

## **ABSTRACT**

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

**Field Notes:** Randolph T. Hester (compiled November 18, 2011)

**Interviewee:** RANDOLPH T. (“RANDY”) HESTER

**Interviewer:** Yona R. Owens

**Interview Date:** Wednesday, September 28, 2011

**Location:** Durham, North Carolina

**Length:** Approximately 170 minutes

This interview was conducted at a rustic wood table in the Center for Ecological Democracy. Hester discussed his rural upbringing, his eye-opening educational experiences, his methodology evolution, his conservation work in California, and his ongoing work to preserve and improve design wetlands projects in Asian countries. He concluded with ideas on how landscape architects can remain relevant in the future.

### **Tape Log**

00:00:40	Where from and how got interested in landscape architecture, Richard Moore’s influential presentation, and beginning classes in 1963
00:04:55	Cross discipline classes, some of the profs: Bob Broderson [Robert M.], Duncan Stuart, Ron Taylor
00:10:10	Does computerized world still need hand drawing courses?
00:12:44	All landscape architecture faculty named, but asked about Thurlow, Moore, Clarke and the trio’s dynamic, no second class landscape architects
00:20:00	Greenfingers, Clarke class designed greenway around Raleigh, later Bill Flournoy as Hester’s student wrote up proposal, emergence of excellence over years as Moore and Clarke students’ careers developed, caliber of Moore and Clarke design on par with Eckbo and Walker
00:25:13	Types of projects given to students, message being conveyed and should it continue today, change of personality of landscape architecture to feminine [phone rings]
00:29:45	Classmates in 1968, Don Collins anecdote
00:32:00	Chavis Heights, Negro ghetto work began in 1964, also worked for Moore
00:39:45	Seby Jones developed Crabtree and mayor of Raleigh
00:40:17	Plan for Chavis Heights by Collins and Hester done for Dorothy Allen, head of Economic Opportunity Office
00:41:25	By 1969 or ’70, moved to Boston, involved in Civil Rights Movement, building sensitivity to racism and classicism in urban renewal decisions
00:45:56	1968 and ’69, working for Lewis Clarke Associates, impressions as a young kid, working on planting plan for “monster size” Tysons Corners, overnight redesigns done by Clarke
00:50:46	Life gets a bit complicated, discussion of overall curriculum, included ecology in 1963 with Art Cooper, applying urban sociology principles to design projects
00:55:52	Realized had a different approach by combining landscape architecture and sociology, anecdote about class project from Raleigh to Coast to ID problems

- 01:01:40 Learning from tenant farmers, taking it personal when Civil Rights Movement not recognized as part of landscape architecture
- 01:04:31 Sasaki invite to join his office, declined to return to continue work in Cambridge and Chavis Heights in Raleigh with same kind of fight to keep freeway from destroying neighborhoods
- 01:06:06 Running for Raleigh City Council in 1970, NCSU faculty member, greenway funding, fight over freeway still front burner
- 01:13:15 Politics changing, some but few landscape architects joined fight
- 01:15:40 1973 -1980 in Raleigh, Manteo project, Texas Gulf Sulfur project, discovering concept of “sacred spaces,” Texas Gulf fights back
- 01:22:00 Back to Manteo project, interviewing people evolved “affective domain” concept, Sanoff and Jewell as faculty participants, Brian Scott and Billy Harper as students, newspaper survey to find sacred places
- 01:29:48 Mapping to develop novel design ideas and solutions like “civic front porch,” Manteo as poster child for combined landscape architecture thinking and social thinking to improve an economy
- 01:32:15 Getting the community involved in the planning process [phone rings]
- 01:39:00 Move to Berkeley about 1980, Marcia McNally, Community Development by Design, taking on longshot recovery projects like Reseda Ridge, power maps, and stopping a freeway
- 01:55:02 Rebuilding a mountain and planting it out
- 02:03:06 Selective diversity in Taiwan, saving the black faced spoonbill and its habitat
- 02:10:24 Refuting government findings on viability of industrial development and employment possibilities
- 02:14:49 Birds and winter habitat saved but breeding ground turns out to be elsewhere, NCSU’s unsatisfactory involvement in filling bays to build satellite campuses
- 02:18:10 Vow not to support NCSU if plan to use a bay built satellite campus goes forward
- 02:19:53 Asian Basin port ideas failing on slack economy but also on ecological grounds, redesign idea for Fukuoka, spreading save the spoonbill effort to Shanghai
- 02:26:46 Ecological democracy’s position on sustainable populations
- 02:29:18 Preserving community wisdom over time, keeping a sense of place, understanding local ecology
- 02:35:13 Anecdote about Mount Vernon’s current natively wise people
- 02:37:15 Does landscape architecture have a future in its isolationism, draws on Jackson, Orr, and Berry about sense of place, pairing degrees on opposite ends of discipline spectrum, cultivating skill to understand how to cross scales
- 02:42:40 Important thing to know about Randy Hester
- 02:46:20 Comments on this oral histories project, speculation on Clarke, Moore, Sasaki’s opinion of his work, thanks for gift from them for problem solving
- 02:50:50 End of interview