

## TRANSCRIPT

**SCRC Series:** Lewis Clarke Oral Histories Project – MC 00191

**Field Notes:** C. LaMarr Bunn (compiled October 20, 2008)

**Interviewee:** C. LAMARR BUNN

**Interviewer:** Yona R. Owens

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**Location:** Raleigh, North Carolina

**Length:** Approximately 88 minutes

This interview for the Lewis Clarke Oral Histories Project was conducted at Clarke's studio. LaMarr Bunn grew up in Raleigh, N.C. He graduated in 1966 with a degree in landscape architecture from North Carolina State University School (now College) of Design. Between 1965 and 1969, he was one of a group that became the first employees of Lewis Clarke Associates (LCA). After 1969, Bunn practiced on his own and with a variety of offices, except for 1975-1977 when he again worked for LCA. On his own after that, two of his projects have been admirably recognized: Stonehenge Development in North Raleigh, and Wakefield Plantation.

YO: This is an oral history with LaMarr Bunn on September the second, 2008 at Lewis Clarke's Studio in Raleigh. I'd like to start off with our first standard question tell me a little bit about where you're from and how you got interested in landscape architecture?

LB: Well, I'm from Raleigh. I went to Broughton High School and got interested in architecture. My father had always been a drawer and a builder and my grandfather had, so I was always interested in construction and drawing. So I took a lot of drafting in high school and got very interested in it. I wanted to be an aeronautical designer, but NC State did not have aeronautical design as a curriculum. They had engineering, but I didn't want the engineering, and we couldn't afford to send me anywhere except State. So I signed up for the architectural school and luckily got in and in fact, Milton Small's son, G. Milton Small, Junior—the III—and I were roommates the first semester at NC State and we had been good friends in high school. So I went to NC State in architecture.

YO: What year was that?

LB: It was 1961.

YO: What was the school like in 1961?

LB: Scary.

YO: How was it scary?

LB: Well, Dean Kamphoefner was there and he had a large presence and because you were working so closely with your professors and you got to know them on a first name basis, it

became less scary. It became much more intimate. But being one out of three hundred and seventy three students, freshmen students and at that time I don't think there was more than five hundred students in the, I'm sorry, there was three hundred and some in the whole school and we had a freshmen class of a hundred and seventy three. As you found out the first semester on campus, the School of Design students were kind of looked at in a different way than all the other students. In as much as of the professors in other curriculums and other classes you had to take would cut you a little more slack because they understood what you were going to go through even though at the time as a freshman we had no idea what we were going to go through.

YO: Was it the hours that you had to put in on projects?

LB: Yeah, yeah, it was. It was working so many hours on the projects and you would have—I think freshman year we had three classes in the School of Design. One was a drawing class that was free hand drawing that was taught either by George Bireline or Joe Cox and then you had a design studio, and you had a technical drafting studio. I forgot who taught the design studio for him; it was a product design gentleman from Germany. His interest was in photography and Brian Shawcroft taught me in my freshman [year] technical drawing class and Joe Cox taught me in the drawing class.

YO: And that was your first semester?

LB: First semester.

YO: So not going from semester to semester, but what were some of the projects that you started working on as a student? What were some of the assignments?

LB: Well, the first year that whole year was made up in design studio of basically breaking down your prejudices of what you had brought in to the school. Looking at rubber bands differently than just rubber bands, looking at paper different than paper, learning to fold paper so it became structurally supported. When you dropped a squirt of ink from ten feet, what did it make on the floor? And from twenty feet what did it make? Just exploring all kinds of the mediums that you had available to you and stretching your deposit of knowledge on these items. And you really didn't have a project as such. I guess the biggest project we had was to take one of Brian Shawcroft's homes and do an isometric drawing of the components of it structurally without the sheetrock and without the siding on it and everything. Doing it in ink, which at that time we were using ruling pens where you had to fill the little pen up with ink and you had to adjust the little knob on the ink pen to get finer lines or broader lines. I'd say that and towards the end of the first year we actually had to design a building, any kind of building we wanted to design. We had to design a floor plan and, and elevations of it and draw a perspective of it. I remember we had a Cuban guy in the class who was probably thirty five years old. He had just emigrated in from Cuba and he was an architect in Cuba and we were all just amazed at his building that he designed, which was in much more sophisticated than our little, out little amateurs Sweet's catalog put-together stuff. And then we moved into second year. Second year was a little bit different because everybody, the first two years, took the same courses whether you were an architecture or landscape architecture or product design. But in second year you had to take a semester of landscape architecture. Most of the architects didn't have any idea of what landscape

architecture was and neither did I. So second semester, I was assigned a landscape architectural studio and Lewis Clarke happened to be my professor. And that's where I first met Lewis, and where I became faced with landscape architecture, and where I fell in love with it. And it was during that semester I decided to transfer to landscape architecture out of architecture.

YO: Were there some other students that did that same thing?

LB: There may have been one or two, but there were a lot of students there that were there exact, precisely for landscape architecture. One of my best friends was Fred Stresau, Jr. from Fort Lauderdale and his father had been the first landscape architect in South Florida and his mother was a landscape architect as well. They had graduated from the University of Illinois and he'd come there to do landscape architecture. There was Roy Pender who was a year behind me whose father had been in the nursery business here in Raleigh. Roy and I had gone to high school together and he had gone there specifically for landscape architecture. And there were a couple of others that were there who had enrolled in initially landscape architecture.

