

TRANSCRIPT

SCRC Series: Lewis Clarke Oral Histories Project – MC 00191

Field Notes: Richard A. Moore (compiled April 11, 2012)

Interviewee: RICHARD A. MOORE

Interviewer: Yona R. Owens

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Location: Raleigh, North Carolina to Hawaii via Skype

Length: Approximately 114 minutes

YO: Today is Wednesday, March 21, 2012. My name is Yona Owens and I'm interviewing Richard Moore via Skype to his home in Hawaii. Richard has had a long and illustrious career as an educator, landscape architect, chief project director, and office administrator. Of particular interest to this oral histories project, he was a North Carolina State University School, now College, of Design faculty member from 1962 to 1968. He served as the head of the landscape architecture department for most of those years. In 1987, he was accepted as a fellow in the American Society of Landscape Architects, so we've got some territory to cover today. Hello, Richard.

RM: Good morning. Good morning here, anyway.

YO: Good morning there, right. Well, to start us off tell me a little bit about where you're from and how you got interested in landscape architecture.

RM: Oh boy, that's a good one. I was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri and essentially left there when I went to college at the age of seventeen, so I haven't really lived there since. Everybody's dead there now, obviously, and I don't go there much.

YO: Did you—

RM: I went to the University of Missouri and I got a degree in horticulture. In getting that degree, I did have to take some what's called landscape courses and design and so forth. That was with Willard Summers, eventually with Willard Summers. He was a graduate of Michigan State and he got me interested, and a few years later I went back to school.

YO: So, you did some time in the military, I know that. That was during Korea, right?

RM: I went in the Army in 1951 to '53, two years. All I wanted out of the army was me.

YO: [Laughs] So, then you enrolled in grad school in the University of Oregon in '55 and what happened then?

RM: January, '55, yes. I packed up my wife and six-month-old child, Sheryl, and put them in a relatively new Ford, loaded it up, and went to Oregon. Went to my aunt's first, who lived in Grants Pass, and then on from there I went to the university. I was admitted by mistake, I think,

because I didn't have any design training, and the regular faculty were out of town for some reason, I don't know. Oh, it was summertime. It was summertime, that's what it was, when I applied, so Marion Ross, the history professor there—

YO: Who was that again?

RM: —said well, he has a degree. I guess he can get in graduate school.

YO: And what was the man's name?

RM: Marion Ross, very brilliant architectural historian, very well respected. Anyway, that's how it happened.

YO: So you got a master's in landscape architecture and you worked while you went to school, right?

RM: Yeah. I was admitted and the deal was I had to finish the undergraduate work before I could start my graduate work, so I essentially had to go through the five-year program. [Laughs]

YO: Oh my gosh.

RM: Yeah, so I did that in a year and a half, I think.

YO: Wow, that's great.

RM: Well, because of the system there. It was a different system. At that time it was a system of education where you don't go to class and get grades. You are assigned projects, or problems, whatever you want to call them, and when you finish them you get credit. So, I said, well, okay, the main thing is finish these things and if you finish then you get the credit and you go do another problem. I think at one time I—one semester or one quarter I think I got nineteen design credits. [Laughs]

YO: My gosh. Oh wow.

04:58

RM: It wasn't because I was a good designer or anything. It was because I understood the system and as a result I was able to enhance my whole process, the whole feedback oriented process. The only way you learn is by doing so the faster you do it the faster someone will tell you what's wrong and you can do it over. So, it's an iterative process and it just fit into the whole—my whole eventual design philosophy.

YO: I was going to say, I think we'll be hearing some more about that in just a little bit. So you worked while you were in school at the University of Oregon and you worked for Wallace Ruff, Sr. Tell me about him.

RM: Very interesting person. Came from—I think he was teaching at Texas A&M. You know life is a continuum. It's not something you can separate, so all of these things eventually when you look back they all tie together.

YO: Right.

RM: He was a good designer, but he was not too altogether when it came to talking about it. Anyway, he was fun to work with. You know he eventually was murdered in Papua, New Guinea at the age of about eighty-five or eighty-eight.

YO: He lived in New Guinea?

RM: He became a Papua, New Guinea expert in artifacts and things of that sort and in fact created a small museum on his property in New Guinea. [Correction: in Eugene, Oregon]

YO: Oh, that's right. He was a landscape architect and an anthropologist. That's right.

RM: That's right, and on his, obviously, last trip to New Guinea, people broke into his house and butchered him with machetes.

YO: Oh, no, I didn't know that.

RM: That's how he ended.

YO: So, you graduated from Oregon in '57 and you started your first teaching job that fall at Cal Poly Pomona. What attracted you to Pomona?

RM: [Laughs] There's nothing in Pomona to attract anyone.

YO: [Laughs]

RM: I was graduating. I think I was working at the Lane County planning department. I don't know why—because it was a job, I guess. Mack Ruff said, oh, there's a—I'd done some teaching with Mack. I taught a horticulture class to landscape students and stuff like that.

YO: That was Mack who?

RM: Mack Ruff.

YO: Oh, okay.

RM: Yeah. So, he saw that I could probably teach and he said there's a job at Cal Poly if you're interested. At the time I was looking into a planning job in San Diego at the same time, so I interviewed for both of them and I thought it fit my personality a little better not to have to work for a bureaucracy and do what people asked me to, so that's pretty much why. And I liked to teach. I used to like to teach.

YO: Well, the School—

RM: Am I going too fast?

YO: No, no, you're fine. The School, I think, was fairly new at that point, having just started being called Cal Poly, wasn't it? So, the department—let's see, I think it was Howard Boltz in '57 was coordinating—so when you got there, there really wasn't an official landscape architecture department, was there?

RM: No, that was the first year. First year we had classes in regular classrooms, studios and everything. We were in the science building, which had just been built. In fact, it was a new campus donated by the Kellogg family. That's how the campus got there and got started and of course the original Cal Poly was in San Luis [Obispo], and still is.

YO: Well, there were three faculty members there at that time. Were you one of the three or were there three additional faculty members?

RM: No, just the three of us, Howard and Jere French, J-e-r-e. [Laughs]

YO: Right. And so you made the three.

RM: Myself, yeah, and Jere and I had come at the same time.

YO: I see. In addition to teaching, you also practiced with Howard Boltz and Jere French, right?

RM: Pardon? I didn't catch that. Try again.

10:03

YO: Okay. In addition to teaching, you also practiced with Howard Boltz and Jere French, is that right?

RM: Later on, yeah.

YO: What kind of projects did you work on?

RM: Pretty much whatever we could get. Howard was more of a plant man. He brought in a project to do a tree plan for West Covina I think it was—one of those Covinas over there.

YO: What was that again?

