Interview with

BARBARA HASTORF

John W. Gardner Legacy Oral History Project
conducted by Abby Feder

STANFORD HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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Introduction

This oral history was produced by the John W. Gardner Legacy Oral History Project team in collaboration with the Stanford Historical Society Oral History Program. The program is under the direction of the Oral History Committee of the Stanford Historical Society.

The Stanford Historical Society Oral History Program furthers the Society’s mission “to foster and support the documentation, study, publication, dissemination, and preservation of the history of the Leland Stanford Junior University.” The program explores the institutional history of the University, with an emphasis on the transformative post-WWII period, through interviews with leading faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, and others. The interview recordings and transcripts provide valuable additions to the existing collection of written and photographic materials in the Stanford University Archives.

Oral history is not a final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a unique, reflective, spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it may be deeply personal. Each oral history is a reflection of the past as the interviewee remembers and recounts it. But memory and meaning vary from person to person; others may recall events differently. Used as primary source material, any one oral history will be compared with and evaluated in light of other evidence, such as contemporary texts and other oral histories, in arriving at an interpretation of the past. Although most interviewees have a past or current connection with Stanford University, they are not speaking as representatives of the University.

Each transcript is edited by program staff and by the interviewee for grammar, syntax, and occasional inaccuracies and to aid in overall clarity and readability—but is not fact-checked as such. The approach is to maintain the substantive content of the interview as well as the interviewee’s voice. As a result of this editing process, the transcript may not match the recording verbatim. If a substantive deletion has been made, this is generally indicated at the relevant place on the transcript. Substantive additions are noted in brackets or by footnote.
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Project Description

This interview was conducted as part of the John W. Gardner Legacy Oral History Project. The project, which began in early 2017, is sponsored by the Haas Center for Public Service, the Stanford Historical Society Oral History Program, the John W. Gardner Center for Youth & Their Communities, the Gardner Family Trust, and the Stanford University Libraries Special Collections & University Archives. With the transfer of over 100 linear feet of John W. Gardner’s papers from the Gardner home to Stanford University Libraries Special Collections in late 2016, the project sponsors launched an oral history initiative to capture recollections of Gardner and reflections on his life from people who knew him well.

John W. Gardner (1912-2002) earned his BA and MA degrees in psychology from Stanford and a PhD in psychology from University of California, Berkeley. He remained connected to his alma mater throughout his illustrious career, serving on Stanford University’s Board of Trustees from 1965 to 1982. As the president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York from 1955 to 1967, he became known as “one of the most powerful behind-the-scenes figures in education.” Gardner served as Lyndon B. Johnson’s Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) from 1965 to 1968, playing an important role in enforcing the 1964 Civil Rights Act as well as launching Great Society programs such as Medicare and Medicaid. While at HEW, he also oversaw the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the creation of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. He founded two influential public advocacy groups, Common Cause (1970) and Independent Sector (1980). He was also a prolific author, with books on topics such as leadership, excellence, and self-renewal.

Gardner spent the last thirteen years of his life at Stanford. He was a founding member of the national advisory board of the Public Service Center (later the Haas Center for Public Service) and the first Miriam and Peter Haas Centennial Professor in Public Service. The John Gardner Public Service Fellowship and the John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities are just two examples of Gardner’s lasting legacy at Stanford and beyond.
The project includes interviews with people who knew Gardner in various capacities, including as colleagues, students, mentees, friends, and family members. The interviews are a companion collection (SC1355) to the John W. Gardner Papers, 1912-2004 (SC0908) and the John W. Gardner Papers, 1961-1992 (M0659), which are housed at Stanford University Libraries Special Collections & University Archives, as well as the John William Gardner Miscellaneous Papers (84008) at the Hoover Institution.
Abstract

Barbara Hastorf discusses growing up in New York and New Jersey, taking a class with John W. Gardner while she was a student at Mount Holyoke College, and reconnecting with him when she moved with her family to Palo Alto.