YO: How were the projects different from architecture to landscape architecture?

LB: The architectural studios in the second year dealt with form follows function of the building. You were designing the function of the building in terms of layouts, of floor plans, and then let the exterior side come from what was happening inside. I know that first semester in architecture, we had what they called, the Brick and Tile Competition. Sanford Brick Company would put on a competition and all the second year students would enter and that particular year it was to design a pottery with kilns and everything. And one of my classmates, Gil Wheless, won it with a beautiful design. The pottery had a certain function of where, when the clay came in and how it went through rollers and how it went to the design part and then how it got to the kiln and then how it got to the showroom and so forth. So, that ate up a lot of that semester's time in doing that particular project. Then the landscape architectural studio concentrated more on environmental issues, of how to deal with the land and what went on the land, how to sculpt and form the land that's best use while preserving and maintaining a lot of its natural resources. So we dealt a lot with that and at the time we were taking geology and botany and more of the natural sciences than the architects who were taking more of the math and algebra and statistics and mechanics and things like that.

YO: With Lewis teaching the environmental aspects of landscape architecture, this has come down as a theory of landscape architecture, hasn't it?

LB: Yeah, he brought it from his time at Harvard. Brian Hackett had brought it to Harvard from England and at that time there were two basic theories of landscape architecture being taught in the United States. It was the East Coast theory being taught by Harvard, which were the environmental process and then there was the West Coast theory was coming out of Berkley where Eckbo, Dean and Austin and the Greene and Greene Brothers and everybody were doing. They were based a little on environmental but not as much as the East Coast and we were being taught a lot of the environmental side or dealing with the natural resources, the water, conservation—let the land dictate where the buildings go rather than the buildings dictate how the land would be utilized.

YO: So you started in '61, you're learning this environmental aspect theory in '62, '63—

LB: Yeah, right in there? Uh, huh. Yep, '62, '63. Yeah, I started at State at seventeen years old.

YO: Seventeen?

LB: Yeah, I turned eighteen my freshman year there.

YO: That was when it was good to turn eighteen wasn't it?

LB: Uh, huh. Yeah, that was '62, '63 and then after second year everybody was split up then into their chosen major. The architects went down the architectural road. The product designers went down the product design, visual design road and the landscape architectural students went down more of an intense landscape architectural program. So we started third year. And third year you always had at least three or four classes in the School of Design. You always had a design studio, which was where you worked on primarily design of projects and programs. You had a technical studio. The design studios were usually either three or four hours in third year and your technical studio was usually an hour of class three days a week and a three hour studio lab. And then you had a drawing class. You could either be drawing painting or sculpturing. And then we had some type of history class. In the first two years it was taught, the history classes were all outside the school, and were taught in the University's history departments, and was basically history of western civilization or American history. But starting in third year we started getting into art history and then later the history of architecture and then history of landscape architecture and so forth.

YO: Were those some of the courses that Lewis was teaching? The history courses?

LB: Lewis taught history of landscape architecture I think for about two years. A very good course. He was able to tie it to what was happening in the rest of the world and where it was within the world and then within the time frames. Where so many of the other art history and history of architecture were memorization of slides, what was this? When was it? What significance did it have? Lewis's courses were a lot more fun to take and, and I think you retained a lot more.

YO: So, moving into your fourth year, it's a four year program, right?

LB: Five year.

YO: Five year program. Moving into your fourth and fifth year, did you start working on some of the projects outside of school that Lewis was starting to have?

LB: Yeah, yeah, midway December during my third year, I needed a job during Christmas and I asked Lewis if he needed anybody. He sent me over to his office which was over what is now the old McDonald's on Hillsborough Street to Charlie Burkhead who—Charlie and Warren [Edwards] and Henry Hammond were working for Lewis at that time in that office. They had

just moved the office out of their house on Rothgeb Drive up to there and I think we had one, two, three—we had four rooms over there. And I went over and interviewed with Charles and he hired me. So I went into basically that second semester of my third year—December of my third year I started doing base maps and running prints. I think one of the first things we were working for the Rouse Company out of Baltimore was doing the Village of Cross Keys. We had a lot of town homes, very expensive town homes that had gardens out back and we wanted to develop a series of wooden fence designs and brick fence designs that would not be repetitive. That would be individual to each unit so I must have designed twenty five or thirty different fence designs for these. We were also working on New Hanover Memorial Hospital for Leslie Boney, it was an architect in Wilmington and I started working on that with Henry Hammond. He was kind of the project manager for it. We had to do all the storm water calculations and the grading of it and I learned how to do all that in the office. And then I'd go to class two hours later and we'd be taking it up in the class and I'd already learned it in the office. So in the landscape technology classes I was always two or three pages or chapters ahead of what we were learning in school. I had already done it in the office. But it was a very interesting time. I would work probably twenty hours a week in the office and maybe twenty four, twenty five depending on the weekends and keep up with my school work.

YO: Well, that was a job wasn't it?