RM: It was a master street tree plan for Covina. I remember him working on that. I did whatever I could get a hold of, residential work. I did the First Church of Christ Scientist in Pomona. That was a very good project. What else did we do? Ganesha Park.

YO: Yeah, I was going to say Ganesha Park, but also Central Park in Brawley.

RM: Central Park in Raleigh.

YO: Brawley.

RM: Brawley, oh yes. That was a great thing. That was a great experience because it's right close to Calexico, you know, so every night instead of going to the hotel you just went to Mexico.

YO: Oh my gosh.

RM: It was like going to Tijuana, of course.

YO: Right. Well, that sounds like it was fun, in addition to being—

RM: I wasn't very old, you know.

YO: Yeah, I know. You were pretty young coming through here.

RM: Twenty-seven. I was twenty-seven.

YO: Yeah, that was a good age. Who and what was influencing your approaches to teaching and design the most at this point?

RM: I'm not sure I understand that question. The whole department was all in formation so anything you did was brand new, not only to me as a faculty member, but the other people and to the whole School. They didn't know what the hell they were doing. They didn't know what a landscape architect was. It could have been a janitor for all they knew.

YO: Really?

RM: The philosophy there is learn by doing. This is another one of those kind of fortunate happenstances where you go from an educational system, which is fundamentally based on an iterative approach, and once you understand that that's possible—and I go to a school where you do the project first and then you find out what you did wrong and you learn by doing. That's the model. Learn by doing. So it fits. So, we put the department together by learning by doing. So we had a free rein to do what we wanted to. I'm a pushy kind of person so I exerted my will.

YO: Right. Well, was there a particular thing that you were focusing on or something that you had in mind to establish at that time?

RM: Design. That's always been my focus. Everything in landscape architecture ultimately has to come through the design process or it's all a waste of time, actually, because you don't know if it's right or wrong.

YO: Right. Was Lewis Clarke ever a guest lecturer at Pomona while you were there?

RM: No. I didn't meet Lewis till I came to North Carolina State to interview.

YO: Well, let me stop on him for just a second and let me go back to another question I've always wanted to ask you, and then I'll ask some more questions about this in a minute, but up to the point that you were at Cal Poly Pomona, and this is most of the '50s and a couple years in the '60s, did you ever encounter the term "ecology"?

RM: Oh, of course, yes. [Laughs] Not in a relationship to landscape architecture. But of course you run into it when you study articles in biology and all of that sort of thing, and plant anatomy, you run into it, and plant pathology, and I did all that stuff in my first life. So, the ecological relationships between organisms, which is biologically totally different than when you're thinking about regions. Biology ecologists study smaller and smaller things, not larger and larger things.

15:00

YO: Say that again, Richard. I didn't quite catch that.

RM: Okay, which? [Laughs]

YO: You said smaller and smaller, larger and larger. What was that about?

RM: In biology an ecologist concentrates on things like liver flukes in clams or frogs or something. They're looking at smaller and smaller relationships, biological relationships. The use of the term in landscape architecture, frankly, is a stretch, I think.

YO: Really?

RM: It's a stretch and it's a stretch that's led the profession off on some very strange tangents.

YO: Give me an example of a tangent.

RM: It's a euphemism, almost, you know. It's a term borrowed from biology because in biology it deals with the interrelationships of organisms.

YO: So, in your teaching at Pomona you didn't introduce ecology to the curriculum at that point, is that right?

RM: No, no, not ecology, not as a subject, because the curricula in those days were all standardized. You go from course to course and you have prerequisites and you take this and then you do that. I mean, it seemed linear and rational, but it's not really because it's never interrelated.

YO: I see. Well, in 1962 you moved from California to Raleigh to become head of the fourteen-year-old landscape architecture department at NCSU School of Design. What events led to this decision?

RM: Oh, well, I got upset over the relativity amongst the then faculty in landscape and how I was being related to. People were being promoted and I thought I should have been.

YO: I see.

RM: And I said, well, screw you, I'm out of here. I'll just go do my practice. We had a little office down there in Pomona, and I was talking to Garrett Eckbo. We became friends because one of the things we had to do in Cal Poly, the main thing we were trying to do, was get accredited as a program. And we were able to do that in something like two years, which was unheard of at the time. It was with the help of the AILA, which was another organization, professional landscape organization. That's another long story. All these things, I'm having trouble tracking here because—that's why I like to sometimes start at the end and work backwards because that's what I'm doing right now.

YO: I see.

RM: Anyway, I left because—anyway, Garrett said—I said, I don't know what I'm going to do and he said there's a faculty position at North Carolina State.

YO: Eckbo knew that?

RM: Garrett had been there as a visiting lecturer, apparently, or Lewis had been in California and talked to him or something. I don't know. Somebody had. So I said, okay, fine. Recommend me. [Laughs]

YO: [Laughs]

RM: He said, okay. And he did.

YO: Well, that's great. Give me an idea of what Raleigh and the campus and the school were like in 1962 when you arrived.

RM: I'd never been there before, to begin with. I didn't know North Carolina from West Virginia, frankly. I thought it was a very pleasant campus and the School of Design was very interesting. I thought it was a great situation to be in and to teach in. I didn't have any problem with it. It was all Lewis's instigation to—I think he threatened Kamphoefner that if he didn't get some better faculty or another faculty person, somebody to run the department, he was leaving, and that's the way Henry worked. [Laughs]

20:13

YO: Right. Do you remember your initial interview with Henry Kamphoefner?

RM: I don't think I had one.

YO: Really?

RM: No, I don't remember it. I think I met him, that's about it. I don't remember anything about it. I don't have any recollection of sitting down and talking with him, only Lewis.

YO: Well, do you remember your first meeting with the landscape architecture faculty?

RM: Well, there were only two, Lewis and Gil Thurlow. That was it.

YO: Oh, I see. I thought David—well, that's right. In '62 David Teachout and Bob Phillips and Wayne Maynard hadn't gotten there yet, right?

RM: No, two of those were my former students from Cal Poly.

YO: Oh, I see. Which two?

RM: Bob Phillips was one of the State students. Wayne Maynard and Teachout and Herb Schaal, those guys were all Cal Poly students of mine.

YO: Really? When you started talking to the faculty, which was Lewis and Gil—

RM: No, that's another— Never mind. What's your question?

YO: Whenever you had your first landscape architecture faculty meeting, so to speak, what did you describe to them as goals for the department?

RM: I never did. No, I never had those kinds of discussions. We did eventually have them. Yeah, eventually the meetings turned into something more substantial, but originally, they were just who's going to teach what and what's happening and who's doing what and everything else just kind of evolved.

