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Interview of James D. Riley

ABSTRACT: James D. Riley became the first lay editor of *The Americas* journal in 1987, leading the journal to its current status as a leading refereed academic publication of Latin American history and cultural studies. The interview addresses Riley's formative years as a scholar, his work with the Academy of American Franciscan History and The Americas, and the transformation of the journal from 1987 to his retirement from the academy.

James D. Riley was the first lay editor of *The Americas*, overseeing its transition from a cleric-run journal to an internationally recognized, refereed journal in the closing decades of the past century. Jim taught Latin American history at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., from 1974 to his retirement in 2010. He and his wife, Rita, also an educator, live on their farm in eastern Maryland.

Jay T. Harrison is an associate professor of history at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland. He was Jim Riley's last doctoral student at the Catholic University of America. His recent publications include two co-edited volumes, *The Franciscans in Colonial Mexico* (2021) and *At the Heart of the Borderlands: Africans and Afro-Descendants on the Edges of Colonial Spanish America* (2023).

Harrison: I thought we'd start today talking about a little bit of your own history. How was [it] that you discovered history and became an historian, and how was [it] that you got into this enterprise to which you dedicated your life until 2010 when you retired from the academy?

Riley: I have thought about that question as to where my interest in history started. I honestly can say I don't know. From my first days I loved narrative stories, and when I was very young, a lot of the books that I read were historical in content. There was a series; I don't remember who published it, but it was called Landmark Books [Random House]—all sorts of historical topics that I loved. I don't recollect anymore what exactly I read in those books, but I devoured them, and they were a part of an interest in exotic places and exotic people. That was kind of a focus of my intellectual life, if an 8-year-old or 9-year-old can have an intellectual life.

Harrison: So, you grew up in California?

Riley: I grew up in the San Francisco Bay area and the Sacramento area. My father died when I was 8 years old, and we were living in Alameda at that time. He had been a civil engineer who had been part of the construction of the naval supply depot during World War II. He had previously built dams in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and one sadness of my life is that I never really met him. I didn't know him for who he was. I was raised by my mother—I and my brother and sister. She was a single parent. She did not re-marry until after we had left home. So that meant that we didn't travel a lot. And we didn't have a lot of money, but my mother was fixated on education, and so books were always available to us. And so my life was as a dreamer—through the books; that's right. I read voraciously, but of this is kind of, of adventure book, and I wanted to have adventures. When I can say I really found history was when I was in high school. I always liked history. In my junior year, we had a literature course in which we were supposed to read a fairly substantial number of books from a list that the teacher gave us. And I found Kenneth Roberts' *Northwest Passage*. To the dismay of my teacher, I then read everything Kenneth Roberts wrote, the whole series—*The Man from Arundel*, about the Revolutionary War, as well as the *Northwest Passage*—and I then wrote my end of year paper on the corpus of Kenneth Roberts as literature.

Very soon afterward—and I don't remember how—I found a book by Bernard DeVoto, *The Year of Decision: 1846*. It was about the movement of immigrants to the west. That was what I would call the first serious history I ever read. I was overwhelmed by it because it was based on actual narratives of events written by the people who lived them, little people who exposed their purpose, their emotions, their reactions to conditions. Novelists created characters and gave them fictional emotions and insights, but de Voto was using real people to do what novelists did. I could not have been more than 15 or 16 [years old]. I have treasured that book ever since. He's one of the great narrative historians. I then came across Bruce Catton and his work on the Civil War. That decided for me that I was going to become a historian who did exactly the same thing because it simply fit my persona. I was taken by the fact that the author could explain things about people, about their motives, about their feelings, about their experiences—and just ordinary people, not necessarily people who would be great figures. I decided that this is what I wanted to do.

Harrison: Your interest began as a high school student?

Riley: Yes, I was a high school student, and this was just casual reading. The courses that I took at the Catholic high school that I attended focused basically

on dates, names, and great men. That just didn't satisfy my inner passion. Unlike now, I could memorize names and dates at that time. When one of my college roommates who was a science major, who intended to become a doctor, would be poring over his biology or chemistry textbook, I'd be lying on the bed reading science fiction or reading the *History of the English-Speaking Peoples*, whatever had attracted my attention. He couldn't figure out how I got good grades. I told him the study will take care of itself. Anyway, that was my actual attitude, and at that time I took courses on Latin American history. The man who taught Latin American history at St. Mary's College [Moraga, CA] was a dynamic speaker. That's the best way I could put it. He held my attention in class. I was attracted to Latin American history. I decided I wanted to concentrate on Latin American history as an undergrad. My sense at that time was that I was going to go into the State Department. I figured that my interest in foreign places could be combined with current affairs, and I'd become Secretary of State.

Harrison: That would satisfy your desire to explore and travel?

Riley: Exactly. And someone else would be paying the tab.

Harrison: So how did you choose to go to St. Mary's College? Or did it choose you?

Riley: My mother was very interested in an education. I was going to a Catholic high school, which we honestly couldn't afford. I had an aunt and uncle who were childless who basically took the place of grandparents for me and my brother and sister. They paid for me to go to a Catholic high school in Sacramento. We moved from Alameda to Sacramento after my father died. The people at the Catholic high school had decided—it was taught by the Christian Brothers—that I was intended to be a priest.

Harrison: Was that what you and your family intended as well?

Riley: Quite candidly, my mother was horrified. My brother and sister were incredibly cynical. Anyway, I didn't want to be a priest. But I decided maybe I had a religious vocation because, by this time, I had gotten interested in philosophy from an intellectual point of view. I was trying to understand the structure of things. In 1958 or 1959, the world obviously had lots of hot spots. The threat of nuclear war was all around us. The Korean conflict had recently ended. Trying to explain the world was important to me, and my high school had courses in philosophy.

Harrison: Certainly, in a Christian Brothers school.

Riley: We had a steady dose of religion and philosophy. We talked about big questions in philosophy. We were actually exposed to Greek philosophers. I don't think that they teach this now in high school, but when I was going, they did. I decided [I] didn't want to be a priest. I knew that. But maybe I would be a Christian Brother because I admired the Christian Brothers immensely. I thought joining the Christian Brothers would be the way. I decided at the end of my senior year that I would go to the novitiate. I packed my bag, which included a large number of books on the Second World War, Bruce Catton, and others I'd finished. This is what I expected I would read. I knew they weren't going to like my science fiction.

Harrison: You expected to read about the Second World War at the novitiate?

Riley: At the time, I was going into the novitiate; that was where I was going to meditate. I was going to think religious thoughts to discern my vocation. I was fully expecting to have some free time to read my books. I entered the novitiate right next to the winery in Northern California.

Harrison: How long did novice Riley last?

