



Smithsonian  
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Interview with Paul Galloway about Ed  
Galloway

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# **Transcript**

## **Preface**

### **Tape-Recorded Interview with Ed Galloway's Son Paul**

**in Sand Springs, Oklahoma**

**June 1981**

**Willem Volkersz, Interviewer**

#### **Editor's Note:**

This transcript is from a series of recordings made by Willem Volkersz over a number of years. They are not formal interviews, but rather records of conversations, often taped during photo-taking tours of the artist's studios or home collections.

The naive/visionary artists in these interviews have unique verbal mannerisms, many of which are difficult or impossible to transcribe accurately into written form. Thus, for grasping certain nuances of speech, researchers will find it advantageous to listen to the original tapes.

Our intent in transcribing these interviews was nonetheless to translate as accurately as possible the spoken word into a comprehensible written form, making changes to clarify but not to interpret. Thus the speaker's grammar is unedited. For example, "them" for "those," "themselves," and "gotta" were all transcribed as heard. On the other hand, certain changes were made for clarity: "'cause," was transcribed as "because," "'fore" as "before," "'yo" as "your," etc.

Other editorial notations are as follows: Bracketed words are of two types. Those with "[—Ed.]" or "[—WV]" are inserted by the transcriber, editor, or Volkersz. Other bracketed words indicate uncertainty: Two or more words or phrases indicate possible alternatives; "[unintelligible]" and "\_\_\_\_" indicate words that are garbled or incomprehensible on the tape, the former being a much longer phrase than the latter; "[noise]" is self-explanatory.

#### **Interview**

**PG: Paul Galloway**

**WV: Willem Volkersz**

#### **[Tape 1, side A; Volkersz' No. G1-1] [45-minute tape sides]**

[Throughout much of this tape, Mrs. Ed Galloway conversed with Diane Volkersz, occasionally joining directly in the interview to provide additional information—Ed.]

WV: How were they lost?

Mrs. Ed Galloway (MG): They were stolen.

PG: Stolen.

WV: From the place out there?

PG: Uh huh.

WV: Oh, that's terrible.

MG: He had all. . . [continues talking with Diane Volkersz, usually too far from microphone to transcribe—Ed.]

PG: They left me this picture right here.

WV: That big one?

PG: Uh huh, I guess they felt sorry for me.

WV: (chuckles)

PG: Now, I take that back. Not this picture, but the one that's on display down in Oklahoma City [Exhibition, Folk Art in Oklahoma, Oklahoma Art Center, May 3-June 19, 1981—WV].

WV: Uh huh, I'm going to go look at that later, yeah.

PG: Just exactly like it, only it's bigger in the frame.

WV: Uh huh.

PG: And more in length.

WV: Now, I really don't know much of the history of the place I looked at yesterday. Maybe you can tell me something about what he did for a living, and why he started to build that? I'd love to know something about it.

PG: Well, I might have to go back a little ways to make it. . .

WV: Yeah, I'm sure.

PG: . . . a little more realistic. Well, anyway, he was quite a natural craftsman, even from a boy. And leaned that way for making, you know, stuff for his teachers and this, that, and the other out of wood, and they later on went to Nagasaki, Japan, with the army, when he is in the cavalry.

WV: Huh!

PG: During the, they called the Insurrection, and I'm not quite sure, Spanish-American War Insurrection.

WV: Right.

PG: And he got on one of these trips to go to Nagasaki, Japan, and he saw works there of carvings and things that Japanese and Chinese people had spent their whole lives on this one piece of work, you know.

WV: About what year was that? About when was that?

PG: I think it was about 1904. Or it was pretty close to that.

WV: What year was he born?

PG: Ooh, Grandma, I don't know. What year was Grandad borned in? I should have that on my tongue, but I don't. [PR referred to his father as "Grandad" and his wife as "Grandma."—WV]

WV: Oh, that's all right. I was just curious.

MG: I tell you, I can't. . . About 1880, but I'll look it up, for sure.

WV: Uh huh.

PG: Well, I'd be, I miss that \_\_\_\_.

WV: I understand, yeah.

PG: I'd have to back it up and. . . And then there's more backing up. (chuckles) When he come back, why he come back to the States, and married, of course, my mother, and he was interested in this carving, and he got him a whole lot of sycamore and gum logs, from Arkansas.

WV: Uh huh.

PG: And he carved out some very unusual things, and had a quiet little exhibit there in Springfield, Missouri.

WV: Was he living there?

PG: He was living there and working in, for a while, the Springfield wagon shop, and then later on, the Frisco Railroad. And there was lots of woodworking, you know, going on in the trains of that time, and of course the wagons, why, lots of it. But he stayed with his art, and. . .

WV: Was he trained in a particular field?

PG: He had no training.

WV: A jack of all trades?

PG: No training, only a third-grade education. But he was very interested in reading. You would have like to have talked to him because he had read about every book you could think of—and good books.

WV: That's marvelous.

PG: He'd set and read every night. And he could out figure you in his head in math, lots of different ways. But he just come out that way. He had a very good memory. And quite a philosophy. So up there, he was going on real fine with his little exhibit, and the boy next door in the filling station let gasoline run over, and it caught on fire.

WV: Oh, no.

PG: And it burnt him out, and he rolled out a few things—they were so terribly heavy, massive stuff, that. . . In fact, one of them was a six-foot lion inside of a cage.

WV: Oh! Out of wood.

PG: Out of wood. No loose bars whatsoever. All the bars were carved, and he had to use line. . .

WV: Oh, there it is! [Speaking of birth records—Ed.] Born February 18, 1880. Nathan—was it Nathan?

MG: Edward.

WV: Nathan Edward Galloway. Oh, thank you for looking that up. I really appreciate that. What happened after the fire?