I didn't come with any grand plan except—as always—landscape architecture is a design profession. It's not an analysis profession or a data profession. It's a design profession and that's it. When you get away from that, and you're not integrating design with everything else you're doing in the profession, then it's more or less irrelevant to me, and Lewis was already on that track so it was easy. I just followed him.

YO: Right. I was wondering how much—

RM: I found out what was going on and—yeah, that's essentially what happened. That's what you're doing here and I don't see anything wrong with that. Let's just do more of it.

YO: All right. Well, the students I've interviewed so far tell me that you were a taskmaster and only decades later did they realize it was to their benefit. What courses were you teaching and what is an example of how you earned the title, "taskmaster"?

RM: I have no idea. [Laughs] Well, one thing I learned going to school at Oregon, you had to set deadlines and meet them. You had to be disciplined in your decision making. The more decisions you could make, the sooner you would find out if they were good ones or not, and you could do them over. You don't want to wait till the end because the final thing you turn in or you think it's the final solution, and there's never a final solution anyway. So yeah, you have to meet your

deadline. It doesn't matter. If you've only got an hour to design a city, do the best you can based on what you know.

YO: Did you ever—[Brief interruption] Did you give them enough projects that kept them busy all the time?

RM: Oh, here's the thing about design students that you already know. There is never enough time for design students to do what they want to do because no matter how small the problem or how large the problem they will spend as much time as they have available up to the last minute. So, that's why the lights were always on at night, and that's—[Interruption]

25:03

YO: Talking about the task expands to fill the amount of time available.

RM: Yeah. Serious design students always spend all the time they have on the project at hand. Now, they may not spend it productively and they may not spend it in a timely fashion. They may wait till the last minute and then try to do it all the last night, but that's the way they work. Every design school that I've ever been associated with has always been the same way, so obviously the way—in other words, it all ties back to the whole iterative method of learning. Period. Everything is learned that way. You learn by making mistakes. You don't learn by doing things right.

YO: I see. Do you want to mention any of your students?

RM: Oh—

YO: [Laughs]

RM: —I will as we go along, but I'm not going to start a laundry list in the beginning because I'll miss somebody. [Laughs]

YO: Well, let's go onto my next question then and we'll think about your students as we're going along. In your résumé you write that under your guidance the department became a major force in the national environment awakening of the decade.

RM: That's true.

YO: What were landscape architects not doing before that you started them doing after? In other words, what was missing? We're so used to environmental issues now we can't imagine a time when that wasn't something that was a part of the curriculum. So what were landscape architects not doing before you got a hold of them?

RM: Well—[Laughs] I didn't—that's not a simple question.

YO: Well, let's try it anyway. Let's see what we come up with.

RM: They were running traditional practices, which essentially was you got a project and you did the design, you did the working drawings, and they built it and you went on to the next one. There was no awareness of the total environmental situation, not until Rachel Carson made it a big deal.

YO: Did Rachel Carson influence you a lot?

RM: Not really because I never even read her books.

YO: Really? [Laughs]

RM: No. I know what's in them and the way I usually read books is I start from the back because I'm left handed and it's easier to turn the pages that way.

YO: Now I know that's not true, but anyway, let me—

RM: [Laughs] No, that's really true. I tend to go to the end and see if it makes sense, if it's something I know already or if there's something I can learn by reading the first part.

YO: Okay, Richard, I believe you. What are some examples of how the department became a major force during your time on the faculty, a major environmental force?

RM: Well, of course Lewis had already started. You've got to remember, we were both pretty young. I had just turned thirty-two when I started work at North Carolina State, probably stupid, I know, but that was the state of the profession as well. There were no good faculty. Very, very rarely did you find a good landscape architecture faculty.

Lewis was an anomaly. He'd come from England, and you know his whole story. He went on a Fulbright to Harvard and he'd studied under Brian Hackett at Leeds before and Hackett is kind of the father of the whole regional approach to landscape architecture. [Laughs] It sounds simple, but it's not. The whole idea, and Lewis articulates it very well, is that the objective of landscape architecture is to be able to make the smallest possible decision affecting the environment based on the broadest possible base of information.

YO: And that's what you guys were starting to teach.

RM: I said, yeah, that makes a lot of sense. I agree with that. For example, the name of our little design firm in Pomona was called Environmental Planning Associates, you know. Now, you've got to realize that when we started that in 1958 or '59, no one could even spell "environment."

30:11

YO: Really?

RM: I'm serious, much less understand or even comprehend what it was about.

YO: Right.

RM: It was all totally disjointed amongst specialists, biologists, horticulturalists, plants people, planners—everything was separate. When I came up with that name, I said this is broader than that. It's all one big thing. You can't separate a piece of the environment from another piece of the environment. My master's thesis was on controlled environment. I don't know if you know that or not.

YO: No, I didn't know that.

RM: Yeah, trying to make an enclosed space where you could—trying to learn what the environment was all about by trying to design one, where you had complete control of it. Of course, that's not possible.

YO: You designed an environment? Was it an environment that you said that you tried to—

RM: Yeah. I just enclosed the whole thing, about an acre. Now I can control everything, but then I realized I couldn't because you had to control the light coming in and the humidity. [Laughs] You know, you can't divorce yourself, like architects do, from reality.

YO: Good point.

RM: Never mind. [Laughs]

YO: Well, I know from having talked with you in the past that eventually you and Kamphoefner started having conflicts. What were some of these conflicts and what basis did they have?

RM: Oh, well—

YO: Is the word "conflict" not strong enough for you, Richard?

RM: No. Well, you know that story. The conflicts were that I was not then, and probably still am not, socially astute. I'm not a person that—I'm not a Texan. I'm not a person that you can touch on the back and stick your knife in at the same time. I'm not a person that works very well with society. If I have an idea, I'm usually prone to say it and if I don't like something, somebody will very quickly find it out. So, this is what happened, Yona, and I've got to explain my whole concept of education in terms of administration. Henry Kamphoefner was a perfect dean. Now no one is going to agree with that, [Laughs] because he was such an incomprehensible fool sometimes, but that's what a good dean is. They stay out of education.

YO: Okay.

RM: A good dean. Now this is just my opinion. A dean's role is to represent education to the outside, to make contacts, to get the money, to take care of the university administration, get them off your back, get the things you need, find out what you need and get it, and hire good faculty. A good dean has enough sense to hire people who are brighter than he is and can do the

job better than he can. That's understood, I think, or should be. Henry was good at that. Lewis always called him, the head janitor.

YO: The head what?

RM: Head janitor.

YO: Oh, head janitor. [Laughs]

RM: Yeah, it was his job to keep—he was saying exactly the same thing but it takes a while to understand what Lewis is saying.

YO: Right. [Laughs]

RM: If you don't know him. I understood right away because I'm sort of the same way, but he said you've got to make sure the toilet paper's in there, and you've got to make sure that people keep things clean. You've got to make sure you can get the building open so the students can study late at night. You've got to do all these things. You've got to find a good faculty.