At Mount Holyoke College, Hastorf majored in economics and took an introductory psychology course with Gardner. She offers her recollections on that class and remembers Gardner as an open-minded and pleasant professor. Hastorf also discusses meeting with Gardner once she came to Stanford with her husband, Albert Hastorf, who was also a psychologist.
Barbara Hastorf

Biography

Barbara Elizabeth Reck Hastorf was born in Syracuse, New York in 1922. Upon graduating from high school in Montclair, New Jersey, she matriculated at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, where she majored in economics. While at Mount Holyoke, she took a psychology course taught by John W. Gardner. Also, she met her husband-to-be, Albert Hastorf, who was a student at nearby Amherst College. They married in 1943. She and her husband later reconected with Gardner after his return to Stanford in 1989.

Hastorf accompanied her husband as he pursued his graduate studies at Princeton University. Their first daughter, Elizabeth Hastorf, was born while they were at Princeton. Hastorf and her family then moved in 1948 to Dartmouth College where Albert started his teaching career in the psychology department. Their second daughter, Christine, was born while they were at Dartmouth.

In 1961, the family moved to California when Albert accepted a faculty position at Stanford University. Hastorf was very active on the Stanford campus in a number of different roles. She was involved in social planning for the psychology department, and hosted events for faculty members and students at her house. She served as an advisor for Stanford students along with her husband. She was also a member of the Stanford Faculty Women’s Club. When her family lived in the famous Hanna Honeycomb House, she was responsible for overseeing its maintenance. She volunteered as a Stanford Auxiliary “pink lady” at the Stanford Hospital. She also worked to promote the arts on campus, including through her involvement in Treasure Market, the Committee for Art board, and the Music Guild. Hastorf played an important role in supporting her husband as he served in various capacities at Stanford, including as dean of the School of Humanities & Sciences and as provost of Stanford University. She also assisted her husband with his research in psychology.
Feder: [00:00:00] This is Abby Feder. Today is September 1, 2017. I am here with Barbara Hastorf at her home in Portola Valley, California. We are conducting this interview as part of the John W. Gardner Legacy Oral History Project in cooperation with the Stanford Historical Society. The Stanford Oral History Program conducted a more comprehensive interview with Barbara in 1986.

Barbara, I’d like to begin by asking you to tell us where you’re from, and a little bit about what it was like growing up there.

Hastorf: What it was like doing what?

Feder: Growing up in wherever you’re from.

Hastorf: I have one sister, and I grew up in Syracuse, New York, which was a very pleasant place to be. I went through school--public school--there. It was within two blocks of my home, so it was an easy walk for me--uphill.

[00:01:07] I stayed there through ninth grade, and then because of changes in my family, we moved to Upper Montclair, New Jersey. There I continued high school, and that went very well. My dad was with the same job, but they changed his territory, and that’s why we moved.
After graduating I went away to college. I went to Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts. For me that was a fine experience—exciting, interesting faculty, interesting students. I majored in economics, and I went all the way through my four years on schedule. I graduated with a bachelor’s degree.

[00:02:21] While I was there, I met my husband-to-be. He was a year ahead of me at Amherst [Amherst College], which was ten miles away. Eventually I graduated, and he’d already graduated, being a year ahead of me. We got married, and he went off to graduate school at Princeton, and I went with him. We spent about three years there, maybe four.

[00:03:07] Then it was up to him to find a job, which he did at Dartmouth College. We felt that was a great success. So we moved to Hanover, New Hampshire, and he taught there for fourteen years. He taught psychology, and a few other helpful courses.

[00:03:45] At the end of fourteen years, he got an offer to move to Stanford University. So we came here to California, and he spent the rest of his teaching career here at Stanford. We had a lovely home. We lived on the campus and had two girls, Elizabeth and Christine.

He retired, but he taught all the way until his death, which was when he was ninety. But he was one of those popular professors whom the students really enjoyed. So for many years, we entertained many, many, many, many students in our home for either picnic-type gatherings or tea parties or a little beer or hikes in the woods. We were very close to many of the students that were in his classes. Then he died in 2011 at ninety.
Feder: [00:05:26] Well, that was a great overview of a wonderful life. So when you were growing up, what did your parents do?

Hastorf: My father was an engineer, and he sold steel for Bethlehem Steel. He enjoyed his friends and Rotary Club, and other local adventures.