PG: Well, he sold \_\_\_\_\_ all the people standing around there, and he sold postcards, and then he come here to Sand Springs to see—not, come to Tulsa [correcting himself from Sand Springs to Tulsa—Ed.] to see Harry F. Sinclair, I believe was his name. He was the oil man?

WV: Yes, Sinclair Oil.

PG: Well, it's Harry Sinclair, but I don't know about the F.

WV: Right.

PG: But anyway, he had a home over there on Third Street, and he tried to interest him in some of these carvings and things so he could get a little money for another start. And he sent him out here to Mr. Page, Sand Springs Home [an orphanage—WV].

WV: Page?

PG: Uh huh. He operated a home here, the largest farms in the southwest, and he had a home up here of children that he kept that he helped hold families together. You know, something happened to the daddy and mamma?

WV: Right, I understand.

PG: Well, he'd take care of the whole group.

WV: Like a foster home.

PG: Um hmm. And dad stayed with him for 22 years.

WV: Doing what?

PG: Manual training teacher.

WV: Ahh.

PG: He had self-educated himself, in lots of different ways. And all the kids just loved him. I was up to a meeting last night, of all a bunch of the old home kids.

WV: Yes.

PG: And lots of them now are as old as 72 and 73 years old, and see they were talking about Dad and were greatly displeased over his old shop being torn down. (chuckles) For, you know, rebuilding stuff around here.

WV: Now where was that shop?

PG: His shop was down near. . . Well, you might have come pretty close to it coming in.

WV: Right here in Sand Springs?

PG: Right here in Sand Springs.

WV: I see.

PG: It belonged to the home, you know.

WV: Yeah, I understand.

PG: Starting out there, they built this big home up here on the hill, and of course the shop was very productive in making stuff for the home.

WV: And made things to sell? Oh, for the home, I see, like furniture and things like that?

PG: Made furniture and cutting out all the members in this roof and the ceiling, and it saved them a lot of money there. They had—oh, it would be big money back in those times—there was about \$25,000 worth of equipment in that shop.

WV: Boy, uh huh.

PG: In those days, that would be a tremendous amount.

WV: That's a big chunk of money.

PG: All of their machines, which were very, very good. And him and Mr. Page got along real, real well. And he would take those boys camping, all over the country, just practically by himself—and girls. And he'd have quite a number of them. And he had a very, very unique way of handling boys. I think. . .

WV: What's that?

PG: Well, he just got along with them some way or another. I don't know how he would do it, but it's through a form of psychology that he just developed. After he moved up on the farm and retired up here, lots of families in Tulsa would bring their boys up there and let them stay with him all summer. Some of them, why, they wouldn't even speak to him, you know, and he'd have them out in the woods and they'd be following him around and he'd start telling them about—and out in nature why he could tell you about every leaf that's out there. Every piece of bark and what family of tree it might have come from, just from a little piece. And animal life, he was pretty well up on it. Some way or another he'd work his way and worm his way into where this little boy in just a short, short amount of time would be right in there following him around.

WV: So he was there for twenty-some years?

PG: Twenty-two years at the home.

WV: Huh.

PG: And after he, well, retired up there, why he started building that totem pole, and. . .

WV: That's here, you mean?

PG: Well, we worked on building that house [near Foyil, Oklahoma—WV] and part of the totem pole, before he retired from there, on Saturdays and Sundays.

WV: Yeah, I mean, did he already own the place up there in Foyil?

PG: Yeah, um hmm.

WV: Was that sort of like a, was it bought as a farm, or as a place to, as a summer cabin, or what?

PG: Well, he was planning on retiring and going there.

WV: Oh, retiring there.

PG: He had that planned out ahead of time. He had, him and my mom both had some folks right in that area, and not too far away, that were also farming there.

WV: I see.

PG: But this particular place had, well, it wasn't big, it was only ten acres. Later on, he got ten more acres.

WV: So when did he buy that, do you think? About.

PG: Oh, I would say about 1930, somewhere along in there.

WV: Had he built the house on there too?

PG: He built the house on there. We built it on Saturdays and Sundays, you know.

WV: When you were still living here?

PG: When we were still living here.

WV: You'd go up there on the weekends and work on the house?

PG: Um hmm. And built the house, and then we started on the old turtle's head. There's a little old creek used to run down through there; it's not much of a creek anymore. But we'd haul all the sand out of that creek and mix up the concrete. And then the rocks, you know, come from right around there, sandstone. I worked for the fire company then, and they'd give me all their old guy wire we'd take down, you know.

WV: Right.

PG: And I'd take that guy wire up there. I've hauled tons of it up there.

WV: To reinforce the concrete?

PG: And lots of it, it was just plain old steel wire.

WV: Yes.

PG: It doesn't braid. Boy, it's real stiff.

WV: Right.

PG: And that's in the faces, and that's reinforcing the concrete.

WV: Right. Now, why would he even want to build those things? I mean, first, he was a woodcarver, primarily, right?

PG: Yeah, uh huh.

WV: Now why would he, how did he decide to make things out of concrete? And why? Do you have any idea?

PG: Well, not too much, only that would last longer. And he had some ideas there about little Boy Scouts. He never was connected with the little Boy Scouts, but he helped them in lots of ways. And he wanted on each level of that [the totem pole, a tower—WV], a different part of the country, the little Boy Scouts' pictures to be around the walls there, see, on the inside.

WV: I see.

PG: And they'd have a spiral winding staircase going all the way up.

WV: In that big tower, you mean.

PG: Um hmm.

WV: Did that big tower have a name, or anything like that? Or what did you refer to it as?

PG: No, just a totem pole.

WV: As a totem pole, uh huh. Now, there's a lot of birds living in there now, it looks like.

PG: Yeah.

WV: A lot of just birds were coming and going at all times.

PG: Yeah. Yeah, the windows are all out up at the top.

WV: What happened to the spiral stairway?