YO: So, he was good at that, huh?

RM: Well, I have to say that. He hired me. [Laughs]

YO: [Laughs] So, what was it that you started having conflicts about?

34:54

RM: Well, mainly it was that he expected me to act like a dean [and] that I was supposed to go out and promote the department out in society. Well, I'm no good at that. I never saw my job as that. The head to me, he's responsible for what happens in the educational end. There's an interface there between what the dean does and what the head does. You should not have a head who wants to be dean because he's probably not going to do either very well.

YO: I see. That's a good point. Well, in addition to teaching—

RM: Lewis never wanted to be a dean. [Laughs] I never wanted to be a dean. Why the hell would I want to be a dean? Every dean I ever saw was messing around, glad handing, and finding money and doing all kinds of administrative trivia, as far as I was concerned.

YO: So, there was a kind of conflict of what Henry thought you should do and what you thought you should do as the head of department, right?

RM: Yeah, and the fact that I was not very good talking to people and smooching, smoothing—what's the word?

YO: Schmoozing?

RM: Schmoozing them up and all that and saying, oh, you're a nice fellow, and all that. I'm just no good at it.

YO: No, I can't imagine you doing that.

RM: And he wanted me to go out and—and he was right; I was no good at it. I'm still no good at it, [Laughs] mainly because I have no interest in it.

YO: Well, that makes a difference, doesn't it? In addition to teaching, you were also practicing in Raleigh and NCSU Libraries Special Collections Research Center has a few of your drawings. One that comes to mind is the Whispering Pines Motor Lodge. Do you remember who the developer was that you did that job for?

RM: The developer?

YO: Yes.

RM: I can't remember his name. Yeah, Whispering Pines. There was a Whispering Pines Golf Course somewhere down there and it was all part of the same thing, and I can't remember his name. I'm sorry.

YO: That's okay. Well, how about the Fayetteville Market Square? Tell me about that job.

RM: Paul McArthur got us involved in that.

YO: Who was that?

RM: Paul McArthur, the architect in Fayetteville. I don't know if he's still there or still alive or not. I don't know.

YO: I don't know either.

RM: That was an interesting project. [Laughs] I don't know how the hell it ever happened, how they ever built part of it. It's an old slave market, you know, and nobody wants to talk about that. It's not a regular marketplace.

YO: What did you do to it? How did you change that area? What was your design about?

RM: The ground level of the marketplace—have you been there?

YO: Yes.

RM: That was the level of the whole surroundings.

YO: Ah.

RM: We dropped the whole intersection, and that's a very complicated intersection because there's a grade fall through it. We had to drop—I said the only way you're going to make this thing stand out, it's got to look like it's on a pedestal. You've got to raise it and you can't raise the damn thing. That's not practical. So, we'll just drop the rest of it.

YO: [Laughs] You dropped that whole block?

RM: The whole intersection.

YO: [Laughs] Oh my gosh.

RM: [Laughs]

YO: Okay.

RM: Yeah, we did. [Laughs]

YO: That was very good, very creative. Well— [Laughs] I'm speechless on that one.

RM: We had to do—you know, I did—I say “we”, I don't know—well, Herb might have been in my office when he was working for me.

YO: Who was that?

RM: Herb Schaal was working—

YO: Oh, Herb Schaal, right.

RM: Yeah. I think I did all the grading even. I had to because the engineers had no idea how to go about it.

YO: [Laughs]

RM: Or how to make the transitions, and of course this was all before the handicapped access extravaganza, where everything in the whole world had to be redone for wheelchairs. So a lot of it is just not accessible. I don't think you can get up on that top, unless they were forced to build one, which they probably were, which would have destroyed the whole thing.

YO: I haven't been down there in awhile so I don't really know. You and Lewis began a professional relationship during this time and developed a friendship that's lasted until today.

RM: Absolutely. I hope so. [Laughs]

40:03

YO: I hear you're okay with him, so I think we're good on that statement. Did Lewis influence your teaching or practice, and if so, in what way did that happen?

RM: Well, he influenced my practice in Raleigh by giving me work.

YO: [Laughs]

RM: [Laughs] But he never—we never collaborated on projects. I did work for him in his basement over on—I forget the name of the street now.

YO: Let's see. Was that Rothgeb?

RM: Yeah, Rothgeb, when he was working out of his basement. [Laughs]

YO: Maybe it was Mordecai. Was it Mordecai?

RM: That's the new house, isn't it?

YO: No, that was Darien.

RM: Oh. I don't know.

YO: Okay.

RM: One where we were working in the basement is all I know.

YO: Well, what kinds of things did you talk about in that basement?

RM: Oh, what kind of Scotch to drink, silly things. We didn't talk much about design.

YO: Really?

RM: Not in a specific sense. He was working on mostly malls at the time all over. You know, he did the Cherry Hill Mall with Gruen and that set him off on a path with the Rouse Company and all that stuff. I would do schemes for them. I think more so that he would have an alternative to show. He had no intention of letting anyone else design it. I mean that's Lewis. I would do schemes and he would talk about them, and he understood what was going on in the malls more than I did. Then you never heard any more of them. But he would show them to the client. He said he showed them to them.

YO: Okay.

RM: It didn't bother me. I wasn't doing any more anyway, so.

YO: Right.

RM: There it is. If you don't like it, you don't like it. [Laughs]

YO: Yeah, that's the way it is. You just say it, right? Well, in 1968 you left the School of Design and moved to Hawaii. Can you tell me some more about that event in your life?

RM: Well, my personal issues had caused a final flare up with Henry, taking his secretary, who he was secretly in love with, away from him.

YO: Oh. That didn't go over too well, did it?

RM: No. [Laughs]

YO: So, once you got to Hawaii you started to—

RM: And as a result of that, you know, finally Lewis said there's no use to—I took a leave of absence, as you know.

YO: Oh, take a leave of absence.

RM: That's what I did. I took a leave of absence to go to Hawaii and I actually renewed it, but Lewis said don't plan on coming back here because Henry's going to destroy you if you if you—

YO: Henry's what? Oh, Henry will destroy you if you come back?

RM: [Laughs] Yeah. He's just waiting for you and you'll never make another dime in salary other than what you're making now, so forget that. He said get out.

YO: I've heard other people say that whenever you left the School of Design that was run by Henry then you didn't come back because he would just make your life miserable.

RM: Yeah, well he would have.

YO: Why do you suppose he did that?

RM: Well, I just explained it. [Laughs]

YO: Well, in your case I can see that there were extenuating circumstances but was he just that—demanded just that much loyalty from his faculty, or did he—

RM: No. It was never—I never thought about that, why he would do something like that. I think it was just the way he was. He was not vindictive with people who left. I don't remember that. Maybe he was, but people left all the time. They never came back. I noticed that.

