in the unique biographical experience of individuals is prerequisite you know, for students in gerontology and I, I tell them if you're not interested in history, you're in the wrong field, I really believe that [laughter]

VAN WILLIGEN: That's r . . . that, that's . . . sounds like something I could say. And it, and it, it, it ends up – not to talk about what I did, but . . .

STAFFORD: Yeah.

VAN WILLIGEN: It ends up that, everything ends up being a history o – studying history. I, I mean even though on the surface it isn't and then I, it, it transforms to that.

STAFFORD: Yeah, huh-huh, and . . . so, yeah.

VAN WILLIGEN: So, so you never, you, you, you didn't think of yourself as a aging specialist until later.

STAFFORD: Yeah I . . . I would have taken courses on aging, had they been available at the time in graduate school, but there was virtually nothing going on.

VAN WILLIGEN: Huh-huh, you, you . . .

STAFFORD: So I basically put together my own . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Sure.

STAFFORD: . . . program.

VAN WILLIGEN: And you, and you didn't necessarily think well you know, what I really should have done is, is gotten a degree in gerontology.

STAFFORD: No, I really didn't, because I . . . I felt that anthropology provided a, a platform and a perspective and a set of concepts and a kind of a theoretical picture of the world that, that I valued then and still value and I didn't see that in gerontology, and . . . so . . . but y . . . I, I knew I was going to, I has this passionate interest in the whole issue of aging and the aged and not too much of a lifespan focus at that point. I was mostly interested in sort of late life.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: And . . . so I, I was looking around for teaching jobs at, at when graduate school was coming to a close and, and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: When would that have been about?

STAFFORD: Huh, seventy-six, yeah. I got my PhD in 1977 so started looking for jobs in seventy-six and I, and again it was not a good time to be looking for jobs and in anthropology, if you didn't have a cross cultural experience you know, you needed to be able to teach area studies as well and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: . . . I was offered a, a one-year position at Southeast Kansas State, because I happened to be in a departmental office when the dean called from there.

VAN WILLIGEN: Huh-huh, I see.

STAFFORD: And they were kind of looking for somebody, and I had a telephone interview and, and . . . they said, you know, we are looking for somebody to teach sociology and anthropology and psychology and I said well, you know, I, I believe I'd never I'm not, don't know much about psychology, I, you know, I am interested in social psychology and George Herbert Mead and those kinds of things and they said, oh, 'sounds good to us,' you know, so [laughter] so I kind of had second thoughts, I was, I was the first alternate for a post doc at Columbia in Missouri where they had a, a, some kind of a center on aging, aging and

social something or other. And so I p . . . I put off the offer of the position because I rather have had the post doc and of course the post doc didn't come through either, so, the, the first person took it. So I . . . my wife had a good job, solid job so I started wash . . . I was, we were l . . . still living in Bloomfield and I was washing dishes at Pete's Back door there in, in Bloomfield, which is a great place for an ethnographer to be. I mean it was a really terrific, and answered an ad in the Bloomington paper to . . . for a position, they were looking, the mental health center was looking for somebody who had, who was, who could interview elderly alcoholics as a part of a research . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: This is a short, a shorter-term position?

STAFFORD: Well, it was . . . I was a position in the evaluation research department . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: . . . at the mental health center, and it was a multi-year project. They were training clinical psychologists to do research on alcoholism and so I . . . partly because of a personal connection in my fieldwork, I was, also I was hired into that job and, and started interviewing elderly alcoholics. Unfortunately I had to use this battery of tests that these psychologists had. [chuckle] Which is like, you know, let's just throw everything at them you know, and it was like a six-hour process. But I also had the opportunity – the other people didn't see it as an opportunity, but I was given the, the task of running the Friday night group, which was mostly elderly alcoholics.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: And it was a, it was a kind of a . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: This is a, a talk therapy . . .

STAFFORD: Essentially yeah, group, group therapy and . . . but it was Friday night because that was, was kind of a substitute for what they might otherwise be doing Friday night.

VAN WILLIGEN: Oh, I see.

STAFFORD: And, and so there wasn't a lot of pressure to do therapy and we just sat around and bull shit and it was, it was great fun and I heard a lot of great stories, and I'd come home saturated with smoke, I'd have to take my clothes off outside before I could come into the house [laughter]. Anyway, I did that for about three years and, and I n . . . at the time I took the job at the mental health center, my boss there was aware that the, the Mental Health Systems Act had . . . en . . . enabled funding for the development of specialized mental health services for older people. And so there was a, an ulterior motive there

and, and so I started working on a grant to develop the mental health program.

