

berkeley anthropology matters — *BAM!*

anthropology department † kroeber hall † university of california † berkeley

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Interview with Professor Emeritus Eugene Hammel, Thirteenth Honoree in Anthropology's Emeritus Lecture Series

Who are you? How are you an emeritus professor of anthropology yet you are in the demography department?

I entered anthropology here in 1947 when I took my first anthro course with Ronald Olson. I was always interested in archaeology. I got my degree in 1951, minoring in linguistics. Most of this time I worked as a museum preparator. I started graduate school here in 1951. Then I got called



Eugene Hammel

into the army and spent three and a half years in the service, during which time I learned Serbian. I returned in 1955 to resume graduate work—my most influential teachers being McCown, Rowe and Foster. I worked in all four fields; the fields for my Ph.D. included: anthropological theory, South American archaeology and peasant culture and society. My orals committee was made up of Mary Haas, Robert Lowie, John Rowe, Ted McCown and James Parsons (geography). I knew Kroeber, but I didn't work with him because he had already retired. One time I was talking to Kroeber about my Pomo work, and I admitted to having trouble with my glottalized consonants. A year later I ran into Kroeber, and he said, "How are those glottalized consonants coming along?"

In those days you had to take two preliminary written exams before your orals. First, we took what were called "baby prelims," a two-day written exam taken at the end of your first year. Then you took regular prelims, which was three days of written exams. If you passed the latter, you were scheduled for your orals. I was the first student not to have to do a "ten day problem." A ten day problem was when at the end of your orals, the chair would hand you an envelope which contained a research problem that you had 10 days to go into the library to research and solve. I was the first student who didn't have to do this. They thought they were being too rigid.

I did my field work in Peru in 1957-58, and then wrote my thesis in 1959. I had a wife and two children and I didn't have time to waste. I continued my work in the museum and helped Foster design Kroeber Hall—mainly as the museum photographer, I helped design the darkroom. I taught at University of New Mexico for two years. I taught all four fields. Then I was invited to come back to Berkeley. I started teaching here in 1961. I taught Anthro 1, Anthro 2 and in the 240 series, I taught the physical component. From 1962-63 I was at the Center for Advanced Study in Palo Alto, then in 1963 I did field work in Serbia on ritual kinship. I did further work in Serbia in 1965-66, investigating how urbanization and mobility affected kinship. When back here in 1966, my interests in computing developed. My interest in historical demography was also growing at this time. This led to hooking up with the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, so I spent a sabbatical year at Trinity College in Cambridge,

England. When I returned to Berkeley I succeeded Bob Heizer as Associate Dean of the Graduate Division. This was 1966 and there was a lot of political turmoil on campus. The ideological warfare completely fragmented the demography department. The faculty basically split off to join other departments and then the campus administration shut down the department. As Associate Dean of the Graduate Division, I was given the job of taking care of the demography graduate students who still needed to progress towards their Ph.D. This is how I came to be administratively connected to demography.

For a while I chaired a committee that was in charge of what to do with this problem in demography. We proposed to form a "graduate group in demography." The group would maintain the Ph.D. and masters program and was to be funded and have faculty. However, the group would be administered by the Graduate Division. After being told for some time, "you can't do that," we finally succeeded in getting the idea approved. I became chair of the demography group. We ran this program successfully, we were excellent especially in demographic theory, and we gained an international reputation, but it was difficult to do any personnel actions because all of our FTE were joint appointments. Whenever we wanted to get someone promoted, we had to go through some other department plus Grad Division, which doesn't do personnel actions. Finally Shack, who was Dean of the Graduate Division, said enough! and demography once again became a department within the College of Letters and Science.

I was going to two faculty meetings a week, in anthropology and demography, until I finally decided to move my FTE line over to demography, where I was the chair. I retired in 1993.

Why are you interested in what you study?

I am interested in the events of the life cycle, the milestones in a human life, birth, death, marriage, etc. And I am interested in the fact that, in principle, these events are countable. Of course, definitions and social meanings of, for example, "what is a marriage" vary between cultures, so it is not always easy to count things, but still, in principle, they can be counted. And if you do a good job of counting, then you can ask what makes the numbers go up and what makes them go down. Without quantitative data, any historian or ethnographer would not know what has happened. And you can't detect what is happening without sorting through huge numbers of records in order to come up with what is happening statistically. Of course, those counting wouldn't know where to look for problems if they did not listen to the ethnographers. I'm interested in: "is it possible to assemble information on social processes that is sufficiently precise and countable so that you can see what affects the outcomes?"

In the last 40-50 years, anthropology has been distrustful of quantification—there is a skepticism towards what was done. This is too bad because there is a natural marriage between the two disciplines. Anthropological demography is a fertile field. For one, outcomes are countable. You can actually tell the difference between a little and a lot. Second, the events we are trying to count are the basic events of a human life. What could be more important? I can't understand why people don't get passionate about this subject.

What work are you the most proud of?

I'm not proud of any of it. Not a single piece of work that I've done is without a valid criticism. I don't view research as something to be proud of, but instead it is something to be critical of, so that it can be made better.

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November Happenings in Anthropology

All **Brown Bag Lectures**: noon, 2251 College, unless otherwise noted. All **290 Lectures**: 4pm, 160 Kroeber, unless otherwise noted.