YO: Right. [Laughs] Well, when you got to Hawaii you started working for Oceanic Properties and I noticed in your résumé that you said about this time you started using data processing techniques, and I was wondering if you'd comment on why you needed data processing techniques as a landscape architect at this time.

RM: That's a long story, but if you really want me to go through it I will.

YO: Well, if it will last less than two or three hours then go ahead. [Laughs]

45:00

RM: [Laughs] It's all the same story. That's the problem.

Okay. You're going to start to see patterns here. I went to Oceanic, as I've done everything in my career, I said, oh, okay—I may as well. Bob Royston was at the School as a visiting lecturer and we were doing a regional project that gave every student a mile of a road all the way from Raleigh to the Coast, something like that, and they all had to put them together. [Laughs] Anyway—

YO: Oh, the students were given the sections of road all the way from Raleigh to the Coast to do an analysis for, right?

RM: No, a design.

YO: Oh, a design.

RM: Lewis would never do anything that didn't culminate—he was more or less in charge of that. I just let him go with that. He always had you finish any analytical problem with design to see if your analysis is right, so it's all again still a cyclical process. He thinks it's all intuitively creative and stuff like that, but that's just the difference between us because he is creative and I'm not. [Laughs]

YO: [Laughs] Okay.

RM: I'm more analytical. I'm not an artist. He's an artist. I'm not.

YO: So you're leaning on data processing techniques at this point.

RM: Let me stay on track here, because the way my mind works—it's starting to do it again. I start to analyze this whole conversation. I don't want to do that.

YO: No, don't do that.

RM: So, I said I have to get the hell out of here. I knew I had to leave Raleigh at that time because of my personal situation. He said, oh, they're looking for a landscape architect in Hawaii. I said, okay. Where? He said Al Boeke. He knew Al Boeke. I had never heard of him. Okay. I said recommend me. I'll go. But you see the pattern. All of my life's major decisions are made this way. [Laughs]

YO: [Laughs] Okay. So, who was the job—

RM: So, he recommended me. I flew out there in April. I looked and I said, Jesus Christ, what are you people doing out here? This isn't going to work. They were building a golf course and

they were digging some sort of major—like the Suez Canal for the major drainage way and it was in the wrong place and everything else. I said this won't work. You guys are completely off base. The rest of it was all pineapple fields. So, I spent most of the time there rearranging coconut palms. I said, move that one over here. These are full grown palms, by the way. It was fun. I came back and they offered me a job and [?] and I went out, and that's the way that happened.

Now, I was there two years when the Nixon recession came and market money collapsed. The whole supply of money collapsed. They had no more money to keep the project going. It could still go on, but—they also had bought a firm called, Curci-somebody, I don't know, and they put Curci in charge of the planning and he took over Oceanic, and he was a crazy person. I guess because his first name was Shurl. I guess that's why.

YO: [Laughs]

RM: [Laughs] Anyway, I have a problem with authority figures and I said I can't work with this guy.

YO: And who was the guy you were working for? What was his name again?

RM: Al Boeke, when I went to work for Al Boeke, and Al Boeke's secretary at the time was Carolee Robinette, if you know the name. [Laughs]

YO: Yes, yes, I know. Now this is Oceanic, but it's actually—

RM: Yeah, it's Oceanic. He left Oceanic to go to—oh, Christ.

YO: Castle & Cooke?

RM: Yeah, Castle & Cooke owned Oceanic.

YO: That's right.

50:00

RM: And he went to work for the big private—Bechtel. He went to Bechtel and made a fantastic financial deal where he never had to work again. He didn't stay there very long. He just took their money and ran.

YO: How do you spell that?

RM: Boeke or Bechtel?

YO: Well both of them, actually.

RM: Boeke, B-o-e-k-e, Al Boeke. He was very good. He trained in architecture at [U]SC and he was on the faculty at [U]SC, so that's how the Sea Ranch—and he started the Sea Ranch. That

was before the Hawaii work. That's why all the San Francisco people got involved and he got involved in Oceanic as well.

YO: The Sea Ranch is the project that Larry Halprin did the first master plan for, right?

RM: If you can call it that. Don't get me on that. [Laughs]

YO: Okay. [Laughs]

RM: Halprin, he's an architect. He's not a landscape architect and never was. That's my opinion. He likes to build. He's a block stacker. He likes to build concrete things, and forms, and plazas and all that architect stuff.

YO: I see. So, Boeke decides to leave and so you're left with this—

RM: I and Jack Sidener were left with the whole planning and design elements of Oceanic. I was hired on as landscape architect and Jack Sidener was hired on as urban planner, and he was very talented.

YO: What was his last name again?

RM: Sidener, S-i-d-e-n-e-r—very talented, very creative mind, very quick. He could draw very well, but kind of flaky administratively in terms of staying on track. He's a real planner. [Laughs]

YO: [Laughs] Now, how did you manage in late '69—

RM: I'm trying to answer your question. [Laughs]

YO: Oh, sorry.

RM: I haven't left the question.

YO: We're still going on that one, okay, sorry. Go ahead.

RM: Now Castle & Cooke owned the island of Lanai where they had a massive pineapple plantation and they would ship the pineapple to Honolulu and can it and do all that stuff with it. So anyway, they had almost a hundred thousand acres, between ninety and ninety-nine thousand acres. So, they wanted Oceanic—I don't know whose idea it was. They wanted a master plan because they wanted to make some money from it somehow. Oceanic was a development company. So, they said we ought to do a plan for this. This was '67, '68.

Anyway, so I said, okay. The first thing we've got to do is an inventory of the whole island to find out what the hell we've got to deal with, where the usable land is, what's developable, what's not, if there's water, where does the water run, what's uphill and what's downhill. The usual crap. At that time for Lewis and I, it was the usual crap. For the rest of the world, it was an unusual thing. [Laughs]

So we did the usual crap, and I didn't have time to deal with that because I was doing all the design work at Mililani and I was also doing most of the design work at Sea Ranch at that time. So, a kid named Seabolt, Seth Seabolt, came in and he did the environmental inventory, and it was okay. He did a good job. He was a good guy. And it kind of just sat there. Meanwhile, the turmoil at Mililani and the financial crisis and all that stuff was going on and I was up over my eyeballs and would have to get up and go into work at three or four in the morning to do FHA plot plans for subdivisions and make sure they got out by noon or something.

YO: By hand, right, by hand.

