

TRANSCRIPT

SCRC Series: Lewis Clarke Oral Histories Project – MC 00191

Field Notes: James Brooks Breeden (compiled November 16, 2011)

Interviewee: JAMES BROOKS (“BROOKS”) BREEDEN

Interviewer: Yona R. Owens

Interview date: Monday, July 18, 2011

Location: Pinehurst, North Carolina

Length: Approximately 113 minutes

This interview for the Lewis Clarke Oral Histories Project was conducted at Brooks Breeden’s home in Pinehurst, N.C. A native of Fayetteville, N.C., Breeden was asked about his years as a North Carolina State University School (now College) of Design student (Class of ’65), and revealed insights into the pros and cons of Clarke’s teaching style. Breeden discussed working briefly for Willard Byrd, Baldwin Associates, and his teaching years at University of Georgia with Herbert Owens, and at Ohio State University with Jot Carpenter. He explained how he developed *LARCH*, computer software programs used by students of landscape architecture, architecture, and engineering. He concluded with comments about landscape architecture present and future.

YO: My name is Yona Owens and I’m interviewing Brooks Breeden in his home in Pinehurst, North Carolina, on July eighteenth, 2011. To get us started, tell me a little bit about where you’re from and how you got interested in landscape architecture.

BB: I’m from Fayetteville. I got interested in NC State as a result of a field trip we took and I was fascinated by ceramic engineering. So I went there and I joined ceramic engineering, but I had a friend who was in the school of architecture doing landscape architecture, and I thought I’d like to be an architect. And so, I became an architecture student. I watched what he was doing and thought, boy, they have more fun over there than the architects do, and so, I tried it and I liked it and joined the landscape architecture program and was a semester, I guess, behind schedule. So, it took me five and a half years, due to the transfer of credits and so forth, to make up a five-year program.

YO: What was your friend’s name?

BB: Sammy Thomason.

YO: And he didn’t finish the program though, right?

BB: No, he washed out.

YO: It was a high washout rate at that time, wasn’t it?

BB: Yeah. He really didn’t want to wash out. He was washed out.

YO: Oh, was he? We'll leave that for another time then, right, [Laughs] the story of that. What year did you start and when did you graduate?

BB: I started in '59, in the autumn, and graduated in the spring of '65.

YO: Who were some of your classmates?

BB: The four in my class were John Beaman [John R. Beaman, Jr.], Hal Price [Hal L. Price] [Pause] One more. I forgot. It'll come to me. [Baxter Wayne Coulter]

YO: Okay. Fred Stresau? Was he in your class?

BB: No, Stresau was in the year ahead of me. When he was in fourth, I was in fifth.

YO: But all of you, no matter what year you were in, you took the studios together, is that right?

BB: We had to. There weren't enough to break it down at that time.

YO: Really? So, like a dozen students in the landscape at that time?

BB: It actually worked very well because, of that, with three years together, the fifth year students always would be happy to help the third year students because they were no threat. They didn't know enough. The fourth year students had it in for the fifth year students so they wanted to excel and beat the fifth year students. So the fifth year students weren't really happy with the fourth year students. The third year students were trying to do better than the fourth year students, but we had that leg up from having been third year, which really helped us get ahead because of the fifth year students helping us out.

YO: What were the classes like? Were the teachers in there all the time or how did you learn what you were learning? I always wondered were there lectures?

BB: Yeah, it pretty much occurred in the studio. The teachers weren't in there all the time, they would come and go. Sometimes they would have a long lunch and they would come sauntering in. The studio met at two o'clock; they would come dragging in about two-thirty or a quarter to three. You never knew when they were going to show up. Generally they would come okay, but occasionally it was real late.

YO: Did they assign you a project and then take off and see what you came up with on your own?

BB: We had projects and we would go through an analysis of prototypes of what had been done in the past and so forth, which involved showing work, both the professors' work and also work of other places. When I was a sophomore, John [P.] Shaw took us around just gorgeous slideshows of Italy and France and so forth that he had taken when he was over there, you know. We got a real travelogue. It was so much better than history classes.

05:11

YO: Now he was in product design, is that right?

BB: No, he was an architect.

YO: Architect.

BB: But he was just teaching a design class there at the time.

YO: Who were some other teachers at the time?

BB: George Bireline and Joe Cox and—who was the big painter? Duncan Stuart. They were the big three in the painting aspect.

YO: Now, you had to take painting from one of them, didn't you?

BB: Well, you get your choice of which one, but you had to take a painting studio, you had to take a sculpture studio, you had to take—there was a guy named Joslin [D. Grant Joslin] who was a sculptor for awhile and he came and left while I was there.

YO: Well, in the landscape department there was Gil Thurlow and Lewis Clarke and Richard Moore and I think David Teachout was there at the time.

BB: Well, he came when—what it had been was Lewis was the head, I believe, and Thurlow was there and the two of them were the department when I came. They hired Richard Moore and when he came from California, Teachout came with him as his protégé. Teachout was—we couldn't figure out whether he was a student or a faculty member or exactly what and I'm not sure that he could either. He actually was not a bad guy, but he took a lot of grief from a lot of students.

YO: For what? What kind of things would they not like?

BB: Well, jet pilot coming from California to tell us how to do things.

YO: Oh.

BB: That sort of thing.

YO: Even then could you tell a difference between the West Coast approach to design and maybe what Thurlow and Lewis were bringing to the table?

BB: Yeah, but probably more from—not from Dave but from looking at all the prototype projects that we would look at from EDAW and the whole—actually it was Eckbo at the point. Little did I know I was going to meet Francis Dean and ride on a plane with him and do all kinds of things like that and then end up teaching his daughter.

YO: And who was that again?

BB: Francis Dean.

YO: Dean?

BB: Yeah. But it's funny. [Laughs] I got another story. I could talk for hours and hours. I never thought I had that much to say, but it keeps flowing out.

YO: Well, tell me one of the stories.

BB: Well, Francis was on the program with me about different kinds of things and he went first and he got up and delivered this wonderful eulogy about Greenpeace and everybody just said, Yay! [Claps hands] like this. Then [Laughs] he came back and sat down and somebody, Cameron Man, I guess, made some kind of remark. He says, Oh goddamn. He says, I gave the Greenpeace lecture. I thought this was the Greenpeace section. [Laughs]

YO: [Laughs]

BB: He had another one that he was supposed to give the students at Guelph.

YO: [Laughs] Oh no.

BB: Guelph is how I got to—

YO: Now is that an acronym for something, or is that—

BB: No, that's the name of the town.

YO: Oh, the town.

BB: And the name of the campus.

YO: Oh.

BB: G-u-e-l-p-h.

YO: I'm sorry. I didn't know that.

BB: It's in Ontario. It's near Toronto. That's how I got over to Canada, but I think I told you that story earlier—not Canada, but to Australia.

YO: Right. Well, let's you get you back in school for a few minutes here. What was your impression of Kamphoefner?

10:02

BB: I liked Kamphoefner, as far as it was possible to like somebody as arrogant as he. I enjoyed his house. His house was wonderful, I loved his house.

YO: Now Matsumoto designed that house, right?

BB: He always took credit for it.

YO: Did he?

BB: I don't know whether George did it or not, but I never heard anybody get credit for the thing except Kamphoefner, but I don't know for a fact who did it. I understand it's been put on the historic registry now. But the house was very nice and we would meet at the house for a seminar on ideas in design, weekly. The class was big enough overall for the school to break it up and meet in two different groups and the meeting was always followed by coffee and cakes.