Riley: Two and a half months. In the middle of August, I decided that this was simply not what I wanted, and it was not for me. I was frustrated; again it's the little things that tell you when you have discerned something. The thing that really irritated me was that I could not see the newspaper. They kept us away from the newspapers. I was an inveterate reader of newspapers, and I wanted to know what was going on in the world, and there was nothing. I was not allowed to. That just really grated on me. I left in the middle of August. Well, what was I going to do? I didn't want to get a job. I still wanted to get an education. My mother was insistent that I had to go to college. If I didn't go to college, I was going to work. That meant that I was going to go to college. I thought I would go to a junior college. I told my mother, and she was appalled. She said that wouldn't do.

Harrison: Your mother had some higher standards?

Riley: She had higher standards. She was a very kindly woman, and for her to say you can't do that was something that we didn't hear a lot. She was a very gentle woman. She had never finished high school herself, and she always suffered for that. I've always thought that she was one of the brightest, most intelligent women I've ever met, and I've met a lot of intelligent women. She had a common sense combined with an intellectual rigor that just always impressed me. When she said you can't do that, I had to find another option. In a way, she provided me

with the option. She called my principal, Brother Eugene from Bishop Armstrong High School, a Christian Brother, and she told him that I had left the novitiate. She asked if could I come to talk to him about the possibilities for college. Brother Eugene interviewed me. He knew me already and offered to make a couple of phone calls, including to St. Mary's College, which was a Christian Brothers College, in nearby Moraga, CA.

Harrison: You devoted yourself to studying Latin American history at St. Mary's?

Riley: Yes. I liked the professor. I liked Latin America. US history had become boring. Bruce Catton's *Civil War* and the *Second World War*, with stories of generals, were exciting. I was very impressed with military history, but I didn't like US history. Those of us in the US were obviously the greatest people in the world. We had no adversity to overcome whatever.

Harrison: By contrast, in Latin America you found something new, different, and exotic?

Riley: Yes, very exotic. In my junior year, my mother found some more money to pay for a summer in Mexico City, at the Universidad Iberoamericana, a Jesuit school, known as the *Ibero*. Just taking courses there and the whole experience of that summer was an epiphany to me.

First of all, I saw how different Mexico was from the United States. I took my first airplane trip. I flew from Sacramento to Los Angeles without any idea of what I was doing. I had never traveled anywhere. I had not been outside of California unless you considered Carson City, Nevada, as a day trip. I went to San Diego, where I met my friends. We crossed the border into Tijuana. At that time, you just walked across the border. That was the summer of 1964. But there was hardly a border. I didn't have a passport. I did have a driver's license. That was it—almost no formalities.

Harrison: You entered Mexico at Tijuana with barely a paper on you?

Riley: Exactly. And the bus didn't leave until the next morning for Mexico City. I was going to get on a bus with my friends.

Harrison: Let's frame this thought: three college students from California are newly in Tijuana in 1964.

Riley: Exactly. That's the thought to keep in mind! We were completely innocent. We went down the street with a red light district around us and women on the street. There were guys actually trying to hustle us into bars. We had no money at all. We literally spent the night on the street. We just walked around downtown Tijuana. This was an absolute revelation to me, a side of life I had never experienced.

We were three Americans on this bus. It was a first-class bus full of Mexican people. Everybody was kind to us. We stopped somewhere in Sinaloa to get a meal. We went over the mountains, got to Mexico City, and there we were taken care of.

I loved everything; I fell in love with Mexico City. This is Mexico City before 1970. It was a time of innocence. Believe it or not, Mexico City was safe. It was open to Americans. But it was different—incredibly different. I fell in love with Mexican food. I would eat anything that was put on the table. I learned that the architect's mother loved that I praised her cooking and that everything I ate in volume. I didn't want American food. I was just overwhelmed by the differentness. I was overwhelmed by the kindness of the people. I was overwhelmed by the food, the tastes, the smells—everything.

Harrison: Was it that summer or was it the next year that you started to think about graduate work?

Riley: After that summer when I came back, I was deeply in love with all things Mexican. I saw poverty. But I saw a government that, in its propaganda, was trying to get rid of poverty. I saw progress. The Torre Latinamericano in the center Mexico City had just been erected [in 1956]. There was an architectural boom. Mexicans were confident. Things were going right. They were going to be middle class. Optimism abounded. I honestly don't really know who the president was at that time. It was before Díaz Ordaz—it was López Mateos. But at any rate there was a huge amount of optimism. They had a plan.

I took a course in cultural anthropology at the *Ibero* taught by a summer professor from a small, Catholic college in Minnesota of great reputation, St. Norbert's. He was oblivious to much going on in Mexico. In a way, he was as innocent of the environment as we were. But he was a cultural anthropologist, and he wanted to spend his time out with Mexican people. In class, we would have the normal lecture, and we would be do readings in cultural anthropology focused on Mexico. But then we would take these day trips out. We went to see small towns, and one of them was really impressive to me. He took us to the

town near Cuernavaca—I think Tepoztlan—hard in the state of Morelos. It was outside of Cuernavaca in the mountains toward Tepozteco.

And it was an astounding experience. Ten or twelve students just walked through the town. He knew people there, and so they would take us in. We would talk with Mexicans. They were small-town Mexicans. My Spanish was not very good. I could read very well, but I couldn't speak Spanish very well. I could understand a little bit, but he translated for us, and we talked. We talked about social issues. How do you see the world? This was when Oscar Lewis was researching the books that would transform our understanding of people. That was the environment we were put into. That's what our professor was passionate about: that. This small-town Mexico was a real Mexico. If you wanted to understand Mexico, you understood these people. I remember Tepoztlan so well, although we took trips to lots of places. But I remember that so well because of the ruins that were striking. We talked about religion; we talked about politics. And the people were pretty open about it.

Harrison: So how did you pick Tulane? How did you get there?

Riley: I applied to some four schools. I just wanted to do graduate studies in history. Moreover, at that point I decided I wanted [to study] colonial history.

Harrison: So New Orleans fit that exotic requirement?

Riley: Exactly. In my head, New Orleans was like a third-world city. It was colorful. I'd never been there of course, but it was colorful, wonderful. Tulane offered me money, and I said, "Off to Tulane"—$2000 fellowship, with no strings attached!

Harrison: Starting in 1965?

Riley: That would have been September of 1965. I met my wife that summer in a mountain resort where I worked—no more Mexico travel that year. I arrived in New Orleans right after a huge hurricane. [Hurricane Betsy made landfall in September that year]. It was a monster storm. The city was with completely without power, and a lot of it was still under water. I remember my first experience of New Orleans coming in from the airport. We left the airport to head for Tulane, which is in uptown New Orleans. There was a billboard, a massive billboard, that had literally bent—not broken, just bent over to the ground just outside the airport. There was no electricity. They let us into the dorms. But there were no lights. I don't think there was running water. But at any rate, there was no air conditioning. Whatever services they did have, they had to

watch very carefully because the power was out all over New Orleans. They might have had emergency generators. But there was no air conditioning. So I spent the first two nights—no more than that—sweltering in New Orleans' 90-degree heat with 99% humidity.