VAN WILLIGEN: And let, and let this, what, wha, wh . . . when would this have been about?

STAFFORD: Seventy, huh, seventy-seven, yeah, seventy-seven, seventy-eight, yeah. And so I wrote a, a successful grant and we started a program for older adults, through the mental health center.

VAN WILLIGEN: This is located in that community?

STAFFORD: In Bloomington, Indiana.

VAN WILLIGEN: In Blooming . . .

STAFFORD: Yeah.

VAN WILLIGEN: Bloomington.

STAFFORD: It's a compr . . . it was a comprehensive community mental health center.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: Now . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: This is a county facility, or a civic . . .

STAFFORD: It served multiple counties, primarily . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: . . . I was in Monroe County.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: And . . . pretty well developed organization, this was in the heyday of community mental health, when the Great Society programs was still operating and, and there was funding for these kinds of things. And, but I knew we wouldn't really want a clinical focus for a program like this, and . . . when I, my, my, one of my first days on the job I, I went over to the, the mall to meet with a group of older women who were planning the first senior expo, and it was a cool group of women. They were all in their, well, I would have been in my twenties and they were probably in their sixties, I perceived them as older women.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: They called themselves the Senior Citizens Action Congress. They were a fairly radical group of women, and so we're going around introducing ourselves, up, and what we could do for this senior expo and, and I'm, I'm Phil Stafford, I'm mental health center and, and I'm trying to develop some new programs there and there's this kind of a blank look, you know, and I said and I have a pickup truck and I can carry chairs for this festival [chuckle] and Oh! That was great, you know [laughter]. So I knew that taking a clinical

approach to this issue you know, really wasn't going to solve the problem and, anyway we developed a, a number of programs over . . . I was there fourteen years running the older adults program at the mental health center.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: Until Ronald Reagan was elected president and the way that services were funded began changing and, and we developed a day services for people with dementia and were getting mental health reimbursement for the dementia and that began to fade away because Medicaid decided that it would only reimburse for remediable conditions and brief treatment and those kinds of things, and so a lot of the, you know, elderly people with chronic mental illness and, and people with other kinds of conditions you know, were sort of pushed to the side and [clears throat] seeing the writing on the wall as, I went over across the street to the hospital where they had just decided that they needed to be doing something in the field of aging and, and consulted with them for a few months and then moved over there permanently to develop a program at the hospital, and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: And the, and that too was focused on mental health aspects of aging.

STAFFORD: At the hospital?

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

STAFFORD: Well, no, it was . . . it was a b . . . it was a broader senior health program, and, but again it w . . . our focus was kind of non-clinical you know, where you are interested in the community aspects of health and . . . did a lot in the area of education and prevention. We developed a, you know, one of these senior membership programs . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: . . . where people could . . . we did a lot of educational programs, we had a care giver supports, we develo . . . I developed the Alzheimer's support group and . . . so . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Did you, at that point did, so . . . sometimes with this career path people have . . . are uncertain about whether or not they're actually doing anthropology or not. Did you think?

STAFFORD: Well, I . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: What did you think about it?

STAFFORD: I . . . in a way it was a, it was good being in a clinical environment, because it, it, I was a kind of a gadfly you know, I was a cultural anthropologist in that environment and was always trying to push the, the clinical perspective outside of the walls of the clinic to

look at community health issues, whether it was mental health or physical health. And . . . so [clears throat] the, the resis . . . the resistance that I would meet to a, you know, to that sort of clinical perspective helped reinforce my sense of, you know, the importance of doing a kind of a community approach to health and mental health and looking at environmental aspects of health and mental health and . . . I think in s . . . in some ways it was . . . defeating, self defeating in a, in a, at the mental health center, because we did not have a clinical approach, we couldn't be sustained to speak of. I was replaced there by a, a ment . . . psychiatric social worker who could, who was reimbursable.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: And . . . at the hospital, when I, after we got with the Evergreen Project going and grant support from the retirement research founding – foundation to do research on the sort of quality of domestic environments of older people, the hospital administration changed and . . . the new CEO of the hospital called me in at some point, and, and, as I read it was going, coming to the end and said you know, you've gotten too much in this housing stuff, and that's not part of our mission and so therefore when your grant ends you know, we don't have a place for you here. And . . . so that's essentially how I left the hospital and we sat up Evergreen as a not-for-profit at that point.

VAN WILLIGEN: Oh, I see.