Kamphoefner's wife was a wonderful cook. She made just the most delightful pastries and Scotch shortbreads and just wonderful things like that. In fact, I asked and she gave me a recipe for Scotch shortbread. I liked the house very much and I thought it was very innovative, the way he opened up the back for the natural air conditioning through the fake-looking cabinets that really weren't cabinets. I discovered, or I was amazed, too, the fact that he had the house not because he played golf—I don't play golf and here I am at Pinehurst, and I heard you tell me that Lewis doesn't play golf and he lives on a golf course now, apparently. But anyway, the house that Kamphoefner had, on a golf course, beautiful place, he didn't play golf. He bought it so he could run that dog. That's what he said. He runs the dog back and forth on the golf course for the exercise.

YO: It was a large dog, wasn't it?

BB: It was an Alsatian or something, or a Russian wolfhound, one of those dogs with the long black nose and the long orange hair and the tail that went like this and made a question mark at the back. Beautiful dog, whereby hangs another tale. The poor dog, one night—Kamphoefner had this old hi-fi system—he was really into hi-fi, and you've got to remember this was 1959—or not '59 but about '65—and he would play records for us while we ate the coffee and the crackers. He would do this and finally he didn't like the sound that was coming out of the system anymore. Something broke and oh, he was all upset about this.

The next week he had a brand new, totally alien-looking because the area around the stereo was blond and he had this walnut-looking mahogany cabinet for the stereo, a Fisher, I think it was. He would crank the volume up on this thing and he says, oh, the way to tell this is good is you stand a nickel on the edge and it will play as loud as it will go and blow your ears off and not knock the nickel over, you've really got a good system. So, he proceeded to see if he could knock the nickel over. He cranked that sucker up, the dog goes ape. The dog goes [Howls]

YO: [Laughs]

BB: —like this and takes a dump right in the middle of the cork floor.

YO: [Laughs] Oh no.

BB: At this point, [Groans] the wife comes running out. Kamphoefner grabs the dog's nose and rams the poor dog's nose in it and says, see what you've done? You've embarrassed me in front of the class.

YO: Oh no.

BB: And everybody said, uh...we've got to leave early because there's a project due. [Laughs]

YO: [Laughs] Right.

BB: And everybody got out of the house as quickly as possible.

YO: Oh my gosh. Well, these are sessions for the seniors, right?

15:02

BB: Yeah.

YO: What kind of things did you talk about?

BB: Well, everybody was assigned a famous architect and we had to do a bio of those and, as I said earlier, the landscape architecture students always got the Bay Region School. We'd get Schindler and the Greene brothers and the typical Bay Region, early 1930s, Garrett Eckbo—

YO: Church?

BB: Yeah, Eckbo, Church, the early years, and that was it. Let's go onto the next.

YO: Okay. Summing up your experience at the school, what philosophy or approach to design did you come away with?

BB: Boy, I haven't thought about that for a long, long time. I've forgotten the term, but it was an analytical approach where you would investigate the problems and see what the problems were and solve the problem as creatively as possible, never losing the view of the form, and the form and the function work together to create a solution that was very aesthetically pleasing and yet functioned well and solved all the physical problems that created the need for the design in the first place.

YO: That's quite a plateful.

BB: It is, but it all sort of comes together and makes a big single conglomerate.

YO: So, after graduation in '65, you went to work for Willard Byrd in Atlanta, and NCSU Special Collections acquired the Byrd & Associates drawings in 2004. Tell me about Willard Byrd.

BB: We had a guy in the office named Matt Welch and I'll never forget, Matt would go absolutely ape—I can see it now. Willard would come in and say, literally—this is a quote, I was there—Golly damn, Matt. You can't put the such and such there. There's a hog pen there. Matt told me, there was no hog pen. He never, ever, ever mentioned a hog pen, even though Willard alleges that he told him that. Willard would go off and spend two or three days down in Miami or, out of Georgia, but up to North Carolina. He did Irongate. He did a couple of courses up here that I worked at. He did a whole bunch of courses around the Atlanta area, he did a country club in North Carolina, and one of the first things I did was he sent me up here to design a residence at the main entrance gate, where you drive into the place you can see it. I've never been back there even though I've passed it a lot since we've been down here. It's a gated community and I never really felt it was worth bothering to go in there and do it.

But I did a lot of drawings for Willard, did a lot of clubhouse renderings in pastel, and did a whole bunch of things of that nature. Willard was a hard one to work for because he would go off and not give you any direction at all about where he wanted you to go. And I think everybody in the office had done something—I remember one female draftsman that we had, Toby Lowenstein. She couldn't take it. She says I got to do something. So, she found a drawing that had come in and started tracing the base map, started making a base map from it so it would be ready to use next time around. Willard came back and just climbed all over her. You picked the wrong damn map to trace for the base map. She said how would I know? I was trying to get ahead. He said, well, golly damn, it's in here. And it was on the end of his desk, rolled up tight.

20:13

YO: Right.

BB: And all the files were completely locked. He was absolutely paranoid and that was part and parcel of the way he left Harland Bartholomew. He had a dispute. Harland Bartholomew said we want you to go to— Harland Bartholomew said I want you to go to Hawaii and Willard said I can't go to Hawaii. I just became a deacon in the church and we just built a house here so consequently, I'm not going to leave. They said, you leave and go to Hawaii or bye. And he said bye and he took every single client in the client list with him.

YO: No!

BB: Yes, and he was so afraid somebody would do that to him. So, how did I find Willard? Crazy as a boss. Just crazy. I mean it was—he would not tell you things and then claim that you were supposed to know all this stuff and I found it extremely frustrating.

YO: So, you didn't stay there very long. [Laughs]

BB: Longer than I should have. I was there for about a year and a half.

YO: Right. So, between '67 and '71 you worked for Baldwin Associates in Atlanta. Now is that the Harry Baldwin who at the time had just taken over Martini Associates?

BB: Yeah, Martini had died.

YO: That was a large client list there that he picked up, wasn't it?

BB: Well, he was with the firm. Martini had key man insurance so the firm just continued under a different name. In fact it was Martini & Associates for a long period of time and then became Martini Associates and then it became Baldwin & Associates and then I think it was Baldwin Associates. I never knew whether the name was Baldwin & Associates or Baldwin Associates. They said, well, what are you, and I said, I'm an associate only because I associate with him.

YO: [Laughs] Right. What was he like?

BB: Harry was absolutely the salt of the earth. I mean, he would give you anything, the shirt off his back. He had a hair trigger response. I have seen him get angry at something—pick up a Bruning electric eraser—you know what those are? Those are the big long ones with the big head at the back and the point like this—and throw it all the way from one end of the drafting board to the other. If he hit somebody, he'd kill them.

YO: What would set him off?

BB: Miscellaneous things. I can't think of a good example, but something would set him off and he would go crazy with that, and then an hour later, come on, everybody. Let's go down to Herron's. Today's a good day for the roast beef or whatever else, and he was ready to go have a party with everybody and everybody was sitting there just seething.

YO: [Laughs] Right.

BB: But he was wonderful and his wife was wonderful. Evelyn was just a great person.

YO: After you left Baldwin, you not only got your master's in landscape architecture but you also taught at the University of Georgia's School—which is now College—of Environmental Design in Athens. The founder of the landscape department was Hubert Owens, right? What was Hubert Owens like?

BB: He was wonderful, just wonderful, in so many ways it was just classic. [Laughs] He had two or three of us over, I guess it was Jim Knopf and Peggy [Breedden] and I and maybe somebody else, maybe not, over for lunch, and this was after we had just been hired. Mrs. Owens was conducting—conducting—lunch and she had a bell underneath the table—

25:02

YO: [Laughs] She was conducting.