LB: It was fun. It wasn't a job. It was fun. The whole thing about the School of Design back then was time management, how to manage your time. And like people would be over at the school at eight or nine o'clock at night working on their projects, but there was a lot of horseplay going on. And there was several of us that would go home, get something to eat and take a nap, and then we'd go back about eleven, eleven thirty when all the horseplay had shut down, when you could really—till three or four in the morning you could get a lot done. And that's still the case with me today. I do most of my good design work late at night after the phones stop ringing and I've thought through everything. We had another professor there who was head of the department of landscape architecture. His name was Richard Moore and between Richard and Lewis, it was just a dynamic duo of talent to be around and be exposed to. Some of the best things both of them ever taught me and my classmates was people had the tendency to keep designing on yellow trash, keep redoing it, keep redoing it, keep redoing it right up to the last minute and they could never finish a project. And they taught us to finish it, not to keep redoing it but finish it, and then you could go back and refine it a little bit, but you had it finished so it was ready to meet the deadline. Then you could refine it rather than keep designing right up to the last minute. I know we'd go in to hang our projects up for the critique because after every design problem we'd have a series of faculty come in and critique our projects. And we had one guy had designed and designed and designed right up to the last moment and he had nothing except just these idea sketches and so he just wadded them all up in a big ball and took a ten penny nail and drove it into the board. It's just a big wad of yellow trash. That's my project.

YO: So they taught you to not do that? Not go past your deadline?

LB: Yeah, we used to have where we'd be in the middle of a project designing something and they'd say okay in today's four hour studio, you've got fours to design this problem. They'd hand out a new problem and we'd have to come up with the idea or the concept and the finished

project within four hours. And it taught us to design within your time limits whatever you have you've got to get it finished. Your deadline is not going to be extended particularly when you have clients and working under the city municipality deadlines and things like that. You've got to finish. So the critical things—and we had a many of those types of exercises that really taught us to think fast and accept some decisions and move on with it. Once you accepted one decision you could move onto the next one and you built your designs on those decisions. And that was one of those valuable lessons I took away from the school. And we kept doing that and this is planned by Lewis and Dick—I mean they absolutely planned this into the curriculum. I mean even up into fourth year when Lewis would be teaching one studio and Dick would be teaching a technical studio and they would assign two projects to be due on the same day and it would almost impossible to get them done and do your other school work. And I know they were both due the Monday after Thanksgiving. So when we left on Tuesday before Thanksgiving, we basically had Lewis' design studio done and we hadn't even started on Dick's. Lewis' was a golf course kind of community and I forgot what Dick's was. Dick's was a housing project and Dick came in the studio that afternoon and he says, guys you know you had better have something. See, we were begging for an extension. He said, I'm not giving an extension you have between now and Monday. Think something up. Don't put me in a place where I have to give you, all Fs. So we worked the whole Thanksgiving and got something done. It wasn't what we wanted, but it was enough to satisfy the project's criteria and we made decisions that we would have probably taken two days to refine and we made them in like an hour. And we knew how much time we had. So rather than doing a big rendering and a big fancy presentation we cut it down. We did it in a smaller scale so we could take less time to draw it and learned a lot of things like that.

YO: These are really mature decisions that they're throwing at you—

LB: Yeah.

YO: —at the undergraduate level right? Well, you mentioned Charlie Burkhead and Henry Hammond—

LB: Yeah.

YO: —they're in school with you at the same time...

LB: No, they had graduated.

YO: They had graduated. So the office was—

LB: Henry.

YO: —actually a going concern at that time?

LB: Yeah, there were three people who had graduated. Warren [Edwards] who had graduated from State. Charlie Burkhead, who had graduated from State and had gone on and gotten a master's degree at Harvard and then had come back, and he was working there with Lewis. And Henry Hammond who had graduated from Georgia who had moved to Raleigh—all three of

them were different. Charlie was kind of a project manager overall kind of. He ran the office. Henry was more of a technical oriented person dealing with grading and drainage and road, roadway layout and things like that. Warren was the pure designer and the plants man. He ended up doing all the planting plans and he and Charlie would come up with design concepts with Lewis. And then they would go their separate ways and work on the projects. It was an interesting office.

YO: After you graduated, did you start working full time?

LB: Yeah, I stayed. I worked with Lewis all through third, fourth and fifth year and then went to work with him full time after I graduated. By then Henry had left, Warren had left and gone to Oklahoma City, which is where he was from and so it was Charlie and I. Then we started hiring some more other students. I'm trying to think if initially we had Ken Sangster who graduated a year or two ahead of me and had gone to work in Norfolk and had come back. He had come to the office and then we had a couple of students that were in fourth and fifth year that were working there. Don Basile, Sally Schauman, Roy Pender, Tom...I forgot Tom's name. Wayne McBride had come into the office at that time. Fred Stresau had come into the office for a while. Fred was fifth year with me and almost everybody else was—Sangster was two years ahead of us and then almost everybody else were fourth year or one or two years behind us.

YO: So, was the office still located on Hillsborough Street?

LB: Yeah, we had moved it. Lewis and Kit had bought an old house right across from the English Building on Hillsborough Street halfway between Enterprise and the street that forked that comes out—

YO: Oberlin?

