

INTERVIEW OF DIRK A. BALLENDORF

By Howard P. Willens and Deanne C. Siemer

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- Willens: We have the good fortune today to have with us Professor Dirk A. Ballendorf, a student of Micronesian history for some three decades. Dirk, thank you very much for being available for us. Could we begin by asking you where and when you were born?
- Ballendorf: I was born in 1939 in Philadelphia. My mother was the only woman on record who got morning sickness after I was born.
- Willens: Where were you educated?
- Ballendorf: In the Philadelphia public schools. I was an undergraduate at Penn State at Westchester. I went to graduate school at Howard University and I have a doctors degree from Harvard.
- Willens: When did you graduate from Penn State?
- Ballendorf: In 1961.
- Willens: Then your next step was graduate work at Howard?
- Ballendorf: No, I joined the Peace Corps. I was in the first group. I came here to Guam and then the Philippines. The first time I came to Guam was 1961 en route to the Philippines.
- Willens: Where were you trained for that Peace Corps assignment?
- Ballendorf: Penn State, Puerto Rico, and the University of the Philippines.
- Willens: What did you major in at Penn State?
- Ballendorf: I majored in American History.
- Willens: What motivated you to enter this Kennedy Administration program?
- Ballendorf: Kennedy was a marvelous, inspiring, charismatic person. When I first met him during the campaign, I shook hands with him. I heard his speech at Ann Arbor where he offered the idea of the Peace Corps in October of 1960 and I joined right away. I wasn't unique. There were so many in my generation who were just so captivated by what he said. And we thought we could, he told us we could, end poverty. We would be able to be these soldiers of peace that would end poverty, and we believed that then because he was so charismatic. Probably if President Kennedy told me to get out there on the roof and flap my hands and arms and jump off—you are going to be perfectly alright, you will float to the ground—I would have probably done that then. I don't think we will see a leader like that again. I wasn't alone. We would have just done anything he said. Of course, we couldn't eradicate poverty. I was recently in the Philippines and found it to be worse now in many ways than it was when we were there in 1961.
- Willens: How many years did you stay in the Philippines?
- Ballendorf: A little over two years.
- Siemer: What kind of projects were you working on?
- Ballendorf: I was a school teacher, English and Science for the most part. I did other community projects but not very well. I really learned much more than I think they did, the Filipinos.

They were so nice and the children were so wonderful. I was teaching third grade English. It was a wonderful experience. I had nothing in the way of materials. We were in quite rural areas. And the schools were thatched roofed affairs, blackboards were simply painted plywood, painted green. I remember the printed materials. I had a pre-war copy of Gibbons, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. I had a Charles Darwin, *Origin of the Species*. These were eaten by worms and they must have been published in the 1920's sometime. Big thick books the moisture had made swollen. I could fit three little students behind one of these open books. We didn't have any other materials there at that school. And I started teaching English by having these three little fingers looking over to identify articles. That is how I started. So identify articles with a, an and the. Then I had a, an and the up on the green painted blackboard. And when they found one they would get down from their seats, and go up make a check -- isn't that silly? That's how I started to teach English then.

Siemer: Did you training include Tagalog?

Ballendorf: Yes, although I went to a non-Tagalog region I studied a little Tagalog prior to that. We studied Tagalog at Penn State briefly. We studied communism. See, in those days this was the first Peace Corps ever. And they didn't really know how to train us. So we had marvelous trainers. Buckminster Fuller, he was one of our trainers. William Sloan Kauffman, he was one. We would have done anything for these people. What a wonderful time. We learned all about communism with a view to being able to identify communists. The only communists I ever met in the Philippines were taxi drivers who were trying to provide for their families. It was a lot of wasted time as we look back on this, if you want to look at it from the efficiency point of view. But on the other hand it was rich for us, and I am glad that I went through that. Even though I never really used all that. There was time, money and professors that came to explain communism. They went over all the history of the Philippines. That was never really important. Of course, it is important, but we didn't use it on the spot. But gosh it was wonderful to have gone through it.

Willens: How many Peace Corps volunteers ended up in the Philippines program?

Ballendorf: Well, I guess by the time I left the country there were between three and four hundred there at that time.

Willens: Then after the two-year term, did you then leave the Peace Corps?

Ballendorf: Yes, I came home, and we went to graduate school at Howard University in Washington. I was on a scholarship. This was a program to utilize ex-Peace Corps volunteers in urban (I think they called it disadvantaged) areas. There was a buzz word they used—culturally disadvantaged students.

Willens: What was the Masters Degree in?

Ballendorf: Well, it was in what you would call today Black Studies. In those days it was the Negroes—Negroes in American History—that's what I specialized in.

Willens: How did you happen into that particular branch of history?

Ballendorf: Well, I had a degree in American History and they were interested in our teaching. That is really where I learned how to teach at this wonderful program. They had money to spend. We had a master teacher, Larry Cuban. He is quite a well-known educator today, a superintendent at several school districts, and now a professor at Stanford. He was my master teacher. He taught a class and then I taught a class. He would watch me and I would watch him. Then we would have a critique. That was wonderful. We also

had psychiatrists on the staff who would observe the behavioral problems with these disadvantaged students.

Willens: The students presumably were at the public schools in Washington?

Ballendorf: Cardozo High School. And we were the only whites. Sam McPhetres was in the program. He and I were in there together. He was in, I think, a second year of Liberal Arts. That's where Sam and I first met. He can tell you about it. We had these black students, and then we would go over to Howard. All the students there were black. You could tell the Africans. You could tell them from the American Negroes in those days. You can't do it now. They all look the same. But you could tell them from a distance. It was a great deal being a minority at that school. When I went to look for a house for my family—I was married and we had a one child—I found this house out there in Silver Spring and called up the guy. He asked me what do you do? I said I was a graduate student. Where do you go to school? Howard. Are you colored? I was never asked a question like that. I said no, no. Well, we don't want to integrate that neighborhood there. It was the first time I had run into that. He had me come down to his office, a lawyer in Washington, to make sure that I was telling the truth. Well, I ran into several other instances like that since I was a Howard student. There were white people at Howard, of course. There always have been, but always a very small group.

Willens: How long did that program last?

Ballendorf: I was there two years. And then I graduated with a Masters Degree and I got this marvelous job in the Job Corps program. They thought that a white man with a degree from a black school would probably know secret information that other people didn't know which, of course, is nonsense. I got a really good job. I got a job for \$8,500 a year.

Willens: Was that in the Department of Labor at the time or was it OEO?

Ballendorf: Yes, OEO. We went to Rodman Job Corps Center in New Bedford, Mass. That's where I went. I was there for a year.

Siemer: As an administrator?

Ballendorf: I was a teacher and then I became an administrator. I was a math teacher, of all things. Then I was on the Interdorm Council. We were trying to understand these behavioral problems. These IBM people, see IBM had the contract, and they had this subcompany called SRA. They make educational materials. They didn't know anything about how to handle a black urban population. What a time we had. I was there for about a year and half and then they announced this program in Micronesia. So we talked it over and . . .

Siemer: Who did, OEO?

Ballendorf: No, the Peace Corps. See, the Peace Corps first wanted to come to Micronesia in 1961 when it was first started. Dr. Gibson was the one who made the request for the Trust Territory. And the Peace Corps said, "No, we can't go to Micronesia because it's a domestic place, and we only go to foreign places." So by 1965 things were so bad here that the lawyers got together and they said under some principle that it was a foreign place.

Siemer: I saw that in one of your articles. I was having a hard time relating that to any decision that this was not a foreign jurisdiction.

Ballendorf: Maybe it's just gobbly gook but . . .

Willens: There was a different legal opinion?

Ballendorf: Yes, it was based on a legal opinion. That was the basis for allowing the Peace Corps to go

there. But, of course, everybody wanted it to come out that way to meet some manpower needs.

Siemer: That was Bill Josephson?

Ballendorf: Yes and Ross Pritchard was the Director of the Far East Region. Now the Peace Corps at one time wanted to take over the whole TT. I don't think you will ever find this written. But I was asked if I thought I could take over the district. I think I was only twenty-something. I was the youngest person there. I didn't understand what it was really like to have administrative responsibilities.

Willens: When you went back into the Peace Corps did you have administrative responsibilities given your educational level and your prior experience?

Ballendorf: Yes, I was the Director in Palau. I was appointed the Director of Palau.

Willens: You suggested a few minutes ago that the changed legal opinion, if that what it was, was prompted by some common sense that there's much to be done?

Ballendorf: It was very clear, or not unclear, that the United Nations had admitted a number of new developing countries, i.e., Nigeria, Ghana, these newly-emerging African countries. They sent a visiting team. You know, periodically there would be a visiting team coming to the Trust Territory from the U.N. Trusteeship Council. And on this visiting team, there were several nationals from these newly emerged countries. One of the particularly flamboyant ones was this woman, I think she was Nigerian, Angie Brooks. She was married to a Britisher. She was an elite person, well-educated and clever. She was neat. She would come out and she got off the truck and went right into the village with the people there, the chickens, she liked to do that.

Willens: You were here when she came out in 1967?

Ballendorf: No, this was ...

Willens: There was one in 1964, one in 1967.

Ballendorf: I got here in 1966. I met her in 1967 when she came here, and she had also been on the previous team. These newly-emerging countries were criticizing the U.S. for the health conditions. So it made sense. I guess somebody figured it out in Washington. Well, what we are going to do is make a big Peace Corps program there in public health, education, the whole battery, and we are going to change all this. But there were too many. I had 143 in Palau myself.

Siemer: I was going to ask you, why the large numbers?

Ballendorf: Well, it was to solve these problems. No more screwing around. Some of these people wanted to actually takeover the whole island group under the Peace Corps. It was crazy.

Willens: Who originated that thought?

Ballendorf: I think it was, this is all hearsay. I think it was Ross Pritchard, who was the director. Maybe Josephson had something to do with it too, I don't know. This is all speculation because there was never anything written about it.

Siemer: Who were the other Peace Corps directors out here when you were here?

Ballendorf: Well, the country director was still alive, he must be well over 80. I can you give you his address. He was the overall director.

- Siemer: He was stationed where?
- Ballendorf: In Saipan, that was headquarters. You know where the Villagomez store is? That was our office.
- Siemer: On Beach Road.
- Ballendorf: Yes.
- Siemer: Who were the area directors under him?
- Ballendorf: There was me in Palau, Dirk Ballendorf, Leon Moss in Yap, Jerry Fite in the Marianas, Robert Gould in Truk. Boy, was that something!
- Siemer: Truk or Gould?
- Ballendorf: Gould.
- Siemer: Who was in the Marshalls?
- Ballendorf: Jim Huttar. And in Pohnpei was Joseph Royce. He was from Holland. Royce was a professor at Berkeley on leave.
- Willens: Were the programs in the districts standardized or did they take different directions depending upon the needs of the district or the preference of who worked there?
- Ballendorf: No, they were standardized from Saipan. We as district directors later had the responsibility to suggest relevant programs after we were there for awhile. Well, we had a bunch of guys who started to grow pot; the Peace Corps were the ones who brought marijuana to Micronesia. This was probably their most lasting contribution.
- Willens: You mentioned in one of the articles about some particular plant that grew to an enormous height.
- Ballendorf: Yes, because they were growing it in that phosphate soil. It was really healthy stuff and heavy, I've been told.
- Willens: You never handled it yourself.
- Ballendorf: No.
- Willens: You did mention in one of the articles the training the Peace Corps volunteers received, in particular what they were told was their mission in contrast with the mission of the Trust Territory Administration. Did you personally experience any of the training that you and others have written about that reflected this anti-TTPI feeling?
- Ballendorf: The TTPI was seen as bunch of bunglers. I look back on that now, and I can see that there were really nerds that they had in the TTPI. Like you would find in any distant bureaucracy, people that had spun off, lateral transfers for one reason or another. I never met anybody who was out to screw the Micronesians. Nobody struck me as being like that. But I met a number of people I would describe as being kind of incompetent. And, of course, they weren't supported, they didn't have enough money. And the money they did have, they weren't using very well. I will never forget these auditors that came. See, the Trust Territory would get this pile of money and then they would go in for a supplemental as a routine. Nobody was properly checking. You know, our government does check, they do audit better than most governments. Down in Palau these three gentlemen came auditing from Washington. Got off the plane, the Palauans had a police honor guard for them. They had it right there, these wooden rifles, their shirttails were hanging out. They were saluting, it was really funny. You can imagine the old DC-6 aircraft they were coming out of. Of course, the ladies, the Palauans are so beautiful, the Micronesians are