BB: —that she would summon the servants with. She conducted this thing and she said, this is my father and this is my grandfather and this is my mother and her mother and this is, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. Hubert pointed over at a painting on the wall, an Audubon reproduction, and he says, and these are my relatives. [Laughs]

YO: [Laughs] What did he look like?

BB: Oh, I can't describe him. He's elegant. If you could imagine—the look that I remember is a pinstriped suit, blue and white seersucker suit, and a white straw hat, and just that elegant summer attire worn by a fine old Southern gentleman.

YO: Really?

BB: That's really what he was like. I mean in terms of describing him for a police artist or something I really couldn't do that. Just the aura about him was class.

YO: I've heard some nice things about him. How did he present himself to the students?

BB: Warm, daddy.

YO: Really?

BB: It was interesting. I got a lot of ins and outs and I went places I never would have gotten in the University without him. During the summer—part of the summer quarter I didn't get off—and part of my duties there were registration and scheduling of students. That involved meeting students to conduct the students into this orientation program and so forth. Well, you can imagine that took me to the president's residence for a summertime orientation, meet the president situation. The president of the University of Georgia had a one square city block garden.

YO: Oh my gosh.

BB: And it was a formal garden and it was absolutely gorgeous. They would set that thing up with a brass band playing, not military music but just music, and have that going. And they'd be serving Cokes and all kinds of other stuff and the waiters would come moving through the crowds to serve the students who were planning on getting there and their parents. Well, you could imagine what this does to the parents. I mean the—

YO: Very impressive. [Laughs]

BB: —are saying—whoa!—you know, like this, and the kids are saying, mmmm.

YO: [Laughs]

BB: But it was really nice, and then everybody would go through receiving lines and stuff like this inside the house. It was really a first class, uptown act.

YO: And you were teaching as well.

BB: Yeah.

YO: What were you teaching?

BB: Teaching grading, staking, drainage, earthwork calculations, all of it.

YO: All that basic—

BB: Stuff nobody else really wanted to teach.

YO: [Laughs]

BB: And I was getting a lot of good experience from others who had been teaching the material for a long time. Jack Haynes, who went on to become a dean at LSU [Louisiana State University], was a good mentor on the side for some of that.

YO: In '74 you moved to Columbus and began your long and outstanding landscape architecture teaching career at Ohio State University. Among several recognitions, including investiture as an ASLA Fellow, you received the award of distinction from the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture in 2002. What drew you to teaching?

BB: I had planned on going back to Atlanta and practicing in Atlanta. And Roy Ashley, who also became a fellow at one point—he was a really nice guy when I knew him and he went on to become a flaming asshole, but don't put that in.

30:15

YO: [Laughs]

BB: But Roy and I were going to open a business and we would have, but the economy got so bad that it was impossible. And here I was, everybody was starving in Atlanta, literally sitting around playing cards, and I had a job offer at OSU. So, it didn't take a lot of thought to figure out I should go to OSU and take a job instead of sit there and not do anything.

YO: Did you think it was going to be permanent or did you think it would just be an interim situation?

BB: Oh, for the longest kind of time I was a practitioner who happened to be teaching. That's what I thought I was up until about my mid-thirties and I suddenly realized, my God, I'm a teacher who used to practice.

YO: Right. [Laughs]

BB: It really struck me one day. I said this is ridiculous. I'm a practitioner, but I'm not anymore. I'm a teacher.

YO: Well, by that time, you had written quite a few articles and were working on a book, I think.

BB: Never got a book out. I had written a few articles and this, that, and the other. It was publish or perish, of course. And I never thought the articles were particularly good, but they were publications and they were recognized and they were peer reviewed. So that part's true.

YO: Tell me about the graduate level class you taught called, Evaluation and Criticism in Landscape Architecture.

BB: [Laughs]

YO: [Laughs] That one stood out in the list of ones that you gave me. I thought what in the world is that one about?

BB: I have no idea.

YO: You don't have any idea on that one? [Laughs] What would a course called, Evaluation and Criticism in Landscape Architecture, what would that be about?

BB: It could have been a graduate class down there I taught for awhile which was in response to the ASLA annual awards. I was looking at an awards issue and saw the awards that were being given and thought, you can't tell what this is. And it's pretty hard to evaluate. I can't tell whether this is an office or whether this is a residential unit or whether it's an apartment complex or what it is. It may have been a function of that. I know I was conducting a seminar on that, but I cannot remember for the life of me a syllabus or the driving force behind that. If I did do such a thing, I pretty much assume it was evaluation and criticism of things that people had built and their ideas and looking at so and so believed this certain philosophy. Well, what about it? Is that true or is it false? What do you think? Have you thought about it?

YO: So just get the students to question rather than accept something that's been picked out for them.

BB: That would be the—I have to say this, I don't know if you're coming back to it or not, but somewhere along the line I want to get it in and I want to remember to say it. I owe Lewis [Clarke] a lot.

YO: Okay.

34:28

BB: Okay? Not the way he thinks, because I was one of the very few people who never worked for him. So, I didn't have that kind of personal working relationship at his office. But when I started teaching I said for awhile, I'm teaching because of the way Lewis Clarke taught me, which I think was totally wrong. And I hated him for it. Hate's too big a word, but I was so upset with how he taught because what he would do is what I've seen other young people do, young professors. He would come over and he would design something for you. And if you looked at that and you said, as I did, I think that's a great design. That's wonderful. That's *his* design. I want to do *my* design. I don't want to do his design. I put it away and I attacked the program all over again. It was a little square block in Raleigh, a park, and I did it again.

The next class meeting he came by and says this is terrible. I don't understand. Where's your design we worked on the other day? And I said, it's here, and he said, well, pull that out.

And he worked on it a little bit more and was explaining this and that a little bit, but not really explaining so much as just doing it, you know?

YO: Right.

BB: And I said, after he left, damn. That's really, really very good, but it's not mine. It's his.

YO: [Laughs]

BB: I'm so impressed how he could take it and make it better. I put it up and started working on mine. He came in the next day and he was really mad with me and he said this is terrible. I don't understand. What's wrong with you, Breedon? Pull out the other one that we've been working on, and he'd play around and he says, now that's really good. Use that one. And I felt like a whore.

YO: Really?

BB: I used it. I got the second highest grade I've ever gotten in my life on that design. And I resented that so much, and when I was teaching, I said, I don't want to do that. I want to make people use their own solutions, and I would see young faculty members come in and start doing a design for someone in the class and redoing the same design and doing exactly what Lewis was doing.

In fact, I had one faculty member tell me they didn't want me to talk to their students because they had everything under control. I said, fine. Do it. My problem was I didn't know that I had thirty-some good designs in me. You have thirty students in the class. I wanted them to pull out their designs and I was more than willing to spend as much time as it took to help them work through their ideas and to get their ideas as good as they could, but I never could get it—I couldn't do that for thirty people with totally different ideas. So, I said, you're going to have to do your own design and I will do whatever I can to help you. What kind of questions do you have? What do you think about this? Can you make this better? What about this form? And that's the way I philosophized teaching the design classes was, how can I help you make yours better and make yours work, primarily. And by and large, I found that pretty successful albeit frustrating for the students.

Later, I think I forgave Lewis in the sense that I said, well, I probably wouldn't have done anywhere nearly as good a job as I may have done if he hadn't pushed me in that direction and opened my eyes to it in that way. So, I forgive him for it, but it took me a long time to come to grips with what the problem was, one, and it just bothered me so much, the fact that I ended up saying, I'll do it. I'll take the design and I'll—but I knew full well if I hadn't done so I would have flunked the thing and I probably wouldn't have finished school.