Harrison: You had a proper introduction to graduate school at Tulane.

Riley: I did. The government came to my rescue again because what had started as a Tulane $2000 departmental fellowship was immediately turned into a NDFL, National Defense Foreign Language fellowship, a new program. All I had to do was agree to learn Portuguese. My Spanish was okay; spoken Spanish was not. I am a terrible linguist. At my best, I could get along, I knew enough vocabulary, slang, and whatever to deal with personal situations. But I was never really a scholar or a knowledgeable speaker Spanish. I've always admired people who are. But now I got a chance to learn Portuguese. And the government would pay me to do it, for four years! The government offered $2250. So I took it. The $2250 had no strings attached other than taking the class in Portuguese. I just had to go to class and pass.

Harrison: At what point did you discover that the Jesuits would become your theme for your doctoral thesis?

Riley: When I read about the Palafox Controversy, between the Jesuits and Palafox, I was incredibly intrigued by it at a very human level. How were the Jesuits able to confound Palafox, who represented regal authority, despite the *ordenanza de patronazgo*. I just simply decided that I had to know more about the Jesuit order. What gave it such strength in this kind of a political confrontation? I didn't want to study theory. I wanted to study people. What could I look at? I wasn't really interested in mission history as such. I really wanted to know why the Jesuits were in a position in central Mexico basically to not only not thumb their nose at Palafox but to thwart him. What gave them their institutional strength? That somehow morphed into a question of finances. The Jesuits were front and center in the literature at that time—the great miracle workers they were, that they could turn a dime into a dollar almost by an act of consecration. Geniuses, financial geniuses, they were cynical manipulators. They got what they wanted.

Harrison: How did you find your way in Mexico City? Did you go to Mexico City for the dissertation research? Did you end up working with Richard Greenleaf there?

Riley: I did. After completing my graduate comprehensive examinations in June 1968, I decided that a topic dealing with Jesuit financial affairs was what I was going to pursue. I took a preliminary trip, leaving my wife and child in New Orleans, to visit the Vatican Film Library at St. Louis University, and I found out they possessed a great deal of microfilmed material on the topic that had been taken of from various archives in Mexico [St. Louis University has an extensive microfilm collection of both Jesuit and Vatican materials]. I decided the subject was doable, and so, when I returned to New Orleans, we worked up a thesis proposal, and it was accepted. My director was William Griffith, whose specialty was late-nineteenth-century Central America. I stuck around until late September, in part to be able to speak with Frances Scholes about paleography. He was coming to teach a course at Tulane on that subject during the fall semester. I couldn't take the course, obviously, but he gave me some written materials on the subject, including a guide to the differing systems of notarial script from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

I returned to St. Louis in October with my family and went right into taking notes from the microfilmed materials. I spent about four months there to complete my work on the materials they had. Sometime after the new year, I received a letter from Bill Griffith that he was leaving Tulane and that he would be replaced in Fall 1969 as director of Latin American studies by Richard Greenleaf. Bill told me that Greenleaf would be my dissertation director and that I should make contact with him when I got to Mexico.

In early February 1969, I was completely on my own, packing my little Renault 10 to drive my wife, who did not speak Spanish, and my baby girl down to Mexico City, which had just gone through some very rough times. I was more than a little intimidated. I knew nobody, had no place to live, and was going to meet a man I didn't know who would hold my fate in his hands. But Mexico City once again saved me. I used the American newspaper ads [*The News*, published by *Novedades*] to find a place to live, an inexpensive apartment on LaFontaine Street in the Polanco district. I got started at the AGN [Archivo General de la Nación] which, at that time, was located in the presidential palace on the Zocalo, and whose workers were very friendly. Then I met Richard Greenleaf for the first time. On the day I met him at the University of the Americas, he was preparing for an operation on the leg the very next day. It was pure chaos. I remember secretaries interrupting us constantly by coming into his office with papers to sign. Yet, he did nothing but tell jokes, make small talk, make sure there were no continuing crises that he could help with, and put me at ease. When he got out of the hospital and I met him again about three weeks later, he began the process of using his connections with the AGN to help me get materials that I would

never have found on my own. From that small beginning, our friendship blossomed over the next decades.

Harrison: You taught in Kansas for the first years of your career and then moved to Washington after that, correct?

Riley: In September 1970, I got my first academic job, at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas, and I finished my dissertation there in 1972. Most of the time was taken up there writing the dissertation and learning to teach. I had never had a position as a teaching assistant at Tulane, and so I had no course notes at all to fall back on. I didn't do much additional research during those years—short summer trips in 1972 and 1973 were all the time I could spend at the archives. I focused on teaching.

In 1974 I accepted an offer from Catholic University. We moved the summer of 1974 to Washington. At that time, research became much more of an imperative to me because I had to produce. Not only was I interested in the material itself, but also I now had a job which was going to require a book for tenure plus additional publications. In 1976 I published an article in *The Americas* that Antonine Tibesar was satisfied with as a part of my additional research looking at different new topics.

I polished off the book manuscript *Hacendados jesuiticas en México*, which would have been the same manuscript that I would have sent to an American publisher. I gave it to *SepSetentas* in Mexico. A large number of scholars were contributing to *SepSetentas*. It's quite amazing if you look at their list. I know somewhere there's an article which includes all of the volumes published by *SepSetentas*. Many of the major scholars of my generation started with a Spanish-language book in the *SepSetentas* series. I believe that I got a hundred dollars, so I felt like I had been paid adequately. But that was not the point. They disseminated all 10,000 copies. That was the run of each of the volumes. I was amazed to find out about four years later that it was no longer available—that the run had been completely sold out. It wasn't very expensive. As I recall, it seemed to me the price was 10 pesos, less than a dollar in those days [The price was 10 pesos. In the period before 1976, the exchange rate was 12.50 Mexican pesos to 1 US dollar.]

With the devaluation, that became almost nothing. But I did find that, when I looked for it in a used book catalog some 5 or 10 years later, it was selling for $70. So I figured, well, somebody must be reading this.

Harrison: To clarify, this was put out in paperback in the first printing, the sort of thing that most graduate students might carry with them on the Metro.

Riley: That's exactly right. Many students were required to read these in various courses that they took. I felt justified that it was a good book. I thought it was. It got me tenure. I had to give the department an English translation of it. But it was published, and I could say it was highly read. It was; it was a book that I really felt honored to have been able to publish in Mexico.

Harrison: But that wasn't the only thing you published in those years.

Riley: The article on Jesuit wealth appeared in 1976 and another on landlords, labor, and royal government that I gave at a conference in Patzcuaro in 1977.

Harrison: On St. Lucia, the hacienda?

Riley: Yes, that was published in *Historia Mexicana* in 1973. I had forgotten that. I haven't looked at my resume recently.