PG: Well, it was never put in.

WV: Oh, it never was put in?

PG: Never was put in.

WV: Now, did you have a scaffolding to build that?

PG: Well. . . Oh, yeah. Well, his scaffolding wouldn't be hardly safe enough for you and I to work on, the way \_\_\_\_\_. [gesturing towards Volkersz' wife?—Ed.]

WV: Oh, she wouldn't like it, huh?

PG: No, that's for sure! And the last time he painted it—and I wouldn't want to be hemmed in too close, but I know he was in his eighties. I don't know how far, maybe eighty-one or eighty.

WV: Gee.

PG: But anyway, he'd take a rope, right out of the top, and a little—not a board and basket, just a board.

WV: Right.

PG: And a strap up here, around his back, and he would run around that thing and paint it.

WV: Oh, I'll be darned! What was the rope suspended from? How did he tie it on?

PG: Just loose out of the top, see.

WV: Out of the top.

PG: Uh huh, it would go up through the center, and down.

WV: Right.

PG: Well, he could let down from down below, you know, and then. . .

WV: Now, we're talking about painting the inside now?

PG: On the outside. On the outside. (chuckles)

WV: Oh boy. That's extraordinary.

PG: But he was in real, real good health, you know, and pretty dad-gone strong, for an old man, right up to the time he got sick. But after Mom died, he just kind of seemed to lose all—well, I don't know how you'd even explain it, but. . .

WV: Yeah, all of his interest in. . .

PG: All his interest in. . . Well, he kept quite a bit. Even when he was down there in the hospital, he was. . . His last thing that he wanted to do, he thought that there was a great counterpart between all the presidents of the United States and the great Indians that we had had, and he wanted to make all the presidents in relief like these pictures [of inlaid wood, which he had made earlier—WV].

WV: Right.

PG: And did. All but, up through Kennedy. In fact, Kennedy, the only one that wasn't completed was Harry Truman.

WV: Now, were they made out of concrete or wood?

PG: No, they're wood.

WV: They're wood. Oh, and they were located where?

PG: They got stolen.

WV: But they were originally in the base of the totem pole?

PG: No, they was out in the little fiddle house.

WV: Oh, I see.

PG: All the way around, see.

WV: Ohhh.

PG: And he had to do a lot of history and writing, you know, to even know what color hair they had. . .

WV: Boy.

PG: . . .and a little more about them. National Geographic magazine helped him out on some of it. And he'd have to do a lot of experimenting. You know, that wood there, you don't know what it's going to do when you put varnish on it, just how it is going to come out. Some of these woods, like them pictures there, there'd be woods from all over the world. He'd get them through the Paxton Lumber Company.

WV: Oh, Paxton, yeah.

PG: When he went to working on the presidents, he started making his own. See, just a sheet of that thirty-second of an inch thick, put my foot, would cost a dollar then, which was pretty good-sized money, when you get to messing with them.

WV: Yeah.

PG: There's \$75 worth of money at that time in that picture.

WV: Oh, that big one?

PG: Uh huh.

WV: Boy, that's a lot of money, certainly for those days. You say he was interested in doing things for the Boy Scouts. . .

PG: Yeah, and boys, and girls, and from all religions and denominations would show up there, and the little Catholic girls and boys would come in, clean up the totem pole, and clean up the stuff around there. And he had places for them to play there, as you can see. It's not as good as it is now, or. . . [probably meant the reverse: it's not as good now as it was then—Ed.]

WV: Yeah.

PG: It was very well kept them. And he believed in art as a fulfillment, if the kids would get into it, of their better lives.

WV: Sure.

PG: And could live a much healthier and better life by, through art, being interested in it, no matter what it was. He had a kind of a belief that anything—if you was a fisherman and you liked to fish, why, you should fish. If you was a carpenter, if you liked carpenter work or any part of it, you ought to do that; that's what you really should do. To be happy, and be happy with your work.

WV: Right.

PG: But through art, which would, you know, come from all of these things, you can tell by his work and these carvings, most of them would go back to animals or fish or something along this line.

WV: So it was about nature, a lot of it?

PG: About nature. About nature, and leaves. . .

WV: And a lot of it was about Indians, right?



PG: Leaves and Indians, right.

WV: Is that because of the part of the country that he grew up in? What was his interest there?

PG: Ah, well, I don't know. It could be because of the part that he grew up in, but there wasn't too many Indians, I don't believe. He grew up around Missouri.

WV: Where? Around Springfield?

PG: Around Springfield.

WV: Was he born in Springfield?

PG: Huh?

WV: Was he born in Springfield?

PG: Right out of there.

WV: But it's interesting because there's so many Indians on the towers there.

PG: Yeah.

WV: And that big one that's shaped like an arrowhead.

PG: Yeah, all of the Indians on there are actually, are reproductions of actual Indians, five civilized tribes, chieftains, and then he'd go to another part of the country, and he would find the head chieftains that would be in that part of the country. Then he would go to another part of the country, and then, of course, the ones on the top are in the status—I don't remember all of them's right now—but Geronimo, and Sequoia, and Chief Sitting Bull. Darn, I can't place the other one.

WV: Where would he find the pictures of these men?

PG: National Geographic would help him out just a whole lot.

WV: Yeah.

PG: And then some of the historical societies would help him.

WV: He would write to them?

PG: Uh huh, he would write to them, and they'd send him pictures and things.

WV: That's interesting. Now there were some, on the big totem pole, there were some big, almost like monster-like faces on there too. What are those? They're the real big faces.

PG: A lot of this would, when he was. . . He made totem poles all over the country around here, out of old trees and snags and stuff, in the parks and things. He would have snakes that'd be, oh, maybe sixty feet long, you know, that would be made out of a tree that would be. . . And then he'd have these goofies [apparently a term for a nonsensical carved image—WV] all over them, but he was stationed in Boise, Idaho, and they left from Seattle, Washington—you know, on these trips to Nagasaki, Japan, the Philippine Islands.