STAFFORD: And . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: So, Evergreen started in the context of the hospital.

STAFFORD: That's right.

VAN WILLIGEN: The hospital.

STAFFORD: Yeah, yeah.

VAN WILLIGEN: And then there was this transition to . . . because of this concern on the part of the administrator about . . .

STAFFORD: Yeah, that . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: . . . the way it came to their program.

STAFFORD: Sh . . . they didn't see that getting involved with housing, which was one of the things we were working on, was core, part of the core mission on the health system and . . . you know, it's not surprising, I mean, it's . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Sure.

STAFFORD: . . . a common way of thinking about it but, and times were rough, anyway.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: But . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: So how did, how did the idea of . . . Evergreen emerge. You were working at the hospital.

STAFFORD: Mm-mm.

VAN WILLIGEN: And there was a grant.

STAFFORD: We applied for a funding to the Retirement Research Foundation [<http://www.rrf.org>] to do, I think the original mission was to . . . let me think what, what do we, essentially we, we wanted to create a shared vision of healthy urban environments for older adults, I think that was our, kind of our phrase, the way we thought about it.

VAN WILLIGEN: To, that, that phrase would have appeared early in the proposal.

STAFFORD: Yes, huh-huh, yeah. And . . . we, we wanted it to be participatory in the sense that we felt that there needed to be as, as there was a lots of contributing environmental factors that con . . . that helped determine health, we felt that it needed to be a broad base, sort of multi institutional approach, coming from the kind of values related to inclusion, we felt that . . . sort of ordinary citizens obviously should be involved as well, and we needed to understand things from the perspective of old people [chuckle].

VAN WILLIGEN: Was – let me, let me just, I’m trying to . . . get some feeling for where these ideas come from. I mean that, what you just said of course resonates with . . .

STAFFORD: Sure.

VAN WILLIGEN: . . . with anthropology, really, intensely, I think.

STAFFORD: Mm-mm.

VAN WILLIGEN: And, but you know, there may have been, you may have been thinking about models of other programs or people’s, other people’s thoughts that, that seemed to make sense to you.

STAFFORD: Yeah.

VAN WILLIGEN: In that context.

STAFFORD: Mm-mm. Well I think, one key relationship was with the School of Architecture and Planning at Ball State in particular a . . . a, a good friend who, a man who became good friend, Stan [Stanley B.] Mendelsohn who is, was an architect and, at Ball State they had developed a, they had a lot of experience with Charrettes, community Charrettes.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yes.

STAFFORD: And, around the country, and . . . that was my first introduction to the idea of a Charrette and, and I, I immediately saw

the, the relevance of that approach to not just sort of the built environment, but to the environment more, more generally s . . . more generally speaking.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: And so we, we conducted two or three Charrettes in, in Bloomington with Stan, and they were, they were . . . great fun and valuable learning experiences for people.

VAN WILLIGEN: And these were all focused on needs of older people.

STAFFORD: Ye, for the most part, yeah, right. We did one on another area of the city that was focusing on a, on children's museum that they wanted to go in.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: I didn't really play a key role there but . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: And then they, so these charettes would be, the, they are events that would help people . . . from the community look at alternatives?

STAFFORD: Yes [clears throat] I, in, I, I think in some areas of architecture charrettes aren't always anthropologically informed, I guess. They, they don't always try to constantly extend the, the involvement of stake holders beyond what they might perceive as a client group, you know, and so they might be working just with decision makers you know, in a . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: . . . in a charrette, rather than sort of all the potential users but . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: We, we also wanted to . . . inform the charrette with the other aspects of research that we were doing at the time and . . . kind of build a base for gro . . . a group of people to . . . understand or discuss life in their neighborhood which would lead to some discussion as to what they would like to see changed but . . . we would, we would precede the charrettes with a, a, you know, a walkabout you know, and engage people in a kind of a more deliberate observation of what's going on in this neighborhood, what are things like? We tried to, and it was, and it wasn't just old people, we tried to involve people of different ages, in that process. And at the park charrette we c . . . we developed a kiosk, an archive of historical photos of the park to use as a basis or foil for discussing the history of the park and invited older people in to talk about the history of the park, because we felt that would inform

you know, any thoughts about what the park should, should be like in the future, and . . . and so it . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: So this, these, these charrettes, at wh . . . at what point did you think, at what point did the . . . Evergreen project actually exist in you mind at least, was it during these charrettes?