Harrison: That was reprinted in 1975. The government in Mexico was placing the scholarly emphasis on providing higher caliber scholarship.

Riley: Yes, that's exactly what it was for: the specific purpose of training students. They were used in many Mexican universities. I assume they were emulated in Mexican universities.

Harrison: Where did that leave your research after you published *Hacendados jesuiticas en México*?

Riley: One of the requirements for tenure was that I show a new project—that I answer the question: What are you going to be doing next? Honestly, I didn't have a desire to continue with the Jesuits. I felt that I was satisfied with what I had done with the combination of the book on the Colegio Maximo, the article on Sta. Lucia, and the article on the Jesuits' wealth in New Spain, which I was quite proud of. My good fortune was that I was in Washington at the time. I had total access to the Library of Congress. I happened to be wandering around, and I found the microfilm room. I just sort of started looking at the catalog of microfilms, and I discovered that Howard Cline, who was, I believe, the first director of the Hispanic Foundation or at least a very major figure in the Hispanic Foundation in the 1950s and 1960s, had microfilmed a huge variety of materials that he found interesting from Mexico. I thought, wow, this looks quite interesting. They were military archives. I looked at it and thought, that's really not what I'm interested in. They were modern, and I wanted to stay in the colonial period. It went a little further beyond the colonial era. There were some

other very interesting materials, but then I found another collection that really caught my interest.

I can't tell you exactly how many rolls of microfilm it was that Cline had done from the Archivo General de Tlaxcala. They were marked the AGT. When I looked at them, I started surveying them; I found out that a portion of the rolls were notarial records from the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. But the vast majority of them were selections from the governors' archive, which included lawsuits, technical reports, or circulars—just about any kind of governmental paper that had been generated in Tlaxcala in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There were some sixteenth century documents, if I remember correctly, but most of it was the seventeenth and eighteenth century. I started to explore it, and the range of materials it held was vast. But the things which really attracted me, because of my interest in the human side of the equation, were wills. They had all of these wills; they had all of these circulars that were sent around to the various districts of Tlaxcala. They informed the local people of the nature of some government business usually having to do with taxation. But it also could have to do with labor. There was a lot of material on Indian labor and the uses of Indian labor because the *cabildo* of Tlaxcala, which was an Indian cabildo, was very concerned about its control of the Indian labor. The Spanish governor of Tlaxcala had to make certain that the rights of Indians were observed, were protected. That was the sort of thing that really attracted me.

I completely reversed my orientation away from religious issues and toward the question of Spanish–Indian relations. That's pretty much where my research has been focused ever since. That's what I've been interested in.

Harrison: For all that, though, there's this consistency with your work on the Jesuits or with what you did in Tlaxcala, related to land and people's use of it.

Riley: Property and power—that's what it had to be with the Jesuits. It was very, very clear. The Jesuits needed the money to be independent to pursue their own their own interests. They participated in the colonial economy completely. They were Spaniards; they were part of the Spanish economy. With the question of Tlaxcala, it was actually the question: what right does economic power give you over labor power? That's how it started. I was really interested in what the connection was between the Indians and Spaniards on the land holdings. The more I got into it, the more I realized that the Indian laborers were active participants in their development of their conditions—that the Spaniards couldn't run roughshod over them because, if they did, first of all, they ran into trouble with the Indian cabildo. The governor had to issue warnings. In fact, the

governor had to go out to inspect. One of the formative documents that got me thinking about this was an inspection which had real teeth in it. The governor went out at the insistence of the cabildo, or his agents went out, the assistants. Between 1711 and 1713, he inspected all of the haciendas of Tlaxcala. I thought initially, well, that's the end of that. But he demanded that the *hacendados* provide for a levy made for the support of the king in the war. It was a military levy.

Harrison: For the War of the Spanish Succession?

Riley: The War of the Spanish Succession. Yes, that's exactly what it was. The hacendados had to pay a tax. But in the process of paying the tax, they had to tell the king who their laborers were and what their property was worth—that sort of thing. You could look at that and would say, well, end of story. This is a tax levy. But right after it, immediately following, you begin to find in this archive all of these inspections that the Indian laborers have protested that they're being abused by their landlords. The Natives are being held on account of debts. That the landlord is acting as a tyrant, and he is enslaving them. Then, all of a sudden, the governor has to jump and go figure out what's going on. He has to go to the estates and physically find out exactly what the Indians owe to the landlord and what the conditions of labor are for the Indians. His heart might not have been in it, but he had to do it. As a result, the government then gets deeply involved. I asked myself the question: Why? Why did the governor care? Well, he cared because, if the labor supply was restless, the workers could soon, I assumed, potentially walk off.

Harrison: Or perhaps worse.

Riley: Or perhaps worse. But that worst-case scenario was really not the issue. The worst was the real estate owners were going to lose access to the labor. Then I asked: well, how could they do that? The Indians were supposed to be free. How could they enforce debt peonage? This is when I discovered the institution of *gañanía* and the laws that governed it that were instituted in the 1670s, I think it was. The issue truly came back to a question that I could really see involvement [in]. The Indians were manipulating the system. If they had not been paid, the governor could have forced the hacendado to pay them or lose his *gañanes*. If they were in debt, those debts had to be noted, and the Indians had to be told they were free to leave if they paid the debts. The officials went through this ritual not just with one hacienda but with a whole series of haciendas.

I learned that there was a movement back to the villages. The Indians really wanted to become citizens of the village. There was a pressure pushing them back. Times were changing, and the Natives were restless but not necessarily

because they were abused. In fact, I found that debts were merely a sign of it. This was an advance given to people to keep them working. Debt peonage wasn't debt peonage. It was really a system of advances. Some of the advances were substantial. If you had an individual who was [a] really good and important individual to your operation, you would advance him multiples of his yearly salary because he wanted it. But you had alternatives. I found that society was much more complex than it appeared. At that point I really wanted to understand both sides of the society, the Indian side and the Spanish side. That pretty much led me into the topic of my book, which was basically: How did Tlaxcala develop this unique circumstance? What was the relationship between the Indian governors of Tlaxcala and the Spanish settlers of Tlaxcala? From labor, it went to a much broader question of the nature of provincial society, which is what I'm still working on, or was at least until I retired.

Harrison: You showed up in Washington, D.C., with a young family as a young scholar and professor. At what point did you engage with Father Antonine Tibesar at the Academy of American Franciscan History?