40:25

YO: Well, it was one of those big decision moments for sure, wasn't it?

BB: Yeah, and that's what bothered me more than anything else.

YO: Well, I think you've come to grips with it at this point though, don't you think?

BB: I do. It was an eye opening kind of experience and overall it has paid well and put the—it's paid its dues, you know?

YO: Good.

BB: I mean, I paid my dues and I'm sure that Lewis has no recollection whatsoever of it and I would be surprised if he did have. I've often wondered if that was one of his philosophies, one of the ways of doing things, or whether it was a device to trick me, pushing me to the point I decided that it's just a way to get things.

YO: One of these days I'll ask him that question. How about it?

BB: Yeah.

YO: Well, as I said, you didn't just teach, you authored some articles and the topics ranged from how to assign marks in courses to teaching computer applications in landscape architecture. But you were most noted for your *LARCH* software which evolved over a twenty-year period. Now tell me how you got from being a landscape architecture person to being a computer person at a time when these software programs did not exist. We did not have these things.

BB: When I went to work at Ohio State the guy that hired me there was Larry Gerken. Larry Gerken was a city planner and he was using a program that would develop tests. He would put in banks of questions and then people taking a test—when did Daniel Burnham do such and such, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah? Who was responsible for so and so? And those silly little questions that weren't great philosophical things but just factual in nature and it could be multiple choice. He put in a question bank and the kids would take those questions and run up a score. Jot Carpenter, the guy that hired me directly, suggested that since I was complaining one day about being stuck in my office for hours and hours and hours over the weekend making up lots and lots of problems for lots and lots of practice tests to make sure the students could manipulate the numbers necessary to get the stuff—

I said there is no reason under the sun that you can't do this stuff. Even the engineers can multiply these numbers and get these things. I mean, you just plug in a formula, right? So I figured, here. Get some practice on it. Well, they wanted more problems to practice before they took another test and flunked it. And so, I said, well, I've really been busting my hump doing this thing all Saturday and Sunday. It would take forever to grade them, too. So, Jot said, why don't you talk to Larry Gerken? He's put all his stuff on a computer. So, I went to Larry and I said, tell me more about this stuff, and he did. I went over to the office of computer based instruction and they said, you won't fit the same program that Larry does because yours is numeric and his is just *alpha*. So, I said doggies. His answers were a, b, c, d. Mine would be 2.45, which is a different category.

So, we talked about it a little bit and said, you know, maybe we can do something for you, and I said, okay, let's give it a shot. I worked with a couple of guys over there and we ended up spending a good bit of time working on a project and we had to call it something. It became *LARCH* because it had to have a five character name. And Ohio State had labeled our program, LARCH, because it had five characters and all the programs had to be five character names—

45:20

YO: Right.

BB: —for the computer program and for the University, so it was all the same so it made sense. So, I ended up naming it that and we worked on it and generated programs and built probably, oh, a whole bunch of things. The big wonderful thing was closing and adjusting a traverse, and that's pretty good, considering. It was rather clever. It would randomly generate the numbers, randomly display the numbers to the students, evaluate each response, and go through the thing, and it was pretty snazzy.

YO: That is pretty snazzy. [Laughs]

BB: In this case I was the content expert and my friends at CBI were the programming expert gurus throughout the time. At this time, I've got to say, there were no things. BASIC was the only other language besides Assembler, which was like a machine language, literally talking to the guts of the machine. The code for *LARCH* read something like, branch star plus four if switch thirty-one is on turn, switch thirty-one off, which said, go here if this is true. Once you're there, cut it off so the next time through it will—

YO: And this was all hand coding as well.

BB: Oh yeah, all hand coded, and if you wanted to type something you'd say, type so and so slash B two. That goes into buffer two. Buffer two was a text buffer with eighty characters in it, or sixty-four depending on the machine. And then you'd say, type buffer two. And it would display that whole line of text. But then you had to format where you wanted it to go. So, you'd have to get the line and the time and all this stuff.

YO: Oh my goodness.

BB: We worked on it that way and I thought, well, that's the way you've got to do it. Everybody said later, Wow! I said, well, that's what we did. But it really was close to an Assembler code. Then I learned a couple of languages when they came around and it became, wow! You can do this stuff with words. That's incredible. So, it became fun to redo that and then I discovered, when the IBM personal computer came out, my God, I can put graphics up here a little bit, but they're pretty poor graphics and what a pain in the butt. You had to literally hand draw the graphics up there. To import a text drawing was really a pain. It all came to fruition with the Macintosh though.

I was on my way over—I went over to CBI to take a look at some later stuff that had come in, and one of the women that was working over there said, before you do this—before you look at this stuff she was talking about—I want to show you something. Now, I had just published an article in *Dr. Dobb's* software journal—I got paid for it. I couldn't believe it.

YO: [Laughs]

BB: My God, they—they sent me a letter saying, where do we send the money? And I said money? I mean, lord, I've never gotten paid for anything. It's always been, do I get a review? And I said, send the money here.

But anyway, the payment was for this article in this magazine and the article was "How to Use EGA Graphics for Drawing," and it explained how to import a drawing that was done in a Paint program and then animate that drawing. Now this is hard stuff, I mean really hard stuff.

50:00

YO: About what year was this?

BB: This was 1979, I think, '78, '79,

YO: So, really early on.

BB: Oh yeah, really early. I did that and it got published. I had to do something with it. It couldn't just come up there so I had to move it around. So, that's when I had fun. I said this can be fun and I said let's put an image of a German Fokker tri-plane up and let's animate it to move around. And he put a gun sight up there and you can make out like you're Roy Brown and shoot down the Fokker.

I said that's going to be kind of nice. As you fire, you press the space bar and you fire two shots coming in like this, converging. If you hit the plane, you hit it twice. You're going to shoot the airplane, but if you start ringing up hits on it, the plane's going to get excited. I mean the pilot's going to take evasive action. So, the pilot's normally moving one pixel up or down or left or right. As soon as you start firing and you get the first hit—almost always you get the first hit because you sneaked up behind him—as soon as you get the first hit the pilot starts jumping and moves two pixels. So that's two plus the one so now it's moving three pixels. Then, if you hit it again, it starts moving five pixels. So, it's really taking evasive action. If you don't hit it by the time it hits five, you're probably not going to be able to shoot it down and you run out of ammunition and the German wins. Now to distract you the German shouts curses in German on the screen, which appear up there at the same time.

YO: [Laughs]

BB: So, anyway, all this was written up and published. Back to the report, I had just gotten that thing published and I went over to CBI and I had just finished that on the IBM, and this pig on this Macintosh screen, this pig was jumping across the screen in a series of hops. I had just spent something like six months trying to get this thing done.

YO: [Laughs]

BB: And I said how'd you do that? She said I had seen the pig in *Byte* magazine. Well, I scanned the pig's image. I said what? She said, I scanned the pig's image and I pasted it into this program and then dragged it in the path that I wanted it to go on across the screen and it followed me.

YO: Oh my gosh. [Laughs]

BB: I said how long did it take you to do this? She said, about ten minutes.

YO: Oh no. [Laughs]

BB: [Gasps] I sold my Compaq Pro and bought a Mac SE with two floppy drives for Christmas. Now that wasn't cheap. A Mac SE at the time with two floppy drives was twenty-five hundred dollars.

YO: It was a lot of money.