STAFFORD: Huhhh, yeah, we, we, we thought of the Evergreen project as that sort of that eighteen-month period where we were trying to engage the community in a discussion about aging and so we, we pulled in a number of different participation projects to try to kind of feed fuel that, that community-wide dialog, and . . . sort of get aging on to the public agenda as well, and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: What were some of the other projects?

STAFFORD: Well we . . . we had a [clears throat] creative writing project that we had funded additionally through the Indiana Humanities Council, that was an inter-generational writing project.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: We, we had an ethnographer on the grant who was doing ethnographic research with a smaller number of older people.

VAN WILLIGEN: Who was that?

STAFFORD: Julianne [E.] Short and she was a graduate student in the department at the time, really super terrific. The writing project was done by, with the, by a folklore graduate student, Erika Peterson-Veatch. We had a lecture series we developed . . . to run at the community, the new community art center, Henry Glassie and Scott Sanders.

VAN WILLIGEN: Oh! I see, whoa!

STAFFORD: So we had some good resources to, to call on. It was called 'Visions of Place' I think or 'Experiencing Place' I think maybe was the name of the lecture series and, and it became, that ran for about five months, it became pretty popular, and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Sort of archaeological almost.

STAFFORD: Yeah, yeah, trying to build layers of [chuckle] understanding.

VAN WILLIGEN: Okay, returned [laughter].

STAFFORD: [Laughter] Yeah, we had . . . an alternative school in town. The kids were interested at ethnography so they developed an interview project, interviewing elders around their school, and that became a masters thesis for their teacher and we used their material, we . . . we'd . . . I'll talk some more about this and give you some examples later on in the, in the program but we . . . we had a, a graffiti

wall, a mural project that we developed and we developed a, basically an art exhibit around the whole constellation of issues that included a collage project that was done by people with dementia at the adult, adult day care center and we had a focus group project as well, we, we had about eleven different focus groups that we set up around town, mostly community settings, but they were multi age. We felt that the opinions of children around these issues were important as well, it was not just old people whose opinions you know, should be considered in what . . . and . . . so the, the research, when we reported on the research to the foundation we, we asked for continuation funding to begin looking at sort of what can we do at this point. And . . . that involved then, efforts to develop some, some new initiatives in the community.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: And . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: So, initially this started as a what, co . . . while it involved the concern about the future of the community and it's development that was basically a . . . participatory research project without necessarily having this end goal . . .

STAFFORD: Yes.

VAN WILLIGEN: . . . of a project in mind.

STAFFORD: That's right.

VAN WILLIGEN: And that, and so it developed to a certain point and then one would . . . looked for benefits, you might say, from it.

STAFFORD: I think so, I think what, what we were funded for and what was attractive to the foundation was the idea that you could bring people together in a collaborative way to create a kind of a shared vision and, and then use that as a basis for mobilizing support for you know, community development efforts.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right. Did, did the, did the approach that you have that you used, did it have a name in your mind or was it, it was . . . this assembly things that resonate with each other?

STAFFORD: I think, I think at the time we were, we were thinking of it as a collaborative research, you know, or citizen participation research was a phrase that . . . that would . . . you know, that you tossed around. I've not thought – there are some other sort of . . . labels you know, that, that are kicked around, action research and, and . . . community based research, and I don't know exactly what all those labels mean, I don't know that there is a really clear idea then, then there is rapid ethnography you know, there's this whole sort of third world development . . . stuff that's, that's out there, and . . . but I think

over time, I think participation has been a key word for me . . . as a, as a kind of a defining characteristic of this kind of research, because it, it's, it's not just research but it's also planning and development . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Sure.

STAFFORD: . . . early on, it's part of a broader process.

VAN WILLIGEN: So lo . . . w . . . the, the specific, Evergreen, as I understand it, it involves this hou . . . [sound of sirens] housing, you know, these facilities, there's, there is a physical place and there is an information base that can, can inform that and that e . . . so that existed, that began to exist after the information base, at least in part was developed.

STAFFORD: Yes, huh-huh. And . . . so the Evergreen project evolved into the Evergreen Institute partly out of the needs to kind of keep it going, and since we are sort of rejected from the hospital.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: And, and in retrospect I almost wish it were still a project because . . . I, I, I thought, I think we'd have been more successful on the process side than on the sort of the institutionalization side of it.

VAN WILLIGEN: Sure.

STAFFORD: There's, there's some, there is some risks associated with inst . . . institutionalizing something and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: The process if part of an [inaudible]

STAFFORD: . . . because then it becomes yours rather than you know, somebody else's and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Right, right.