Riley: Well, Father Tibesar basically hired me. My first trip to Washington to meet the history faculty was mediated by Tibesar—literally. He met me at the airport. He installed me in the Academy in Potomac [Maryland]. That's where I stayed for the interview. It was not a shabby accommodation. It was actually I think the nicest bedroom I had ever slept in; at least it was the largest bedroom I had ever slept in. It was very nice, and the Franciscans there were absolutely charming. I mean that. I remember that Lino Gómez Canedo was there. Francisco Morales was there. Everybody had been ordered to be there by the director. There were several other people, about whom I could tell stories, if I could remember their names! There were resident scholars in the academy and Fathers Lino and Francisco, who were migrants, coming in and out of Mexico frequently, or coming back from Spain and going to somewhere else in Latin America. That was the last decade or two of Father Lino's productive period. He had already published his major books and was looking for more detail regarding the Franciscans in South America. Antonine had them there when I was there for my interview.

Harrison: How was it that a scholar of Jesuits in Mexico engaged the Franciscans at the Academy in those years? What was the connection that you made there?

Riley: One of Antonine's very, very dear friends was Dick Greenleaf of Tulane University. I don't know when Antonine met him. Two more different personalities I cannot even imagine. But they hit it off. They had a charming relationship.

Harrison: What do you mean by a charming relationship?

Riley: They drank together.

At the interview, Fr. Antonine took me into Catholic University, and we saw everybody, but it was a foregone conclusion. Antonine had basically gone into command mode, and he told me later that, if I didn't take the job, then nobody got it. It would be a failed search. He did everything he could. But I had offers. I actually had another offer from Marquette University. At the time, Marquette paid more than Catholic. There's no secret about that. It was more congenial, too. Anyway, I was waffling after they had made an offer.

I believe I got the Marquette offer first, and then I got the offer from Catholic. Marquette was about a thousand dollars more than Catholic. Catholic offered me $12,000. I was leaning toward a quick decision until I got a phone call from Dick Greenleaf, who said, "I'm in a motel room with Antonine at RMCLAS (Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies)." I believe it was some God-forsaken place, somewhere in Texas.

He says, "We're sitting here talking about where you should go. Why would you want to go to a godforsaken place like Milwaukee when you can come to Washington?"

I mean, I understood that Washington was the right choice. It was the big city compared to little Atchison, Kansas. And I was probably going to lose money, in the short term. Whereas at Marquette, it was much more Midwestern, much more homey. But it came down to opportunity, and I decided on Catholic.

Harrison: Your interaction with the Academy and *The Americas* was a foregone conclusion made by two guys sitting in a motel room in Texas.

Riley: That's exactly right. Antonine had plans. He gave me time when I finally arrived. We didn't make contact immediately. He gave me a couple of months to settle in. But then sometime in November, I think, he invited me out to the Academy. He asked me to come to work with *The Americas*. He wanted me to be an assistant editor of *The Americas*.

It was very much of a one-man operation. *The Americas* was Antonine's baby. He had organized the editors so that there were senior editors, and there were associate editors. Antonine picked them from his friends. There were people from the Franciscan Academy on the editorial board. Father Lino was a senior editor.

The senior editors were very prestigious. John Tate Lanning was one, as was the man who was the cultural attaché of the Spanish embassy, who was a dear friend of Antonine's. There were several other people like that from the area who were people Antonine could use on occasion.

Harrison: So, there was an early connection to the environs of Washington which continued in later years, too?

Riley: Yes, absolutely. Howard Cline [at the Library of Congress] had been an editor—anyone that Antonine thought could be useful to judge articles or to direct articles to the journal and things like that. Dick Greenleaf was one of the senior editors. It was a very eclectic group, and they were basically picked by Antonine, put on the masthead, and they didn't really do very much. They were not a part of the active journal. There were only two assistant editors at the time I came to the journal: Richard Gronet, who handled the book reviews, and Father Francisco Morales, who was often away from the Academy. Both had been Fr. Antonine's students.

Harrison: Was there a meeting of the editors at any point?

Riley: Well, no. There was nothing regular. We had a meeting at the American Historical Association meeting. Antonine took everybody to lunch, usually in the hotel. But no business was ever conducted then.

But wherever the meetings were, Antonine paid my way to go and to be his general assistant, glad-hander, and whatever. The associate editors, the assistant editors, and the senior editors were all invited along with a whole bunch of friends that Antonine would bring in. The funny thing about [it] was that Antonine was not a charmer. He was not really comfortable with people, unless he was in control. The result was that he went to these meetings, and he had lunch, and then he left, going back to his room. Then he would leave the first day of the conference.

Harrison: That left to you to make the connections and work for the journal?

Riley: Yes. For the first couple of years. Dick Gronet held a very important government position in Washington and gradually withdrew. I took over the book reviews, probably in my second year. I pushed Antonine to begin to add people to the group of assistant editors. The main job of the assistant editors was copy editing the upcoming issue, so we met every three months for that purpose. That's when Georgette [Dorn] joined. Antonine and I brought her on. I asked Vince Peloso very soon thereafter. Vince was at Howard University at the time.

Georgette had been at the Library of Congress for easily a decade and a half. There were other people we brought on. In fact, I tried to get all of the Latin Americanists in the Washington area on the board. If someone wanted to be on the board, we would invite them. The more, the merrier. That's where it really got interesting because, at that point, the job wasn't just copy editing. We sort of evolved. Through the copy editing, the assistant editors had to read the articles and the proofs to make sure that they looked okay. But we also had time on our hands. We would start thumbing through the files, seeing what articles were coming up, and seeing what we could say about the articles. We would talk about how we could get more articles. At that point, Antonine always organized the issue. He got into the habit of giving us the issue—not only the issue we were proofreading but then the issue that would come after it—to look at. He had accepted them. There wasn't anything we could do about it. I would discover later, when I actually took control of the process, that he had a two-year backlog of articles, some of which were six or seven years old. He was phobic about having enough material to fill an issue. He did not want to be caught short. So, he would accept articles. He didn't look at them very carefully; sometimes, there was some critical evaluation. If it was somebody that he knew, he would send it to one of the senior editors, saying "Would you take a take a look at this—I have some problems with it." That was the hint that he could eventually say, well, we sent it for outside review, and we didn't like it. But he trusted his own judgment enough that he would accept these articles usually without any kind of major revisions. He simply did not believe in changing someone's writing. This meant that it got awkward. One of the reasons why we [the assistant editors] wanted to preview an issue was to see if we could improve it a little bit.

We needed a lot more people. Very quickly, with Antonine's consent, we got six or seven people on the board of assistant editors. Then we created a tradition. Antonine believed in hospitality, Franciscan hospitality. Thus, when we had finished our day, we all had a drink and then a delicious dinner. We always met on a Sunday from about one o'clock to about six o'clock; that was it.

Rosemary Lund was the secretary of the Academy of American Franciscan History, and she actually handled all of the finances. She actually wrote the checks for Antonine to sign. She made sure the bills were paid and that the Academy House had what it needed in the way of supplies. She also was responsible for *The Americas*. She had to type everything up into the final form, handle all of the editing, and the publication, everything, index and all.