LB: No, it was north of Oberlin right across from the English Building, English Department. It was eventually torn down, but anyway we took that house and turned the second floor into the studio and the first floor was the accounting office, and Lewis's office and a conference room and a reception area for the secretary and a kitchen area in the back. And upstairs we had kind of gutted it and turned it into a big crit-conference room. It was all wall gallery where we could hang the big projects up and show them to clients and crit ourselves. Then we had two back rooms that were all drafting studios, design studios and stuff. And I think when we moved into that house we had Lewis and Kit and Lib who was the secretary and Lewis—that was four downstairs and we had a print, errand guy. It was Richard Lee started out in high school and then went to the School of Design but he's now a landscape architect. In fact, he's the chairman of the Landscape Architectural Board. And then we had one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, we had about ten combination landscape architects and students.

YO: That's a big staff.

LB: Yeah, we had a big staff.

YO: Well, you must have been working on big projects?

LB: We had started getting some. We always had fairly larger projects. Lewis for years had been doing the Rouse Company's work for Bill and Jim Rouse and I think we had about the time we moved into the house we had just finished up basically all our malls. We were doing some preliminary work on Plymouth Meeting in Springfield, Massachusetts, but we weren't doing what we usually do. We just did some concept stuff and the Rouse Company had started some preliminary design work on their new town outside of Baltimore, and we were doing some preliminary concepts for them. They had built kind of their own, in house staff.

YO: That's Columbia?

LB: Columbia, yeah, and the Rouse boys had built kind of their own in house staff and they used us to give them some ideas on how to do some of the stuff. But about that time we had gotten into a lot of school work. We were doing a lot of—the state had developed a large community college program and we were doing a lot of community colleges. We were doing a lot of work with Tommy Hayes, Hayes Howell out of Southern Pines—schools, high schools, and banks, and large residential work for Tommy and for Leslie Boney out of Wilmington. We were doing a lot of community colleges and hospitals and high schools. We did Hoggard High School with Leslie. We had done the—what's the school in school outside of Fayetteville?

YO: Laurinburg? Saint Andrews?

LB: Saint Andrews. We had done the master plan for that and we were working on the master plan for Sandhills Community College for Hayes. We were doing Hoggard High School as I said with Leslie. We were doing Richmond Technical Institute for Leslie Boney and that was down in Rockingham and we were doing Rockingham Community College for Leslie up in Reidsville, Isothermal up in the mountains, Asheville Buncombe Institute which became UNC Asheville—we did the master plan for it. Vance Community College—

YO: Was UNC Charlotte in there?

LB: We did some dorm expansion when they wanted to build the dorms. We did the master plan area for the dorms for Charlotte as I recall. I don't think we did a lot. We did the law school campus at University of Virginia. We did Patrick Henry Community College in Virginia. We did James Mason Community College in Virginia because when they found out how North Carolina was doing, Virginia started their program and then they started using us to work with them up there.

YO: So, you're still the house on Hillsborough Street at this time?

LB: Yep, still in the house on Hillsborough Street.

YO: And was there an airplane involved in this mix?

LB: I think about that time Lewis and gosh, I can't remember—

YO: Ezra Meir.

LB: Ezra Meir, a structural engineer had gotten together. We worked on a project together and they decided they would buy an airplane together. So they did. They bought a push pull, a 337 Cessna, which has an engine in the front and an engine in the back, an overhead wing. It would hold six, five people plus a pilot. And it was one of the safest airplanes in the world. You could land and take off from very short runways and a lot of our projects were in areas where we needed to fly into grass strips so we could get to them quicker. And sometimes it was economically feasible and other times it was just fun to have.

YO: Just fun?

LB: Fun to have.

YO: And the pilot's name was Rooney?

LB: Rooney, he was our full time pilot. He was a retired lieutenant colonel from the Air Force and he became kind of a personnel manager in the office and our pilot. He took care of our people and our office cars and made sure they all got serviced properly and he became really very invaluable. Let's see about that time—this is '69—I left Lewis.

YO: Well, let me just stop you for a minute—

LB: Okay.

YO: —before you leave Lewis because in 1968 the Palmetto Dunes project came in so I was wanting you to say something about Palmetto Dunes.

LB: Yeah, we got our first two large resort residential golf course communities. The first one was Palmetto Dunes down on Hilton Head Island by a group out of Greenwood, South Carolina. A bunch of doctors investors and we started designing that. I worked on that and we were working on it for about two years. We were one of the first people and we brought an entomologist onboard because of the insect mosquito problems. We brought an ecologist onboard because of the sensitive environmental issues down there. We were probably one of the first people in the nation to ever—I mean everybody used aerial photography and we'd take the aerial photography of the island that would show the bodies of waters and then we'd take the survey that the surveyors did and we'd overlay those so we could see where the vegetation was. And where it was difficult to see where the wet lands were and there weren't anything about wetlands back then except they was just wet land. There weren't any rules about it or anything and we just tried to stay out of it and preserve it as much as possible. So the Research Triangle Institute, the director out there, was a friend of ours and they were [the] first people using land sat, satellite imagery. And they showed us how they were doing it, and they had these huge computers—nothing that we could use—and at that time we were doing no computers. We didn't have a computer in the office and for years we didn't have computers. We were doing everything manually. But what we learned from the Research Triangle Institute was that we could use infrared satellite imagery that we could purchase and we put that down on the drawing

board and overlay the topography and the aerial because we'd get all those in clear Mylars and the infrared would show you where the wet land was because it came up with a different intensity of color. And in fact, we used it an awful lot because you could take an infrared photograph and if you could identify one item on that photograph that you knew was a building or a parking lot or a lake because of the different intensity of color, then you knew what all the land uses were in say a county or a large area track of land or something.