STAFFORD: But . . . we, we had, we've had some successes and we've had some major failures too with respect to some of our projects. The , . . the . . . the, we set up a board, we had a few more months of funding . . . that allowed us to keep moving ahead with some of our projects.

After about a year and a half or two years [clears throat] you know, it was pretty clear to me personally that there wasn't going to be a full time salary or ha . . . I didn't want to have to exist on soft funding and I had no benefits, you know, as a, as a director of the Evergreen Institute. There was no retirement or anything like that so, I took the job at the university and it's been, it's been positive because it's allowed me to continue to be involved with Evergreen . . . issues and, and projects . . . and there is so much overlap with my other job as director of the Center in Aging and Community that they're almost indistinguishable at this point. We still have an Evergreen board. We don't have any

Evergreen employees now. We had one f . . . that for another year or so and . . . we developed a home share of matchmaking program that still sort of operates on a low level. We, we've done a lot with education about home modification, with folks on a sort of physical environment of the homes. The city continues to provide reverse mortgage counseling which was one of the outgrowths gross of the program. Our, our major effort that a lot of people in town have associated us with was, was a desire to do this downtown senior housing project and that is still stalled because we've, we . . . the f . . . the f . . . well we got close to fruition then the funding stream began going back the other direction. We had assembled a fairly major package of financing for this downtown Evergreen Place project, and . . . the . . . this, this city . . . waffled on the way we could use some of the money that had been committed and then the state of Indiana froze lottery funds which were committed to the project and those funds are matching another grant that we had from the department of natural historic preservation. So that, that went by the wayside, and . . . so . . . the housing project has not gone forward, we're still, now we are looking around for another site, actually we . . . for some donated property that we can use. We have, we have . . . a lot of equity in the project, and . . . we have plans that we've gone through, you know, there are architectural engineering plans, and so now actually we're, we're hoping maybe the housing authority might, might even take some interest in the, in the project or, incidentally the hospital . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: It's, it's still, it's still a possibility.

STAFFORD: Yeah, yeah . . . and I feel something I personally feel committed to because I really think it's important, and we've had a lots of students move into the downtown area. Developers have been building these big complexes right downtown for students and we need old people there to kind of balance [chuckle] the life in the downtown areas, so [laughter].

VAN WILLIGEN: I, I'm going to turn the tape.

STAFFORD: Sure.

[End Tape 1, Side 1]

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

VAN WILLIGEN: Let's see, so . . . there are a variety of techniques used and, there was this general wo . . . general, various rubrics that

kind of covered it. It wasn't as if you had, you were, you thought, you're, you n . . . you probably never thought of yourself as taking a, a model from somewhere else and applying it. It, it, it kind . . .

STAFFORD: Not really.

VAN WILLIGEN: . . . of evolved that, but there are values and approaches that work, you'd find in different places.

STAFFORD: Yes, I think there wer . . . you're right, there was a set of values, a sort of un . . . underlined proc . . . underlay the process and, and the team of people that we put together, you know, to . . . from various organizations that were involved and so when we would have an idea for a project you know, they would volunteer to help develop it and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: And in, e, e, might be as well to discuss your view of what those values were at this point.

STAFFORD: Mm-mm.

VAN WILLIGEN: I mean, it, I, I, I would guess that, you know, if we look back at what you've said this morning that, that we'd see it in there but . . .

STAFFORD: Yeah, right.

VAN WILLIGEN: . . . it might be, it might be good to, to identify that.

STAFFORD: Well . . . synonymous but . . . in . . . inclusion and what I refer to as a mos . . . mosaic of perspectives is, is in an essential planning value and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: 'Mosaic of Prospective' . . .

STAFFORD: 'Mosaic of Perspectives' which is sort of stealing a, a phrase from Jay, Jay [Jaber F.] Gubrium 'The Mosaic of Care,' . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: . . . which is the study of home care and . . . Jay, as you know as an, as an ethnographer has been . . . excellent in demonstrating how reality . . . is . . . a . . . product of multiple perspectives, or I should say really that there are multiple realities and . . . so the idea of . . . revealing a variety of perspectives on a, on what might be perceived to be a common issue you know, within a community like the meaning of home or something like that, is an important planning value, I think. Bringing people in who had been disfranchised from municipal planning processes I think is also a value. But it, these are at core kind of anthropological values.

VAN WILLIGEN: Sure, sure.

STAFFORD: . . . and beliefs and so it's part sort of driven by his sort of the idea of democracy with the small d, and at the same time that

kind of a cultural relativism you know, that anthropology offers in, in evaluating different perspectives.