BB: But I knew the guy because when I had first started working with CBI this guy had been pretty much the honcho of the shop. He had gone to work for Control Data Corporation and was working with a guy named Mike Allen who had also finished up and who had been working at OSU and gotten hotshot big in Control Data. They'd worked on this thing and then the president of Control Data had given them some time to develop something special, so they did. He said we can't afford that, we can't sell that, but you can have it. You worked all this time on it.

YO: And they said that to you.

54:51

BB: Well, they gave it to him, to Mike Allen and Carl Philabaum. Then they had developed this product, which they called, "Course of Action." That's what they were showing me down there. Well, as it turned out, I knew Phil real well and so, Phil said, how would you like to beta test this stuff? It was way before selling anything. So, I said, oh, man. So I got a copy of that for Christmas, too, and started working with that and it became so easy. I could scan something in, a drawing in that would be representative of what I was trying to do, or just draw a diagram in, because they had all the little basic tools that we take for granted now, straight line, arrows, boxes, circles, simple tools. But, boy, they were really complex at the time compared to what you had to do to draw a line on an IBM. You had to pick end points and draw them this way. You just picked it and drew it. Animation was simple. You wanted the line to fly across the screen you just drew the line and dragged it across the screen. But I said, man, this is wonderful. I can do all the things.

So what had been a testing program, what's the value of such and such, gradually changed into fairly quickly a teaching program because I could show people the diagrams in actual motion that represented things like vertical curves and traverse closures and things like this. I mean, I could actually illustrate dynamically what I was trying to get across.

So, that really got good and I got a—I don't know if you've got this in there or not, but another big push came when I was contacted by Carl Philabaum and he said, we have this job going that we've been contracted to do with Educational Testing Service. And we need somebody to go to ETS and to work with them up there on adult education programming. And we can't afford anybody there and you're the best person that we've got who knows the language better than anybody else except one of us here in the factory.

I said, man, I can't do that. He said sure you can. I said, well, let me see and I got permission. I sort of took a semi—not a leave but a sort of semi reduced funny schedule where I could teach instead of Monday, Wednesday, Friday, I could teach Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and that left me Fridays and Mondays open so I could get a long weekend there if necessary. It worked out really, really well.

So that was how I got into it and I worked for ETS for awhile and as a result ended up meeting some guys from Apple because they said, okay, we're all going to—first crack out of the box they said, okay, we're all going to go out to California. So, I was essentially given a ticket and they said meet us at this hotel at such and such a time. This was the guy who was in charge from ETS and one of the people who was actually doing the programming, actually two of the people who were doing the programming, both girls. I shouldn't say "girls," but they were so young at the time. We all went out there, plus a guy from Syracuse who was a question expert, and we met out there and met one of the vice presidents from Apple, and several other people from Apple. And they set me up with a special Apple account, which was an email account that you had to be a special hotshot to get into. It was a pretty nice experience to go out there and be wined and dined and—

YO: Now, you're seeing things that nobody knows about at this point.

59:52

BB: Oh yeah, and it's all secret sort of thing. We went into this special projects area, which was in an interesting building. In the lobby the television set was showing Russian news. I mean this was way back when, man, when do you see something like that on the news?

YO: Right. Before Cable News Network, right? [Laughs]

BB: Oh, yeah.

YO: Way before that.

BB: But it was interesting. I saw things I had to sign nondisclosure agreements on. The RADIUS monitor people made me sign a nondisclosure agreement, looking at fifteen-inch displays, which were enormous at the time because the Mac was a little nine-inch display.

YO: Right.

BB: And this thing was in color.

YO: I mean, your whole world was opened at this point.

BB: Oh yeah, and then all of a sudden, we looked at this thing and the guy says, you can't tell anybody this, and we'd sign a nondisclosure. And he said, we're working on running video with this, and I looked in there and they were playing *Star Trek* on the computer screen, I mean the movie, *Star Trek*.

YO: Wow.

BB: Or one of the TV episodes.

YO: Right.

BB: This is so far ahead of when you can actually get video on screen, just mindboggling.

YO: So, what did this do to what you were thinking about these training modules?

BB: Oh, lord, it was wide open. The first thing I did—you know they were saying, how much do you want to do this, and I said, how much can I get? He says, well, dah, dah, dah, dah, he said something or other, and I said well, I'm going to have to turn around and buy a color Mac. The guy looked at me. He said you want equipment?

YO: [Laughs]

BB: You're going to buy equipment with this? I said, yeah. I figured I can get the color monitor and the major CPU with the first Apple color display that came out, the first Apple II, or Macintosh II. They said, wow! The next thing I know, arriving by UPS in a truck was the monitor, the system unit, a scanner, for goodness sakes—I didn't ask for a scanner—a scanner and a whole bunch of software and all kinds of other things that were sort of specialized equipment that I hadn't even thought I needed much less wanted or whatever.

YO: But you took it though, right?

BB: Oh yeah.

YO: [Laughs]

BB: It was something else. The more I saw, I said, man, you can do a lot with a scanner because you didn't have to draw a lot of diagrams. You've got almost—well you did get photorealistic stuff that you could work from.

So that's how I got intrigued in it because *LARCH* then became something much more than just working on a little black and white image, which I was doing pretty good at because I could do a lot of things with it, but still it wasn't the same level of reality that I could start peeking at once I could get at least first even black and white images, but then we could begin to get scanned-in color and begin to import color photographs, that became the real deal.

YO: So, when you first came out with these programs though you were still fairly limited because of what your audience's capability was equipment wise, right?

BB: Yeah. Not as much as I was the very first, the very, very first thing that I was working on, the back-to-the-machine language stuff almost. The first computer I had was a—I didn't have, the school had—was a Magnavox 60 Orion. You've never heard of it, nobody has, but it was about a nine-inch square plasma panel with a range of LEDs in it and on top was a thirty-five millimeter slide tray.

1:04:54

Now the plasma panel by its very nature is completely transparent, you can see right through it, and so, the notion was you can project something through the plasma panel, anything that you can put in a thirty-five millimeter slide. So what I did was put thirty-five millimeter slides of things in there and then you could show them and ask questions like, point to the such

and such, point to the thing-a-ma-hickey, point to the so and so. And it would respond by getting something just about the resolution of your fingertip that you could touch the thing and it would go, beep, and it registered yes, no, or whatever.

We had a bunch of demonstrations on that, one of them was for *LARCH*, and did a big presentation at ASLA in Denver in 1980. That was a lot of fun, but nobody could afford it because it was like sixteen thousand dollars in 1978, so just impossible.

YO: What was the need that you were answering with these programs?

BB: To be able to be a surrogate professor. To be able to put myself in a box so a kid could interact with me twenty-four seven, essentially. And get help, review a lecture, review material that I had presented, make certain they understood what I did in class because they could play it again. That was an important way. I know at the University of Georgia, Bill Mann, who was teaching history at the time, he'd put up outside my door—it happened to be outside my door—a big, about this big by this big, slide viewing tray [gestures about 2 by 2 feet]. It was mounted on the wall vertically like this and you rack it with slides and he would have all the slides from the lecture that he had been doing for the history class up there so that kids could come back and look at the things and say, oh, okay. Now I see. It's Trafalgar Square from this view and that view and the other thing, or, yeah, now this is Versailles, this way and that way and back and forth. And so, you can see, okay, yeah, I understand now the comparison between these two because I can see them side by side up here and it's not sequential in that you look at this one, now look at this one. It's here, they are together. So, I wanted to be able to do that kind of thing and by and large could, and I could see the potential for doing that on the computer screen because I had seen it done, thanks to my nondisclosure agreement stuff at Apple. I knew it was coming, I just didn't know when.

YO: How long was it before you started working with McGraw Hill?