- 11/3 **290 Lecture Series**: Bill Maurer, UC Irvine, *Does Money Matter? Abstraction and Substitution in Alternative Financial Forms*.
- 11/5 **ARF Brown Bag Lecture**: Kirsten Tripplett, Rosemary Joyce, Christine Hastorf, *Chocolate Culture: the Archaeobotany of Theobroma Cacao in Mesoamerica*.
- 11/10 Excom Mtg., 10-12, Faculty Lounge
House Mtgs., 3-5
- 11/11 School is out. Veterans Holiday.
- 11/12 **ARF Brown Bag Lecture**: Andy Roddick and Doris Maldonado, *Polity Formation in the Lake Titicaca Basin: the Taraco Archaeological Project's 2003 Field Season at Coa Cullu, Bolivia*.
- 11/19 **ARF Brown Bag Lecture**: Agazi Negash, *Long Distance Movement of Obsidian during the Middle Stone Age (MSA) in Ethiopia*.
- 11/19-23 AAA meetings, Chicago.
- 11/27-28 No school again. Thanksgiving Holiday.



AUA Hosts Event After Event

On September 4th the Anthropology Undergraduate Association (AUA) held its first meeting. Seventy students—the largest turnout in the past couple of years—gathered in Kroeber's Gifford Room to hear AUA's agenda for the year and to meet the current officers. On September 11th, the AUA hosted Professors Dundes and Graburn, who spoke about the why's and why not's of doing an Honors Thesis. We had a great turnout!

On October 9th our panel "Back from the Field" took place. We invited socio-cultural, archaeology, and medical anthropology graduate students who have recently returned from the field, to share their comments and experiences. We learned from their experiences and enjoyed many good stories.

The Presidio will be the AUA field trip destination, where current and future anthropology students can learn about the rich histories and archaeological activities that have taken place in this area. The field trip will take place towards the end of October.

Last, in an effort to recognize students' achievements in making ethnographic films in Anthro 138B, we will host a Film Night, where we will show students' films and discuss them with their producers.

The AUA would like to thank all the professors and staff who have contributed to AUA's effort to have a space for undergraduate students to be active in the department.

—Laura Alarcon, AUA PR Officer

Publications from Berkeley Anthropologists

Ouzman, Sven.

2003. Is audit our object? Archaeology, conservation, sovereignty. *Antiquity* 77(298) & <http://antiquity.ac.uk/wac5/ouzman.html>.

2003. A Riet River burial from Koffiefontein, South Africa. *Southern African Field Archaeology* 10:3-15.

Elijah Seung-Joon Paik was born to Nan Kim-Paik and Peter Yoonsuk Paik on April 24, 2003 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He came into the world weighing 5lbs 2oz but is now over 15lbs. If child-care works out at the AAA meetings, hopefully Elijah will accompany Nan in Chicago!

*This newsletter is produced by the Department of Anthropology, UC Berkeley. The next issue of **BAM!** will be published December 1, 2003. Please submit all story suggestions and announcements to Holly Halligan at 643.4445 or hollyh@uclink.berkeley.edu*

Suzanne Calpestri to Chair AAA Committee on Electronic Publishing

Suzanne Calpestri has been appointed by the President and the President-Elect of the American Anthropological Association to chair the AnthroSource Steering Committee.

AnthroSource is AAA's electronic portal designed to enrich scholarship and build global communities for the discipline. The Steering Committee's objective is to recommend policies and practices related to the implementation and further development of AnthroSource. For instance, the Committee will recommend potential content; provide input on the initial service design; advise on the development of a service branch and marketing plan; and advise on policies and practices related to AnthroSource's scholarly communications (e.g., content acquisition, content selection, privacy policy, digital preservation and archiving policy).

It is a high honor to be not only appointed a member to AnthroSource, but to be asked to chair the committee that is at the forefront of the rapidly changing field of electronic publishing in anthropology. Congratulations, Suzanne!

The Ear

Nelson Graburn will be presenting two papers in November. The first will be at a UNESCO Seminar on Cultural Diversity and Tourism in Havana, Cuba, Nov. 3-5. This seminar is for the purpose of identifying and protecting a list of World Intangible Heritages. Professor Graburn's paper is entitled, "Whose Authenticity? A Flexible Concept in Search of Authority." Similarly, the Russians are looking to the Caucasus as a site of ethnic tourism "after peace breaks out" and are concerned with the erosion of "tradition." Nelson Graburn will present a paper, "Tourism and Tradition: Culture as Resource or Commodity, with respect to the Caucasus," at the International Institute of Peoples of the Caucasus (IIPC), Department of Caucasus Studies at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology (DCS at IEA), in Moscow, Nov. 24-28. . . . Congratulations are in order for **Meg Conkey** and **Ruth Tringham** who have been funded for a new L&S College Course for spring 2004. Their course is called "Heritage Futures in a Digital Age." Ralph Hexter, Dean of Letters and Sciences Arts and Humanities Division, states that "Heritage Futures" is exactly what they had in mind when the College Course concept was envisioned. . . . **Nancy Scheper-Hughes** returned from meetings in Spain with a World Health Organization Advisory Panel on Transplant Ethics in the Global Context, and was in Israel through October producing a film on transplant tourism with a British team for the United Kingdom's Discovery Channel. . . . On a crabby note, does the lack of a shelf in the women's first floor bathroom aggravate anyone else out there? No matter what you do, your purse or backpack is going to come out of that room wet. You go to wash your hands, put your purse on the floor (under either towel dispenser #1 or #2, there really is no other place) and then drip water onto your purse when reaching for a towel. You put your purse on the towel dispenser, it flings itself onto the floor, and you drip water on it again. I've seen women balance their purses IN the sink (not what I would recommend but hey) and lo, wet purse. If anyone has come up with a solution to this problem, let me know.

Who's the cutie?