They had one other person who helped with the shipping—wonderful, wonderful guy, Jesse Suarez. He would come out [to Potomac] for some of the meetings. We would have wonderful dinners. We all liked Latin American

food. We had wonderful meals with great conversation. The Franciscans are incredibly friendly men.

Sunday dinners at the Academy were exceptional. I was out there quite often. I know what they had for their regular meals. They lived very abstemiously. But when it came to entertainment, Antonine said, "You've got to do it right." That was one of his mantras. "You've got to go first class." Whenever there was a public event, he had the best caterer in Washington, such as when he hosted the [Junípero] Serra award dinners. There were a few other occasions as well.

Harrison: Did it become clear at some point that Father Tibesar wanted you to carry on as editor after him?

Riley: Well, I can't say there was a point. I think it was generally understood after the first couple of years that I would be taking over from him at some time. But Fr. Antonine had great difficulty giving up anything—giving up control, more than anything. He clung to the directorship of the Academy because he didn't feel that anyone else could do it exactly the way that he did it. The process with *The Americas* was, I guess, one of deepening our association. I was out at the Academy often, even though my official position with *The Americas* occurred only once every three months. I made it a practice to go out one day a week to simply help look at the articles, look at book reviews, the books that had come in; give support to Rosemary Lund; and find out how things were going. Antonine sometimes was around; sometimes he wasn't. But he knew that I was always there, and I had friendly associations with all of the other men that were out there.

I remember those years rather fondly because I would take my dog out there. She was lovely. Her name was Angel, and she was a Brittany spaniel and loved the environment, the 16 acres of land that she could roam on. I would be out there, working on manuscripts, editing copy, doing things that needed to be done. My dog would be laying out on the steps in the sun. Antonine would like that. To him it was very, very homey. I usually brought my own lunch. Occasionally he'd say, "Would you have a sandwich with me?" And it always, more importantly, was a cup of coffee.

For Antonine everything was a cup of coffee. I'd have a cup of coffee with him and talk. He got to know me a little bit better. I got to know him a little bit better. Sometime in the late '70s, or the early '80s, he began to let me do the publications. He needed help on the publication, putting the articles together or doing the more rigorous editing. After that, and after a grueling retranslation project he entrusted me with, he developed real confidence in me.

What happened was that, when I suggested that we send these articles—new articles that had appeared—out to people, saying, "Let's find some outside reviewers," he was amenable to it. That was the next stage of the transition. It was in the early '80s that the assistant editors began to take control of actual decision-making. We established a system in which Antonine was not involved. He never came in all the time we were together during the workday. We worked out a system which they still use whereby one of the assistant editors would read the whole thing. [Editor's Note: Currently, all of the Assistant and Associate Editors read as many of the submissions as they care, rather than assigning each submission to a specific editorial board member.] Then, as a group, we would come to a decision of whether we should do anything with it. If we did, we'd ask who should review it. We established, in other words, a rather standard peer review system for the journal.

I'm pretty sure Antonine never read the pieces. I think he had grown tired. When we would take the work on, he pretty much was more hands off. We were taking more and more responsibility. The assistant editors were quite enthusiastic about this.

But then, sometime in 1984, we hit a real roadblock. It was a crisis. Antonine, as I had mentioned before, had a lot of friends. They would submit things. There was one individual who Antonine liked an awful lot who submitted an article about historiography. We, the assistant editors, read it, and we were unhappy with it. Antonine had given us the article—it was submitted to Antonine directly, who then said, here's an article for the journal. We looked at it. It was gossipy. This is someone who Antonine knew, who knew everybody in Peru. He knew the inside stories, and he gave details of people's lives that would have embarrassed them. After a lot of discussion, we decided as a board of editors that we could not publish this piece because the gossip would hurt people, and it would not really improve the profession.

I took it back to Antonine. He exploded. He said, first, that there were no lies in there. Everybody knows these things about these people. I had to explain to him that it's one thing for everybody to know about these people, but it's another thing to put it in a scholarly journal. He said, no, it must be published.

I had to tell Antonine that all the assistant editors, the editorial board, would resign if the article appeared. Antonine really blew up. He could get very aggressive when he blew up. I left it at that. The next day, he called me. He had calmed down, and he said, basically, I understand that this is a difference of opinion. It's time for me to go.

He was resigning, right there on the spot. He said, “You guys can run it.” I said, “No, that would not be good for the journal. It wouldn’t be good for the Academy. We need you as a figurehead. We need your guidance. We need you in the position of editor. We’ll start a transition process.”

Harrison: Had you spoken with the other assistant editors? You were having to deal with the situation on your own?

Riley: No. I was dealing with the situation. I said that nobody wants your resignation but that the assistant editors are the ones who have to approve an article. I don’t remember exactly the terms that I used—it’s been too long with that—but the gist was, “We have to have you. We need you. We don’t want your resignation. Nobody wants your resignation. We all appreciate you.” We had a great amount of esteem for him.

Harrison: How did he take that?

Riley: He said, “All right, you can keep my name. But I won’t have anything more to do with the journal.” I basically said, okay, that’s it. Then I communicated that to the assistant editors. He wasn’t sad, I think.

When the masthead changed in 1987, we very carefully prepared it. December 26th, 1986, was when he announced his resignation, when he formally retired. That was the first announcement to the world that Antonine was retiring. I think it was the proper approach. He had been associated with the journal for 40 years. So, it gave him time to deal with it. It gave us time to prepare the base so that, when he formally resigned, I took over as editor.

We agreed that every article would be refereed and that we would run under a different system. That’s when we discovered we had two years of backlog. It was shoved in the back of the cabinet. We had to work those through. They had been accepted, but we had not known. In the end, we did pretty well, I think. Then the astounding news hit that the Franciscans were selling the academy; they were selling the building in Potomac. We weren’t going to have a place there, and there was no agreement for the journal to continue.

Harrison: Your editorial reports expose that as an ongoing unknown in those first few years.

Riley: Exactly. We weren’t sure how the Franciscans were going to deal with us. But we did what we could to prepare the way. I handled the editorial process, while Antonine took care of things with the Academy. That was not my purview.

Harrison: Eventually, you were able to secure very low rent in Cardinal Gibbons Hall (the location of the History Department at the time) in Washington at Catholic University. What happened next?

Riley: That's right. The first thing I did with the journal after the move was to give it a budget. I mean, there were no books at all; no account ledgers. The friars really didn't want to see an account. I insisted that they see an accounting for all funds. And I insisted that we would cut it to bare bones. I reduced the publishing costs. We did all sorts of things to reduce that budget. We tried to increase the price of the journal. It was ridiculously inexpensive, even in terms of the time. We settled the journal down financially so that it became routine very year that I would ask for less money from the Franciscans.

There was an increase in revenue, a slow increase in revenue. There was the cutting of costs. And so, the friars never really questioned us. We kept producing articles on the Church, and we talked about Franciscan projects. That's what the Inter-American notes became.