54:54

RM: Oh yeah. By hand, oh yes. [Laughs] And you couldn't find draftsmen. You couldn't find anybody in Honolulu to work. I brought a lot of people over eventually, but there was nobody to do the work. You'd hire a draftsman and he'd been doing mechanical drawing for machinery or something. Who the hell knows what he'd been doing? Anyway, so that was just—Lanai just sat there.

Now, when I left Oceanic—I left in '69, June, just about two years to the day, July, August, sometime in there—they said we still need Lanai done. I said do you want me to finish up the master plan on Lanai? They said okay. They had Seth's data still. So I said, okay, I'll take it on as a private project. So I did. It's a project that normally a consulting firm would say oh, it will take years to do this. I said, well no, I can do this in three months. I didn't even give them a price. I just said I'll bill you. [Laughs]

YO: [Laughs]

RM: So, they rented this space somewhere else in—I know where it is. It's in Honolulu, close by, the whole basement, vacant space, and I moved about twenty people in there and we started cranking—again all by hand, now.

YO: Yeah.

RM: We did all those data maps by hand. The result of that was the Lanai Development, whatever I called it. I don't know. Do you have a copy of it?

YO: Let's see. I'm looking right now.

RM: It's a square report, twelve by twelve.

YO: I can't be sure on that, no.

RM: I don't have it in front of me. Anyway, in the process of this three months, I said you can't do—it was called the land management and development study. I said you can't do these things just to do a paper plan and throw it away somewhere. You've got to have a way to connect it to the financial results, to see if it's feasible. To do that I brought in—I think his name was Dennis Hooper, a young kid [Laughs] who had access to an IBM 360, and he was a very creative kid and he was good. I said, here, look. I don't want to know how computers work. I don't care about it.

All I want you to do—I want to tell you what I want and I want you to figure out how to do it [Laughs] on the computer, and I still have that attitude. I don't want to know how they work.

He said what do you want and I said I want to make an interface between the economic things that in-house accounting does to determine the feasibility of a project. I want to interface that with the landscape characteristics and what's feasible on the ground. And I want it to happen from beginning to end and I want, if this doesn't come out right, to go back and change the data and get a new solution. Well, he did it. [Laughs]

YO: And this is an innovation at this point, because—

RM: Yes, no one had done this.

YO: —you're not doing data processing in—now Lewis, I think, was doing some of it with Palmetto Dunes, but it's still something that is very foreign for landscape architects to call up on, isn't it?

RM: Well, this is '68—no, '69, actually, 1969. No one was doing it. They were still doing accounting at Oceanic and Castle & Cooke with adding machines and pencils.

YO: No kidding?

RM: So, he had to kind of invent the whole thing, and he didn't get all the pieces right, but it's all in that study, the diagrams and the flow charts and all of that stuff is in there—how do you get from one to the other, and the only piece we left out, which was the key one of course but you couldn't solve that, was the market.

1:00:05

YO: Right.

RM: You have to have [Laughs] a market or no development will work. So, that's how I started in the computer stuff and that kept going over and over in my head. At the same time, there were other people out digitizing things—just bare, rudimentary kind of things. Digitizing is just—it's awful. It takes forever to get information into the computer with a digitizer and to do it manually is almost impossible. So, I knew it had to be an interface again between a human being that could say, hey, this area is so-and-so and this area is so-and-so and skip all this digitizing crap. In other words, generalize it more because in the cyclical process the data is always expanding. That's why you do the solution first, so you'll know what data you need. [Laughs]

YO: Backwards again, huh? Do it backwards again?

RM: Yes. Every time you do it you find out what data you don't have. So, the data is always expanding and the process is always refining to funnel all that data down to the point of design, which is the decision making.

If you draw it out it's a little easier to understand. It's the way everybody works. It's the way you tie your shoes. It's not uncommon. It's nothing you had to invent. It's the way people

work. It's the way they operate in everything except when it comes to designing things or putting things together, they think there's some other process, and there isn't. There's only one process. Anyway, so that's where it started, with Lanai. That, in my opinion, is a key work. That study.

YO: Really? And how do you feel like it's a key work?

RM: Because it's the first example of the way everything can be integrated in a cyclical way to not only initially design something, but to manage it.

YO: I see.

RM: Now environment has to be managed. It's never finished. The landscape is always in the process of becoming. It's never finished. So you have to be able to manage the changes and you will never have all the information, ever, ever, because it's changing moment by moment, ecologically, because it's an ecology, you see. An ecology by definition is a system of interrelationships that are always changing and adjusting within themselves to accommodate the situation. I just thought of that. [Laughs]

YO: I think you've done a remarkable job and it's interesting to me that in a way you say, well, that's the obvious, but there was a time when the obvious had not been stated.

RM: No—and even after you think—everybody's going to love this. You think everybody's going to say, oh, eureka! Nobody did.

YO: Really?

RM: I printed that thing, I sent it to—I contacted all the university libraries and said if you want a copy of this you can have it. I think I charged them ten bucks a copy, or something. It's probably in your library.

YO: I'll check it out.

RM: I know it's in Berkeley. But every time I try to discuss this, even at design schools, every time I say here's this whole philosophy, they come up with some ridiculous question that just blows me away and I just refuse to talk to them anymore. The last time was at an interview for the faculty at Berkeley in '84, I think. I went through the whole process, and the first goddamn question I get is: How is this different from what Halprin did in his—what did he call it?

YO: Oh, the circles book.

1:05:00

RM: Yeah. I said it's no different, for Christ's sake.

YO: [Laughs]

RM: I'm not even going to answer that question. Obviously it's the same. It's the same as Aristotle and—who was the other guy back there—and all these guys, cause and effect, because cause and effect's a philosophy. It's the same as Norbert Wiener and his cybernetics in the '40s. It's all the same thing! They're talking about the same thing! That's what I'm trying to get through your thick skulls.

YO: [Laughs]

RM: If you can learn how to teach this or encourage people to learn this in a design school, you will have solved the problem. That's what I was trying to do at North Carolina State at the end.

YO: Right. It's a—

RM: Sorry. [Laughs]

YO: No, I'm glad that you framed it in that tone of voice. I think it's a good message that'll get conveyed. Well, let's move on to 1969. You were retained by the Honolulu office of Eckbo, Dean, Austin, and Williams to direct the completion of the general plan for the county of Kauai. In the history of landscape architecture design, why is this general plan an important project to examine?

RM: Well, the short answer—and I'll try to keep my answers shorter now—the short answer is because it's exactly what we did on Lanai as a private development process. We just transferred it to a public, governmental management system. Same. Nothing changed. That's why it's important, and that had never been done. No one has ever tried to do that before. Now, it won't work at the public level because of politicians, but it doesn't work at the private level either for exactly the same reason.