[00:06:02] And my mother was a really civic citizen who worked in the community at all different levels, making things comfortable for elderly folks, helping newcomers find a place to feel comfortable. That’s about it.

Feder: Do you remember the stock market crash of 1929?

Hastorf: Yes, I recall. Yes.

Feder: What was that like for you? How did the Great Depression affect your daily life?

Hastorf: [00:06:45] Well, of course it affected everybody, and us included. When you look back, it didn’t wipe out all our earnings, and it didn’t take our house away from us or anything serious like that. My father kept his job, which kept paying. So we had adequate funds to take care of ourselves. It was just a hard time for us and many of our friends.

Feder: And when you were looking at colleges, why did you decide on a women’s college?

Hastorf: Why did I decide to go to Mount Holyoke—a girls’ school?

Feder: Yes.

Hastorf: I had some friends who’d been there, and the history [of the school] looked appealing to me. I’d seen it, and found that pleasant. And so I applied, and I luckily got accepted. That’s it.

Feder: [00:08:06] And did you want to go to an all-girls school specifically?
Hastorf: Yes, I did.

Feder: Do you remember why?

Hastorf: I was happy there—with all girls.

Feder: Once you were in college, how often would you see your family?

Hastorf: Did I what?

Feder: Once you were at Mount Holyoke, how often would you see your family?

Hastorf: Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, summer.

Feder: Do you remember what you did during your summers in college?

Hastorf: Yes, I got little jobs. Not always very interesting, but I earned myself spending money for the next year.

Feder: [00:09:02] What were those jobs?

Hastorf: Oh, file clerk. I worked in corporation offices and did what they wanted me to do—run errands, add figures. I worked on a computer—on the adding part of the computer—a lot. It was the early computer days.

Feder: Did you learn how to use computers in school?

Hastorf: I took typewriting, and from that learned the computer by myself—I think.

Feder: [00:10:01] And how would you get home to your family? Was there a train—or did you drive?

Hastorf: From where?

Feder: From school.

Hastorf: From college?

Feder: Yes.

Hastorf: Well, they came and picked me up in the car.

Feder: And were you involved in activities on campus?
Hastorf: Yes, a few. Drama, golf, tennis. That’s about it. I can’t think of any more.

Feder: Were you in shows? You said drama--.

Hastorf: Yes.

Feder: What kinds of shows?

Hastorf: [00:10:58] [I’ll] say musicals. That’s the best I can think of.

Feder: That sounds fun.

Hastorf: Yes.

Feder: Can you tell us how you came to know John Gardner at Mount Holyoke?

Hastorf: He was a new professor. He was in psychology, and I wanted to take a psychology course. It just happened he was new the year I wanted to take the course--and I did.

Feder: Which course was it?

Hastorf: Psych One.

Feder: Psych One. And what did you think of the course?

Hastorf: Oh, fine. I enjoyed it very much, and I enjoyed Professor Gardner, too.

Feder: Did you go on to take more psychology?

Hastorf: What?

Feder: Did you go on to take more psychology courses?

Hastorf: [00:12:00] Well, I married a husband who was a psychologist, so at least I knew something about what he was talking about. Yes, I took altogether I think four courses in psychology. So I had some background.

Feder: So was that helpful when Albert [Albert Hastorf] had his whole career in psychology?

Hastorf: Yes.
Feder: So the class you took with John Gardner, about how big was the class?

Hastorf: How--?

Feder: How big was the class?

Hastorf: Fifteen, twenty--in that area.

Feder: And was the class like a lecture style or did you have group discussions?

Hastorf: Lecture.

Feder: Lecture. And what did you think of him as a teacher?

Hastorf: [00:12:58] Oh, first rate.

Feder: Do you remember what made him a good teacher?

Hastorf: I just enjoyed his classes. We had projects, and I worked with him on psychological projects. And that was interesting. He was a very nice man, and there weren’t too many students. So we each got a lot of individual attention.

Feder: What kinds of projects were you working on with him?

Hastorf: Testing students.

Feder: Doing research on students?

Hastorf: Yes. Testing them, bringing in the results, and then going all the way through to whatever we wanted to find out. It wasn’t too much of that, just a little.

Feder: [00:14:08] Did you have a sense of what other students in the class thought of him?