Finally, once the Franciscans had the money in hand from the sale of the Potomac property, they could see where to take the Academy and where we were going to go.

Harrison: They sent the Academy to Berkeley, California, to Holy Hill and the Franciscan School of Theology.

Riley: Right. That was very, very important. At that point, they started to look for a full-time director. John Schwaller, "Fritz," became the director. They did a very credible search. I was on the board that hired the new director. Fritz was perfect. He got a reasonable situation there for a few years.

Consequently, the Franciscans basically had their money from the property, and they had the Academy, too. From that time on, it's evolved.

Harrison: At what point did the area editors appear?

Riley: The area editors were the associate editors. We gave them more responsibility from almost the start. We were thinking of coverage of the various areas of Latin American history. Again, because of the way Antonine had organized those two boards, those two groups of scholars, there were no area responsibilities. When we tried to bring people on, we would make it clear to them that we wanted them to be our point person for this specific field.

Harrison: You were seeking specialists in Central America and Brazilian history.

Riley: Along with social history, economic history, and political history, not just colonial. We wanted to have a mix of colonialists and modernists. We wanted to attract articles from a much wider group of scholars than we had previously.

Harrison: When you joined Antonine in working at *The Americas*, how did the journal compare to some of the other journals in the field, for example, the *Hispanic American Historical Review*, which has its own long and storied history.

Riley: In terms of reputation, we were known as a place for young scholars to put their first work. That actually was Antonine's vision—that he saw, and I saw, the journal as an outlet for young people whose work might not be polished and who needed a chance to break in to the profession. It hurt that he didn't proofread the pieces. We had to explain to him that you couldn't just let people say what they wanted to say, how they wanted to say it. It would come back and embarrass them on occasion. We had to prevent embarrassment to young scholars by helping them to make the article better. That was the rationale that I used with him to give the assistant editors more responsibility in this process. Even if we accepted an article (or Antonine accepted an article and [there] wasn't anything we could do with it), nevertheless, we could improve it by pointing out bibliography that the person might not have been aware of by editing at a paragraph level. We could also make sure that the arguments that were being made were clear. For the most part, the young scholars appreciated it greatly.

Harrison: Well, that's been noted by more than one scholar—that there is a tremendous difference between *The Americas* now and in its early decades. Knowing you as I do, would you lay that at the feet of your colleagues that you worked with and recruited in those years to help you in that effort?

Riley: Yes, that's exactly how I would put it. But the big change came, as I've already pointed out previously, when we came to a crisis in 1984.

After that point, Antonine never contributed, as far as I can remember, anything to the editorial process. We kept him as the editor for reasons of prestige and continuity. No one outside the journal, even within his confreres, I believe, knew that he had done this—that he had given up the journal. Over time he became quite relaxed with it. Our meetings were still incredibly friendly. We had the wonderful dinners that I've described out at the Academy. Nothing really changed. And the storm blew over. But once we got to that point that we were now in charge, we began to think more thoroughly about what the other two boards were going to look like. It's at that point that we came to a decision that

we would begin to look completely at the associate editors as area editors. I don't know if they have that name now. I honestly don't recollect looking at the masthead of the journal. But we decided we would have very clear responsibilities given to these individuals. One of the disagreements was over whether we should have two Mexican specialists. We had to have a modern Mexicanist. But did we? If we had a colonial Mexicanist and a modern Mexicanist, was that too much?

Harrison: Well, that would demand that you have the same split in other regions.

Riley: Precisely. Those people were not at a level that they were going to have to do too much work for us. But we really were going to solicit advice from them. The special issues came out of that. The associate editors organized quite a number of the early special issues. They became editors in fact as well as in theory. People understood what it was we were looking for. We wanted them to solicit articles for us, subject to approval. At the point that we took over from Antonine in 1984, that was the first basic decision we made: that every article would have to be reviewed and approved by one of the assistant editors at one of our quarterly meetings. Then we would send it out for review. It had to be reviewed externally by at least two people. It's at that point, I think, that the nature of the work of the journal began to change, pretty dramatically, because every article that we had after the blow up in 1984 was a refereed article.

Harrison: And that process continues to this day.

Riley: Absolutely. I was last connected to the journal in 2012, I think it was. It was still very much the name of the game at that point. I can't imagine that has changed any.

Harrison: One of the things that I've been told by some of the people who edited the journal with you and then took over and became editors in turn was that you spent a fair amount of your time showing them the ropes.

Riley: Oh, yes. I believed in continuity. I believed in collegiality. Obviously, I was going to select people who had those same, the same, feelings. Actually, the only one that I selected was Vincent Peloso, who was my senior assistant editor, from Howard University. He was the book review editor. He was also the in-town person that I worked most with on the journal.

As soon as I became editor in 1987, the first step that I took was to make the board and the editor himself subject to term limits, a five-year term. That's all I wanted: the five-year term for the editor and five years for the associate editors. We split the board into three parts. And each year we changed one-third of the

editors. Everybody knew when they were offered an associate editorship that there would be responsibilities, area responsibilities, but they had a five-year term. We would extend that for people who were particularly important and friendly. There were Franciscans who were helpful, for example, in this way.

The senior editors were another case. The senior editors did not have term limits or anything like that because we kept them on as long as they wanted to be there. But we also moved people around there. There was a little more grace when they retired. The feeling was that someone else who is active should replace them, or we didn't want the board to just proliferate. It had to be set numbers. That was a decision made very, very early on.

As soon as I took over as editor, the working editors, the assistant editors, had no term limits, but I was definitely on a term limit. Vince knew that he was the next editor, and he would take over in five years. Then it would be his decision to appoint a senior assistant editor who would then take over from him. I tried to set a pattern for the future, as well, by returning to the board of assistant editors, where I stayed until 2012.

Harrison: That position on the masthead evolved to become the book review editor.

Riley: Oh, it was always definitely the book review editor, but we called it the Senior Assistant Editor early on.

Harrison: Did the number of reviews that the journal published grow over the years, or has it maintained a rather consistent footprint?

Riley: My sense is it has; the number of reviews has increased, but not dramatically.

The thing is that, with an issue, as every one of us learned, a page in print is costly. And so, the journal was never to be, except in very special circumstances, more than about 140 pages. That was financially sustainable.

When I was the editor, we put a lot in the notes section. We continued that whenever somebody came up with an archive nobody had heard of. We wanted to know about it. We wanted to have detailed information about what was in it, what one could hope to find in it. Some of our editors, some of our associate editors, were doing quite innovative work in archives that people had not touched before.

Harrison: You came to Catholic University in Washington, D.C., at an interesting time in the history of the university in the 1970s. Certainly, you found yourself with your hands full, working with Father Tibesar at *The Americas*. What were the significant parts of your academic life at the university in the 1980s and the 1990s?

Riley: I got tenure in 1981, and that changed the game somewhat, as it did when I became an associate professor; then I became a part of the inner group, I guess, and I began to reach outside the department.