You get in everybody's kuleana—everybody's scope of influence. They don't want it tampered with. That's another issue. That's why it's important though. That was the first time that a public planning effort had been set up as a management tool that recognized the same things—all of the existing information, which would constantly need to be updated—reflected in the design proposals and the planning proposals. Now, the government couldn't see past—when they hit zoning, they think that's the end of it, right?

YO: Right.

RM: They can't think beyond that. They can't think about design. They can't think about physical things happening on the ground. They can only think in terms of colors, yellows and blues and zoning and so on.

YO: Right.

RM: So, this was a whole process again set down and it was adopted, you know, adopted and then promptly ignored.

YO: [Laughs]

RM: That's the way government gets around doing things.

YO: Right. Well, let's do mention that it won an award from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development—

RM: That was much later.

YO: —in 1974. Yes. It did start affecting some people's thinking. It took two or three years, but it finally got some attention.

RM: That's after we went on and did development plans for each of the districts. We only did—two of them we didn't do. Then we also wrote the comprehensive zoning ordinance.

YO: That did what now?

RM: We wrote the initial comprehensive zoning ordinance for the county of Kauai—

YO: Oh, right, right.

RM: —which took the same environmental criteria and processes and put it into the law.

YO: And did they accept that information?

RM: Yeah, accepted it and passed it and then promptly put it aside. [Laughs] I could go into why. But that was written with Michael Heyman, who just recently died.

YO: And how do you spell his name?

RM: H-e-y-m-a-n, Mike Heyman. Ira Michael Heyman.

YO: I see.

RM: At the time he was at the Hastings School of Law in Berkeley on the faculty there, and then he went on to be the chancellor at Berkeley, and then he went on to be the director of the Smithsonian.

1:10:10

YO: No kidding? Wow.

RM: And then he just died recently, this year. Brilliant person and he's the one—[Laughs] I would say Mike, can we do this? Is this legal? He would say anything's legal until the judge says it's not. I said, okay. We're off. [Laughs]

YO: That's the kind of people to work with, isn't it?

RM: Yes. He was a brilliant, creative person. He would have been a good designer if that's what he'd chosen to do. You don't find that much in the legal profession. They're people who are trained to go through life walking backwards, you know.

YO: [Laughs]

RM: If there's no precedent, it never happened. Well, it's true. [Laughs]

YO: Yeah, I think that's why I'm laughing. Well, let's see. By 1972, you were director of operations and chief executive officer at the San Francisco offices of Eckbo, Dean, Austin, and Williams and you were with the firm during this period—I call it the corporate massiveness of design offices that were starting to turn into conglomerates. But anyway, the firm grew in prominence while you were there and it became EDAW, Inc., which of course to most people EDAW is more familiar than what the initials stand for. Tell me something—

RM: —and it isn't EDAW—

YO: —about the partners?

RM: —anymore either, by the way.

YO: That's right. Tell me some about the partners, especially Eckbo.

RM: Well, this is the way your whole life gets intertwined. Mack Ruff, [Laughs] okay, out of Texas A&M, as I mentioned, one of his students was Don Austin.

YO: Oh really?

RM: When I was in graduate school at the University of Oregon, one day a knock at my door on Patterson Street, a little funky apartment, which was all we could afford, and he said, [in Texas accent] Hi, I'm Don Austin. [Laughs]

YO: [Laughs]

RM: [in Texas accent] Mack Ruff said I should come by and talk to you. And I said, okay, come on in. We've been friends ever since.

YO: Really?

RM: So, Don eventually ended up opening an office in Honolulu for Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams. And of course I'd seen him and had stayed good friends with Garrett right up until the end. That's another story. So, when they had that project—I used to go over there when I was still at Oceanic. On the weekend, I'd go over and do schemes for them and stuff like that. They were just starting, and that's how I met Carl Muroda and Carl Muroda was his friend and so forth. Anyway, that's how I got—so, I knew Garrett, and I knew Don, and I didn't know Francis [Dean], and I didn't know Ed Williams. At that time—where are we? What year is it?

YO: About '72, '75, somewhere in there.

RM: Okay. When I left Oceanic after I finished Lanai—I'm not very good at promoting my work. I never enjoyed it. I'm not a marketing person. That's more of that social dysfunction I have. So, I started a little firm and was doing a little work, not much, nothing important, and doing work for Don. Don had hired a Hawaiian student that I'd had at Cal Poly—Richard Kapololu—and Richard said you ought to get Dick Moore to work on this. That was the Kauai General Plan. They were just hopelessly lost, wandering around in the data.

YO: Really?

1:14:55

RM: Well, that's what everybody did. Once you get trapped in the data, you never get out. It's endless. Anyway, so that's how I got involved there, and then they said why don't you join the firm and I said, okay, I'll talk about that. You buy my practice and I'll come to work. Don will be in charge, and I never did anything to indicate that he wasn't, but then I had to do all the work. Don doesn't do work.

YO: [Laughs]

RM: He's a very good designer and he can draw very well. He's just not interested in doing it. He just wants to talk about it and diddle and do drawings and stuff. He's a diddler. But he's socially extremely adept, being from Texas.

YO: [Laughs]

RM: Now. So I said okay. So, I did that project and over a period of time we did the Wailea General Plan. What else did we do of any significance? I forget. We did a basic study for West Hawaii campus on Oahu. Did a lot of stuff, lot of development work.

YO: Did you work on the Iranian—Did the Iranian Helicopter Industry Community Master Plan come while you were at EDAW?

RM: Yeah, all that stuff is—anyway, that's how I got into EDAW, and EDAW was dying. That's the point I was trying to make.

YO: Oh.

RM: They were practically bankrupt. They were a corporation, but they were a corporation run by four individuals who had no idea what it was all about and they were all running their own office, practically. So, San Francisco was a separate entity, and Los Angeles was a separate entity, and Honolulu, and they all got together and drank wine four times a year at the board meetings and that was about it. That was their corporate responsibility.

I said this won't work. Once I got in the firm I said, this isn't going to work, Don. None of this is going to work. You've got to bring this all together. It's got to function together. You

can't survive this way. You've got a Los Angeles office that can hardly wipe its butt, and Honolulu's can't get enough work to sustain it, and San Francisco is just turning into a collection of incompetent people. I said you've got to get it together. They said, well, okay. Garrett was the president [organize something]. I said okay, I will.

So, [I] came up with something called, EDAW Center. You've got to have some sort of a center organism or you're going to die. I had the business manager, a new business manager, Howard Elliott, and he knew what he was talking about at least. I'm sure he had his own ax to grind, but—so, finally we put that together, but the firm was still financially teetering on the edge.

YO: Really?

RM: Even after I got there, I said, my goodness. No wonder. The San Francisco office was just crawling with people who'd been educated at Berkeley and had no idea what landscape architecture was or anything.