VAN WILLIGEN: Is this something I imagine like, in the context of project . . . people working project, that m . . . most of these people weren't anthropologists.

STAFFORD: Right.

VAN WILLIGEN: And did, did you have to invest any special effort to kind of orient them to this way of seeing things?

STAFFORD: Hum, I, I wouldn't say so. I, I think people get an "uh-huh" reaction you know, when, when they s . . . they, they wonder well why wouldn't we do this.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: You know, particularly if they are not traditional decision makers, I, I do have to say that I found myself . . . pitching this, this notion that . . . and, and critiquing the way that strategic planning typically happens in communities . . . the, which involves major institutions like city governments, and hospitals, and schools you know, doing strat . . . their own sort of strategic plans, and they may go as far as inviting people in for input. But there's no convergence of strategic planning across these major institutions and communities, just that, that, that I have seen much evidence of and that was true in, in Bloomington. I can't say that we really had an impact at the level of you know, those institutions, the high levels of those institutions including the university as well. But . . . at the sort of the level of decision makers and that, that I was working with, which, which, which was, tended to be leaders in aging services you know, and these various organizations as well as . . . older people and . . . people who were just interested in volunteering. They sort of took some of these values as self evident, I guess, for themselves and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: That's just the way they were.

STAFFORD: Yeah, I think so. We did a, a pretty extensive randomized survey and . . . w . . . while it provided great quantitative data, it was, it also had a lot of benefits in terms of participation because you know, interviewing two hundred old people on a community, the word gets around and, and people felt valued by that process, partly because it was a, it was a fairly extensive in-home interview and it averaged 90 minutes, and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Did you say it was a random sample based?

STAFFORD: Yeah, mm-mm. And . . . it was broad ranging and we hired graduate students in anthropology and folklore for the most part [chuckle]

VAN WILLIGEN: Huh-huh [chuckle].

STAFFORD: . . . who just love sitting in the living-room you know, and talking with people, and so people really enjoyed that, that process and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Oh, I see.

STAFFORD: . . . so you know, and, and we were also very concerned about publishing the local reserv – results of all this research.

VAN WILLIGEN: Huh-huh. You published wo . . . in, in the community.

STAFFORD: Yeah.

VAN WILLIGEN: Like in the paper . . .

STAFFORD: That's right, we d . . . we did a, a massive, we did an insert . . . fairly lon . . . long insert in the newspaper. It was expensive, it was around ten thousand dollars to do that, but it went to like twenty-five thousand households. It was a very attractive visual summary of all the various streams of research.

VAN WILLIGEN: Do you have a copy of it with you?

STAFFORD: No I [chuckle] I don't, I'm sorry, I should have brought one. There's only two or three left that I have, that I, I didn't . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: And they're, and they're turning yellow [laughter]

STAFFORD: Yeah, that's right [laughter], that's one of the problems of newspaper these days. But I, I think it's very important to, to do that because, particularly in communities like Lexington and Bloomington, where you have a big research universities they do research in the community but never with the community and the, the results are never published locally, and that's unfortunate.

VAN WILLIGEN: We get, there is this problem of gearing our communications to the things that pay off for us . . .

STAFFORD: Yes!

VAN WILLIGEN: . . . personally and then, and, and, thinking about how you'd communicate with a community . . .

STAFFORD: That's right!

VAN WILLIGEN: . . . is not something we are used to do it as anthropologists.

STAFFORD: Yeah, yeah, that's exactly right.

VAN WILLIGEN: So what are some of the other ways that you communicated to the community. I mean there was this insert, and . . .

STAFFORD: We, we du . . . we cultivated a, a good relationship with the newspaper and we had . . . had several editorials, we had feature articles on events that we did.

VAN WILLIGEN: Oh, I see.

STAFFORD: When we had public events that involved people around a specific task, whether it was a focus group or a lecture or something like that, we always tried to embed that event in the context of a larger community-wide discussion that we were trying to promote, so people could help make that linkage between what we're doing here at this church, in this church basement, you know, and what else is happening around town you know, around these issues, and . . . so it's, it's, and again we didn't use this phrase at the time either but in retrospect I think we were trying to build a learning community and, since that we are all learning together . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: So you know, and it's not what you learn or what I learn but what we can learn together.

VAN WILLIGEN: So everything that happened in the project, you would think in terms of a, it . . . it would be placed in some sort of overall strategy that was participatory in, and contributed to better understanding in the part of the community of . . .