so beautiful. Like their feet, since they don't wear shoes, they don't scrounge up their feet like we do. Their feet are so nice, they manicure their toenails, this lovely hair, the flowers. So here are these kind of Milquetoast auditor types, getting off the plane -- "Oh, Ralph, look at that -- a coconut tree." They were just typical tourists. And, of course, they had a party. We had a turtle, we had booze. We had this party. Then the next morning they come down and they are starting to audit the books. And there's nothing there. "Where are your accounts receivables?" The Micronesians and Palauans said, "We didn't know what do. We are just poor islanders. We need your help." Of course, these guys are saying, "Damn it, this is criminal what you are doing. There's no way of knowing how much you received and how much is going out." And the Micronesians say: "We are just stupid, we don't know, help us." Then the auditors: "This is against the law what you are doing. You can go to jail for this." They came up to my office and they audited me. In 1967, I guess it was. I think I was 27 years old. I was a foreign service reserve officer by that time. I was smart enough to get through all of this. I was smart, but I didn't know what to do. I mean I was inexperienced. I had a position of responsibility which I would never have had at home. That's one of the good things about the Peace Corps. You would be thrust into these positions of responsibility at an age that we aren't really ready for. As I look back on it now, it was a great opportunity. But if you can rise to the occasion, like Thomas Jefferson said. Well, here comes this guy up to my office and wants to know about my accounting. "Do you have any petty cash?" "Yes, it is right here in the box." "Count that. Do you have any in your pocket?" I said, "As a matter of fact, I do." "What is it doing in your pocket? You just can't have it in a box, having people coming up here to get petty cash all the time." I was intimidated. "Mr. Ballendorf, where did you get your accounting system?" And I said from the ancient Greeks, you know. That was the wrong thing to say. I almost lost my job, got my ass chewed out. Mr. Pritchard chewed me out. It was a good learning experience. The Palauans had another big party the first night. Maybe these guys got laid, I don't know. They came into the office and said what a mess this is. You see, this was the next day after the second party. Every night there was a party. So on the third day, they say, "We are going to let you go this time, but if you ever do this again, you are going to jail." The Palauans: "Oh yes, thank you. Now we will know what to do, and we will never make these mistakes again." So they get on the plane, and we had a bigger party. We had a real party after they left. This is the kind of thing that would be repeated in every district of the Trust Territory. There would be a similar kind of occurrence where the Micronesians are hoodwinking the Americans. And these guys would get back to Washington and report that these books are not auditable. At some high level in the Interior Department someone makes a decision—how much is it, \$17 million, write it off. We are getting denial of bases, we get denial of the region, we get all of this, write it off.

Siemer: You knew they would come back?

Ballendorf: People like me were scolded and American civil servants would be held accountable. But we are only the end of the line. The Micronesians were getting the wrong message. Americans are good at holding people accountable. Our government is good at that. Even though it bungles I am proud of it. But you see they were not holding these people accountable. And so instead of the people becoming more and more responsible and mature, they become older and older children. They think they can get away with this.

Siemer: They think they can make excuses and get away with it.

Ballendorf: You are absolutely right. My brother-in-law was the assistant district administrator [during the Trust Territory government] and he is formerly a president of Palau. He is in the generation that came up with—all the Americans are nice, they will give me money,

but you've got to be nice to them. You be nice and polite, and they don't scold you. Where the Japanese put you on the spot for that. So it was this, our national interests were being served by what we were doing. The Interior Department was doing its job and the Defense Department was saying, yes, we are getting what we need there. We are getting a pretty good price. The whole government, the whole Trust Territory government, is a welfare program. That is one way of looking at it.

Siemer: What about the Peace Corps administrators? What was Mr. Fite's background?

Ballendorf: He was a school teacher. He had been a basketball coach. He was younger than me and everybody else was older than me. Bob Gould had been a director in India. When he came to Truk, it was the toughest place. So he came to Truk and insulted everyone. He insulted the chief. "It doesn't look like there is much culture here. I have just come from India. That is where they have real culture over there." Chief Petrus was the chief.

Willens: What happened as a result of that kind of . . .

Ballendorf: My God, the things he did! The first thing he did was to go to the District Administrator, Allen McQuarry, who is still alive and retired in Sun City. And he asked him for a vehicle. You see, we came out like three months ahead of the volunteers. And Gould needed a vehicle. So he went to the District Administrator and said, "I would just like to borrow a jeep." And McQuarry said, "We just don't have any available." A typical bureaucratic response. "Like to help you out, Bob, but we just don't have anything available." He said, "Okay." He goes to Chief Petrus whom he had consulted several times. "I need a vehicle, Chief, can you help me out." You see, in this day there are no car dealers. All vehicles are surplus vehicles. Everything surplus, military. Petrus gives him a 1943 Japanese jeep which was up on plywood. There was a plywood bed and plywood seat and then the steering column came out toward the seat. It was funny just to see you sitting on this thing, and no muffler or anything like this. So he says, "Thank you very much." The chief is giving it to him particularly so he is going to look ludicrous, which he did. He is driving along dignified, he drives up and wants to get the mail. Everybody comes out from the office. "Well, boy, gee isn't that some vehicle you have there." Gould said, "I asked you for one first, but you didn't have anything, so I went to the Trukese and got it from them. I think they thought he was a little crazy. Some days later the inter-island ship arrived. It had the Peace Corps truck which is Easter egg green. We had a baby blue one -- all these pastel colors for these 3/4 ton or ton and half trucks. So everybody comes to see the first new vehicle. This is the first new vehicle to come to Truk since before the War. Everybody stops work. It was the same in all the districts. This was a big status thing which we had never counted on. The TT is envious of this. How are these Peace Corps people getting all this new stuff when we can't get anything? They could have gotten much more than they were getting if they had done it right. Anyway they off-load this truck. Everybody is watching. And Gould takes the keys to the truck and give them to Chief Petrus. "I want you to have this truck. You gave me a vehicle when I needed one. Now I'm giving you this." Well, we were all flabbergasted and the Public Works Director said, "You can't do that. That's a government vehicle." Gould said: "I am not giving it to him. I am just assigning it to him." "Well, that's not even been undercoated. We never heard of anything like this." And Gould said, "Yes, I am giving it to him. When I asked you for a vehicle, you should have given me one, but you didn't. Well, here this chief has the vehicle." So the Chief said, "I want to send this vehicle over to [another island]." Gould says: "Give me the work order, I will sign that." The Public Works Director said, "You can't send it over to [that island], for Christ sake, they have no roads over there. What the hell are they going to do with that?" Gould says: "That's what he wants. I told you, McQuarry, you should have given

me a vehicle when I asked for it.” So they took the vehicle over and put it on the beach and the people opened up a road. There was a Japanese road. The Japanese had built a little feeder road around the island, so they opened the road just to see the vehicle go. And Gould is up there saying “This is what development is. You don’t think first and act later, you act first and think later. That’s what development is.” Act then think. I mean it was just magnificent with some of these early things that happened. It got the Peace Corps in really good shape with the Micronesians but not very well with the TT.

Siemer: How about Mr. Huttar in the Marshalls? What was his background?

Ballendorf: He’s an executive and I believe he still is with the Corning Glass Company. He was a junior manager. That was the genius of the Peace Corps. They would take these people. You know, you could never look at it as a career. But you were supposed to get out there and make this work. Your major resource was what you were as a person. That was the whole idea of the Peace Corps, still is really. The basic resource is what you are as a person. You are going to do things. You are not going to sit around. That’s what the original verities of the Peace Corps were. That’s the way I was taught and that’s the way I speak every year when I am asked to go and talk with the new volunteers. Now, they can’t believe we had \$4.4 million just for Micronesia. What would we do with that?

Siemer: How did Amata Kabua do with Mr. Huttar?

Ballendorf: Amata was a crook. He was a king-sized crook. His grandson is here as a student. But they got along fine. I think it is fair to say in all districts there was a tendency for the Micronesians to use the Peace Corps and to pit them against the Trust Territory. I think that is fair to say. I had a very fine man, Boyd McKenzie, as my district administrator. He was Hawaiian royalty, Hawaiian blood.

Siemer: He was district administrator?

Ballendorf: In Palau. And we worked fine together. He helped me. He was a honest man, a good man, never tried to manipulate me.

Siemer: What was the clan leadership like there?

Ballendorf: It was strong all over. Like Chief Petrus in Truk. He was high clan person and also became the Speaker of the Congress of Micronesia. He was a very well-respected Chief. He could keep things together. He would turn over in his grave—he is probably turning over in his grave now—to see all the crooks over here.

Siemer: Was that true in Palau at the time, that the Chief was able to keep things together?

Ballendorf: Oh, yes. The Chief we have now is a complete jerk. People don’t respect him at all. But with the former Chief, there was always team work. The Palauans separate tradition and authority. Tradition is the Chief, authority is the elected President. They have to work together but they like to keep them separate. In the Marshalls they combined tradition and authority in Amata.

Siemer: How about in Pohnpei?

Ballendorf: They always kept them separate. The Marshalls is the only place where they did not.

Willens: During the time you were in Palau, did you have an opportunity to form a judgment as to their capacity for self-government?

Ballendorf: Well, this is an uneven capacity. In fact, the second year I was here I was promoted to the headquarters staff so I moved up there to Saipan.

- Willens: You spent one year in Palau and one year in Saipan?
- Ballendorf: That's right. A little over a year in Saipan. I was assigned to be a staff person for the Joint Committee on the Peace Corps? Lazarus Salii was the Chair. I met all those guys. It was more like a student government than a national Congress. We were informal, but it was serious. And I think that the more enlightened elements in our government looked at the whole Congress of Micronesia not so much as a law-making body, but as an educational program where the Micronesians are going to learn to be politicians and responsible officials. And so it was uneven from district to district. I remember the people in the Marshalls who were in the Congress were not sophisticated. The Palauans, like Lazarus Salii, were more clever. You could see that at the time. The people in Yap were always a mystery. The Yapese never talked very much. I would say that Micronesians are not yet ready to run their own affairs, if you want to say that running their own affairs means responsible leadership. You can't really learn to be responsible in an environment that doesn't hold you accountable like it should.
- Willens: Back in the 1960's, the people were not holding the Congress of Micronesian legislators responsible for their decisions?
- Ballendorf: The Americans were not holding the TT government responsible. There was such overlap. They elected people to the Congress from the TT government. They were all in one confused monologue. But there was no one, for example, who could write. This has happened in just the past five years. I have had several political figures ask me if I could ghost-write an article. They are asked to write articles now, but they didn't in those days. They are asked, but they can't write. I never do that. I never ghost-write for the Micronesian leaders. There's a lot of opportunity to do that these days.
- Siemer: There was some opportunity to do that back in the Congress of Micronesian days, too. Particularly in the 1966, 1967, 1968 period. If you review the journals of the Congress of Micronesia, the quality of the speeches given by the same person varies considerably.
- Ballendorf: Well, they hire lawyers to write their speeches. They started hiring lawyers, I guess, almost immediately after they were established. And then gradually there would be more and more staff people. When they fragmented, they carried on those kinds of habits. I am not sure I accurately answered your question. Go back over that again.
- Willens: Well, we will come at it in a variety of ways. To finish with the Peace Corps experience, did you get the sense that the program was operated differently in the Marianas than it had in Palau?
- Ballendorf: Yes, it operated differently. The Marianas was the most advanced place. That's where the central government was. That always made a big difference in sophistication generally, and in the kinds of programs. For example, we didn't have much in the way of agriculture. Agriculture is a program that has been given such tremendous lip service and no support, no money. And even today in the FSM Congress, generally speaking, they don't put their brightest people in the cabinet positions. For example, agriculture in Pohnpei. I would give that high priority. Look, the future of your country is going to depend on this. They don't give money to that, they give money to foreign affairs. And the best people get appointed so they can go out and beg. They are beggars. The best people are going to be in the premier begging jobs. I think it was always like that. You can trace this back to what I was saying earlier with the Trust Territory. If you are nice, and you say, "Help us, we need your help," it comes from there. Our national interests were denying [other countries any military] bases [in the region] and in testing military weapons. That is very important. I am not questioning that a bit. But the development of the people was really

neglected. It wasn't even serious. So it kind of polluted our mission as it was stated in the United Nations charge in the Trusteeship Agreement. We were never able to seriously do that—put the kind of resources behind it.