WV: Yes.

PG: And while he was there [in Seattle—Ed.], he got to see this totem pole which is down there in—if you've ever been there, it's way down there. . . Darn, it's below the Frye Hotel and right practically on the Sound. Dog gone it.

WV: Oh, Pioneer Square? There is a totem pole, I think, in Pioneer Square.

PG: Yeah, uh huh.

WV: Right down there, right down by the water.

PG: That thing has been there for years and years and years and years.

WV: Yeah.

PG: But anyway, there was numerous ones a few years back and he first got interested then, right there when he was a G.I. in the army. (chuckles)

WV: That's interesting.

PG: And he held that on when he come back down here. He done lots of studying about the Indians.

WV: But I still wonder about those really large faces. You know, the real big ones, you know, that are, you know, on one side it's kind of smiling, and the other side it isn't, it looks a little different. But I wonder where those big faces come from.

PG: Well. . .

WV: Are those out of Indian folklore too, you think?

PG: I don't really believe so. I believe they'd be more or less just something of his making.

WV: Yeah.

PG: Or something that come to his mind from the making of all this other, you know, and the reading. As I said before, he done lots of reading on, like [if—Ed.] he was going to carve some Indian or make one in relief, in concrete—or casting—he'd do lots of reading that he could to try to make it reflect, you know, out of his work.

WV: Now did all of you help him, or did he do it all by himself, or what? How did that work?

PG: Well, most of that work, after I left home, he done by hisself.

WV: Were you the only son?

PG: Uh huh. And on that totem pole, he'd—see, that's done mostly with a five-gallon bucket and a wheelbarrow. And mixing up a little concrete, doing a little work. . .

WV: You mean, he built his own scaffolding sort of to get up there.

PG: Yeah, uh huh. He would. . .

WV: [To Jason Volkorsz:] We're just talking about the sculpture right now.

[Discussion follows about having some tea—Ed.]

WV: So you helped him on some of it.

PG: Oh, yeah, I. . .

WV: Or quite a bit of it, actually, probably, huh?

PG: Quite a little bit, and on weekends I would help. But on the, the most part that was, the stuff that was there I did very little work on. All that I could help him in assistance is money, and some extra time that I'd have, or equipment that I could get, such as I would come about leftover reinforcement bars on the job.

WV: Right, right.

PG: I'd take this and take up there, and that's in the totem pole right now for reinforcement. The reinforcement rod is made down here at the steel mill. It's, I don't know how many tons of that's in there. And then of course that wire. I had a old ton-and-a-half truck. I'd load it up all during the week, you know, and then in the weekend I'd haul it up there.

WV: So did he start to build the totem pole after he built the house?

PG: Right.

WV: And when would you say that was? Oh, the totem pole has a date on it—1948, doesn't it?

MG: 1936, Paul, when he started the totem pole.

WV: When he started it? And so he finished it in '48. Would that be right?

PG: '48, yeah. Uh huh, well, he done. . . It never was completely finished but he had it, you know, for

everybody to view and. . .

MG: No, that's 1937.

WV: 1937.

MG: We were married in '36 and Cindy was born in '38, then he went, they were up there, but your mother came down here when Cindy was born. It was '37.

WV: So it took him a long time to build that. I mean, it's a large structure.

MG: It didn't take him that long to build it.

WV: Do you know how tall that totem pole is?

PG: I think 60 feet.

WV: Boy.

PG: No. Well, when he got that flagpole up there in the center, makes it a little higher. Now that is a totem pole. You can't hardly see it from the ground.

WV: Yeah, it's way up there.

PG: It's all carved.

WV: You mean, it's out of wood?

PG: Uh huh. That's post oak pole.

WV: Now are the other, were the other pieces built after he built the totem pole? Was the totem pole first?

PG: Totem pole was first, and then the arrowhead was next. And the water bath was next.

WV: Yes, I remember seeing that.

PG: And then him and Mom kind of got into an argument there, and I don't know just how that did come out, but she said only God can make a tree. . .

MG: He said, "I'm going to make a tree out of cement." And she said, "Totem poles are built by fools like thee, but only God can make a tree." And he said, "Well, we'll see."

WV: (laughs) Who was this?

MG: His [Paul's—WV] mother. She said, "Totem poles are made by fools like thee, but only God can make a tree." And he said, "Well, we'll see."

WV: (laughs again) Oh, that's beautiful.

MG: So, that's the way this tree was made with the little squirrels and that, you know, on the cement tree.

WV: Yeah, I remember seeing that one.

MG: And the reason that birdbath is so high up is so the cats can't catch the birds while they're. . .

WV: While they're. . . Yeah, right. While they're washing or whatever and drinking.

MG: Yes.

WV: That makes sense. How was he able to carve into the cement, because it must have been somewhat wet still when he was carved into, huh?

PG: Oh, it was wet, yeah, uh huh. You can do anything in the world with cement. But it's got to be at the right texture. Man, you've got to know what you're going to do when you get there. But it'll be a little work.

WV: Did he ever make drawings, or was it all from his head directly?

PG: He made drawings.

WV: Oh, made drawings.

PG: He could see you, you know, come into the house here, and you'd be gone two or three days, he could draw your picture just, blingo. And you'd know it was you.

WV: Do you still have any of those pictures?

PG: No. . . Well, I might have one of Mr. [Fates, Page]. I've got, he drew of Mr. Fates maybe fifteen years after he was dead.

WV: That's extraordinary. What a skill he had. Now was he sort of thinking of making a kind of roadside attraction? It looks like he had a picnic table there, or a table with those concrete chairs around it.