YO: So this was an innovation? This was a huge innovation?

LB: Yeah, yeah, and in fact the RTP, what they'd do is they'd put the land sats things down on their computers and there'd be a little computer screen like this and then they'd take slides of them and then they'd project the slides onto these big glass screens. It would be glass and they'd put paper behind it and project the slide up on the glass and then you'd go stand behind the glass and you'd trace it off backwards—

YO: No kidding.

LB: —on the back side. Yeah, and in fact Dick Moore's office right down the block built one of those in his office so we could go down and use his thing to do that with slides.

YO: I didn't realize Dick Moore had an office at the same time.

LB: Yep, he had an office next to the PR [Player's Retreat] around the corner and the house is still there. It's Sam and Bill's at least it used to be there. It was Sam and Bill's haircut place.

YO: Oh, yeah.

LB: But yeah, the head of the product design department was hired on, Don Masterton and he came up with the logo for Palmetto Dunes and he came up with the first stationary and everything. So, we were doing all the graphics. We were composing the design guideline booklet for Palmetto Dunes and writing it as well as doing the master plan in all the first phase construction. We designed everything in detail from the entrance road back to the north and then everything on the south we left—we had designed ideas for. But we recommended to the clients that they hold off on that because the market was going to change so much that it was no reason—that was going to be a much higher density product over there than single family residential and some villas that we were doing over on the north side. And they did hold off on it and eventually it became very high density development with three or four hotels and a lot more condominiums and two more golf courses. We hired Dr. Pere Brun from Norway who had worked on the Amsterdam canals and locks. Palmetto Dunes had a terrible beach erosion problem. They were losing three feet of beachfront a year. So we had to build a protective dune along the ocean and in order to get the material, the earth work, to build this dune we had to dig some canals. And so we just said, well, every lot in Palmetto Dunes will either be on a golf course or on a canal. And so, all the canals were connected and they went across the highway to the north side and to the Pelican Sound and the sound had a eight-foot tidal differentiation. So Dr. Brun designed these flat gates that are right at where the canal goes under the roadway on the Palmetto Dunes side where we could cut down the tidal. The canal water fluctuates only six

inches. Six inches up, six inches down and also this way we could flush the canals out by opening the gates and letting the water come through and flush it all the way back out and let it go back out so you wouldn't have stagnant water that would present mosquito problems. So we'd always have flow in there and we wouldn't have still water which the entomologist really encouraged. We also design an amphibious golf cart where everybody could purchase one and you could actually use that in the canals and then when you came out of the canal and drove it up onto your lot, we had special irrigation and tracks that they came out on where the irrigation would spray up under the side because this was brackish water and it had a lot of salt in it and it would kill the grass. So you wanted to get all the salt off of it and so then it could drive all around the course. They never marketed it and never manufactured and I don't think they ever built one of them, but it's in the drawings. It was kind of a neat concept. And Palmetto Dunes, on the ocean side, was all basically residential with the golf courses and one or two restaurants and one or two major hotels. We had envisioned the Marriot—The Radisson, which is there now—we had envisioned that the canal would run through the lobby of the hotel. Well, the hotel didn't want to do that so it ran in front of the hotel and you'd have to drive over it to get to it and I think we were one of the first people to use the roundabouts outside of the people in Pinehurst. We thought the roundabout was a good solution for that down there.

YO: The reason that I asked you about Palmetto Dunes also is that for a landscape architect's office this is quite a few people to put together—I mean today you wouldn't normally expect the landscape architect to be the point person for all these experts.

LB: That's true, it was one of the first projects where we were—the landscape architect was the chief designer and not an architect. In fact, there wasn't an architect onboard in any of Palmetto Dunes. They had a local architect that when we wanted some concepts, when they got into designing specific things like the villas themselves or taking our sketches of what the gatehouse needed to look like, he lived on the island and he did those for them but that was after the master plan had been done and approved and everything. But no, we hired the engineers. We worked with the engineers to come up with a vacuum sewer system project.

YO: That was Bob Browning, right?

LB: He was our engineer consultant here in Raleigh. There ended up being some other engineers down there that had specialties that were used. But basically everybody was on our staff and we were controlling what they did and how they did it and how they presented it. It was one of the first times outside of probably Charlie Frazier who had developed Sea Pines on Hilton Head, he had done that initially. He was the client, but he was so far ahead, he controlled all the designers and everything. Sasaki had done Sea Pines and they had done that the same way where they controlled everything, but Frazier had his home office at Sea Pines and had a huge staff there of landscape architects and designers working.

YO: So, it was the era of large offices, wouldn't you say?