Willens: There were some suggestions in the materials that the people of the Marianas were not as receptive to the Peace Corps as they were in other districts.

Ballendorf: One Peace Corps program was designed to provide small business advisors who were like accountants, helping the Mom and Pop stores. Manny Villagomez had one, I believe. After awhile, the people said, "What the hell does he have one for. The guy is rich. He can afford anything." I guess it was seen as being political. I don't know. I wasn't really involved directly with that. But you would get these kinds of things with all government programs. So that would bring criticism. On the whole, people liked us. We didn't have instances of people getting stabbed or fights in bars like you get in Latin America. We had a guy, in fact, a Peace Corps volunteer originally assigned in Iran, which has a border with the Soviet Union. This kid, a Yale graduate, wants to pee in the Soviet Union. I mean it's a typical fraternity stunt. I am going to take a leak in the Soviet Union. And he wades out to the middle of the river, takes out his pecker and pees. The guards get him because the border was the edge of the river. He assumed the border was in the middle of the river. So he is in the Soviet Union. Can you imagine what kind of explanation he would give. "Why are you here?" "Oh, you see I just wanted to pee in the Soviet Union." So they had to send a couple of people down from the Embassy and get him out. And this is how the Peace Corps was in those days. They gave him a second chance. And they said, we want him in the most remote place possible. So they sent him to Micronesia and he finished his tour out there. The Peace Corps was wonderful.

Siemer: How did the joint Peace Corps-Congress of Micronesia Committee work?

Ballendorf: Well, it was mainly with program issues. The TT wanted the Congress of Micronesia to take the initiative in requesting and assigning Peace Corps volunteers. I was the Associate Director of the Peace Corps Programs. So it was my job to work with that committee. I presented them with a list with the kinds of programs we were doing. What would you like to have? What don't you want? Change this. A lot of make work stuff. We were a bit Mickey Mouse sometimes. I would write those requests and I would meet regularly with the committee when they [the Congress of Micronesia] were in session. To put in requests for Peace Corps volunteers.

Siemer: Were there any Peace Corps volunteers who directly supported the Congress of Micronesia?

Ballendorf: I don't think there were when I was there.

Willens: There were some lawyers out here?

Ballendorf: Oh, the lawyers were with MLS.

Willens: Some of the lawyers were with Micronesian Legal Services, but there were Peace Corps lawyers were there not?

Ballendorf: We had two lawyers, just fresh graduates of law school and social minded. One was named Bill Wears. He is a practicing lawyer in California now. We just had two.

Willens: Did you hear of Tom Whittington?

Ballendorf: Tom Whittington, I think, was in Saipan. He wasn't in Guam. I know that name. Anyway, they set up an office and had a shingle. They wore wash-n-wear suits with oxford button down shirts. That was their uniform. One day the Palauan employees of the Van Camp

Tuna Company went on strike. And they engaged the Peace Corps lawyers to defend them. I didn't know about this.

Willens: Were you in Saipan?

Ballendorf: No, this was when I was in Palau. They came in the office one morning. The Economic Development Officer, Peter Wilson, was a good friend of mine. Peter Wilson was a leading ground gainer in 1950 at the University of Hawaii. He was a big jock, a big athletic guy, maybe 6 feet. He comes into my office, grabs me and says, "Do you know what you are doing? Do you know how long it has taken us to get this Van Camp Company here?" I thought my buddy was going to punch me out. I said, "Wait a minute, what are you talking about here?" And so he explained. "Those god damn Peace Corps volunteers are representing them. I want you to go down there and straighten that out." So I go down to Wears, what the hell is the other guy's name? You know what they said? "Sorry we cannot discuss this with you."

Siemer: Attorney-client privilege.

Ballendorf: What was I going to do. See, I am not experienced. I don't know what to do. So I go up to my office. And I get out my Peace Corps manual, Administrator Manual, a loose-leaf affair so you can keep adding to it. We never subtract. So I open this up. I am looking at this. I can terminate the services of the Peace Corps volunteer for the following reasons. Anyway I worked it out—insubordination, program failures. So I went down there, and I read them out. I said, "Okay, you two guys might be lawyers, but, damn it, I am the Director of the Peace Corps here, and I am sending your asses out. You are going up to Saipan. Here are the travel orders. So you be ready." Well, it worked out because Wears called me up. They had a telephone. They were the only ones that had a telephone in their office. And they said, "Oh, Mr. Ballendorf, I think we can tell you a little bit about what we are doing, and maybe you don't have to go to this extreme. What we want to do is get along, but we want to protect our clients." So we got over that hump. It so happened that these four or five Palauans had some grievances about their vacation time or overtime. Some small stuff which should had been settled in 15 minutes with the managers sitting down with their representative or whatever. Instead they made this federal case out of it now. Wilson scared the shit out of me. Because he really wanted to encourage these private companies to come in. These Peace Corps volunteers are going to be a greater hindrance than help. But it all worked out fine. Because somebody from Van Camp, California came out. I should have made note of his name. Boy, was he pissed off. "Jesus Christ, of course, they are on overtime." He settled it and he was on the next plane out. Well, it was just one of those quirks that worked out fine. But we had no lawyers in all the Trust Territory before the Peace Corps came. We had Public Safety Officers, you know, firemen and safety inspectors who were preparing cases to present in the lower courts. They had those. And then we had Micronesians like Roman Tmetuchl of Palau. He was a, they called him a ...

Siemer: Trial assistant.

Ballendorf: A trial assistant. He was presenting cases. He was better than the lawyers in many cases. There were so many of these cases that were being improperly taken forward. After all, our standard was the American standard. All they had to do is point this out. These people [the Peace Corps lawyers] became very unpopular. I believe in 1965 or 1969 General Walt, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, came out to survey possible bases. The Chief in Palau said to General Walt, "Oh, bring your Marines in, we would love to have the Marines." Well, after the war they had given him all the large supply depots they left here.

Willens: Who gave them to him?

Ballendorf: The military gave to the Micronesians, also building materials. My wife was eight years old. She remembers seeing spam and velveta cheese. No, ten cans of string beans and peanut butter. All that good stuff we have. Everybody got clothing, fatigue clothing, shoes. That was the mission: feed, clothe and shelter. That was the first mission. And they get the wrong idea. Boy, these Americans, isn't that wonderful. They were starving here, the military came in with all this food that didn't cost anything. Then everybody gets shots. We are so famous for these medical inputs. And the Chief, he got a jeep. I have a picture of it. So here it is 1969 and General Walt brings them all back here. Okay, now the young Turks in the Palau legislature, they were my wife's age when that happened. They didn't know anything about that. They are trying to be big shots and the Peace Corps lawyers said, "Look maybe you better think about passing a resolution. The High Chief doesn't have authority to invite in the military and if the military is going to come here, they should come properly." I think it was in the usual lawyer bull shit line, write a resolution. So these guys wrote the resolution which these young Turks introduced. And I heard that when General Walt heard about it flames came out of his cigarette. Peace Corps lawyers! The resolution was "We don't want the military here carte blanche, something."

Willens: The military.

Ballendorf: Yes, the military. "We don't want the military to have carte blanche here without proper negotiations." Quite reasonable. The next year that was it. The lawyers are gone, everybody is gone.

Willens: The Peace Corps program?

Ballendorf: Peace Corps Lawyers program.

Willens: Do you think it is due

Ballendorf: Absolutely. You will never find that written anywhere. At the time, I was in graduate school. I was at Harvard then, and one of the Harvard professors had been a buddy of Jack Vaughn's, the head of the Peace Corps. He had been the Far East Director for years. He was quite familiar with all of this. And he told me, "Yes, it was General Walt." He was also a former Marine. He is dead now. Yes, General Walt called the Pentagon, then the Pentagon called the White House, the White House called the Peace Corps.

Willens: Did the Walt visit simulate any expectations among the Palauans that the islands had some special strategic value to the military?

Ballendorf: I think that educated Palauans who were in charge always understood that. I think the Palauans, the educated ones, generally would have been just happy to have the military come in, happy to have new materials come in. There are probably only two greens, environmentalists, in Palau. I never meet people responsible in the government, with maybe a couple of exceptions, who are like that. They just wanted that trump card. The Palauans don't care about their environment. They care about money. The older people who are now out of the decision-making process would say things like, "We know from the past that once you have soldiers come, war follows." The Japanese had moved all those people off, they moved the civilians off [their islands] but when they went back to their homes, it was black. The Americans burned off all the vegetation. Why? Because the Japanese built a base there and so they were a target.

Willens: When did you leave Saipan?

- Ballendorf: I was here from 1966 to 1968 and then I went to Harvard to graduate school. I came back in 1969 for a visit. I was en route to some other place and stopped off.
- Willens: But you had left Saipan in 1968?
- Ballendorf: Yes, in fall of 1968 I entered Harvard.
- Siemer: How long did you stay there?
- Ballendorf: I stayed there five years, from start to finish.
- Siemer: When did you get your degree?
- Ballendorf: In 1973.
- Siemer: And what was your thesis on?
- Ballendorf: My thesis was "To Calculate Wastage from Brain Drain." People from undeveloped countries came to the United States to study, and then they would stay here and they wouldn't go back, after their government invested in them. I was writing about what the cost was.
- Willens: You came back to visit briefly in 1969 but, other than that, you didn't come back?
- Ballendorf: No, I came back every chance I had.
- Willens: Were you married then?
- Ballendorf: Oh, yes, I was married in 1962 to my first wife. My present wife is my second wife.
- Willens: When did you become familiar with the status negotiations?
- Ballendorf: Right from the start. At first there was a kind of visiting group, a forerunner group with Carey from New York, he was there. They came out in 1968 while I was still here, a Congressional delegation, to kind of chat about it. And that must have been like May or June 1968. The following year they established a Joint Committee on Future Political Status of the Congress of Micronesia which Salii was the head of. And I talked with him when I visited in 1969 about that. At that time, they were getting ready to consider options. There were funds made available from the U.S. for them to travel all over the Pacific. They went to the Cook Islands to observe these various statuses and Salii took this very seriously. Salii was always a guy who was interested in the unification of Micronesia. The U.S. always saw Micronesia as one political entity.
- Siemer: Why did Salii gravitate towards this political status issue?
- Ballendorf: Of unification?
- Siemer: To involvement in the political status generally.
- Ballendorf: He never talked to me about this. But I imagine that the Americans pushed him in that direction because he was favorable to what Washington's policy was.
- Siemer: Unification?
- Ballendorf: He was a unification advocate. I think he has an interview in the Micronesian Reporter about this. He had interviews, and he would write about unification.
- Siemer: Did you think back then in 1969 that it was possible to unify all of Micronesia?
- Ballendorf: I never thought it wouldn't be possible. I thought it was perfectly reasonable. I came back I think in 1973 or 1974. I was in the Peace Corps Washington office, and I came back to conduct an evaluation of the programs. I was here for several weeks. And I could see then

that it wasn't going to be unified. For one thing, the Marshall Islands didn't care anything about Palauans or Trukese. They just cared about the Marshalls. They had all this money from Kwajelein.

Willens: The Future Status Commission of the Congress of Micronesia had consultants—Dr. Robbins and Davidson?

Ballendorf: Robinson and Davidson. Then, of course, Norman Meller got into advising them a little bit later than that.

Willens: In the 1969, 1970 time frame, did you think Salii was committed to something like free association with the United States?

Ballendorf: I never had the impression that independence was a true option. I never had that impression.

Willens: Is that your impression from him or other Micronesians?

Ballendorf: Yes, from him and other Micronesians. The most outspoken advocates of independence were people who didn't have much power or weren't really involved in decision making. There was Hans Williander from Truk. He was a big independence guy. Then there was Cisco Uludong. Cisco and Moses Uludong down in Palau, they were early advocates of independence. So you have these people, but they weren't right in the line putting in other than public opinion. They weren't doing official inputs. Salii was.

Willens: Do you think Salii would have ever considered a close and permanent relationship with the United States, such as commonwealth status?

Ballendorf: I don't know. Maybe later on, towards the time he was killed. People were more interested in commonwealth.

Willens: How could that be?

Ballendorf: Well, I think after they saw the deal the Marianas got, and then they saw the advantages [of commonwealth status]. The free association called for a drawing down of monies. I think people never really believed that was going to happen. I worked quite closely with Ambassador Rosenblatt. At that time I was President of the college, so-called president of the so-called college.