PG: Well, you know, it was all for free, and if anyone'd come in, he'd have to register. And then if they wanted to put something in the jar, why okay, and if they didn't okay.

WV: Sure.

PG: So I guess he made about enough to play the light bill, you know, off of the monkey jar. But as far as a money-making scheme, he had nothing like that at all. He had very little use for money, only to buy something to work with. (chuckles)

WV: Now, what was he living off? He was retired. Did he have a pension or something?

PG: He had the Spanish-American War pension, which didn't amount to very much.

WV: \_\_\_\_\_, right. But just enough?

PG: But the biggest amount that he ever did draw I believe was \$90 a month, and then that was cut back to \$30.

WV: Oh boy.

PG: And then later on, it went back up a little bit more. But he would have a quite a bit of work there in his shop, you know, for the farmers and things around. . .

WV: Which building was the shop?

PG: That's the one right due west.

WV: That big. . .

PG: Tin barn down there, you know.

WV: Oh, I see.

PG: Right down. . .

WV: What was that octagonal, that eight-sided building?

PG: Now, that was a museum.

WV: That was a museum?

PG: That's the museum.

WV: I wondered what it was!

PG: There's a lot of pictures in there yet, painted on the wall.

WV: Yeah, I've noticed that.

PG: And they're on. . . On the outsides there's concrete pictures of Indians. I know very little of these Indians, which ones they are. Got no dope on it all. All the, when the thievery went on up there, I had to—you might call it antiques, but. . . Yeah, and they were antiques; they were Dad and Mom's furniture; they'd had a lot of it since they were married. But anyway, a lot of the records that I had I kept in a dresser drawer up there, and they stole the dresser.

WV: Oh, no.

PG: All the records there was in it. [chuckling at the irony—Ed.]

WV: Oh, that's really sad.

PG: Yeah, I really hated it.

WV: What else did he have in the museum? What kinds of things did he have in there?

PG: Well, he had some carvings. Five. . .

WV: \_\_\_\_\_. [obscured by the ongoing conversation between Mrs. Galloway and Diane Volkersz—Ed.]

PG: Yeah. There was, in all, five cedar chests. Part of them was cedar-lined walnut chests.

WV: That he made, you mean.

PG: Uh huh. And each one of them would have a fish or something along this line on the outside. Most of them were fish. And they were, oh, maybe four foot—a big black bass, you know. Or a sea bass. And others would be, he'd have grapes, grapevines, and. . .

WV: Carved out of walnut on the outside of the chest?

PG: Uh huh. They were very beautiful. And they were all taken, and the heck of it is, see, I had, inside of those, so they would keep real good. . . It's not good on these pictures for the temperature to change too much, too fast.

WV: Sure, of course, they'll pop off, won't they?

PG: And I had them just as full of them pictures as they could be. I had them all loaded up for 'em. So they come in there. . .

WV: Oh boy. When did this happen?

PG: I'd say right at about 13 years ago.

WV: Oh boy.

PG: And it was all probabilities on a Friday night. I had Little Joe [Holman?—WV] in the store there, you know, him'll watch the stuff pretty close, and he had the keys to the Fiddle House. We called that the Fiddle House, because there was four hundred and. . . Well, four hundred and something. Four hundred of them violins in there.

WV: Oh, that he'd collected?

PG: No, that he had made.

WV: He'd made that many of them? That's great.

PG: Um hmm. Oh, he worked all the time. See, when he got in the house in the night, he had to be doing something, so he'd make fiddles or some carvings of some kind.

WV: That's amazing!

PG: I've got some of the fiddles downstairs right now. They [the thieves—Ed.] took their time, picked out the best, you know. And, well, there was one or two real good ones. Leonard Noland has quite a few things, and. . .

WV: Who is that?

PG: He is a friend here of Dad's, here in town. They hunted together and were very good friends.

WV: I see.

PG: And practically for every one of these that he made, he made him one.

WV: Oh boy.

PG: And then he had a dining room suite that he made him; it's all carved out.

WV: Oh boy.

PG: [Joanna], is that, them pictures that I got from Miss Andrews there?

MG: Well, I probably \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_.

WV: Oh yeah, I've got that \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_.

PG: They're not in that.

MG: Well, I've got. . . Oh, dear.

WV: Who has the key to the museum now? There's a padlock on it.

PG: There isn't anything in there but I've got. . .

WV: Well, there are pictures on the wall.

PG: Yeah.

WV: And I was thinking about maybe coming back sometime and with your permission maybe photographing the inside of it. Because there's some nice paintings in there.

PG: Yep.

WV: Now, do you know who has the key to that padlock?

PG: I do.

WV: Oh, you do.

PG: Um hmm.

WV: Would that be possible sometime in the future?

PG: Oh, yeah. Um hmm. There's some of the. . . Oh, there's that [group, goofie] we made out of some sycamore.

WV: Oh. Oh, that's beautiful.

PG: I lost one of these, that we certainly cherished. Now see, them's little drawers here that pull out.

WV: So that is what? An owl? Yeah.

PG: You might call it an owl.

WV: Something like that.

PG: Um hmm.

WV: With little drawers on the inside. This is a small totem, isn't it?

PG: Um hmm.

WV: Where's this one now?

PG: That would be over here, in Sand Springs.

WV: Ohh. Diane, you want to look at these in a minute. This one of the fiddle.

PG: That's one of the. . . This is one of the fiddles that Leonard had. This is the stuff that was at Springfield.

WV: Now where is this?

PG: That's at Springfield. That's one he, I told you he got burnt out up there? This is some of the stuff that he carved there.

WV: Now, where is that located in Springfield? Did somebody own that, or is that in a park, or what?

MG: It's in a park, I think.

PG: Well, no, see this is burned up.

WV: Oh, that burned. Oh, that's beautiful.