Hastorf: Oh, of course. Everybody was very fond of him because he was a very charming young man, and thoughtful--and kind and nice.

Feder: Did you have any interactions with him outside of class time?
Hastorf: No.

Feder: You had mentioned when we spoke before that he and his wife had had the students over to their house for I think it was a tea.

Hastorf: [00:14:53] Oh, I went to his house--we had meetings there occasionally, and in later years somehow he met my husband. They’re both psychologists, so they had something to talk about.

Feder: And do you remember how he and Albert met?

Hastorf: My husband and I met on a blind date.

Feder: So the course you took with John Gardner, I think you had mentioned something about how there was a faculty night at your dorm or dinner or something where you invited him.

Hastorf: When we dined with faculty?

Feder: Yes.

Hastorf: [00:15:55] Yes. Well, one faculty maybe. It wasn’t a real close, one-on-one situation, but faculty would come to our dorm for dinner. If you were the happy, select group, you got to sit at the table of twelve. So it wasn’t a close, intimate event.

Feder: But he came to that?

Hastorf: Yes. But that’s a long time ago. It’s hard to recall the little [incidents]. Okay, try another.

Feder: All right. Do you have any other recollections or memories of John Gardner during your time at Mount Holyoke?

Hastorf: [00:16:56] No--he was just around. I didn’t have any other classes with him, just the one. And he was a busy boy. He was off in Washington a lot. But
anyway, I was lucky to have had the one class that was pretty whole. He
didn’t take off.

Feder: And did he and his wife have the class over to the house for something?

Hastorf: Yes. I think we went once to his home.

Feder: Was that a common thing that professors would do?

Hastorf: Yes, if they wanted to. Some didn’t have the space--single women, living in
a dorm, also. But they had a home, because they had two children at that
time.

Feder: [00:17:55] You mentioned that he left for Washington, and I’m sure a lot of
the professors would have been going off to join the war effort around that
time. Were there a lot of faculty leaving?

Hastorf: Oh, I don’t know any of that. I just don’t know about it.

Feder: Did you know other people who were leaving school to join the war effort?

Hastorf: What do you mean? Students who signed up?

Feder: Yes, or were drafted.

Hastorf: Yes, some students joined the Red Cross. Of course they weren’t drafted. I
must say I didn’t know many that signed up, no. Most of them got wartime
jobs in factories or offices, but not to be in the war. But a few did.

Feder: [00:19:12] Do you remember when the bombing of Pearl Harbor happened?

Hastorf: When what happened?

Feder: The bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Hastorf: Yes, I recall when that happened. I can’t remember where I was, though.

But I just remember the event.

Feder: Did things change around campus after that?
Hastorf: Gradually things changed, but not abruptly.

Feder: You mentioned that you and Albert met on a blind date. Do you recall who set you guys up?

Hastorf: My roommate. That’s all.

Feder: Where did you guys go for your first date?

Hastorf: We played bridge in the dorm.

Feder: You mentioned when we spoke last time that Albert knew John Gardner—at least somewhat—and that he would sometimes quote him.

Hastorf: What?

Feder: That Albert would sometimes quote John Gardner.

Hastorf: Oh, sure. Yes.

Feder: What kinds of quotes or topics?

Hastorf: Psychology, I guess. But the two of us didn’t sit around quoting John Gardner. I don’t think he did that much, but at least he knew him.

Feder: So you moved out to Stanford in the 1960s, right—after being on the East Coast for a long time. Do you feel like there are many differences between life on the East Coast and on the West Coast?

Hastorf: Of course. We have seasons. And it snowed—we skied and skated when we were in the east—shoveled. And it was great. It was great here, too, with the sun shining. A lot more golf and being outdoors.

Feder: I missed the snow when I came to California, but then one can put up with that. With the telephone I could always find out what was going on back east.

Feder: Do you have family back east?
Hastorf: Yes, my nieces and nephews. I have one sister-in-law who had her ninety-ninth birthday yesterday. She’s back in Florida.

Feder: Wow, ninety-nine.

Hastorf: Ninety-nine, yes. I’m really impressed.

Feder: Do you have a preference of the East Coast versus West Coast?