Willens: College here in Guam?

Ballendorf: No, the College of Micronesia. I was the President of the Community College for two years. And we were working on what it was costing to keep these Micronesians in the States. It was coming to something like \$15 million, and he wanted this for purposes of the negotiations. I guess when he was talking with them about how much money we were going to set aside for them to have their own program to send people to the States to school. We were discussing the limits on federal monies. So some people then were saying, "Well, gee, maybe we shouldn't go through this status at all. We should go for commonwealth" like they had a choice. The Micronesians never really had a choice. They were always guided. I don't ever remember independence being seriously discussed.

Siemer: Guided by their . . . ?

Ballendorf: By the Americans.

Siemer: Do you think the free association status was something that the Americans were pushing for?

Ballendorf: Yes, I think it was.

- Siemer: Rather than commonwealth?
- Ballendorf: Yes.
- Siemer: Why is that?
- Ballendorf: Well, I don't know. I think maybe the Micronesians liked the idea of free association. There was a precedent for it in the Cook Islands although our form is much different than theirs. And it was a form which enabled them to have more control, more of a say. Sovereignty was theirs under free association. Then they could have the titles like Foreign Minister and all that stuff. They wouldn't have that under commonwealth.
- Siemer: What is it that you think they meant by sovereignty back then when they were talking about these concepts?
- Ballendorf: I think the concept of sovereignty wasn't meaningfully understood in the body politic. As an educator, you constantly mention these things. Even now when I go on an extension for the University and teach a course on Micronesian politics or history, I explain this. It draws rapt attention. Outsiders are welcome. My lectures are always open. Anyone can come. I usually post them in the newspaper. They come like they have never heard this before. Their history they missed somehow. It was never really discussed in the newspapers intelligently. I was in Palau last summer. I think I could go this summer and give the exact same course again and I would have just as many people come to listen to it all over again.
- Siemer: The concept of sovereignty to someone who lives in a clan system and has grown up under clan government may be different than the concept of sovereignty to someone who grows up in a voting society. Is that fair?
- Ballendorf: Yes.
- Siemer: How did the people that you knew back then view sovereignty?
- Ballendorf: I never heard the word thrown around. I never heard Salii use that word. I heard that word used by William Norwood. Americans would use the word sovereignty. There's always been a problem of education, political education in Micronesia. How you dispense that and how you develop these concepts. I have always enjoyed discussing the Trusteeship with Japanese scholars. This is the only place in the world where Japanese and Americans have had a common experience. And when you run into a Japanese who knows about their Micronesian experience, you can have an interesting discussion. They are not even teaching it in schools there anymore. I get invited to give lectures up in Japan about this period of history.
- Siemer: They are not teaching about their own . . . ?
- Ballendorf: Yes, the Japanese colonial period was just kind of written off. I remember talking with a professor of law and he made the statement: "Micronesians do not understand the concept of the Trusteeship." And he said: "They asked me the other day, why don't send us more?" He was flabbergasted. "What the hell is that suppose to mean?" See, they were so used to having things done for them. All of the Micronesians are like that. Their culture and their clan system encourages that top down kind of thinking. Leaders are above the law—the society of man not laws, and all of that. You would have to pound concepts of sovereignty into them and then it becomes part of experience. When they finally have to take that responsibility. The concept of sovereignty is also the concept of responsibility. They don't get that at all.
- Willens: The Micronesian group headed by Salii had turned down a U.S. proposal that was called

the Commonwealth Proposal in 1970, and they then formulated something called the Four Principles. The first of the Four Principles was that there would be sovereignty; second, they would have their own constitution; third, they could exercise their own right of self-determination; and fourth, any relationship with the United States could be terminated on the basis of unilateral action. Those were the bases on which they negotiated for several years. Do you remember any discussion with Salii or others about the Four Principles?

Ballendorf: I wasn't very close with Salii at that time when the Congress of Micronesia was going. I would see him in Palau. We were friends. I remember when I was appointed a Fulbright Scholar in 1985. I went to see him. He said "Oh, congratulations" and all that. I was going to McQuarry University in Sidney. And I was scared. I thought, gee this is a real university. Not like the University of Guam. What I am going to do? I won't be able to do it. I got adjusted in twenty minutes as it turned out. I went to Salii and when he congratulated me, I said, "I will be the position of speaking for Micronesians in the sense that people are going to ask me what the Micronesian position is or what do they think. I find that to be a very heavy thing for me to be doing. I want you to know that I am concerned about that. What do you think?" And he said, "Oh, I think you are able to represent us well enough. I feel comfortable in that. We want others to join us in helping to make this a good place." Probably the Micronesian leaders always assumed a hefty solid American backing. These documents were Cold War documents and that always assumed this strength of the U.S. behind you. My nephew is now the Vice President of Palau, Tom Remengesau. He is going to run for president. See, the U.S. has always helped them out and they make this kind of assumption. So it would seem to me that in those days whatever issues that they were negotiating, they assumed this solid American support which they never had any reason to doubt until after the Cold War. I think the word is getting around in some quarters that it is a little different now.

Siemer: You went to Peace Corps Washington in 1973?

Ballendorf: No, I went in 1971 because I was writing my thesis. So I was there from 1971 to the Carter Administration.

Siemer: What position did you have there?

Ballendorf: I was the Assistant Chief of Programs and Training for the Far East Region there. I made several trips, and I even made a trip to the Middle East.

Siemer: So you left the Peace Corps after the election in 1976?

Ballendorf: Well, when was Carter elected?

Siemer: He was elected in 1976.

Ballendorf: I come from a very middle class background. In my family there was no idea of going to Harvard. We wouldn't belong there. When I went to college, I was going to be a school teacher. In those days, if you went to a State school you signed this pledge to teach for two years for the State in return for them subsidizing your education. And, of course, they could never hold you to that, but we all signed this. And then, I guess it was before Carter was elected, one of my old Peace Corps mentors became the Secretary of Education for the State of Pennsylvania, Jerry Zeigler. And he said, "Would you like to come up and work for us in the State office?" And I told my wife, "Here is a chance for me to honor my pledge to stay. I never got to do that because I went off to the Peace Corps." So I took this job with the State. The worst job I ever had. It was awful, the bureaucracy. It was just stifling. It's nothing like they said it would be. And I was there for I guess two years.

When Carter was elected, Adrian Winkel was appointed High Commissioner of the Trust Territory, and Carter appointed a guy to study education in Micronesia. A consultant from Texas or some place. I will think of his name. He wrote this report on education which was just all bullshit. He was getting paid off for something. I know these things happen. I am not necessarily against it. But he got all this money for writing this just incredible piece of bullshit, and they sent to me to critique it. Janice Johnson, who was the desk officer over in Interior, said, "Would you look at this report and give us a critique?" I was someone who knew Micronesia and also knew higher education extensively. So she sends me this report. Howard, I just looked at it as a person with experience there. I wrote and I told them this is all bullshit. So they had me come down for another meeting to chat with them about this critique I wrote. I think we had two meetings and then they said, "Would you be interested in becoming the president of the Community College at Pohnpei? We need to have somebody there who can get it off the dime and can take it forward. Not necessarily the way these recommendations are, but it's got to move and it hasn't been moving. So I said yes and this led to my being appointed as the president so-called of this college.

Siemer: Was that the College of Micronesia?

Ballendorf: Yes. They had just made it the College of Micronesia, but we called it the Community College (CC).

Siemer: In Pohnpei?

Ballendorf: Yes. They have a new campus now. You might have seen it.

Willens: You took the job?

Ballendorf: Oh, yes. I was there two years and then I came here after that. I was the last haole President.

Siemer: That was when?

Ballendorf: That was 1977. I was there from 1977 to 1979.

Siemer: And you came to the University of Guam when?

Ballendorf: In 1979.

Willens: When was the Micronesian Area Research Center formed?

Ballendorf: I think during the Johnson Administration.

Willens: Did you become affiliated with it?

Ballendorf: I came as Director. I served five years as Director, and I couldn't serve anymore.

Willens: Then you went back to a full schedule as a teacher.

Ballendorf: I really like being a professor. I have a lot of things to do now. I've worked my way down. You see usually people my age want to be the dean or in administration. I don't want any part of that.

Willens: You had a lot of administration.

Ballendorf: I did all of that. Now I feel that I want to put my time into trying to make sense of some of this. I am a very successful teacher. Five years ago, three students came to me and said, "We want to take your course regardless of what you are teaching." That is the highest award a teacher can get when somebody says we just want to hear you. So I can die a happy man now. So I enjoy the teaching that I do and the studies that I do.

- Siemer: When you were President of the college in Pohnpei, did you travel around to the rest of Micronesia in that capacity?
- Ballendorf: I did, yes. Not real often, but I would make it a point to go and explain the college. At one point I made the suggestion that we change the name from College of Micronesia but the Board of Regents considered my suggestion and dropped it.
- Willens: Did you regard the Kennedy Administration as not really making any significant changes in policy until the Peace Corps became effective?
- Ballendorf: No. They did. Kennedy raised the ceiling for the money. This again was because we were being criticized for neglecting Micronesia and it was the U.N. people from the developing countries who got into that. People use to say Kennedy likes the Micronesians because he was saved in the Solomon Islands. That was nonsense. Political pressure was being put on, so they raised that ceiling. We have a copy some place of the memorandum from the National Security Council; it's downstairs here.
- Willens: The National Security Action Memorandum?
- Ballendorf: That's right. We got to keep Micronesia under our control. And then the Solomon Report, do you have copies of that? We have three volumes downstairs. We also have the WIDE Report, did you ever hear of that?
- Willens: What's that again?
- Ballendorf: WIDE. It's an acronym for something, I don't know what. We've got that downstairs.
- Siemer: When was that done?
- Ballendorf: In the late 1960s. They were going to come out and develop Rota and Tinian. The Northern Marianas, I think, was their focus. And they were going to build resorts and golf courses.
- Willens: Is this one of the three Texans you wrote about that came to Rota?
- Ballendorf: Yes. And, of course, the way it works out they get all the profits; the Rota people don't get anything. It didn't work. It never got off the ground. We've got four volumes of plans.
- Siemer: It was a report to whom?
- Ballendorf: Well, they were making this report, or pitch, to the Trust Territory. This is where the Peace Corps would be good, because the Peace Corps would hear about something like this, and they would start asking questions. You know these braless young women with sandals, the Peace Corps types that came in, and they would start raising hell. They didn't really know what they were talking about, but they would talk and then there would be some decision to look into it.
- Willens: One element of the Trust Territory Administration before the Kennedy Administration was directed by Dr. Gibson and it developed a policy of training Micronesians to teach in the local dialect rather than in English. Did you have any judgment about that when you came out here?
- Ballendorf: Yes. That was very lively. Now first of all, Gibson was a good man. Gibson was from the prairie and he believed in community schools. You have the kind of schools you can afford. That was his principle. It was great what he started. Each district had its own way of raising money. They put a tax on cigarettes and they raised money in other ways. My wife went to these schools. She can tell you about it. They were awful by our standards and sometimes the teachers didn't get paid. Sometimes they were paid in pigs and chickens.

That's what the community could afford. And the community was quite involved. And then when Kennedy raised the ceiling and in comes the money, then everyone was on the payroll from Saipan. Of course they liked it, but they are living beyond their means. They couldn't really afford the education system. Teachers were getting paid salaries that the community had never afforded. They removed Gibson. He was forced into retirement. There was a book written by W.W. Rostow called "The Stages of Economic Growth" and that was the Bible for the whole United States development program. And at Harvard we read that. We had him come, of course, to talk about it. His brother, William Rostow. I think has passed away. W.W. is still kicking. He is down in Texas, you know. He said there are these stages of growth and you get to a preliminary stage and then you get to a takeoff stage. Apparently the way you get through these various stages is by the infusion of money. This is all having to do with this planning, development planning. This was the badge of those times. The late 1960s and early 1970s, educational planning, economic planning.

Willens: With respect to the education issue, would you have favored a continuation of Gibson's policy rather than any of the new policies that were adopted?

Ballendorf: At that time, to be honest, I would have gone along with the new policy.

Willens: But you had some reservations about it as you saw it on Pohnpei?