LB: It was an era of small offices, I think, that were growing to medium size offices. My theory was once you got to five in an office you needed to get to twenty-five. Once you got to twenty-five you needed to be a hundred. Anything in between from five and twenty five was not

economically profitable. You didn't make any more money than you did with five people. Between twenty-five and a hundred you didn't make any more money in that in between era. So, at the end of Palmetto Dunes, that thing we were probably—we had dug out the basement in the old house and we had two design studios downstairs with probably six people in each. So we were probably twenty-five people at that time. And we had picked up another large project called Carolina Trace down in Sanford that we were working on as we were finishing up Palmetto Dunes. We were working on another large project in Southern Pines—Dan Farrell, he and Robert Trent Jones owned a piece of land together and we were designing a golf course community on it. It never was built. I think they sold the land and I think it became what is called The Pit golf course down there now. But then we got A.B. Hardee who owned Whispering Pines. He had bought a large track of land backed by a lot of supposedly Hollywood investors out of California and he was going to do the artificial wave lake down there that never got off the ground. But the golf course did and I think when we did it, it was called Lake Surf and I think it's now called Seven Lakes or something. But toward '68, '69, we had a really lot of large projects in the office. In fact, I was in the office one day and the phone rang and I answered it and the gentleman says can I speak to Mr. Lewis or Mr. Clarke? And I said, well, you can't speak to either one of them because they're both the same person and he's not here right now, but I'm LaMarr Bunn, can I help you? And it happened to be Ted Lerner of Lerner Companies out of Washington, D.C. He said, are you the group that did Cherry Hill Mall for the Rouse and I said, yes sir we are. He said, well, I'm doing a mall called Tysons Corner on the west side of Washington and with Laither Douglas who is the architect, and we'd like for ya'll to come up and talk to us about being our landscape architects. Would you be interested? And I said, yes sir. What day do you want us there? He said, well, I was thinking about Friday and I said, well, let's tentatively schedule it for Friday. We'll fly up on an early morning flight and rent a car if you'll tell me where we're meeting. He said, we'll meet in our offices at Wheaton Plaza out in Wheaton on the north side. So I found out where that was and Lewis was in class—he was teaching class I think, yeah, it was shortly after that that he, he resigned—but we did fly up, did an interview, got that job. This was huge and it was a 1.2 million square feet of enclosed mall and shopping center. And so we added that to our plate and then Robert Trent Jones got us a couple of jobs. He had a piece of land west of Montclair where these two new interstate interchanges were going to be and there was a small university there and he wanted to develop a town center and so we, we flew up to Montclair. Lewis says who do you want to take? And I said, I want to take Stresau and Basile and myself and so Lewis—and we flew up, and we stayed up there for four days and designed the whole thing there in their conference room. And also, we picked up the Montclair Tennis Club facility up there, which we hired an architect to design the building and did the facility up there. So we were flying back and forth to Washington and flying the push pull up to Montclair, New Jersey.

YO: Well, that solves the, the riddle of how did you do so many projects in such [a] large geographical area because they were at the same time like you say there was projects from close by and, and far away, so the airplane was the clue. How unusual was it for ya'll to have the airplane? Did other companies have airplanes at that time?

LB: No, Leslie Boney had a limousine with a chauffeur and Lewis always wanted a limousine with a chauffeur and I think that's what sparked it. He could tell Leslie well, I've got an airplane with a pilot and that was analogous to Leslie's, because Leslie would always show up on project

sites with us. We'd fly the plane in and Leslie would drive in with his chauffeur and so that was always on the staff. We always just said, okay, well, this is Lewis' chauffeur and limousine. But it made it convenient and I remember even later on when we got the 421, which was a much larger and quicker plane, I remember one night we'd gone up to Montclair, New Jersey and we got snowed in and couldn't get out. The next morning at six a.m., we're out there chipping ice off the wings so we can get out. And that was the day that all the airplanes in LaGuardia and Newark made the front page of Life Magazine because they were backed up on the runways and in the taxiways. There were so many planes grounded, it made the front page and our little plane took off from Montclair, New Jersey and flew back to Raleigh. We got out before all those planes started eating up the airway, but it was the same weekend.

YO: That was a close call wasn't it?

LB: Oh, it was so cold in that little plane. I remember we were flying back and it's like six in the morning and we had not had much sleep and Rooney was flying and Sally Schauman was with me and I think Don Basile, and we always had a bar in the back. We'd always take one seat out for our luggage and Jerry always had a portable bar. It would have a bottle of Scotch and bottle of Vodka. And we found the bottle of Scotch and that's what all three of us drank. And we took the top off of that bottle off Scotch and it was so cold and we drank it all the way back to Raleigh.

YO: Well, I want to change direction just a little bit and ask you some things about Lewis.

LB: Okay.

YO: What kind of boss was he?