Hastorf: I’m happy right here, right now, but I like both of them. I’ve had a great life back east and a great life here. So I can’t say one was better. They were different, but they were good. I’ve had a good life.

Feder: So John Gardner came to Stanford in 1989, which would have been around the time when Albert was retiring, I believe. Did you reconnect with John Gardner when he came back to California?

Hastorf: Yes. Actually, he found me, and I was pleased with that. I met him again here on the campus once. That’s all.

Feder: That one time, was that at an event, or did you go to see him?

Hastorf: That day I was walking around the campus. He was there.

Feder: Did you know John Gardner’s family at all?

Hastorf: I wouldn’t say I knew them. I met his wife. I don’t know if she’s still alive. He’s not. And I don’t know his children. No, I would say no.

Feder: Okay. Did you ever read any of his books or speeches or anything?

Hastorf: Oh, yes. I have his textbook, a book on psychology. I have that somewhere. That’s all. I don’t know that he wrote a lot. He may have. But this is all pre-Washington.

Feder: Right. Later in his life he wrote a number of books.

Hastorf: More academic.
Feder: Maybe. After his days at Mount Holyoke, did you follow his career at all?

Hastorf: When I saw his name, yes, I would be very interested in what he was doing.

Feder: Were you a member of Common Cause?

Hastorf: [00:26:00] Yes.

Feder: Can you tell me a bit about what that organization was?

Hastorf: No, I just think we all took part in Common Cause. I don’t remember anything special happening that I did, but I was a member of Common Cause.

Feder: Why did everyone take part in that one?

Hastorf: Almost everybody believed that it was good. I did not do anything for it specifically except join it and pay my dues.

Feder: So you spent a long time at Stanford as part of the Stanford community. Do you feel like the campus--or the culture there--has changed during that whole time?

Hastorf: [00:27:05] During that period of John Gardner?

Feder: No, during your whole--

Hastorf: From beginning to end?

Feder: Yes, from the time you first came to Stanford until now.

Hastorf: I think it’s changed. I can’t say how--there are plenty of smart kids around and great faculty. They’re still just a new generation of more of the same. Really good new faculty, and they have enough students to keep them alive. So everything seems to be going very well from all I hear from headquarters.

[F00:27:48] I think it’s pretty much the same. Of course everything changes when you get a new president. A new president can’t help but want
to put through ideas of his or hers. So a few things like that change. But I
don’t know, it still has that *joie de vivre* of being Stanford.

Anyway, I don’t know what’s changed because I’m not on the
planning or administrative side of the university anymore. But they’re
profiting, so I guess it’s okay.

**Feder:** You mentioned that each new president brings in new things. Did you know
the presidents of the university during the time when Albert was provost
and dean and on the faculty?

**Hastorf:** Yes.

**Feder:** [00:29:03] I don’t know if you have a memory of some of the maybe big
ideas--

**Hastorf:** Issues?

**Feder:** Yes, issues or things that the various presidents were interested in or trying
to bring to the university.

**Hastorf:** [00:29:23] I really don’t know what you mean as far as big things. There are
lots of big things going on I think all the time, you know, with different
departments. But I don’t know what you’re really referring to. It’s a lively
campus, and the people are alert, if that’s what you mean. They’re really
tuned in. Happily so. And interesting people come here to talk, which
means they accept Stanford. They get an invitation. So it’s a two-way plus.

**Feder:** When Albert was at Stanford--you mentioned you would have students over
for dinner, or do things with students. Did you enjoy getting to know the
students at Stanford?
Hastorf: Yes. Oh, yes. Fascinating faculty, really very interesting. Some were kind of ancient--they were old-timers. Others were full of pep and new ideas and wanted to turn everything upside-down. But it was an intellectually lively place, and that was interesting.

[00:31:11] And we had lots of nice friends who were very active and farsighted. That’s the main thing you want--someone who can look ahead so you’re ready for the future when it gets here.

Feder: Did you ever go sit in on any classes on campus?

Hastorf: Yes, I took a course in English, a literature course. I just felt I had to do that. I wanted to find out what it was like. But I didn’t take exams. I audited.

Feder: [00:32:06] That’s a good way to do it.