Ballendorf: Of course, you have those kind of reservations which you will repress in the interest of stability. It's always better to be associated with highly respectable error than it is with uncertain established truth. And I think I was as guilty as anyone at that time. But I knew Gibson personally. I loved Gibson. Gibson was put in charge of the Japanese internment camps during World War II. He was in charge of education for the internment camps in nine states. And then after the War he was education advisor to South Korea. So he was very well-qualified when he came here as Director. He was the longest sitting Director of Education. He was a solid American. You can only have the kind of schools you can afford and if you try to get schools that you can't afford you get yourself into a lot of trouble in the future. I like that.

Siemer: That's a free market approach. You can have it if you can afford it and if you can raise taxes to support it.

Ballendorf: Well, he was a great Democrat. He wasn't a Republican, he was a Democrat. I don't know what he would say to that as a free market approach. The person who has written the most about Gibson is Karen Peacock. She was the head of the library and her dissertation is about his period.

Willens: When you were in Palau did you have the sense the Palauans wanted to learn in English?

Ballendorf: Oh, yes. It was always clear to me that English was the way to go. Your anthropologist types would always want to do teaching in the local language. But the Palauans and I think the other Micronesians felt the same way. Their position was we can learn the dialect at home. We want to learn English in school because we want to have a real education. They think real education was English. They don't equate their language as being real education. And on the whole I think that's right. The TT was very confused about this, so we had two camps. The High Commissioner could be persuaded one way or the other. Anthropologists were very popular and still are in some quarters about this. We had this woman from Australia. Her name was Victoria Tate and she had developed this system of teaching English as a second language called the "Tate System." It sounded like a little bullshit to me, but you know these educators come up with their red wagon. That's okay, I am not begrudging them that. She sold her materials and they were being used in

workshops. She came up and gave workshops. Jim Hawkins was the person who brought her in. He replaced Gibson.

Willens: Was Hawkins the man who replaced Gibson as the head of the Education Department?

Ballendorf: Well they upgraded the position. It was called Commissioner of Social Services. So he was really in charge of health and education. I think that was his correct title. The Micronesians would ask to go, of course, especially those on the principal level. They would say: "Here comes another program. Okay, are we going up to Saipan to learn about it?" That was always missed by the administrators. Of course, you want a new program because it means trips. That's very important for these people to have trips. I am not against it.

Willens: Trips to Saipan in particular or something . . .

Ballendorf: They come here, yes. They come up here to shop. That English issue also came up later, I suppose that was in the mid-1980's, when they were translating the compacts into the local languages. They came here to the University and we had a meeting with some of the educators and a couple of the linguists, about five or six people. And I said, "It's a waste of money to translate compacts into the local language." Some guy said, "How dare you say a thing like that? How could you say a thing like that?" So I said, "Look, I am not saying you shouldn't do it. If you are going to translate them into anything, you should translate them into Japanese because people can read that language. You don't understand what you are getting into." And he gave me to understand that they were very well-experienced with this, and they know what they were getting into to. I speak about it in Palau because I know it best and I speak that language. They translated the compact into Palauan. I know the people who did it and they did the best job they could do. The Palauans don't understand it. The most educated people of Palau read it in English because they can understand it. For example, they don't have a word for money. They don't have a word for that. They don't have a word for defense. So you say what is the word for defense. Well, the men have a phrase for defense which is a masculine thing. It means to protect the village, and it's the old men who say that. You say that phrase to young women and they say, "What the hell are you talking about?" For young women, their word for defense is a whole long couple of sentences which mean putting up a little bamboo fence around the garden to keep the chickens out. You read that, and you say "What are they talking about?" So it's much better to read these things in English. I know it's the same with the other languages. The result is that you could go into one of those warehouses and find all the boxes of the compact translations. They never used the translations. These Micronesian languages are spoken languages. It is an oral tradition they have here. The language is fluid. It changes from generation to generation. The change is so great that a younger person might not understand the language of an older person. This is typical for the societies. It's not unique at all. It was ignored. It was just ignored by these government agencies that had the people who made proposals to do these things on the basis it was the best thing to do for the people. So their motivation is okay. But really well-hidden. Now I don't think it did any particular harm. But it's just a waste. When you are going to educate in Micronesia you have to talk. You have to give lectures. In the oral tradition, it's the person who can creatively use the language who can educate. They have many stories. It is very important and that's how people learn things. They don't learn by reading. They don't read. The most popular book in Micronesia is the Bible and the second most popular book is the Sears catalog. It has always been like that. So when you are going to learn something, somebody is going to tell it to you, and it is important who that person is.

Siemer: Is that why television spreads its culture so quickly in an oral society?

- Ballendorf: We are in another oral culture now. My students, they don't read. You know how we used to sneak away and spend the whole afternoon reading a book? They don't do that anymore. Get a video and sneak away and watch the video.
- Willens: The teaching of English was supported by the TT in part because it was felt that it would be a unifying factor among the several districts. Was that true in your opinion?
- Ballendorf: Yes. And the Peace Corps should get the credit for teaching English. When I first came to Palau, I had to learn Palauan to get around. I don't have to do that now. Everybody can go any place and speak English. Largely the Peace Corps did that. Inefficiently, with a lot of humor and strong-headedness, but they did that. We had people in every single school; sometimes there was more than one person. I remember parents would come forth bringing the kids and sending them to school because there's a Peace Corps volunteer there. You go there and learn English. They could see the value of learning English. They could always see that.
- Willens: Dr. Meller and others had singled out the Congress of Micronesia as another unifying factor. What was your sense of that?
- Ballendorf: Well, I don't think that was as important as the high schools. Now we had the PICS High School (Pacific Islands Central School) which was first in Truk and then moved to Pohnpei. And they all went to school together. It was the only high school in Micronesia. My brother-in-law, Thomas, went there and his classmates included Bailey Olter and Bethwel Henry and others. They all went to that high school. That was a unifying factor. Then, of course, they put high schools in every district. And so now a Palauan can go all the way through high school and never meet a Marshallese. And there were marriages as a result of this. You know, there is always a special relationship when you say classmate. Oh, he was my classmate. That's a very special relationship. You don't have that anymore unless you are here. We are still doing that. That's important. I think that was a big unifying factor. Also Xavier High School, that was a quality place. Xavier was established in 1954, I think, and they have less than 400 graduates today. Of course, they have lots of people that start out but they don't finish. It's hard to get in but it's easy to get out. If you can get through it, you'll do well. But they sift them out. They don't graduate the ones who aren't qualified. Then you have University of Guam. It's very easy to get in here. It ought to be hard to get out, that's what I contend. Xavier High School was a great high school; it created special relationships. Now, if you graduate from high school, you get a scholarship and you go to the mainland to school, that's the first choice. Second, you get a scholarship to go to Hawaii to school. Third, you get a scholarship to go to Guam. Fourth, you stay in the Community College in Pohnpei.
- Siemer: What was the situation back then when you first came out here with respect to high school graduates going to college in the States and then staying in the States?
- Ballendorf: Oh yes, we had a few that did that. That was especially true in the case of doctors. They educated several doctors who simply stayed in the States. I remember one pharmacist. He came back, but they had the TT pay scale, the haole pay scale, and the civil service pay scale. The Micronesians didn't have things like mortgages, insurance, and things like that. Contract people had to have more money. But this man was educated and he applied for a job that was going to make him \$1,100 a year or something like that. He tried everything. So he went back to Nebraska or some place. He is still there.
- Siemer: How would you compare the situation when you were first out here in 1966 and a decade later? Were more people going to the States and staying?

Ballendorf: I would say yes. Micronesia is a little different because this is seen as kind of a “mother cow”. Your island will always take care of you. The grossest incompetent is taken care of in the case of islanders. And that counts for a lot.

Siemer: Is it easy to go back?

Ballendorf: That’s right. I always urge good students, when I see them here, I say, “Don’t go home, go to the mainland and get a job and learn how to work. Don’t go back here.”

Willens: And then come back?

Ballendorf: Then, I say, it’s up to you. A lot of people get to be around age 40 or 45 and they have their mid-life crisis, or for some reason, they want to come back. And some of these people are very valuable. I have, in fact, suggested that scholarships ought to be given. Some of these mid-career people have a much better purpose and commitment. They are giving scholarships to 19- and 20-year-olds. When I was at CCM I had a guy come back after eight years in the States with no degree, and he wanted us to give him a degree because he had something like 243 credits. So he wanted CCM to just give him the degree. He had changed his name three times. He was getting these Pell grants. He’s changing his name. And you don’t have to tell people out there in Region 9. I think they are in Oregon. And I tell them about this and they say, “Oh, come on. How many people are you talking about.? We can’t be bothered with that.” That’s always the bane of our existence. These Pell grants are grants that go directly to the students. Well, you give grants directly to the students and you don’t see it again. We needed that tuition money for the school. So we had a little waiver written. When a grant comes to you, it is intercepted by the main office. It comes right to the Registrar’s, so we get the check, the money. Boy, so they came at me. Region 9 makes their annual, bi-annual audit. “You can’t do that. That’s against the law. That money has to go right to them.” I said, “Jesus, we will never see it if we do that.” We would run into those kinds of problems. But then you tell them about that fraud problem and they couldn’t help you. They would say, “This guy is ripping off money because he changes his name. How can he do that?” I say, “This is Micronesia; he can do that.” Well, they don’t really believe you. They’re concerned with Los Angeles and San Francisco. All the blacks and the Chicanos are getting Pell grants. What do they care about 500 maximum Micronesians? We had the same kind of problem with a school lunch program. We are eligible for all this, right? They’ve got the school there, and they are cooking the students’ meals. They cook rice twice a day. A big pile of rice. There must be 70 people in the village. They are going to come around for lunch. What are you going to do? You are going to turn them away? We going to waste this, throw all this away? So, of course, at school breakfast, school lunch, everybody eats. We had hamburgers or this stuff covered with cheese. What do they think? “Oh, the U.S. is wonderful. It’s just wonderful what they are doing here.” The U.S. administration had just no regard at all for what the cultural realities in the situation would be. I remember in those early days, we had those education acts. We got mimeo machines. Oh boy, every school got a mimeo machine. But there’s no electricity up there. Even today, I bet you can find they’re rusted away. And they were proud of them. They would show them off when people came by, but they never used them. We want to be sure and get ours though.

Willens: What was your assessment of the way the Trust Territory Administration treated the Micronesians who worked for it?

Ballendorf: I think they were treated all right. I don’t think I remember any cases where they were trying to be screwed out of things. It was the Peace Corps that sensitized people to these issues. Although Dr. Vitarelli is a very important figure in these times. Not just because of

the McCarthy thing, but because he is a bleeding-heart liberal. The most bleeding-heart liberal you will ever meet, and still is. He thinks Jimmy Carter is the greatest President the United States has ever had. The Peace Corps volunteers were making 11¢ an hour, and they were doing the same job as contract teachers who were making like \$10,000 a year or \$20,000. This was immediately a sensitive issue when the Peace Corps came, because some of the Trust Territory contract teachers who were not so good or tended to be laid back were being shown up by these 11¢-an-hour types. And that brought up the unequal pay scales which the volunteers always harped on. It was just a sense of injustice overall; and, as we got closer and closer to the political status stuff, of course, those noises became louder.

- Willens: What about the training of Micronesians for management positions? Was that a program that was talked about? Do you know how competently it was implemented?
- Ballendorf: I never saw that implemented well. Micronesians could be trained as managers, but then they wouldn't really be given the kind of management positions they thought they deserved. I am not in a very good position to evaluate that.
- Willens: Let's talk about Palau. Did the district administrator have a deputy?
- Ballendorf: Yes, my brother-in-law, Thomas.
- Willens: That's where he got his initial management training?
- Ballendorf: Well, he was sent to the University of Hawaii. He is a graduate of the University of Hawaii. Leonard Mason, as a young man after the War, got Micronesians into the University of Hawaii. He was very important. He was the one who said: "Look, you have to have two standards. You can't judge them by the American standard." Dwight Heine used to be a babysitter for his children. Norman Meller is also very important. He was the director of the Resettlement Camp on Tinian after the War. The Marshall Islands were the only islands liberated during the War where the locals were treated as liberated people. On all of the other islands in Micronesia, the Micronesians were treated as enemy nationalists.
- Siemer: I saw that in one of your articles. Where did you get that?
- Ballendorf: I think it was Dr. Meller who told me that. What I mean by that is that, until we know where your loyalties stand, you are not completely free to go home. They were kept in these camps and they were given food. Everybody ate, everybody enjoyed the tents. I don't imagine anybody articulated to them that you are an enemy nationalist. I don't think that will be the case. Now I will say I never saw that written. That's all told to me.
- Siemer: It came from the guy who was in charge of the camp.
- Ballendorf: Yes, you will want to ask Meller about this.
- Willens: That is a good point.
- Ballendorf: Yes, that is a good point to ask him. Mason was very important in getting Dwight Heine admitted to the University of Hawaii. He spoke up for Micronesians and got them in. And they didn't know what the hell was going on. Their English wasn't good enough, and they had a tough time there.
- Willens: What was your sense about the policy of promoting Micronesians?
- Ballendorf: I would say it wouldn't have been implemented effectively and to implement it effectively would be a very difficult and inefficient job. For example, Micronesians don't take initiative. They are going to hold back. In their culture, traditional knowledge is private property. Knowledge is private property for them. Whereas, for us, knowledge is public

property. In our system, you ask me anything I know about and I am going to tell you. It is public property, so why hold anything back? The Micronesians are not like that. There is some knowledge that only certain people are suppose to know.