LB: He was an excellent boss. He let everybody in the office design the projects. He wasn't an overbearing designer and he kind of ran the office like he ran the studio in the school. He'd come by and check on every project and critique it with everybody and then once a week we'd hang up on the boards. And we'd have everybody come in and critique it and go over the ideas of what's good, what's wrong, what we need to change and things like that. And every now and then Lewis would—particularly when the office was smaller—he'd get on the boards and design, do the quick yellow trash sketches and stuff and then turn it over to somebody like me to turn it into a final master plan. But later on as we got much larger, he couldn't do that. He missed doing it and every now and then he'd put a piece of yellow trash up on the wall and re-sketch how this needed to be. But he was a very, very good boss. A very good mentor. I don't remember many jealousies. He was always interested in quality in design and the quality that we produced. I remember we had done Pine Crest High School with Tommy Hayes and it was just on a terrible sloping piece of ground. We had talked the architect into putting the building on a plinth, the school buildings on a plinth and building this big wall around where we'd let the slope come into and come off of it. And then the athletic fields were way up about ten feet above the school and we had a big bank coming down. And I had done all the design work and all the grading and everything and it was probably one of my second projects out of school. And we'd had a big rain and on one of the banks running down the school from the play fields we'd had a big erosion wipeout—a huge gulley about ten feet wide and about ten feet deep.

YO: Gees.

LB: And we go up there to look at it. He calls the architect since that was our side of the project and he wanted us to pay for the corrections of it and I'll never forget that I'm out there and I'm scared to death. It was the first time I ever had anything like that happen. So, Lewis is out there and Lewis jumps down in this washout and he turns around and looks and says ah, it's just a bit of erosion, like it's no big deal. And I think it cost us a thousand dollars to have it re-ditched and redone and put a new ditch in.

YO: So he didn't come down on your head like the way some bosses would do?

LB: No, not at all, no, no, and he just said, well, we learned a lesson today. And I said, yeah, you can't sheet drain that much damn land.

YO: Well, what made the associates designs different from other landscape architects?

LB: I really think that in the beginning years what made that office unique and different was that everybody had some input into the design. It wasn't just one person and even later when it was divided into four or five teams and they worked on this project that project [they] always put up in the crit room and everybody else in the office had critique and input into it. And I think that's what made it very unique and different than all the other offices that I was aware of. And that was always encouraged. I don't think except maybe once or twice, I don't think anybody took it personally or looked at it as a front to them personally. A lot of times it happened when this person would say hey, I need ya'll to take a look at this, this kind of direction I'm looking at. And we might go down and get Lewis and say Lewis I need you at three o'clock this afternoon to come upstairs. We'll go over where we are on this before we get too far along and make sure we're all on the same page and we haven't overlooked something. And that's the way the office developed. I mean when we were designing Tysons Corner Mall, Fred [Stresau] was designing some of the benches to be hung on the walls and the benches had to be cantilevered out from the wall so that the maintenance people could sweep up under it and get all the trash. And then the wall had to come down and have a curved tile down to the floor so that trash wouldn't gather in those corners and they could easily be maintained. And Fred got into using a lot of metal and welding things together for this bench and I stood by his desk one day and I said, Fred why can't we just do that out of wood? You know he, like a light went off in his head and he says, you're right, we can. It'd be half the cost. And those are the kinds of things that—

YO: So, just a lot of collaboration?

LB: Yeah, and it was a good group of people. I don't think we were envious or jealous of each other. A huge, huge amount of talent. I can't imagine in an office in '69 having more talent than we had in that office. Unbelievable.

YO: Well, let me ask you how did what you learned from Lewis in school and in the office, how did that affect your practice when you started your own practice?

LB: I did it much the same way. The hardest thing was finding the talent. Back then, the talent was just oozing out of the School of Design. When I started my own practice it was just difficult to find talented people so I had to keep much closer reins on the design quality and the preliminary design work and make sure that the people I had hired didn't screw it up. And I think the difference was the lack of talent in the market place. Back with Lewis, we had all been through the same program. We knew what everybody that was working under us knew and they knew what we knew and the only difference would be is I might have two years experience working out where they had just graduated. But I knew what they had been through and I knew what they could do. Where in '70 when I started my first office, I didn't know what these other people had done. I didn't have any clue and so it was me learning what they could do and what they couldn't do and it was a lot of trial and error.

YO: How has landscape architecture changed since you were in school?

LB: Oh, well, as I told somebody the other day, I am so glad that I am in the twilight of my career rather than the renaissance of it because landscape architecture had changed to where now it's almost all big offices and there are multi-disciplined offices usually run by architects and engineers. There are a few large landscape architectural firms around the country, but it's become quantitative rather than qualitative. All municipalities now are run by people that think they can design, and all the rules and regulations now are about numbers and doesn't have anything to do with quality. They have passed rules and regulations and codes and text changes and zoning now to where you can't do a uniquely great design project. Everything is set up that you do mediocrity, medium projects, and that is so you won't get a real bad one, and if you set the codes up so you don't get real bad ones then you eliminated your good ones. And it's really a shame.

YO: Is it a field to go into these days?

LB: I wouldn't recommend it. I told my daughter I didn't want her going into it. And with the computerization—

YO: Well, it's not a craft anymore is what you're saying?

LB: It's not art. I mean it's—

YO: It's just changed completely, right?

LB: Yeah.

YO: Just changed. What's the one important thing to know about Lewis Clarke?

LB: He's a Pisces.

YO: What's the one important thing to know about LaMarr Bunn?

LB: He's a Leo.

YO: Well, do you have anything else you'd like to tell us today?