Hastorf: Yes. And I went to lots of lectures. Just being part of the department, you learn a lot, too. I wasn’t really part of the department except being the wife, and that was enough for me.

Feder: Did you get to know the department well?

Hastorf: Oh, yes. We entertained them frequently. I don’t think I know most of them now, though, because they’re all a new generation.

Feder: Did you feel like Stanford was part of the larger Palo Alto community or that it was more isolated in some ways?

Hastorf: [00:33:05] It’s very well integrated, I would say. Because they borrow each other’s time and they use each other’s consultation. So you get to know a lot beyond your specialty as to how it fits in and what it leads to.

Feder: What do you mean, they use each other for consultation?
Hastorf: If you’re talking about psychology, you want to talk to somebody also in the medical school about the medical side of whatever it is you’re working on, or you want to talk to the economics side for the practicality of what you’re thinking of, or sociology, too. It’s intermeshed together, but it’s individual just the same.

Feder: [00:34:12] Were you involved in any things outside of Stanford, in the Palo Alto community?

Hastorf: Well, I thought I was. When my kids were in school, I was involved in their school system. I went to meetings. I wasn’t in charge of anything, but I attended. No, I can’t think of anything outside of Stanford. It was so big you didn’t need to look elsewhere.

Feder: Right, yes. A lot of people--

Hastorf: [00:34:59] Oh, I know what I did. I went to the symphony every week in season in San Francisco. That’s outside of this orbit. I went to a lot of plays. So I participated in that a great deal. That’s not Stanford, but it’s with my Stanford buddies.

Feder: I know a lot of people refer to Stanford as a bubble, that there’s--like you said--there’s so much going on there already that it’s kind of hard to get out of it sometimes.

Hastorf: Yes. Anyway, I did that. I spent a lot of time on the San Francisco Symphony Committee and at the opera--auditing, not doing anything else. But that was great. So that’s it.

Feder: [00:35:59] I’m just curious, when did you move to the Sequoias [The Sequoias Portola Valley]?
Hastorf: I’ve been here about four and a half, five years. I lived on the campus anyway, and I just gave up being alone. I was alone for two years, and that didn’t appeal to me much. So I came in here—because I got the invitation from the University to do that, and that gave me that extra push to make the change. And that was a good one.

Feder: Good. So you like being here?

Hastorf: Yes. It’s a nice, pleasant little place with my little kitty you can see over here.

Feder: [00:36:55] Yes, very cute. All right. Well, that’s all the questions--

Hastorf: I just enjoy being here. I enjoyed being in Dartmouth where it was very different. But teaching is the same. But this has been a good life, for kitty and me.

Feder: All right. That’s all the questions I have for you. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Hastorf: Pardon?

Feder: Is there anything else you would like to add within the John Gardner section? Any other thoughts or stories there?

Hastorf: I’m glad I knew him. There were two new men on the faculty that year in that department—John Gardner and the other guy—oh, I had his name a minute ago. Another John.

Feder: [00:38:02] Was it Carroll?

Hastorf: I was lucky when they doled out who went where to get John Gardner. The other one wouldn’t have been an unhappy event, but it wouldn’t have been the same.
Feder: There’s one question that we’ve been asking a lot of our interviewees, so I’ll ask you. If you had to pick three words to describe John Gardner—as you knew him—what would those words be?

Hastorf: Intelligent, good teacher, and a fine gentleman. Oh, the other fellow I can tell you—John Carroll [John Bissell Carroll]. He doesn’t mean anything to you or to me because I was dealt John Gardner instead of John Carroll. So my lucky break.

Feder: [00:39:09] [laughs] Yes, it worked out well.

Hastorf: Yes. Okay, anything more? If you have anything, I’m here.

Feder: [laughs] All right. Well, let’s do one more question. How would you characterize John Gardner’s legacy, either at Stanford or in the Silicon Valley area?

Hastorf: Oh my goodness, his legacy. [Pause] Curious, intelligent, timely. And very able. All good adjectives would take care of him. I have nothing negative on his score. I just wish I knew him better. I would have liked that. But a busy life—Washington, Stanford, psychology, research. That’s a pretty full package.

Feder: Yes, that’s a lot.