Siemer: That's the knowledge of the clan?

Ballendorf: Yes. Take the matter of the woman who makes medicines from plants. She doesn't tell people how to do that. That is secret knowledge of hers. When she is so old that she is going to die, then the community selects somebody to take her place and that younger woman goes and visits with her and she teaches her, but she never teaches everything. Because if she taught everything, she would be dead. People are distinguished from one and another largely by what they know. So when that old woman dies, she takes some of the information to her grave and the younger woman has to innovate and discover. So that's how it goes. The point I am making here is that Micronesian society is an oral culture. Knowledge is private property and it is also finite. You give it away, you are going to use it up. That's where they are coming from. It's a very important thing to understand in matters of education and government.

Willens: What is your recollection now about what priority was given to economic development during the 1960s?

Ballendorf: You will find articles in the Micronesian Reporter about that. I saw one guy come out as an economic advisor back then.

Willens: When did he come out approximately?

Ballendorf: This must had been in the late 1960's. The Trust Territory old biddies and the diehards, they weren't really interested. Micronesians don't have a penchant for that.

Willens: What were the expatriates for the most part doing about the problem?

Ballendorf: They were not intelligently, culturally dealing with it. Their way of dealing with it would just simply be do programs like you would do it on the mainland some place. And teach them to be janitors in a school. A maintenance program would be designed and written for the Oklahoma school system, presupposing floor polishers, various kinds of equipment, and also the concept of maintenance. You go around every morning and try all the light switches and you would write down which ones have bulbs out. They have no concept of that, can't do it. They can't see the use in doing it. You go to any school in Micronesia; you would say they were dumps. They are awful. The lavatories haven't been washed, the buildings haven't been painted, it's just awful. I have even invested my money in training programs. I know this is specifically about economic development but the same thing applies to establishing co-ops or to training managers. How do you train a Micronesian manager? If I was going to train one, I would do it on a one-to-one apprenticeship basis. That is how I would do it. Any reading that would be done in this case would have to be done aloud. Would you read this tonight and tomorrow morning we are going to discuss this. I tell the civil action teams this all the time. No, you can't do that because they not going to read it. They might start reading it. You say, "John, how long did you read last night -- an hour?" "Yes, an hour." That's bullshit. He read for ten minutes and it felt like an hour because he couldn't understand it probably. He couldn't make sense out of it, so he puts it aside. He wants you to tell him. So you have got to accommodate that. Even now, Howard, in my class, I have them reading at their desks, supervised reading, or else they not going to do it. These are the Micronesians. They are not going to do it.

Willens: How about the expensive studies that were conducted during the 1960's on developing the economic base?

- Ballendorf: I don't know what the participation of the Americans was in implementing those studies and gathering data.
- Willens: Some of the TTPI officials say that they were just too abstract and that you couldn't really develop industries in Micronesia. Because one, the TT had limited resources, and two, until the political status was resolved, you couldn't get people to invest.
- Ballendorf: Yes, I think that's right. In the case of Palau, the Japanese had a pineapple cannery there.
- Willens: In Japanese times?
- Ballendorf: Yes, and it was lucrative, a very lucrative thing. Many Micronesians worked there. After the War the Americans gave the plant to the Micronesians. They couldn't run it. It just rusted away. They didn't know how to operate the plant. They were just tea boys, bag carriers. Of course, the Japanese knew what they were doing. They didn't want them to be any more than that. But Americans in their "we are really nice people" mode gave it to them. And these Navy people said, "This is all yours now. No more oppression. All this investment, this is all yours." It just rusted away.
- Willens: Did you get the sense as you became familiar with the different districts that there were different attitudes in the Districts with respect to investment and economic development?
- Ballendorf: Well, the Palauans were always entrepreneurial. We have several millionaires in Palau.
- Willens: Were they all politicians?
- Ballendorf: Yes, but politicians like Roman Tmetuchl. When the Americans were hoping that they would become entrepreneurs, he's the kind of guy they had in mind. Boy, he is a smart guy.
- Siemer: And a good businessman?
- Ballendorf: Oh, yes.
- Siemer: What kind of business was he in?
- Ballendorf: God, name it. He was in land speculation, construction, rock crushing, hardware. He always knew the best businesses.
- Siemer: Back in the days when you first came out here, were there many instances in which, for example, a Palauan would have a business in Pohnpei or a Pohnpeian would have a business in Palau?
- Ballendorf: No. That is only a recent phenomenon since the FSM went from Truk to Pohnpei. Specifically that Trukese, Ray Setik. He built the, they call it the Apatel, which is a contraction of apartment and hotel. Have you ever heard of that? The Apatel. That is a new Micronesian word. Boy, those Pohnpeians, they don't like that. You stay in your place; this is our place. Now this is a small number of cases, but you're not going to see that happen any more. When I ask my students who do you want to be when you grow up. Do you want to be President of the FMS or Governor of Pohnpei. They want to be Governor of Pohnpei. That what they want to be.
- Willens: You identified in Palau a handful of successful . . .
- Ballendorf: Entrepreneurs. Credit this to the Japanese. And the same with Saipan. In Japanese times, these are the two centers. Saipan was the sugar and commercial center and Palau was the headquarters. There were more Japanese down there than there were Palauans. And they started forcing them to do new things. You had to save. They had a postal savings program.

And you had to go to school. And the Governor lived there. My mother-in-law, she is 93 now, she said, "We learned more in three years of Japanese schooling than we learned in 12 years of the American schools." Of course, it was all different. I am saying that with a certain grain of salt. The Governor was resident there, and I said, "Well mother, did you ever see any of those governors?" She said, "I could see the carriage, but when he came close we all had to bow like this. So I am looking at the ground. I couldn't see him." We had 12 Japanese governors and they're nameless and faceless. Nobody remembers them. Nobody remembers the High Commissioners either.

Willens: I thought I heard you suggesting that the Micronesians were really not prepared to exercise the kind of responsibilities that these legislative bodies thrust upon them in some limited form.

Ballendorf: That's right. The idea of the public trust is missing. We have these crooks, these incredible crooks. They are violating the public trust in them. And under the clan system, the Chief is above the law. The high people are above the law. That is their cultural reality. The idea of the public trust, that's a new concept.

Willens: Were these tribal leaders elected to office?

Ballendorf: No. They not really elected as we understand elected office. There is a consensus decision arrived at. In Palau, it is the women who choose the chiefs, the male chiefs. So they will have a series of meetings over a period of some years about who they think will be ascending to chief. And once they decide who that will be, the men instruct him, invest him, and explain all the secrets that he will have to know as the chief. But the chief in the case of Palau now is not very well-respected.

Siemer: About how long did it take for the system of expressing individual preferences in voting to take hold in Palau?

Ballendorf: That would be pretty hard to answer with any precision.

Siemer: By the time you were in Palau?

Ballendorf: When I was in Palau they would decide first by consensus who they were going to go for. And then they would vote for what they called a magistrate. And so in every district of Palau there would be a chief, a traditional chief, and then there would be the magistrate. And the people would want to see the two of them be vice leaders. They wouldn't have any disagreements. They would govern together. And often times that happened. Now what they do today. My wife could run for office today. In order to be elected to the OEK, she would need probably 750 votes. Anyone being elected to the OEK in Palau is going to need somewhere between 700 and 800 votes, if you look at it carefully like I have. If you are going to plan a campaign, you want to get 750 votes. You don't want to bother campaigning in an area that's not going to vote for you. First, you are going to get all your family to back you. Then they just go out and start talking and having parties wherever. They want everything to be a consensus agreement that this would be the best person to vote for. And then the election is a rather foregone conclusion. That is beginning to change, and my students are showing that. Now in Palau they do not like all of this development that is going on. When they start into the work-a-day world, they are, of course, changing some of their minds. I was in Palau in December and I was speaking with Dr. Vitarelli to the senior class at the high school. Dr. Vitarelli said, "Don't let the outsiders own Palau. You own Palau." And this girl speaks up and says, "What can we do right now, right now to help turn this around?" And he didn't know what to say. I told them, "Look, you go to your representative in the OEK and you complain if you don't like

something he is doing. You get three more people and you go down there and pound on his door. And say, we don't like the way you voted on that bill last week and just not us but a whole bunch of us don't like that." I don't know what else to say. They could probably kick me out of Palau for something like that. I don't know how I get away with saying some the things I say. I was in Palau last summer and I was saying, "The chiefs down here are irresponsible." I said the same thing in Pohnpei. "Your governor a crook." They don't like it. I was expecting maybe they are going to take me out by the ear.

Willens: I asked about the corruption issue. The American traditional answer is that the political process will deal with this. I guess to be more accurate, law enforcement processes at the federal level will deal with it or in the alternative the political process will work. Can either the law enforcement or the political process be relied upon here?

Ballendorf: No, it can't.

Willens: Why not?

Ballendorf: It's just not taken hold yet and most of the police are corrupt, too.

Willens: Let's take Guam for the moment?

Ballendorf: Guam has not escaped that. We've got a very, very difficult situation here. The governor says, "Oh, yes, \$1 million came in. Where the hell did it go?" It just disappeared. Nobody knows where it went. Well, we are going to have an investigation about it.

Willens: You don't have traditional tribal organization in their clans here in Guam. And they don't for the most part in the Marianas. You suggested earlier that the tribal system produces an attitude where the chiefs are above the law and beyond being held responsible.

Ballendorf: Culturally that's the way it works.

Willens: That has spilled over to the political system?

Ballendorf: Absolutely. The Governor here thinks he can do anything and certainly Froilan Tenorio does. My God, I was up there in January I guess it was. We had a book signing for the Carolinian book that MARC published here. And here we had Governor Tenorio and Lt. Governor Borja both there at opposite ends. I know Tenorio and I went right up and shook his hand, "Governor, you have certainly made a mess of things up here." They know me enough and he was thrown off. He didn't know what to say. So I said, "But I'm sure, Governor, you will get it all straightened out." Well, I don't know how I get away with that. And then I went down to meet Lt. Governor Borja. I knew his uncle, of course. He was in the Congress with Salii and that committee. A fine man he was. Olympio, Oly Borja they called him. He said, "Oh Professor, I've been wanting to meet you." So we exchanged these pleasantries. I said, "Now are you going to fuck up as soon as you get into office? It's nice that we can meet now while we're friends. But as soon as you fuck up, you can expect me to say something about it." He said, "Oh, that's not going to happen with me. I am going to be straight up." I hope so. Bill Peck raises the question, can there be an honest politician in Micronesia today? Can there be? Probably not. There is so much coming at them and so many opportunities, and their sense of the public trust is just not solidified enough.

Siemer: Is it not solidified because law enforcement does not solidify it?

Ballendorf: Partly that.

Siemer: And it's not solidified because public opinion does not vote them out of office?

Ballendorf: That is more important. They will take it. Right now, if we're going to have an election in Guam, I think the Governor would lose. But you know he's got a machine, he pays off the voters, and the election isn't until next year. He is juggling money around. There's all these rumors. We're not going to meet our bond payments. I don't know how to evaluate any of that. People are saying this: "Gosh, it might be awful, a disaster, but he steals from one group, gives to another group. Next pay period he is getting from somebody else."

Willens: You mentioned in one of your articles, and I think I suggested in some of our conversations, that the concept of ethnocentrism has relevance here in Micronesia. Could you elaborate on your views with respect to that?