STAFFORD: Yeah.

VAN WILLIGEN: . . . the issues.

STAFFORD: Yeah.

VAN WILLIGEN: And th . . . the, the actual events themselves were somewhat unpredictable because they were put together with a diversity of different fund sources.

STAFFORD: Yes, that's right. When we approached the adult day care for example, center about being involved with us, they were the ones that came up with the idea for this collage project and it also involted . . . involved poetry. The staff there were very creative, were, were good at doing poetry projects with, with participants and where you, you'd kind of have a, a, a subject area and, and people offer brief, you know, phrases, or reactions, and then those were sort of collated into . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: . . . a kind of a poetic form and can be very compelling.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: And the collages focused on . . . basically we're s . . . we're asking them to, ask, we would ask the question what makes a

neighborhood a good place you know, and so there were a number of collages on the, on the idea of a front porch, and so the, the art project with the participants at the daycare program base . . . was, was based on what they had to offer and how they could express themselves, but became a very compelling image . . . that s . . . that served the, the broader project in sort of learning about itself, and so that we've, we felt that these were people who had something to say, if you were able to facilitate it you know, well.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right, right.

STAFFORD: And . . . with the writing project we'd actually, I did a publication, in fact I'll, I'll give this to you, well, I'll do it, I brought one to give to, to your library or whatever so I'll give that to you but it, you, but the hospital did the printing and it's, it's a publication that's, that we made available for, for five bucks you know, at all our events and s . . . it's now in the, in the bookstore in Bloomington, they keep copies in the bookstore and occasionally they'll sell one and . . . oh, occasionally we'd, there were some couple of TV call in shows and you know, those, those kinds of things.

VAN WILLIGEN: So and this is something I've experienced myself but the role of, I'll, I'll call it ideology, I mean it's a, it's a set of, it kind of coherent, a set of values that you just happen, you know, you have, and those are used to respond to opportunities that develop to give a coherence to what our, in, at least in part a k . . . almost random opportunities and then they're giving direction by being reasonable and flexible but having this kind of ideological perspective that, that would be . . . you know, encompassing communities' viewpoint and be concerned about the overall affect on the community's welfare.

STAFFORD: I, I agree, yeah we had no, we didn't really have a clear idea . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Yeah.

STAFFORD: . . . from the beginning, nor a hypothesis you know.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: So I think you're right, it did evolve and I think the fact that I had been in a community for a long time, I wasn't and still am not planning on going anywhere, had the opportunity to work across multiple settings . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: . . . and issues and knew lots of people, meant that we are all really well connected with the community so that we could see these opportunities when they would come along and, and . . . people would,

would sort of trust that, you know, that's something you could get involved with and . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: And you'd f . . . you but, you, you would end up furthering the programs of these other organizations by the collaboration with you.

STAFFORD: Yeah, huh, I, I, I think so, I think so. [tapping sound]

VAN WILLIGEN: So . . . I think I . . . dealt with most of the things here that I have listed. This may relate to errors that you think you made but what about things that, let's say, taking in the perspective that you have at this moment and then projecting back to the beginning of this, what sort of things do you wish you knew?

STAFFORD: Well, I wish we had . . . hu . . . adhered more closely to the . . . had, had not moved so quickly towards solutions in specific projects. We published a, a document called 'Design Principles for a Healthy Environment For Older People,' and had identified four sort of domains, or four core principles and a set of corollaries around those various principles and . . . I think at the time, in, in retrospect what we should have done is . . . rather than write the grant with some specific projects in mind the next grant, we should have set up on, on, an organization of people who had interest in the specific issues that emerged from that, and it was you know, it was a fairly sort of systematic document and we could of set up committees to focus on this principle or that principle and let them kind of continue to explore those, depending on what they were interested in, because of the principle supplied to . . . environments at multiple scales, they, they wouldn't apply to the micro environment of a nursing home as well as a neighborhood, a whole neighborhood, some of the same design principles, and so people that, if we had done a . . . a kind of a thing where we would educate ourselves as a, as a group, a working group about these principles or what they might mean for various environments and then have people organize themselves into committees to work on these and report back and develop some kind of a mechanism for doing that. I th . . . I, I, I think that would have been in the long run a, a better strategy in terms of long term sort of cultural change, you know, in the community, rather than going back to the foundation for specific money, for specific projects and then getting w . . . totally wrapped up in one big expensive project and having that not be successful, and so that . . . it, it distracted us from other things that we needed to be doing as well.

VAN WILLIGEN: And when were these principles published?