BB: McGraw was—God, I don't know. McGraw must have been '80, '85, something like that. Staub rustled them up a little bit and found out what they were, that they were interested in doing this sort of thing with different software.

YO: When you say doing different things you mean like having the software complement a printed situation or—

BB: Yeah, or go through and get just oodles of problems to practice and test that were related directly to the problems in the back of the chapter. So in other words, this was an animation of the problems in the back of the chapter, but better than an animation of the problems—it was pretty poor animation of the problems because George was doing the animation, but it worked just fine because it was a level that was enough.

What was good was that you could randomly generate the numbers and say, if the fireman is standing down here and he wants to shoot the hose to reach the fire on the second floor, and he is standing at such and such an angle to the second floor, what is the difference in the angle he has to aim the fire hose to reach the fire? So, you've got to know something about trajectories and all kinds of other things to get to the fire.

1:10:10

YO: Right.

BB: Those types of things. I remember one of the nicest ones was the case where you got three boys standing on a boat and what happens if the bigger boy jumps off first? The boat obviously shoots ahead, but what happens if the smaller boy jumps off then the bigger boy jumps off—bigger, smaller, smaller, bigger—and what happens if all three of them jump off at the same time? So you've got all these possibilities of what happens if.

YO: And what was the name of the textbook that this was with?

BB: The textbook was three textbooks. One was *Statics*, one was *Dynamics*, and one was *Mechanics of Dynamics*, or whatever, but it was really strength of materials, what we always called it. So, it's how strong is such and such. A beam bends and flexes and what's the loading on the beam and where does he have to put it in order for it to break the easiest or resist deformation as much as possible? So you get all kinds of things from statics, which is static forces, you know, not moving things, and then dynamics, which is a car drives over the bridge at fifty miles an hour, a car drives over the same bridge at seventy miles an hour. What's the difference in the deflection of the bridge as the car's going if the bridge resonates at such and such a—so all these things I never made any remote—I never once remotely suggested that I understood what I was doing, but George understood what he was doing and I sure knew how to go through and get the pieces parts hooked up so that yes, you did this one and then you did that one and you go here and then you go there, and if you did this one then you went to that one and if you did that one you went to this one, and so forth. So it became kind of tricky to do some of these things that were—

YO: No kidding. [Laughs]

BB: Well, it was fun though because it was second nature by that point.

YO: Right.

BB: It really was a nice experience.

YO: And where was this used?

BB: Let's put it this way, statics was a required subject for every incoming freshman engineer in the world. I mean, it's a required subject, and I think dynamics is also. And while not every single one of them used Beer & Johnston as their textbook, an enormous number, by far the majority, used Beer & Johnston as the textbook and in fact it was McGraw Hill's biggest selling textbook in the engineering division, was *Statics*. And *Dynamics* was right up in there pushing, too, but the third one, *Mechanics of Materials*, was not nearly as up on the ladder, but it was still up there.

YO: Now, you developed some programs that were tuition [tutorial] assistance for landscape architects on their national testing, didn't you?

BB: Well, that's *LARCH*. I mean, it was not tuition [tutorial], but I always advertised *LARCH* as being—first off, it was for teaching. I began to understand shortly that I was getting a lot of inquiries. I was selling it out of my office, out of my home basement, initially, and I was putting it on a CD. I put it on a CD because nobody could afford a CD-ROM when I first started selling. I was trying to figure out how I could do it without spending four hundred and some dollars for a copyright protection program and having to hassle with all that stuff.

So I thought, well, if you put it on a CD, it cost eight hundred dollars for a CD burner at the time so none of the kids could afford that. By the time I got everything set up and started running programs, CD players had dropped to about three hundred dollars and the next year they were about a hundred and fifty, and then all of a sudden they were included in every single player.

1:15:12

YO: [Laughs] Right.

BB: So it rapidly fell out that I was losing the ability to protect using the CD-ROMs. But I was selling the CD-ROMs out of my home and I was selling them to schools, trying to, and trying to market them as, buy so many of these things at a whack and you get a good price on them. Several faculty members at different locations were very, very good about it. Cornell was good. Purdue was good. Never could get a lot out of Rutgers. University of Florida had several good years of selling down to there. Several other schools were quite good on buying them. Then they sort of just went away.

I began to realize, hey, what's happening is kids are copying these things and selling them or giving them away to their friends or one person buys one copy and everybody else is copying them. So even though the faculty member says, I want every single person to have one, well, every single person doesn't get one. Even though they may have a label on them and all this other stuff, they don't.

Prentice Hall for some reason thought they could sell this stuff and they thought, oh boy, oh boy, this is wonderful material. We can sell it. Well, there's good news and bad news. The bad news was they couldn't sell it. The good news was they packaged it and did a beautiful job on the packaging and the box and the whole nine yards and just did a wonderful thing, and advertising—precious little advertising. As I told the editor one time, I said, I teach this stuff, for God's sake. I would never have a clue that this was available. I received zero advertising.

YO: Right.

BB: We don't understand. We've been sending it out. And I said, I don't know where you're sending it, but it's certainly not getting to me. But they weren't advertising, they weren't selling, and they got really squeezed badly. That I'm sorry for. The good news is, more good news is, because of their beautiful publication on everything, I think that's what gave me the last promotion to full professor—

YO: Ah.

BB: —was because it was a refereed publication in spades. It looked really nice, it did get reviewed, it did have comments and all the other kinds of things, and although the program itself hadn't materially changed, it got a full page by page, word by word, review.

YO: Wow.

BB: I mean, everything was read by a professional reader and everything had to be changed and I had to follow their instructions like after a colon you capitalize the first word of the next—you capitalize the word following the colon.

YO: Right.

BB: Not everybody does that, but still they said you're going to do it. So, I did it, and I followed some other grammatical conventions that Kate Turabian would probably not have agreed with but—

YO: [Laughs]

BB: —still it was, you know, here or there. But they did put together a nice package and they did give me a nice present.

YO: That's fantastic. You went to teach for a while at the University of Canberra in Australia, and I'm wondering, what is the difference in their teaching method compared to here, or is there one?

1:19:57

BB: I said earlier with respect to Lewis that I resented him doing it for me. I don't believe in doing it for anybody, but I believe in helping somebody with their design and in order to help somebody with their design you've got to be able to see their design so they've got to show it to you. That means they've got to uncover it and let you look at it and react to it and if you tell them something doesn't look very good, they've got to own up and take that punch and start fixing it. We sort of expect that here. Students hate writing, they can't write, they all flunk English—not all, but—

YO: It's tough.

BB: High preponderance, it's a tough subject for them. Most of them are graphical, not literate. Ironically, they can't do math either, so what is there left?

YO: [Laughs]

BB: Anyway the upshot of it is they want you to help them with their stuff. In Canberra they didn't want any help with their stuff. They wanted to show it to you and stand there and take the beating. They didn't want any criticism, period.

YO: While they were working.

BB: No, yeah, while they were working. They didn't want any criticism when they finished either. Well, obviously everybody wanted to hear you've done a really good job, and that's fine, but they didn't get it. Still, it's one of those situations where their idea was, let's write it out.

Let's write it until we get it right, and if we go through it with the book we can write the solution out to where it becomes real simple to draw. We solve it by talking about it and writing it down and thinking about it and drawing little notes and figures and stuff like this and that's the way you go about solving it. I don't know where they get that notion, but that's—

YO: I'm kind of struck that that's really kind of how in an office that you would develop a program for a client, is that there's a lot of writing that's involved before some of the actual design work gets done.