MG: Yeah, but isn't that lion inside that thing in a park in Springfield, the lion inside the. . . Doesn't it say that on the back of. . . [she was not responded to—Ed.]

WV: I'll look at all of these here.

PG: That's \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_.

WV: Oh! Oh, that's beautiful.

PG: These are, that is a graft palm.

MG: [continuing to Diane Volkersz:] We'd been offered \$50,000 for that stuff years ago that was stolen.

PG: These are eel. He had lots of little goofies like this. I didn't even have no record of them, you know. And smaller boxes, that were stolen. There's a lot of work in this. I helped do this.

MG: [continuing to DV:] And it would be so easy to identify.

PG: See, there's a big fish on the back of each one of these.

WV: Extraordinary.

PG: The chairs are real comfortable. There's a little owl, and an owl and fish, grapes, lots and lots of work.

WV: Oh, I believe it. That is extraordinary. So your dad's friend owns that?

PG: Um hmm, yeah. I have an idea that'll go to, I believe it's going to wind up in Arkansas, just off-handedly.

WV: Huh. Now what happened to all of these on the car? These were all burned?

PG: Those were all burned. I believe there's a lion that was scorched pretty bad that is, still yet might be there.

WV: [Reading from postcard:] "Life-sized modern hunter with assortment of game, cut from one piece of timber by N. E. Galloway, Springfield, Missouri." So he actually sold postcards of these, huh?

PG: Um hmm.

WV: This is that same one. "One-piece wood carving. . ." Who was that lady that was represented there?

PG: That's my aunt.

WV: Does it. . .

PG: That's the world there, you know.

WV: Okay, uh huh. And this is a soldier, is it?

PG: Um hmm.

WV: Now is that him?

PG: Yeah.

WV: That's your dad.

PG: This is, the house up there, that's at the farm where you was taking the pictures?

WV: Yes.

PG: And that's one of them bass, right there.

WV: Oh, that's beautiful.

PG: That's his lighting fixtures.

WV: Ohh.

MG: \_\_\_\_\_ same \_\_\_\_\_.

WV: On, no.

PG: And this is the dresser I was talking about that. . .

WV: Oh, that all the records were in.

PG: I had records in there. I sure hated to lose all. . .

WV: Oh, that is so sad.

PG: They probably just burned them.

MG: They had a great big old, handmade bed that he'd made, a poster bed, four-poster bed out of. . .

WV: Is that your dad and mom, or. . .

PG: Yeah, this piece here is burned.

PG: Now there's one that's almost like that. It's up there in the home, that wasn't hurt at all.

WV: Oh there's. . . [Reading:] "World's Largest Totem Pole." Oh, they call it actually Chelsea up there, huh?

PG: Um hmm.

WV: I thought it was Foyil, but it's officially Chelsea?

PG: I don't know what it'd be, but it's seven and a half miles from Chelsea and three and a quarter miles from Foyil.

WV: Yeah, it's closer to Foyil, isn't it?

PG: Um hmm. Here's one of them cedar chests.

MG: Probably need to get your medicine \_\_\_\_\_.

PG: Is it ten [o'clock]? It sure is. I better maybe get up there and take some pills. There's one of them chests that was stolen, see, with the fancywork front.

WV: Uh huh.

PG: And here's one of the better violins that was stolen.

WV: Oh, boy. Did they ever find any of these?

PG: No, never got any clue of anything.

WV: Oh, that's so beautiful. Oh.

PG: Now, here is inside that Fiddle House where you was talking about.

WV: Yes, yes.

PG: This is some stuff that was in there, earlier, when he was just getting started.

MG: \_\_\_\_\_ in a park.

WV: Yeah, I just read somewhere that somebody thought that there was some of your dad's work in Springfield still. And they wanted to know where it was.

MG: I think they call it Central Park. I'm not sure.

WV: I'll go down there and look, and I'll let you know.



MG: [They say it's not be going], you could go through that way.

WV: I could on my way back. See, I'm. . .

MG: It's on the way to, by St. Louis more than it is Kansas City.

WV: Well, see, we're on our way to the west coast now, but on our way back, later this summer, we could come that way, of course.

MG: Yeah, I don't know how much out of your way it is. I've been to Springfield, I've been to Kansas City, and I've been to St. Louis, but. . .

PG: I've never seen the stuff that was in Springfield. The stuff that's here I have, some pieces in here in the home, that's, they're made out of gum, like that one piece that. . .

WV: Yeah.

PG: Only they're a little bit better than it.

WV: Now, the pieces that were made in Springfield were sort of made before your time, or when you were. . .

PG: Yeah, uh huh. However, I've seen those, and I'm. . . A lot of the furniture that's up there in the [children's —Ed.] home, it was made by the home boys and Dad's supervision.

WV: So when did your dad die?

PG: How long has it been since Dad died, Grandma?

MG: Sixty-two.

WV: 1962?

MG: Your mother died in 1960, and he died in 1962.

WV: So it sat there all, what, locked up for a few years before they burglarized it?

PG: Yes, well. . .

MG: Ten years.

PG: . . .I kept it open, and kept it going for. . .

MG: See, they could go to the little store and get the key and go in, and then they returned it to them.

WV: Oh, I see.

PG: We never figured that anyone would steal anything there, and they never, and they taken real good care of the place, and then, blingo, all at once, they started, well, they stole everything, and then they started shooting windows, and I could. . .

MG: . . .keep the house in repair. We'd go up there and. . . [unintelligible]

PG: I could take all them windows off and bring them down here and repair them, take them back, put them on. . .

MG: . . .screened them and painted them, and painted the \_\_\_\_ and, my God, they'd shoot them out faster than we could put them in! [continues, unintelligible]

PG: Changed the roof twice. And the last one, when I just about give up, I was putting a window in on the front, and a little old boy was shooting them out on the back that I just got through. [chuckles ruefully]

WV: Oh, that is sad.