Ballendorf: Some people mix up ethnocentrism with racism. I point out in my classes that racism was quite a legitimate philosophy or reality, social reality in the last century. The Japanese, for example, in this century looked at the problem of development in Micronesia not as a problem of education and social kinds of development. They looked at it as a problem of race. They considered Micronesians as inferior people—not just uncivilized, but inferior. I had several conversations, not lately, with Japanese people who were in Micronesia prior to the War. For example, the manager of the largest company in Micronesia prior to the War. He was quite clear. I spoke with him in Tokyo in 1980 (I think it was), and he has passed away since. A quite elderly gentlemen. An entrepreneur of considerable stature even after the War. He said very clearly that Micronesians should not be able to buy alcohol. We were very foolish, we Americans, who allowed them to do that. He noticed also that Micronesians were no good at business. There's no use in trying to train them for that. They just cannot adapt. He's the most gentle, loving racist guy I guess I've met. Of course, it was so matter of fact—that always impressed me. I didn't argue with him. I was interviewing him so I just noted this. Today, racism is over used. Micronesians are more racist and ethnocentric than Americans are, for example. They discriminate against other islanders which, in fact, is a function of ethnocentrism. It's not really racism, I don't think. When I think of racism I think in terms of Caucasians, Mongols, Negroes, gross situations like that. There are so many variations in this thing [in Micronesia]. I don't think, for example, here in Guam many people have accused the government, the present administration, of being racist. When you are interviewing, for example, for a faculty position, an unqualified or less qualified local Chamorro person will get the job over a better-qualified haole. This is clearly against the law, but we don't enforce it here. The Navy is having a problem with it now with respect to the downsizing of some of the facilities here. But that's a reality. It's ethnocentrism, it's not really racism. But you can easily confuse these terms. My own opinion is that in these islands the Chamorro people have a leg up on these things because this is their place. So I tend to be soft on ethnocentrism or I tend to rationalize it. That's pretty easy for me to do. I am a senior person here, and a tenured professor. I am sure that some of my junior colleagues won't look at it that way, and they won't appreciate my statements in this regard.

Willens: How would you relate it to your experiences in Palau?

Ballendorf: I have never experienced any, what I would call, racism against me.

Willens: Let's put racism aside for a moment and speak to the way in which the natives who are inhabitants of one island view the inhabitants of another island. The concept of mother cow in some respects is related to that.

Ballendorf: That's right, that's the reality here. Palauans and Trukese don't have real regard for one

another. Palauans and Marshallese, Marshallese and Pohnpeians, and so forth. And their policies are like that. They regard the FSM government, the national government, as simply another foreign administration.

Willens: You mentioned an example of different restrooms. That seems a little bit unexpected to us.

Ballendorf: Yes, that was unexpected to me when I was President of the College of Pohnpei. The students had painted on the doors in the restrooms. This is for Yap, this is for Palau. I thought that was really absurd but, of course, Micronesians don't mind being absurd provided everybody is modest about it. I discussed this with some of the faculty who had been there at the college longer than I. I said, "Hey, isn't this a little bit strange?" and they said, "Oh, yes, it is, but just leave that alone. Our advice is to just leave that alone." And I did and we never had any problems about it that I saw. They just felt more comfortable. I think it was a turf area. I don't think it had to do with public health. It is turf. Turf is very important in the islands. In Palau, when there is some kind of a party or fundraising function, the family keeps a notebook of who came and how much they gave. Then everyone knows where they stand in the exchange. And then in areas of turf, I was explaining about knowledge being private property. When I am in Palau, and say I am teaching a course on extension from the University here, I will get a lot of outsiders. When I say lots I mean a half dozen over a couple month period who will come to me and ask me some historical question. They do this out of respect for me and the turf area they allowed me to have claim on. Not because they wouldn't know the answer or couldn't find it out some other place. "Well, did you see Professor Ballendorf? You should ask him that." Even if someone knows. This is all connected to the ethnocentric reality, and I think it is something where Americans might react as Americans to a situation like that. I have learned to react culturally to it and be mellow about it and understanding. I think it's a reality of our environment. Socially people are ethnocentric and that can be worked within, I have always found.

Willens: Based on your experience, do the clan or tribal leaders from one area of Micronesia have any business or other transactions with the leaders from another set of islands?

Ballendorf: Well, they do in certain situations having to do with ceremony. I have never experienced that in terms of political decisions. But, for example, Yap and Palau have exchanges that sometimes we never ever hear about. Several years ago when a municipality in Palau completed a project of building a traditional meeting house, their affiliate municipality in Yap chartered a ship and came down for the celebration. And these decisions were made by the traditional leaders. They had these historic connections which I don't particularly know about in any detail. These things happened frequently. I know they happen in the Marshalls as well. So there's this other traditional connection that goes along. I remember that the traditional people of all districts were against the nuclear dumping of Japan in the Northern Pacific. I guess this must be twenty years ago, and the Japanese officials came down here for PR purposes and they discovered that all the traditional people said we don't want this dumped here. The marine biologists at the marine lab and others who were knowledgeable were making comments that probably the best place for this nuclear waste was underwater in appropriate containers in an area of the Pacific which was stable and so forth. But yet politically that was just not possible to do and the Japanese backed off.

Willens: To what extent did you think that the common administration of these areas by a succession of colonial powers increased these kinds of contacts?

- Ballendorf: Well, the colonial administrations have used the traditional systems in many cases. I never heard particularly that they encouraged inter-group exchanges. In Palau, for example, the Germans named a Palauan, James Gibbins, as the administrator there. Palau was part of Yap then when they had one district there for them. Instead of stationing a German administrator there, they named us a Palauan. It didn't work out very well as I recall, and subsequently they did assign a German there. But they, the Germans, tried to use the traditional systems for governance. In fact, in the whole German Administration there were never more than 25 German nationals here. So this is an example of small is beautiful; I think the present administrations all over could well take a lesson from them.
- Siemer: But the Germans and then the Japanese brought Chamorros from the Marianas to Yap, for example, to run businesses, to fill middle level supervisory positions, to be translators, and to do a variety of things. By the end of World War II there were hundreds of Chamorros just in Yap.
- Ballendorf: Well, I don't think that affected the traditional structure or decision making processes—the fact that they had these foreigners here. As I mentioned a moment ago, most Micronesians, the overwhelming majority I believe, look at the FSM Administration, the FSM central government, as simply another foreign administration. Now I want to put that into the context of how the Germans and Japanese moved people around. They are moving them around in their administrations and that doesn't seem to bother the people. If those people started to want to claim land or buy land or do something that was affecting traditional things, it would had been a different story. Generally they separate power and authority—with the exception of the Marshalls as we talked about yesterday.
- Willens: You also suggested that there are certain primary difficulties with understanding Micronesian politics.
- Ballendorf: I don't think there is anything mysterious about Micronesian cultures or politics. Some Micronesians like the outsiders to think that there's a mystification about some of the culture aspects. I think that is fully nonsense. I don't think there is. I would say, however, I don't think I would be able to understand all of the familial and clan connections on how some decisions are made. When I'm asked that as a professor here, I believe I have to stay in the middle. For example, occasionally the Interior Department would phone me, or even the State Department, to ask an opinion. Who is going to win the presidency in Palau? Things that are perfectly reasonable questions in our government. We have wonderful expertise all over our country at universities. Specialists who study these things. But when it comes to Micronesia, there's probably a handful of people who might be specialists and three and four of them are right here. We had been making our reputations this way and we're committed. When I am asked, I will give some kind of opinion as far as I know it. I remember Mr. Zeder asked me, when Roman Tmetchul was running, who was going to win the election in Palau. I told him Remeliik was going to win, and he didn't want to hear that. He said, "I don't want to deal with him. The man can't make a decision. What do you say that for?" Well, Mr. Remeliik has been in the administration for many years in the TT and when youngsters go off to school for studying on the mainland, he is out at the airport. He's got a roll of \$20 bills and he goes up puts a \$20 bill in their pockets—"Now you go and get back here and help us out here. You go study hard." "Every single funeral, he's there. That's why he is going to win." He said: "I want Roman to win because Roman makes a decision." After Remeliik won, my credibility with Zeder went up. He asked me even to make phone calls and things. On the other hand, Micronesians come here and they ask us for help. We have done a couple of little studies for them, for their political

people. This is their academic institution. This is a regional place. If they can't come to us, where are they going to go? So I have always seen it as being important to stay in the middle. When I am opinionated, I am always opinionated in the realm of humor. That's the other thing. When you're dealing with Micronesians, you have to keep up a sense of humor or they don't communicate. They are not intellectuals. These people are not intellectuals. You have to be really behavioral to communicate with them and sensual. And I have found humor works. I have gotten across some points in my career through humor more effectively than if I was going to be reasoned about it. In the mainland, sometimes humor would not be appreciated in academic circles. I found out these things through experience and through direction. And then, of course, through my own personality. You have to put in time here. Even to gain access, you have to put in time in order to even be allowed to ask questions or to investigate. You just can't go to Palau and set up like this and ask questions, saying we're writing a book. Oh, they would be very polite, but you won't get very far unless you are properly linked or introduced. This is really hard to understand. I mean it's not intellectually hard to understand, but when you are trying to operate in an environment like this there's a lot of frustration and you can't get through it without humor.

Siemer: How would you say that the traditional family and clan system was overlaid on the U.S. requirement that people vote?

Ballendorf: Well, they decide first who they are going to vote for. I mean they always acquiesce to colonial prescriptions. And they changed loyalties very quickly when the Japanese left. They just get that worked out all right. Now generally speaking, I think today the traditional people are losing ground all over. They are bound to because of the kinds of customs that they have. They don't fit in with the growing individuality here.

Siemer: Back then in the 1960s, it is fair to say that process had perhaps started but was not very prevalent?

Ballendorf: That's right. In Palau, for example, in the late 1940s, early 1950s, the traditional people walked out of the Legislature. They had an Advisory Council and they got so angry because the Legislature wasn't doing everything that they wanted it to do. On the other hand, the Palauans elected a woman to their Legislature, I think in 1949 or 1950. She is still alive but quite elderly now. That was unheard of, to do something like that. That was impressive. They always acquiesce, but they always kept it under control. A professor in New Zealand likens this to the "crashing of the wave on the beach" and it rolls up and then it recedes but it never gets into the heartland. That's a good analogy. I ask myself these questions once in awhile to keep myself centered. Senator Angel Santos of our Guam Legislature in voting on bills goes out in the boonies and communes with the Chamorro spirits. To the great annoyance of his colleagues. They really get angry. For example, Carlotta Leon Guerrero is a great critic of his. "What the hell does he think he's doing going out there." He is a populist type. They complain and make remarks about it, but nobody ever censures him. He goes out there and communes. And if it stirs in them yes, a way we need to recapture our culture, especially here on Guam, because we lost it all. And it is those damn haoles. This is a way to get even and make that legitimate somehow or semi-legitimate.

Siemer: Were there contested elections, for example, when you were in Palau back in the late 1960s?

Ballendorf: No, never that I remember. I think the Yapese are the best example of this. An extreme example. The traditional people control everything. And when they approve, it goes right through the Legislature.

- Willens: You use an example with respect to Yap in the area of economic development in one of your articles. You said that when Continental Airlines had undertaken to build a luxury hotel in each of the districts, the Yapese passed a resolution in opposition to it.
- Ballendorf: Yes, they didn't want development then. In Yap you can walk into an air-conditioned store and there's a young woman bare breasted with a grass skirt on. You walk into the Department of Finance in Yap and women who work in there as typists are bare breasted and wear traditional skirts. You can't do that any other place. They are trying to keep that quality. One Yapese political said they are going to outlaw beer. This is really hilarious if they think they are going to that. Of course, I happen to know him and he is a leading consumer of beer. Now there's a historical reason for this. Yapese hang on to their culture but it's partly for a historical reason. The Germans had constructed a cable station in Yap and that linked us to Singapore and Hong Kong. The Japanese immediately improved this cable station when they took over. And, of course, they closed everything. And one of the things that they did, the Japanese did, was to declare Yap an international place and anyone could come there. Now the fiddler's bill for that was that they didn't want to develop it either. They did build a school, but their development in Yap you will always find was minimal. And that was because of those political realities internationally. At that time, when the Japanese did that, you could say that Yap and Palau were quite equal as far as development or stage of development. And then it became quite unequal after that. So they have that historical reason for slowing their development.
- Willens: But that suggests that it was a result of different policies by the colonial administration rather than differences in the tribal and traditional leadership?
- Ballendorf: Yes, it feeds into that. Well, the traditional people said we are going to keep this the way we want it. The Palauans or Trukese would have said the same thing, but the colonials had other ideas. Once the stuff starts coming in—you know, you get pots and pans and utensils and flashlights—things that seem kind of minor but they fundamentally change lives. Then they get attached to those things, they don't want to do without them. The Yapese didn't do that. They were perfectly fine having those lamps, those fire torches. After it gets dark is when you do your lovemaking or sleeping. You don't need that stuff anyway.
- Willens: At Harvard was your doctorate in education?
- Ballendorf: Yes, and economic planning.
- Willens: Do you have any recollection of when you first heard about the separate status negotiations for the Northern Marianas?
- Ballendorf: I was in Washington. I guess I probably heard about them from the Peace Corps desk officer. You know I can sympathize with the Watergate people where they say I don't know. I have no recollection. But I think that was because Charles Shorter was the desk officer and, when I came to Peace Corps Washington Headquarters, I was already established as an expert on Micronesian. That was quite intimidating to these younger people who were desk officers. So that's probably where I heard about it.
- Willens: You have suggested in your writings that the subsequent decision by Palau and the Marshalls to go their independent ways was based on this Marianas precedent. My question is whether you are aware of some of the economic and other interests in the Marshalls and Palau that supported the decision to separate.
- Ballendorf: Of course. There was the missile testing facility in the Marshalls and the superport

down there in Palau. Palau understood that it was a place where the Japanese were very interested. They had already applied for the permit to build the Palau Pacific Resort.

