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Interview of Steven J. Stahley

Steven J. Stahley
La Salle University

Kate Ambrose
La Salle University

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FIELD NOTES

Interviewee: Steven J. Stahley
Interviewer: Kate Ambrose
Interview date: March 12, 2011 (mid-day)
Interview location: Mr. Stahley's home

The Interviewee:

Steven J. Stahley was born on August 14, 1951 in Philadelphia Pennsylvania. He spent his childhood growing up in the Catholic school system, eventually moving to Cardinal Dougherty in 1965 to attend high school. It was in high school that Mr. Stahley decided he would enter the Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity. During his first year with the Missionary Servants, a decision was made that all men would attend college and receive the "full college experience." This brought Mr. Stahley to LaSalle University in 1970. After three years, Mr. Stahley graduated and worked his way through the process of becoming an ordained priest. Mr. Stahley was ordained in 1978, worked as a Missionary Servant in Cleveland, Ohio and after careful deliberation, eventually decided that the priesthood was not for him. Mr. Stahley is now living in Westminster, Maryland with his wife Lisa and their two children Thomas and Sarah.

The Interviewer:

I, Kate Ambrose (born April 23, 1984 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), grew up in Warminster, Pennsylvania. I attended Villa Joseph Marie High School and graduated in 2002. From Villa, I attended Kutztown University earning my BS in Secondary Education with a concentration in the Social Sciences. I began teaching at my Alma Mater, Villa Joseph Marie High School, immediately after my graduation from KU in 2006 where I am currently employed. I am in the process of attaining my Masters in History from LaSalle University and hope to graduate this summer (2011).

Background:

I became interested in my uncle, Steven J. Stahley, from the moment I discovered his "prior profession." I did not receive much information from family members on the subject of Mr. Stahley's departure from the priesthood so when a class project required an interview of war veterans, Christian Brothers, or LaSalle graduates I saw my opportunity and pounced. I emailed Mr. Stahley to ask his permission to interview him and after a few emails back and forth, we set the date for the weekend of March 12th. Since Mr. Stahley lives in Maryland, I, along with my mother, took the trip to Maryland and stayed with my aunt Maryellen who also resides in Maryland.

Description of the Interview:

I arrived at Mr. Stahley's house around 11:30 on March 12, 2011. Mr. Stahley led me on a tour of the house, since this was my first time visiting their new home in Westminster. After the tour, we settled in the living room to begin the interview. Mr. Stahley chose to sit in his armchair and I sat across from him. Throughout the entire interview, Mr. Stahley was extremely relaxed. He answered every question I asked candidly and in many cases, paused before each answer. Sometimes these pauses were long and sometimes short, but each pause signified that Mr. Stahley was taking the time to think and answer the questions as honestly as possible.

After about seventy minutes of interviewing, we broke for lunch. Lisa, Mr. Stahley's wife prepared an excellent meal that the three of us shared. Over the course of the hour break, we discussed their children, my work at LaSalle and Villa and current events.

We resumed the interview and recorded for another one-hundred and thirty minutes. Mr. Stahley brought up his departure from the Missionary Servants and had nothing but love and respect for the order that treated him so well; this emotion, although not physical in any way, was apparent throughout the interview.

At roughly four-thirty, the interview ended and Mr. and Mrs. Stahley, my mother, my aunt Maryellen and uncle Bob, and I all met for dinner at the halfway meeting point between the two houses. We had a great dinner where we caught up and laughed together as a family.

Editing the Transcript:

My editing decisions included:

1. Deleting repeated words.
2. Eliminating false starts, unless they were significant.
3. Beginning new sentences in most cases where "and" was used as a transition.
4. Using quotation marks to indicate discussions reported in the interview.
5. Placing a time stamp at the beginning of each page unless there was a break in the conversation. In those instances, time stamps can be found close to the top of the page.
6. Using footnotes for further explanations.