Part of my reputation was that my door was always open. If it was closed, that means either I wasn't there or I was really engaged in some kind of classroom activity. If somebody knocked on my door, I said, "Come in." Whatever I was doing, I'd drop it and talk with them. That's been one of my philosophies all of the time: very people oriented. If they came to me, I tried to help them as best I could, no matter what other things I happened to be doing.

I developed this reputation, and I enjoyed myself enormously. I began to be called upon for administrative activity. The first administrative activity that they gave me was to take the place of the dean of international students who was taking a sabbatical.

Harrison: Speaking of your own work, in the few years before you retired in 2010, you were busy editing a compilation of essays of one of your primary mentors, Richard Greenleaf. This was published by the Academy of American Franciscan History. What motivated you to do that, specifically those essays of Greenleaf's? What did that project mean to you?

Riley: The project itself was envisioned as an honor for Dick by the Academy. Dick was probably the most distinguished historian of Franciscan history, of colonial Franciscan history, in the world. I would go that far. He had had enormous influence on Franciscan studies. He was respected throughout the Western Hemisphere. He had admirers in Europe. He knew everybody—that was one of his gifts. He knew everybody in Europe as well. He had done great things for the Academy. He had helped the Academy in lots of different ways. When he was approaching his end, the Academy was thinking of some of doing something for him. The idea of some kind of Festschrift was the first idea that came to the minds of people. But I had a slightly different take on it. And they went along with it.

He had published over time, I can't tell you, 10 or 12 articles in *The Americas* as well as articles outside of the journal on a variety of topics related to colonial

religious activity and other subjects. But one of the things that was lacking in Dick's career was the completion of his last book. He had a great number of ideas. He wanted to do a biography of Juan de Zumárraga, which was never going to be done, unfortunately. He had all of the data. But none of his students was interested in it. The documentary collection would be available to anybody who decided they wanted to do this very significant piece of work. But it wasn't going to happen. He also had spent an enormous amount of time on the Inquisition, which wasn't a Franciscan topic, but it was a very key element of the religious history of the New World. I had learned that his insight into the Inquisition was distinctly different than what was being taught in the existing literature. The irony is that, as I myself read about the Inquisition in Spain in particular, you could see that scholars were coming closer to his understanding of the institution. Most of the major scholars of the last generation like Henry Kamen and the Spanish scholars who have worked on the Inquisition saw the Inquisition as the same kind of legal structure. They were not impressed by, or they didn't emphasize, the brutality of the Inquisition. They emphasized its dependence on legal procedure. That was one of Dick's major insights: that the Inquisition was a bureaucracy.

And it was a highly ethical, within its context—a highly ethical and highly legally motivated structure. There was a procedure. There was a legal procedure which had to be followed. The rights of defendants were an important element in that. Dick's conclusion was that this was not the inquisition of John Cleese and Monty Python.

This was a modern instrument of the state. It was one in which law was very, very important. Greenleaf wanted to write that book—to show the Inquisition, to flesh out his story of the Inquisition for the Western Hemisphere. But he would never do it. It was too big a topic. It was beyond his capability.

That's a prelude to the story of the compilation. I looked at his articles; I read all of his articles again. I realized that he had made the argument about the Inquisition as bureaucracy: the Inquisition as an institution bound by legal procedures, by law—an institution in which the rights of defendants were carefully protected. What I could do was to take those articles and put them together with a little bit of introduction and explanation and publish them. That would be the last book. That would be the summary of his career, which is what a Festschrift, I think, is about. In fact, it worked much better. I selected some articles. I put it before him and said, "This is what I want to focus on. Do you agree?" And he said, "Go with it." I don't think he put up any objections to whatever I put in. The articles were from a variety of journals. It wasn't just *The Americas*. It was also works from the *New Mexico Historical Review* and some

others. I decided that it shouldn't be just for scholars. Any scholar could use it for the bibliography that I provided as a reference work. If they wanted to go more deeply, they could go into the analysis and look at the footnotes and other resources. But I thought that it should be mostly for students. As a result, I had to strip out the vast majority of the footnotes from the various articles. I scanned in all of the articles, which was an intriguing process in itself. I was able to deal with the infelicities of language, the mistakes that the computer made in the scanning process. But overall, it wasn't an impossible task. I took on the effort of editing that, and I was quite happy the way that worked out.

I decided the best introduction would simply be to give his biography and offer a few words to show why certain articles were selected and what the overall conclusions were to the entire the volume. I also provided a bibliography at the end of all of the sources that he cites.

Harrison: And you, as a student of Dick's, were able to present this to him at a certain point?

Riley: Yes, it was before he died. We went out to an event in Albuquerque at the University of New Mexico and presented him with a copy of it.

Harrison: How did he respond to that?

Riley: He was very happy about it—that we had taken the effort to do this for him. He told me at a later time that he actually read it, and he was pleased with it. He was the subject of it, but I wasn't looking for his approval. It was an interesting project. I enjoyed doing it because Dick had done a great deal for me, and I simply had to repay him.

Harrison: Since winding down your work with *The Americas* and the Catholic University of America and setting aside, at a certain point, some of your own research for a while, just thinking back about research, teaching, and administrative work, editing a journal that rose under your leadership and those that followed, if one were to talk about the legacy that you're leaving to the field of Mexican history, of Latin American studies, Latin American history, and the academy in general, what sort of thoughts would come to your mind at this point?

Riley: Oh, that I'm still alive and kicking. I've moved on to other things.

That would be the first response to that question. I do truly believe that my legacy is in the hands of others to say what this all meant. All I can say is I'm very

happy with the way my life has turned out. I regret that I did not finish the book on Tlaxcala that I had truly hoped would be the pinnacle of my career. I strongly believe that there are insights into society and the economic structures of a province—a provincial life—that are—that should—eventually become a part of the corpus of knowledge that we have. I've not written a [second] book, but I've written several articles. My friends know of my work and, I think, have some respect for it. All I can say about it is that I immensely enjoyed doing what I was doing.

I guess it's up to a next generation. There are certain things you can accomplish, certain things you can't accomplish in life. What I've tried to do in each of the roles that I have played is to be the best I can at what I'm doing at that particular time: to be helpful and to be in some way not an impediment to progress, but a tool to progress. To me, personal glory meant nothing. I was interested in helping my colleagues, and my students, to improve themselves, to be better at what they had, what they did. I'm very pleased with my students. The undergraduate students have gone on to different kinds of careers. But I was very, very happy to have them during the times that they were a part of my life or I was a part of their life. [As for] my graduate students, I directed six dissertations. I also influenced a whole bunch more students than that. I think that, again, whatever has happened to the people that I worked with, I was very happy to be a part of what they had done. That's my legacy up to this point. I'm satisfied with it.

Harrison: You have every right to be.

Riley: Thank you for that.

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