PG: And I don't like to really get mad at them, especially a kid.

WV: Ah, gee.

PG: I went up to the store, told that lady up there about that. Oh, she says, I know that little boy, and he wouldn't do nothing like that. But my gosh!

WV: Yeah, and he was doing it. What did he [Ed Galloway—WV] paint them with? What kind of paint did he use?

PG: Take me a little time here, I'll come out with it. It is a very well-known paint, from around here.

WV: I wonder if it's a special paint for cement, or is it. . .

PG: No.

WV: Oh, it's not.

PG: Most of it is just oil paint.

WV: Oh, it's oil paint.

PG: Just oil paint. And it does, has done real well.

WV: I noticed. There's still good color on it.

PG: Still lots of good color. But I have tried, you know, to mix up colors like to match his.

WV: Right.

PG: And you run into a problem right there. He mixed his own, you know, to blend the colors that he would want. And to do it just like it is, it'd be quite a little problem. (chuckles)

WV: Sure. Now, did you have to repaint them a number of times, over the years, I suppose?

PG: See, I think it's been painted about three times. I think about three about three times, [Joanna].

MG: But you know you could roller a lot of that anymore.

WV: Oh yeah.

MG: But he painted it with a brush. But all of that flat, that kind of reddish, barn red. . .

WV: Right.

MG: That could be rolled on, with a big nap. . .

PG: You can get that a \_\_\_\_ . . .

MG: Well, I mean, you'd hit the high spots with a big, deep nap roller.

WV: Sure.

MG: And then you'd. . .

PG: [unintelligible] like that. He would run around that thing.

WV: (laughs)

MG: Now, he painted that after he was 70 years old.

PG: He was older than that; I think he was 80.

MG: Well, he was 82 when he fell. He was hanging those president's pictures in the museum, and he fell.

WV: Ohh.

MG: . . .when he was, no, he was 84. Or was he? How old was he? Wasn't he 84 when he died, or 82?

WV: Well, let's see.

MG: Yeah, well, it wouldn't be hard to figure. It was 82. He was born in 1880.

WV: 1880 to 1962.

PG: Yeah, it would be hard to figure that one out, would it?

WV: Did he get a lot of attention for this? I suppose when he was alive, like articles in the papers and all that kind of thing.

MG: Oh, magazines. . .

PG: Oh, people come by and. . . Of course, here again, we lost it in that register in the, when they stole the \_\_\_\_\_ the furniture out up there.

WV: Yeah.

PG: And I had this logbook in there where he had people sign it, and, boy, \_\_\_\_\_, the [kinds of] people that were in there you wouldn't hardly believe.

MG: The detail he put in that stuff.

PG: Oh, generals and majors and. . .

WV: People from all over, I bet.

PG: People from all over the world. Well, old people too, that had been there.

WV: Do you remember any?

PG: I was trying to think of one admiral that was there that I know you'd remember him.

WV: That's interesting.

MG: Now he was an artist, I'm telling you.

WV: Did he think of himself as an artist, do you know?

MG: No. (laughs)

PG: (laughs)

WV: Because he sure was, you know.

PG: He was \_\_\_\_\_ and clothes—why he never had none and didn't want none, and. . . You would just have to love him. And somehow another, why he would gather the attention, no matter who, why he could meet them about on their level, you know, they'd. . . As I told you, he read all the time. And like one of these bigshots would happen to come in, and was navy or something or other, he'd talk his language pretty quick. (laughs)

WV: Oh, that's great.

PG: Oh, boy, there was no. . .

MG: Well, he was very witty. And a real good personality and he was witty. Now, he was very uneducated, but he educated himself.

WV: He hadn't done any carving when he was a boy?

PG: Very little, some. Whittling, mostly then, would be. . . I'll never forget him telling about his making a set up buttons for one of his teachers. [MG continued with a story about a picnic table, mostly unintelligible—Ed.] He got as far as the third grade, you know. And he had made a set of buttons, you know, for a dress for one of his teachers, which they thought was very nice. And he'd built lots of things in the way of furniture back in them days, not what we'd call good stuff, but just stuff that they used.

WV: Functional, good strong. . .

PG: Functional. Functional stuff. And he was in the, when he was in the army, he was the company mechanic, and they built quite a bit of stuff there for the army, you know, their dining halls and stuff. He was very handy about anyplace that he got into. He liked to fish and he was a very good fisherman, and he liked to gig. He knew a whole lot about wildlife of all kinds. Studied it.

WV: What do you think is going to happen to the place now?

PG: Oh, I really don't know, son. But maybe something'll turn up. I'm praying that it might. And [if—Ed.] I get a little money, I might take my hand at rebuilding all the stuff. That's what I did have planned, you know, before

I had these heart attacks, and I don't know whether I'm ever going to be functional again or not.

WV: I think it's a very beautiful place, very unusual. I've seen a couple of places like it, but nothing quite as extraordinary as this place. It'd be wonderful if it could be preserved somehow, you know, and looked after. I mean, I know that's very difficult, because nobody has the money to do that, you know, and the time and the effort to put into something like that. It takes a lot, obviously. I was glad to see that it wasn't in some ways as badly vandalized as some of the folk-art places that I've seen.

PG: Um hmm.

WV: Because usually they are accessible to kids, and they come in there and they. . . I've seen a place with concrete figures where all the heads were all shot off with rifles, you know.

PG: Well, I've got one stone lion right down the way here, that I got that thing, and then the old boy died, and the guy that had taken over the place wouldn't let me have it. But it grieved me for the kids, you know, to come by, they'd cracked the ears off of the lion, you know.

WV: Oh.

PG: And it's. . . [pauses] And the lions up there by the home, but you might go by there and take a look at them.

WV: Yeah. Now, something like the lion, would he build like an armature and build then the concrete on top of that, or is it solid?