Hastorf: Yes, and he did it well. And I was so glad that he did what he had to do, and he did it nicely. But he never was one of those people whose names were in headlines.
Feder: [00:00:00] When you hear the name John Gardner, what comes to mind?

Hastorf: I can see him in front of the class, lecturing.

Feder: And what qualities come to mind?

Hastorf: I’d say he describes what he wants to describe very succinctly and understandably, if that’s the answer. Yes, he’s a good describer.

Feder: And how would you describe him?

Hastorf: How would I--?

Feder: How would you describe him?

Hastorf: [00:01:06] As a very able, like what I’ve said, young man at the time. Interested in his work. In touch with his students. I guess he wrote well, so his name spread far and wide, and he was in demand. That’s about it.

Feder: [00:02:00] Great. You said he was very in touch with his students. Can I ask you to elaborate a little bit on what you mean by that?

Hastorf: Classes were small. So if a student had a question or a statement, he would listen to it and treat it honorably. I guess he was an open-minded young professor. He liked his work, and he liked imparting it to the students his interest. Okay?
Feder: [00:02:55] Perfect, great. I had one more question. You had mentioned that you saw John Gardner at least a few times when he returned to Stanford to teach when you were at Stanford.

Hastorf: Yes.

Feder: And I was just wondering, did he remember you being a student of his?

Hastorf: I would say he did. He did his homework. But he also was familiar with my husband, and so once he knew that, he could put everything together because he met my husband quite shortly after the class was over.

Feder: Do you remember how they met?

Hastorf: Not the first time, no. It was a business meeting. I think he met him at some convention. I wasn’t there, so I don’t know. But I know they met on their own.

Feder: [00:04:11] Perfect, all right. So that’s all my questions. Do you have anything else that you--

Hastorf: I certainly haven’t seen him in such a long time that it’s hard to recall. If I did see him, a lot of scenes would flash back. He was just a good professor and helpful to his students and interested in his work and wanted to get ahead and spread the message. I think that’s why he probably went into teaching.

Feder: To spread what message?

Hastorf: [00:04:55] His theory on psychology, and that’s in his book or books. I don’t know how many he’s written. He and my husband could talk business, which was very nice. I was not really in on that because I didn’t have any professional reason to be. They enjoyed each other. It was a congenial
It was such a long time ago that I’m lucky to remember his name. Certainly when he taught, but I don’t recall that at all. I do have somewhere tucked away our textbooks or psychology book, but I don’t have it here. I think I probably sold it when you get rid of all your college books.

Feder:  [00:06:04] Right, makes sense.

Hastorf:  So anyway, I can’t think of anything more. I can see what he looks like. I can’t remember his wife, though I did meet her at their home. And his children I didn’t know.

Feder:  Did you meet his wife at their home at Mount Holyoke or at Stanford?

Hastorf:  I saw him at Stanford. In Mount Holyoke I was in a dorm, and he was in a dorm, because I don’t think they were planning on staying at Mount Holyoke very long. I think he was there two or three years, and that’s about it. Then he went on. He came from Connecticut College for Women and then to Mount Holyoke. He was gone, I think, by the time I graduated. I’m not sure when he left.

Feder:  [00:07:10] I think you’re right. He was only there for two years.

Hastorf:  Yes, I don’t think he stayed long, because he had better offers at coed universities. But I think he was happy at Mount Holyoke, and that’s good. I know nothing about him while he was at Stanford, but it was just a, “Hello. Yes, I remember you,” and then on. It was nothing more serious than that because it was business, business, business. So that’s about it.

Feder:  Perfect, all right. Well, thank you very much, Barbara.
Hastorf:  [00:07:57] You’re very welcome. Make it cheerful and colorful. You see, he was not a dull man.
Abby Feder

Abby Feder is an undergraduate student at Stanford University. She is majoring in Science, Technology, and Society with a focus in communication and media. She was an intern at the Stanford Historical Society Oral History Program during the summer of 2017 through the Haas Center for Public Service Cardinal Quarter Internship Program. She primarily worked on the John W. Gardner Legacy Project. She thoroughly enjoyed getting the chance to explore the life and work of this incredible man as well as of the many people whose lives he touched.