BB: Mm hmm. They want to write the program, but they don't want you to see any of the writing and then they don't want you to see any of the drawing. In an office, you do the writing and everybody agrees on the writing, the principal and you agree on the writing, and then when you start doing the work you still want the principal to okay it because, as I told a guy I was working for once, I says, look, Mike. Just tell me what you want. I haven't got time to do it twice. He says, am I like that? I said, yeah.

YO: [Laughs]

BB: Well, he was the boss and like Willard—he wasn't Willard, thank God, he was a real nice guy, but like Willard, he would have you do something and then he would say, well, this really isn't what I want. And then you'd do it again and give him what he wanted. Now [if] what he wanted was a font change, if it was something trivial, something not worth arguing about, I didn't care whether it was Garamond or Times Roman. It didn't make any difference. But that was one of those things like he'd say, I wanted this font. And I said, essentially, what do you want?

YO: The students in Canberra, how did their designs come out?

BB: Not as well as if they had been reviewed intermittently. I mean, they came out as a good first attack. It was like they'd put it down for the first time, you know. It was one of those things where if you came on to it and you worked on it a little bit with them and said, do this and do this and do this and take it back to the board. That's what they ended up with, where they needed to go back and take it back to the board.

YO: Interesting, interesting. Has the definition of landscape architect changed from what you originally thought it was?

1:25:08

BB: [Pause] That's a good question. I know it's changed over the years from what it used to be back in the '30s to what it became. And then we sort of went through this whole business with the flowing California school, whorls and twirls and curvilinear shapes, and moved off into this absolutely insane period of *new urbanism* without knowing what old urbanism was. I really don't know whether to laugh or to be angry about *new urbanism* because the difference was that—and you know this so there's no need to tell it—but *urbanism* is the whole notion that back in the 1910s, 1900s, you didn't have a lot of public transportation. So, what you had was people walking to work, the workers walking to work and having to live as close as they could to where

they walked so they could divide the hour up into three pieces. You had twenty minutes to walk home for lunch, twenty minutes to eat lunch, twenty minutes to walk back to work, and that was your lunch hour. That worked out fine as long as you lived within that cycle of a twenty-minute walk. That put a central green space city center core out here with a perimeter of all the housing and everything out here in this zone of twenty-minute walk.

Now they've decided, well, we're going to have *new* urbanism. We're going to adapt this form and so, we're going to put this mini central BD [Business District] out here and we'll orient everything to that, and because of that we'll have alleys and we'll have main streets and we'll put as much asphalt as physically possible around the units. We've got to put asphalt in the back of a little narrow driveway so we can get the garbage trucks back there and pick up the garbage.

Shades of 1920. We'll put front porches out there because everybody's going to sit out front, not with the garbage where they smell the garbage, but out front where they see the people pass by on sidewalks, as if they didn't have horses back there or anything, you know, it was just a slower moving traffic situation. So, they ate that reason for clustering everything so tight, okay, and then they say, this is *new urbanism* and they put it out in the middle of the sticks with nothing else anywhere near around it.

But that's *new urbanism*, and if you want to buy a loaf of bread, you've got to drive twenty miles or ten or whatever to get it. You can't walk downtown and buy a loaf of bread and do any shopping or get some nails or whatever else. That's not down there. There's a theater or something like that, but that's the kind of stuff that's down there. You don't get the full set of services that you get in a city that *old* urbanism was centered around. That's my concern, that it's all for the wrong reason and now a whole generation of people have been saying, oh, this is a wonderful idea, *new urbanism*. It's the architects that are pushing it, they have no clues what's going on, and we're just dragged along.

YO: Mm hmm. How can landscape architects stop from being dragged along in these kinds of things?

BB: I don't know that they can. I really don't.

YO: Does it have to do with how the role of a landscape architect has changed over the years?
1:30:00

BB: I bet you get a lot of different answers on that. I don't know that it's really changed all that much.

YO: Well, I'm thinking like Eckbo and some of the public housing situations that those guys were involved in and some of the planned communities.

BB: Well, there are a lot of planned communities. In fact it's interesting, right up there where I live—we're not too far from Reston [Virginia] and not too far from Greenbelt [Maryland]. It's interesting to think about those early things.

YO: Columbia [Maryland].

BB: Yeah, Columbia, Radburn [New Jersey], and all the areas up there, so familiar and so close, but the deal is that a lot of that stuff is all architecture driven. And this is all architecture driven and they seem to be doing the hiring. We don't seem—they'd rather starve, I think, than let us hire them. I just find it very depressing. I always have felt it very depressing.

But I don't think we think about it very much. I think we're too busy reacting, trying to get enough money to put food on the table, trying to make payroll. That's what I think is the biggest concern that drives the profession, not making a buck, but keeping your head above water. And lord knows out here now all kinds of friends who have won all kinds of awards and who have done outstanding work for the Society and just beautiful jobs, and they're starving to death. They've let everybody go in their office and they're the only ones left.

YO: Is it the economy that's doing that or is it some change in the profession?

BB: I think it's the economy at the moment, but I don't see in this case how any change in the profession can eliminate it or can relieve that problem. But we aren't adaptable enough to try to dig our way out in any kind of way yet. I don't know if anybody can. I don't know how the architects are faring under this. Not very well, I would think.

YO: Well, it's tough all around, I think. This kind of leads me to the futuristic kind of thinking that I think that you're capable of. What is landscape architecture going to look like in the future?

BB: [Pause] I truly don't know. What I've seen which leads me to think that at least for the contemporary period of time and for the foreseeable future, if we continue to do most of our work with jobs that are architecture driven, that many of those will be jobs which have a strong park component. "Park" is in the sense of a national kind of memorial, parks like for the victims of Flight 19, or whatever the number was, that dropped the terrorists out, sites that do that. The site that Walker's been working on around the potential—

YO: Peter Walker?

1:34:40

BB: —yeah, Pete—maybe—*maybe*—finally will get built for the Twin Towers site. It goes off and on hold. Projects of that nature will probably take up a large chunk of the work done because funding seems to be creeping out of the woodwork for projects like that that isn't creeping out for projects of more simple terms.

Now, I don't know whether it's going to keep up. God knows I hope it's not going to keep up because we keep getting knocked out with terrorist attacks and so forth and have to create more memorial parks and the like, but a lot of those things do get caught up, you know, with a public awareness that calls for recognition. And in many cases, since they're set in the landscape, the landscape becomes a major component of that, even though they may be designed by or driven by an architect, [like the] Vietnam Memorial by Maya Lin. But that doesn't necessarily mean that something can't be a good idea. I think the Vietnam Memorial shows that. Everybody says, oh, it's terrible. I think it's very good. The fact that it was designed by an architecture recent graduate, that doesn't bother me a bit, but the landscape itself, she couldn't have done it by herself. There's stuff there and there's work there.

But where does it go in the future? I don't see a return to curvy shapes necessarily. The big plazas seem to be another major thing, in and around a building. If you get a building of any significance in an urban context, it's something like that. I don't know how many of the projects are going to be projects like the—what's the—PepsiCo.

YO: The corporate headquarters?

BB: Yeah. I'm thinking about the one down in Texas. It's Frito-Lay Corporation that had the huge plant—

YO: Right, right.

BB: —somewhere between Dallas and Fort Worth, in Arlington, and that's gorgeous, just absolutely gorgeous, but who can tell? I mean, it looks just like a meadow, farmland, you know, nice water, nice trees, nice—what did he do? A lot of the things that we're getting are what did he do? We're finding a whole lot of work now on rooftops because, quote, it ain't been built, you know. And for all the good reasons, you do get a little insulation and you do get a little bit of green space up there and, yeah, you can grow a little veggie garden up on top of the roof and it looks better. The ASLA's rooftop garden [Pause] is a little strange. [Laughs]

YO: [Laughs]

BB: It really is. I've been up there a couple of times and it's, I suppose—

YO: Now this is in Washington?