PG: No, those are solid stone. Those are. . .

WV: Oh, my gosh. Oh, stone or concrete?

PG: Stone.

WV: Oh, that's stone. Oh, I see.

PG: The one that got knocked off the ears down here, it's stone too.

**[Tape 1, side B; Volkorsz' No. G1-2]**

PG: . . .then they moved them up here to the [children's—Ed.] home. They moved them up to the home there, and they put them at the gate there at the home. [another conversation is occurring simultaneously—Ed.] The home don't have kids in it. It used to have kids. But I guess they've got more widows now than they ever have had. I guess there are more divorces now than has been. And then we have the foreign influx, you know.

WV: Yeah, sure.

PG: And, but they've built very, very nice homes for them. And where they used to have a calling, now they've got just regular city circles, you know. They could take over and all these circles will be widows. And there are certain restrictions that they have to live under.

WV: Sure.

PG: Most generally, why, the lady, they will find her a job, but she isn't required to pay any milk. She gets her eggs and milk and lights and gas for free, which makes it pretty easy on a widow woman. Easy enough, she ought to make it, for just herself—unless she's sick, and if she's sick, why they take care of that. Dad was under that by a love for Mr. Page there, for years, on account of the things that he had done for others.

WV: Were you the only child, or were there. . .

PG: Um hmm.

WV: Oh, uh huh. So you grew up here in Sand Springs, probably then, right?

PG: Yeah, uh huh. And, well, I lived up there one summer—well, two summers. And, of course, I went to work down here, and I went to school down here my last two years after the folks was up there. But I went to school down here and worked, you know, delivery boy to kind of help my way through high school. During that Depression, why Dad even lost his pension entirely. He wasn't drawing but \$30 a month, and then lost that. (laughs)

WV: Oh, geez. That's maddening.

PG: So one summer we made croquet balls and mallets. That was a kind of fad during that Depression. They want, people couldn't have no money to go to the show on.

WV: So they had to have some recreation at home.

PG: So they played croquet.

WV: Did he ever sell the fiddles that he made?

PG: No, huh uh.

WV: Just made them for pleasure, huh?

PG: Yeah.

WV: Did he play them?

PG: Uh, yeah. He could play almost anything by ear. He didn't know note one. But he could play.

WV: Did he ever make any pieces for sale?

PG: Yeah, he would do lots of duplicating of things.

WV: Like what kinds of things? Like these kinds of pictures, you mean?

PG: Like pictures and things, but not too many. He'd more or less. . . Like somebody come along like that little boy and he happened to like him, he'd liable to give him one of them pictures.

WV: That's interesting.

PG: But he had no value of money.

MG: He could have been a wealthy man.

WV: Yeah. Didn't care to be.

PG: He had no value of money at all.

MG: He didn't \_\_\_\_ money at all.

WV: Well, that's sort of nice.

PG: That it didn't bother him what. . . He was satisfied with his lot no matter what it was.

WV: Now were these. . . I'm sorry.

PG: He'd raise enough garden, you know, for him and Mom to live, get by on. As I said, he worked, he was a regular workaholic.

WV: I can see that.

PG: He'd work from four o'clock in the morning till ten o'clock at night. But he was a pretty healthy and husky man, for no bigger than he was.

WV: He was not a very big man.

PG: No. I imagine about five foot, ten and a half, and he'd probably weigh 163, 165, right along in there. But he was all muscle.

WV: He would have had to be. He carried a lot of stuff in his life. These pictures, would they have been copied from pictures he saw in magazines and books and things, you think, some of them?

PG: The most of these would be copies and, well, he would. . .

MG: He had his own patterns.

WV: Oh, he did.

PG: Well, yeah, but he used a, what do you call it? A Pentagraph's machine?

WV: Yeah, a Pentagraph, uh huh.

PG: A Pentagraph, yeah. And like on a picture there, we'd get a picture of that. . .

MG: He made that off a postcard.

WV: Ahh.

PG: . . .and he'd take that Pentagraph and he'd explode it, you know. [probably means enlarged it, as in photography—Ed.]

WV: Yeah, right.

MG: Made pieces. . .bigger, but you look at the little bitty piece, look at the sails on those boats. Look at the little. . .

WV: I know.

MG: . . .all of those intricate pieces. Look at the water, see, that one little wavy piece. How would you ever cut that little wavy piece? I wouldn't have the patience to do.

WV: Now were those like hand cut? How would he cut small pieces like that? Were they machine-cut or hand cut, or do you know?

PG: They were hand cut.

WV: Hand cut. Out of real thin layers. So he used something like an exacto knife, real sharp blade.

PG: That's about a thirty-second of an inch thick.

WV: Yeah, so you could cut it like cardboard.

PG: And they'd be made like a, the little thing was made about like a razor, and it would be on the end of a, like a pencil, and, well, a gasket cutter. He could have used a gasket cutter; however, he would make his. He made all of his own tools. And that would be backed up on a piece of plyboard [plywood—WV].

WV: Hmm, I wonder if it might be possible for me to take some photographs of some of those?

PG: Sure can.

WV: That'd be real to have that record as well. And I think maybe sometime in the future I might want to try and get ahold of you and see if I can. . . I'll get myself a real good flash, so I can photograph inside of the Fiddle House. Because it would be wonderful to have a record of that, you know.

PG: Yeah.

WV: Because that's some nice. . . I like all those birds and the posts and things like that that I was able to see through the windows there.

PG: You know, he could, on that painting (chuckling), he would paint a picture like that in 20 or 30 minutes, just blingo. Of course, they weren't too awfully good. You'll see that. They wouldn't call it real good detail. But the speed that he could do it. . . He could set up in front of people here and paint one right after another. (laughs)

WV: Huh. He had very great skills of observation, clearly.

PG: Um hmm.

*[End of interview]*