LB: Lewis was for me almost a father image. I know I learned everything about landscape architecture from him and two of my classmates.

YO: And which two classmates were those?

LB: Gil Wheless and Fred Stresau. I used to tell my students when I taught and then my employees I said, do it the way I do it until you've learned it and then until you can do it better than I can. And that was my concept with Lewis. I wanted to copy what he was doing until I learned to be able to do it and then be able to do it better than him. I mean he used to come in and somebody else in the office project was in trouble or something and he'd see me and he'd say LaMarr come here. And he'd bring it over to my desk and says here you've got two hours, do your thing on this. Use your orange markers—because I'd lay out lots and subdivisions with a freehand and color in the different size lots with orange and blue and different colors. In fact even today I can take a subdivision layout and lay out the roads and they're perfect curves freehand and Lewis could do the same thing. I remember back in the early '70s Lewis was worried because we were getting so much licensure everywhere and he just had a grandfathered license here in North Carolina. And in some states that wouldn't surpass and because I had been president of CLARB, he started talking to me about should he go through the CLARB process? I said, Lewis that's a pain in the ass process to go through. I said, just go take the damn exam. He said, I couldn't pass the exam. Well, the hell you can't. I said, you taught history. History is the hardest thing on there. Go back and read your old notes, your class notes and you can design anything. You and Dick Moore are the two quickest people on the drawing board I've ever seen and I'm probably the third quickest and Stresau is right behind us. I said, you can design anything it's just do it. And I think he looked at what he had to go through with CLARB and he said, you're right, I'm going to take the exam. I said, you sign up for it, you go take it, its three days and you're over with. CLARB is—it'll take you a year to get all that shit together and of course you know everybody was just shocked when he walked into the exam that day. I think I was monitoring it the first day and I just told him I said, just relax. It's just like going to the office and doing it. I said, you know how to do it. So he passed with flying colors. So, once he passed that I mean he'd get a license anywhere in any state.

YO: And CLARB, what did that stand for?

LB: The Counsel of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards. It's made up of all the licensing boards from all the states that have licenses. CLARB is responsible for providing the uniform exam to each of the states and then grading it and keeping up with the records of the candidates.

YO: Well, that's another difference between how things used to be and now is the licensing and continuing education requirement.

LB: Yeah. That's really been a benefit. That's helped establish a uniform standard across the country to improve the practice of landscape architecture. Requiring continuing education—it's a pain in the butt but, for example, I'm licensed in North Carolina and Florida and I very seldom

go to any of the North Carolina continuing education things because I think they're about three or four years behind what Florida is going through. And so I go every year to Florida and go through three days of their continuing education down there. And they have some of the best classes that deal with the environmental problems, the water problems that we're having here. The storm water problems that we're dealing with here now, I mean, I've already been through classes and dealt with that four years ago. I just got back from Florida last month and one of their big issues right now is the hurricanes and we have a big problem with hurricanes in North Carolina as well. But we're not teaching anyone continuing education as it relates to landscape architecture about that. But I think it's a good thing. Lewis was one of the first people to help get the—he and Dick Bell helped to get licensure here in North Carolina. I don't know what his license number is. I think it's either two, three or four.

YO: Well, I think he delayed, he was hard headed about it. He delayed just a little bit. I think actually Charlie Burkhead has a lower number than he does.

LB: Does he?

YO: I think he's number eleven.

LB: Eleven?

YO: I'm not sure.

LB: He probably just, well, I know he worked hard to get it. I think Dick Bell had number one. I've got, I've got fifty-five so—

YO: Do you know how many there are now?

LB: No.

YO: As a comparison, it's in the hundreds I'm sure.

LB: Yeah, I would think it would be over a thousand.

YO: Really, in North Carolina?

LB: Yeah, I know my Florida one that I got in '71 I was seven hundred and one.

YO: Wow.

LB: And I think they're into the five figures. I think they've got ten, eleven thousand.

YO: Well, that's all the questions I have for you today.

LB: Okay.

YO: Okay and just anything else you'd like to add?

LB: Yeah, a couple of things. We always in the office most of us were Lewis' students and we'd always kind of joke about that Lewis taught us the yellow trash and the five senses. Roll of yellow trash and the five senses—that's all you needed to do to design landscape architecture. And we always kidded each other about that that, and I always kid everybody back and I said, well, I'm gonna write a book one day. It's going to be called "Yellow Trash and Six Senses" and they said, what's the sixth sense? And I said common sense.

YO: That's good.

LB: Lewis being a Pisces always tried to figure out everybody and he would utilize this person, based on this astrology, against this person and which ones would needed to butt heads at times and which ones needed to compliment each other at time. And he was a master at that.

YO: So you're saying he used astrology?

LB: Yeah, I think so, very definitely. And he was a master at being Piscean and working that little magic with the staff and knowing which projects to put who on. But we used to always tell him—we said, Lewis when we're in the airplane you can only fly in the right seat. You can't fly in the left seat. He said, why? We said, because the insurance won't pay for us if you're in the left seat.

YO: That's good enough reason. Okay, LaMarr I think we'll close with that if it's okay with you.

LB: Sure.

YO: Okay.

Transcriber: Jennifer Curasi

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