STAFFORD: They were published in . . . let's see [whispers] ninety-five, ninety-sssix or ninety-seven.

VAN WILLIGEN: Mm-mm, and . . .

STAFFORD: Locally they're not published anywhere.

VAN WILLIGEN: I see.

STAFFORD: I mean it's just a local document.

VAN WILLIGEN: You . . .

STAFFORD: It's not.

VAN WILLIGEN: Okay.

STAFFORD: Yeah.

VAN WILLIGEN: And, and this is public, this is available somehow.

STAFFORD: I can send it to you [laughter].

VAN WILLIGEN: That will be good.

STAFFORD: Yeah. I think I might have made, mentioned to the, to the primary four primary principles in an article that I published, but . . . it's a, there's, there's a whole set of corollaries that, that go along with it.

VAN WILLIGEN: Mm-mm, 'does it's, i . . . it's a, to me it's a it sounds like the, like theory in the applied context.

STAFFORD: Huh . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: I mean . . .

STAFFORD: Yeah, huh-huh.

VAN WILLIGEN: . . . you see, if you follow these [inaudible]

STAFFORD: That's right.

VAN WILLIGEN: I mean it's a, it's link, a, a, a kind of proposition about cause, basically.

STAFFORD: Yeah, that's right, yeah.

VAN WILLIGEN: And so it, it, it is, it is theory.

STAFFORD: Mm-mm.

VAN WILLIGEN: In, in a r . . . very real sense.

STAFFORD: That's right, but it . . . in a sense it's, it's, has local value.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yeah.

STAFFORD: You know, and local purpose and, and it was not designed to, to contribute to sort of generalized theory because I think these are things people have to discover for themselves.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: That's where their . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Right, right.

STAFFORD: . . . persuasion comes in.

VAN WILLIGEN: And then I, this is a comment from a personal perspective, sometimes however useful these principles are they are often . . . it's very difficult to communicate the importance of the process of discovering them?

STAFFORD: Mm-mm.

VAN WILLIGEN: And, and . . . so . . . just by creating a program that would follow the principles might not quite have the same effect as a program that would kind of discover them.

STAFFORD: Exactly right, I, I d . . . I couldn't agree more.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yeah.

STAFFORD: And . . . because a, a lot of people will look at the principles and say well that's common sense.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: You know [chuckle], why do we have to go through to all this if, you know, like, like for example we'd pointed to the centrality of, of, of food you know, as . . . an, a component, an important component of healthy environments.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: Not just food but the whole cultural sort of aspect of food.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: And it leads you to all kinds of i, ideas about how to incorporate food into various kinds of projects and . . . but you, you sort of go through this process and you hear people talking about food and you're gathering compelling quotes about food or whatever it might be . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: . . . you know that's that discovery process that, that I again I think is important which is why publishing something like that for national audience, just the set of principles you know, is, it's not as worthwhile because it's not something that you just sort of would plop down.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right. That's very interesting to me. Then . . . so, so the, these principles, were they disseminated? I mean they were disseminated within the . . .

STAFFORD: They are part of this instant publication.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yeah, okay.

STAFFORD: And . . . and then we would . . . we published this, this survey where the results in very usable kind of document and distributed that widely. So whenever we would develop these sort of

publications we would take them to all these various events as well and sort of des . . . 'Design Principles' was one that we made fair use of.

VAN WILLIGEN: Right. And so then the . . . the . . . have you any in any place described your knowledge utilization design, I mean the, the, the plan for having an impact and achieving your goals, and feeding the information that you obtained into a kind of a system?

STAFFORD: Not really. I am about getting to that point? I mentioned this book you know . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: . . . that, that I want to write on elder friendly communities and . . . I w . . . I really want to think more seriously about how that would be described and . . . you know, it's, it's one thing to describe what would be the components of an elder friendly community but again you're just doing the same thing, you know.

VAN WILLIGEN: Yeah.

STAFFORD: It's like spinning up a, you know, recipes for an elder friendly community, because what a, I think community needs to go through is this discovery process to, to decide . . .

VAN WILLIGEN: Right.

STAFFORD: . . . you know, which of these are germane and which do we want to work on and, and . . . so the community building is, is as much an important part of it as what you know, comes out at the other end.

VAN WILLIGEN: Mm. I think that probably it would . . .

STAFFORD: Be a good place to stop?

VAN WILLIGEN: Yeah, I think so, you probably talked a lot and you will be talking some more.

STAFFORD: Yeah, [chuckle] that's right.

[End of Interview]