Willens: Based on your knowledge of Palau, is it your judgment today that they would not have sought some independent status apart from the other districts if the Marianas had not done similarly before?

Ballendorf: That's a very good question. There were people who were adamantly in favor of Palau separatism. Like Roman Tmetuchl and Polycarp Basilius.

Willens: Could you just stop for a moment and describe each of those people?

Ballendorf: Roman is older than Polycarp. Polycarp was a businessman of some considerable energy. He ran once for the Congress of Micronesia, served one term, and then he didn't run again. He said: "It's much better to control the people who are in office than to be in office yourself." And he has lived up to that ever since. He controls.

Willens: By force of persuasion?

Ballendorf: And money. He was accused of being behind the assassination, which made him so angry and outraged that he forced the journalist out of Palau—this Jewish intellectual from New York, and boy did this guy run. A wonderful writer, you know. He came to me and said, "What am I going to do about this?" I said, "I think you get the hell out of here." And the same thing with Sherry O'Sullivan. "Sherry, just leave. They don't want you here." Roman Tmetuchl was a self-made entrepreneur. He came up here to Guam with one of the first groups after the War to learn English. He learned English very quickly. He went to GW High School. You know, in those days advanced training from here always was to the Philippines. That was the trend. Well, he is this little Micronesian, an older guy, but he was on the track team. And these matronly contract teacher types were saying: "Oh, isn't he wonderful; he is so smart." He used to memorize the book because they would be sending these donated Dick-and-Jane readers for these adult people from California and then using them as text books. He would just memorize that, and write the whole thing down for the tests. Then these spinsters types thought God, what a wonderful native. He gets the scholarship and goes off to the Philippines. He stays in the Philippines for awhile and then said to himself "This is nonsense. I don't need to go through this. I can just read." So he never got a college degree; he came back.

Willens: Some of the people to whom we have spoken who dealt with him extensively maintain that, although he speaks a good deal, no one ever quite understands what he is saying.

Ballendorf: Well, he is a very rapid speaker. Even Palauans can't understand him sometimes. He speaks so fast. He speaks fluent Japanese, of course. He is fluent in English. The political people won't speak English, particularly Roman, so there has to be an interpreter there. You know what it is like—we are sitting around a table and Roman can understand all of the side language that goes on as well. So I warned all of those people. I would say: "Look, just remember he is a fluent English speaker."

Willens: You identified those two as being very strong in favor of separatism for Palau. Were there others?

Ballendorf: Yes. One is a chief, a pie person with businesses all over. He is very wealthy. He likes the Japanese better than the Americans. He is a fluent Japanese speaker who went to Japanese school. Another supporter of separatism inherited from his father all of his businesses. They were in the retail stores, stores that sell everything. He is a member of OEK. A very wealthy person. He is moderate, but he is a millionaire. Palau has more millionaires than any other place except maybe Saipan.

- Siemer: And is it fair to say that the wealthy people supported the independence movement?
- Ballendorf: That is a very good question, and it's one nobody is going to be able to answer accurately. What immediately came to my mind was that sometimes they would be supportive and sometimes they wouldn't. But I think it would be fair to say that most of the business people by the time of the 1970s were inclined towards being separate and seeing the example that the Marianas were setting.
- Siemer: What effect did you think the military had with respect to the Marianas political development that was different from what you saw in Palau and the rest of Micronesia?
- Ballendorf: Well, of course, the military was very interested. Palau had to be in American control. Every day coming through the straits and up to Japan are these tankers with oil.
- Siemer: How far out is that?
- Ballendorf: Well, once in awhile you might see one vaguely way off there.
- Siemer: So 30 or 40 miles out.
- Ballendorf: Yes, and they are just sailing up there every day. The American camp couldn't tolerate anything other than that. They had a nuclear-free movement down there. Mostly as a hedge against U.S. pressure. All through this time, of course, the U.S. was flying B-52's in the air space and had Triton submarines in their waters. What the hell are they going to do about it? Then you got the argument of the two documents. There is the Constitution and the Compact and those documents have to be in harmony. In Palau, they weren't in harmony because of that nuclear-free clause. The great liberal types like some of my Australian colleagues are saying: "The U.S. is putting pressure on those people to change their Constitution." The U.S. position was look, you signed a commitment. This is in the Compact, that we are responsible for their defense. Now we don't separate nuclear from non-nuclear as concepts in defense—we don't do that. Defense is all defense. They are separating nuclear from non-nuclear and that prevents us from meeting our obligations under the Compact—that is the issue. It's not Greenpeace and all these Japanese groups that are anti-war. You know, the Hiroshima victims and all these people are coming down to Palau. Palauans are wondering "Why are all these outsiders really interested in us? We better get on the ball here. I guess we can get more money out of the U.S. this way."
- Willens: Were there any leaders in Palau who were strong vocal supporters of staying together with the other districts?
- Ballendorf: Well, Salii was a supporter of that but he dropped that when he saw that was just politically impossible to do. But Salii was always one who would like to see what the similarities of us all are, rather than the differences.
- Willens: How about Caleb?
- Ballendorf: Caleb Udui?
- Willens: Yes.
- Ballendorf: Caleb Udui, he was an American type. I would say that was right.
- Willens: And had an American wife as I recall.
- Ballendorf: Oh, yes. That was Liz.
- Willens: Actually I recall his having some fairly negative views with respect to the United States.

- Ballendorf: Well, I think Caleb Udui as well as his half brother, John, who also worked in Saipan as a lawyer, were American types. Caleb is a graduate of George Washington University. I knew Caleb personally. So I would put him, when the chips are down, the bottom line, in the American camp. Although when he was running for the OEK, he's like everybody else, he is going to say some things that are the other way. Whereas, Roman was never sensitive to that. I'm for independence, this is the best way to go.
- Willens: Were you ever consulted by Ambassador Williams or his successors with respect to Micronesian sentiment and the issues of separatism vs. staying together?
- Ballendorf: Yes, never by Williams because I wasn't here for most of his tenure. Zeder and Rosenblatt were very much into consultation. And the admirals were always in touch with us. Never anything really heavy. I think probably the Navy was listening to their phone conversations when things started to get heated with the strikes down there. I could never prove this and it would be embarrassing to even ask. But we have the capability to listen to every single phone conversation that goes on down there. So we had conversations about civil unrest, what should be done, what do you think. I would say: "What the hell do I know, I don't think it would come to that." You know, the CIA bugged the Status Commission—a dumb thing to do. They will never let us forget that. And it was so unnecessary. Because Micronesians are going to tell you anything you want to know if you take them out for a beer. There is no such thing as a secret. They put little microphones in lamps and they gave them as gifts. Did you know about this? So they heard these conversations and then they couldn't interpret them and so then they had to hire some interpreters. Who in turn told the subjects. Naturally you've got to have a Marshallese interpret what the Marshalls delegate said, so he goes and tells them and it all just blows up for no reason. That was Henry Kissinger.
- Siemer: How did they get identified as the CIA?
- Ballendorf: Well, the guy that wired everything still lives here. He worked for the CIA. The CIA was up in Saipan for years. And then they kind of admitted it. Then Professor Kissinger said this is pro forma with all negotiations.
- Siemer: They put them in lamps?
- Ballendorf: And yes, and they gave these lamps as presents to the delegates. They had an office up here you know.
- Siemer: Why did they think the lamps would get into the negotiation room?
- Ballendorf: They gave them these lamps that they were going to take home. I don't know what their rationale was. But one guy gave the lamp to a relative, a Palauan senator, who took it down to Tobi. It was so far away it was even out of range. They did these things with absolutely no rhyme or reason.
- Willens: What is your assessment today of how the four entities have developed and what you see as their successes and disappointments?
- Ballendorf: The Compact was a marvelous document for the military. It served their purposes and worked well. But it wasn't so good for the Micronesians. They have not done well economically and they are still dependent.
- Willens: Are you talking specifically about the Federated States?
- Ballendorf: Yes, the FSM.
- Willens: How about the Marshalls and Palau?

Ballendorf: Well, the Marshalls came up at the same time [as the FSM, with respect to Compact funding], but Palau still has a ways to go. Palau might have the capacity and the ability to carry on in some other way without getting all this money from the U.S. when their 15 years are up.

Willens: So you are optimistic about the future of Palau?

Ballendorf: Well, knowing the Palauan people, they always come up on top. They are great survivors. And so while I can't see the future very well down there, they always survive. Who is interested in the FSM? Their crooks are such bold people that I am not so optimistic about them. They are going to have to adjust to a lower standard of living. Nobody wants to even visit Truk.

Willens: What about your neighbors in the Northern Marianas?

Ballendorf: Oh, they are going to be fine. Mostly because I think the military still wants the Marianas to be together, and I think at some point they will, even the people will see it better to somehow reunite. I know it sounds absurd at this point, but I believe that will be viable as time goes on. And the Marshalls, what a mess they are in. But Kwajalein is still there, that's still important. That is going to remain important so that's a plus for them. They will get certain support from the Defense Department. Even though these Compacts are Cold War documents and even though the situation has changed, the military is still the one that has the control.

Willens: You are suggesting a greater Defense Department interest and motivation in controlling the political structure and the economic development of this part of the world?

Ballendorf: The battle group visited here last month. Do you remember the USS Independence came here? We had the full battle group, seven destroyers along with the Independence. What the hell message is that sending? It is sending a message to these people on the fringe. I went to a conference in Bangkok, their conference of historians of Asia in Bangkok. Jerry Berkley and I were giving a paper on human rights in Asia. And we are figuring that all this is going to be easy, and our wives are going to come, and we are going to have a little vacation. So we write this paper and that week of the conference Aung San Suu Kyi was all over the papers. Our session was so crowded we had to move to another room. I was worried because I don't know anything about human rights other than any other normal intelligent person knows. So we are taking turns reading the paper when some Britisher in the back says: "The American view of human rights is 180 degrees from the Chinese view of human rights." What do you say when you are confronted with that situation? And I said: "Their view is wrong and our view is right. And we are prepared to go to the max on this." Those Asian people love to hear that. And so there are four Chinese professors there and these Chinese would say nothing, not a word. You couldn't get them to talk. I got three invitations as soon as the session was over to go to other conferences to talk about human rights in Asia. So how I connect this to this context is that these people—Filipinos, the Thais, and other Asians—they are saying: "Well, who is going to protect us from the Chinese?" I have the same questions. If they take over Taiwan at some point, something is going to happen. They have been bold so far with Hong Kong. So I just ask a lot of questions. They will swallow up a place like Palau. Palau couldn't even face up diplomatically to what they have, and what is the U.S. going to do? The U.S. is going to be faced with decisions as to how are they going to support Palauans, if at all. I think that is fascinating. I think we ought to have a conference about that.

Willens: Okay, that sounds like an excellent idea, and I am confident that you will be generous enough to invite us to participate.

Ballendorf: We are certainly going to invite you to the one next year.

Willens: Thank you. You have been very kind to give us your time for this interview, and we appreciate very much the contribution you have made to our work.