BB: Yeah. It's kind of nice, I'm glad that we're doing it, but I think it's a work in progress. It's not a final solution to something or at least it doesn't look permanent. It looks like a temporary structure, but then I suppose it is a temporary structure. It's a work in progress. They're still trying to figure out what to do and many of the jobs, I think, are going to be experimental like this. What do we do up here to get it really right?

YO: Yeah. Is there going to be any role for landscape architects in space?

1:39:45

BB: We used to, I shouldn't say laugh. We used to dream about things like that and we used to think, yeah, there would be a big one because we had thoughts of big spacecraft that were big enough to carry self generating environments up there. A garden in space and everything would generate a self contained biosphere. And then there was the bioproject and everything else.

I don't know. That's going to be a real interesting thing because it takes a hell of a lot of biomass to sustain one human being and that, I suspect, is going to be a little iffy. It sounds good. I mean Arthur C. Clarke's *Rendezvous with Rama* was an interesting book about here comes a spacecraft from a foreign world and it's a whole world with oceans and everything else circulating in the thing, which is all kept in place by rotation. I love the book.

We had a nice thing, a mini symposium, on a project at Columbus, one of the projects for the—one of the courses had a project about that and we invited guys from the NASA space thing

up in Cleveland, which was the closest one at the time. And a guy came down and had a nice talk with us about this and everybody read *Rendezvous*, and it was by and large a pretty nice, fun experience. But you turn around and you sit back and you think, sounds good, but practically I don't really think we do, at the moment. It's going to be a while. We've got to get enough liftoff, you know.

YO: Yeah, right. [Laughs]

BB: It's all we can do to carry three people up.

YO: What advice do you have for landscape architect students considering teaching careers?

BB: [Pause] Get in as fast as you can because it's getting harder and harder. Anybody who gets in now has got to really, really want it because there's not much opportunity to get a PhD in landscape architecture and everybody has got to have a PhD to teach. And that means now, and I hate to say it, but that's just the way things are in universities. And if you're going to get a PhD, odds are it's not going to be in landscape architecture. So it's going to be in something else, and frankly that waters down the profession a little bit. The concern was, when I was in school, the profession was being, quote, watered down in the sense that schools were hiring their graduates because with the war getting well under way, it was the safest place for somebody to be.

YO: And that's the Vietnam War.

BB: Yeah. I mean if you wanted to keep from getting shot, there's hardly anything you could do except teach. If you could get into a classroom situation and you could get somebody to write a letter that says you're really needed for the position, you had a chance of staying out of school [army]. Unfortunately, you didn't have much of a background in landscape architecture. You had no or very, very little understanding of the real professional problems that a design office was fraught with. You had a theoretical understanding of landscape architecture as it was taught by the people who you had in school, and particularly if you stayed on at the same school that you went to school at, you just kept teaching the same thing as what your predecessors knew.

YO: Right.

1:44:53

BB: This is why Georgia in particular had the deal where if you graduate here you're fired, just we don't want inbreeding, and I find that probably was not a bad move at all. So that's what we had at that time and what we have now is a different set of circumstances and—I don't know. It's just—[Pause] Advice to do, what do we do?

If you're going to go to school, my fear is if you get a PhD, you're going to develop an expertise in something like horticulture, which is fine, or you're going to develop an expertise in forest management, which is fine, or you're going to develop an expertise in pick something else related to it so you don't lose every single credit and have to start from complete scratch, and that's fine, too, but when you come back to teach in landscape architecture, what do you do? Well, you teach horticulture, you teach forest management. I mean essentially—

YO: History of design.

BB: Yeah, because that's what you know, so your projects tend to be forest management type projects.

YO: Right, right.

BB: Your landscape architecture projects are how to maintain a forest, or how to do a park or a national park in the woods, and design a campground and so forth, and protect Smoky Bear and the like. Or it's going to be wetlands preservation, which is all wonderful, but a wetlands preservation park is what you're going to be about.

Well, this is great, but there are only so many times you can do a wetlands preservation park in your class projects. I mean, a kid gets awfully tired of doing—every year they get to do three or two of the same project. And so, that's the problem that you get with that. People have always tended to teach what they know, and that's been one of the difficulties in finding somebody who knows anything about grading, staking, drainage, construction details, to teach it because unless you actually practiced it in the field, you can't teach it.

YO: Right.

BB: If you did and you can teach it and you do teach it then the few students that you teach it to, if you can get them at graduate level and they aren't totally scared off by it, they can go to another school and they can teach that course. But they're still teaching your course because that's all they know.

YO: Right.

BB: So that's a problem and I see that as being an ongoing problem. You say what are the problems in teaching? That's one of the problems in teaching the new curriculum. The other problem is that people end up spending so much time trying to get their work published. I mean, it's absolutely critical and if you don't publish, the university's going to fire you. It's not a matter of [whether] your department wants to keep you, it's the university won't let them.

YO: So, it's a tough profession to pick out then.

BB: The teaching part is really dangerous. I mean, it's really dangerous. It's almost—it's one of those situations where the guy that—[Laughs] the guy that I made all the money with at McGraw Hill has won probably two or three teaching awards, at least one of which has been a school wide recognition for his teaching, outstanding excellence. If he hadn't been publishing as much as he had, and not just the CAI stuff but the books, too, he'd have lost his job for teaching. One of the best ways to get fired is to be a good teacher.

1:50:09

YO: How's that?

BB: Well, if you spend your time teaching instead of writing textbooks—

YO: Oh, right.

BB: —you're gone. And that was one of the reasons I thought, well, *LARCH* is not a bad deal because *LARCH* could help people do that. Well, unfortunately a lot of people are busy trying to develop class materials based around what they teach and their idea is to publish a book on what they teach or to publish a series of articles on what they teach and many of them don't teach *LARCH*.

YO: Right.

BB: My thought was if you don't want to teach *LARCH*, if you can't teach *LARCH*, put *LARCH* up there and let *LARCH* teach *LARCH*.

YO: Right. [Laughs]

BB: And you go ahead and do something else. But people still think they can write their own stuff and publish their own stuff, and they can write their own *LARCH* for that matter, and get promotion and tenure on it. And God knows I wish them well. It's hard.

YO: What's the one important thing to know about Brooks Breeden?

BB: I'm reminded of the I.M. Pei building, museum, this is the east gallery, the east wing. I went over there and there was a Picasso exhibit—by the way, I love the building—there was a Picasso exhibit and there was a little sign up there that says: "Pablo Picasso, born in Spain, worked in France." I told Peggy [Breeden], I said, that's what I want on my epitaph: Brooks Breeden, born in North Carolina, worked in Ohio.

YO: [Laughs] That's lovely.

BB: I mean, that's the epitome of ego, isn't it? [Laughs]

YO: [Laughs] I think that says it. That's good. Those are all the questions that I have. Do you have anything else that you'd like to add?

BB: Oh, you could fire me up and I could go on for a real long time, but unfortunately—I think I said most of the important stuff. You've addressed an awful lot of stuff and dragged it up out of the past that I hadn't thought about in a long time.

YO: I hope it was a good experience.

BB: Not so bad as I worried.

YO: [Laughs] Oh, that's good.

BB: There are a lot of things to drag up. I said I'd tell you this story, but I won't tell it on tape. Cut the tape off.

YO: Okay. Well, thank you for telling me this much on tape.

BB: Okay.

Transcriber: Deborah Mitchum

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