Anyway, that's how that happened. So, I got there and straightened it out, tried to straighten it out, and my whole concept was that a design firm, contrary to popular belief, can be a social organism, which grows and evolves, and acts like an ecology—another analogy. But you can't do this if you're going to have four people controlling everything, having all the authority and all the say.

They were the officer in charge of every project. They wouldn't let anybody else run a project even. It won't work. You've got to get good people and keep them. And keep them. The only way you can keep them, you've got to make them part of the firm. That's a long story short. That's the concept. So, that's what I created, that's what EDAW was, and when it went off on its own direction, which organisms tend to do, it evolved into something that I knew was always possible, but I hadn't planned on, and I said I'm finished. It's over. I don't have anything else to do here. And it was getting boring anyway.

1:20:33

YO: Really? What part was boring?

RM: Well, by then we had a hundred people in, how many offices, I don't know, stretched from San Francisco to Minneapolis to Alexandria, Virginia to Newport Beach. I don't know where all they were. Oh, Colorado—

YO: I didn't know they had them in that many locations.

RM: Fort Collins, Colorado.

YO: Oh my gosh.

RM: And it had to be coordinated, put together, and it was just a pain in the ass.

YO: Right.

RM: I just became exhausted running from office to office trying to get things accomplished. I could never find the right people, but I guess that's my fault. I'll just take that blame.

YO: Well, it sounds like it was almost—well, it must have been untenable because in '77 you were teaching at Texas A&M, and you resigned EDAW in '78 and you—

RM: '79, yeah.

YO: Okay and you went back to Hawaii to private practice. What kinds of jobs did you work on when you were in private practice after '79?

RM: Oh, went back to work on Lanai. By then Lanai and Oceanic had been—Castle & Cooke had been bought by a crazy person in '83 or '84. So, I went back on the Lanai project, another story, and eventually did some more work on Mililani Mauka [road] across the highway kind of thing, but that didn't last.

YO: On the—what was that?

RM: Mililani, more Mililani, but that was—all of these have side stories, and I was getting fed up with the whole idea of doing work at all. And—what else—I don't know. A lot of little things. A lot of it was around Lanai, most of it. It just kept me busy. What else? I don't know. I don't remember.

YO: Well, I think that you and Lewis had a visit one time in Hawaii, in Honolulu, I think it was, in about '85, maybe '86, somewhere in there.

RM: Yeah, right in there, '85 probably.

YO: You introduced him to something called, "CAD," and you were using CAD and a plotter—I don't know who before you was doing that. How did you get involved in using that equipment at that time?

RM: Oh boy. '86.

YO: Was it '86?

RM: Had to be because that's when—after the Lanai experience—okay, let's go back here. At EDAW we perfected—there's no perfect way, but we instituted and established a method of collecting and correlating and utilizing information. We used different firms. We used the firm—I forget the name of it—Urban Research [or something]. I don't know what the hell they were called. Pete Dangermond's outfit. I knew him because his brother was one of my students at Cal Poly. They would do the technical work. Herb Schaal was there in the office in San Francisco, and I knew I could count on him. We were doing a project at Davenport nuclear plant. I mean a nuclear plant for Davenport. We were doing all the transmission line work in those days, doing work for San Diego Gas and Electric. It all involved data and feasibility studies and environmental analyses.

So, we had to come with ways to get that data in, analyzed, and made useful for design purposes. So that's when we did the—cleaned up the digitization. Wait. You have to wait a minute.

1:25:27

YO: Okay.

RM: [Pause] The utilization of the data has to be initially simple. So, you have to start with data definition or definition of relevant characteristics in a way that is simple enough to start out even being drawn by hand, then give it to the people who deal with computers and crap like that and then tell them if they're doing it right. That's the way you have to work with them.

So, we did that, we got that process started, and we started doing the data correlation maps and printouts photographically. We didn't have to cut the damn Zip-A-Tone and all that stuff. It would be cut. You would photograph it, and it would cut itself, kind of.

YO: Oh, wow.

RM: We made some very beautiful maps and Herb pretty much handled all that stuff. We worked on a project with the Navy that was for the ultra low frequency submarines so you could send messages to submarines and tell them to shoot or don't shoot the missiles, right, while they're under water. Interesting comment on that, it was a one-way system. They couldn't call back and say, are you sure? [Laughs]

YO: Oh no. [Laughs]

RM: Brilliant, really brilliant. The military comes up with brilliant things. That's what really kind of saved the corporate EDAW's financial ass, is the military work, which Garrett opposed vehemently and I said, Garrett, it's better us doing it because we know what our objectives are. We don't want it to work. [Laughs]

YO: [Laughs]

RM: Than it is to be outside. They're going to do it anyway. Well, it never happened. For some reason it just was not environmentally successful, according to the consultants, who were us.

Anyway, from that, along the way somewhere—and I forget which year or even which project. I'm trying to think. Oh, it was when we did Lanai again in—oh, God, when was it—'73 or '74. Fred Feiler from UCLA was a probability expert.

YO: Oh, it must be '74 because it mentions in your résumé that the computer programming firm of Log/An, L-o-g-A-n?

RM: Yeah, Log/An. That was Fred Feiler's.

YO: What was the name again?

RM: Fred Feiler.

YO: Fowler?

RM: F-i-e-l-e-r, I think.

YO: Oh, okay.

RM: I think. Anyway, his little firm was involved in probability analyses, and this was at the time—at that time the computers could not handle even what your little PC will handle now. We would do proposals, in other words, all the data inputs for Lanai solutions for example, a development solution that was coming out with probability of making money at the end, which included the market all the way back through the environmental data and so forth. It would take twenty-seven minutes to run it at the computer center in Westwood, California—a whole floor of these damn things spinning tapes and stuff.

1:30:06

YO: [Laughs] Oh no.

RM: Twenty-seven minutes—

YO: Wow.

RM: —to get a printout, okay? That was unheard of speed. So, Fred's contribution, and Log/An's contribution, with the use of probability, we would tell the computer to run these alternatives because you're talking—we had something like, oh, variables in the range of—not by today's standards, not very meaningful, but they were six to the thirtieth power number of variables, or combinations of variables. You know what I'm saying?

YO: Right.

RM: And it had to look at all of them.

YO: What was an example of one variable?

RM: Slope. Water. Cost variables. Market variables. Velocity variables. How fast can you sell them. Time variables. All of these things. A lot of that's financial, but a lot of the environmental values we put in—slope and geography and drainage and geology, normal things—I'd been doing with Lewis since I got to North Carolina State—the same. Nothing changed. [Laughs] We were just trying to do it faster. Then you would look at it and say this doesn't work. Fine, change the parameters. Go back and change your data till it works. But Fred—I've lost my track—Fred's contribution was, I think, we could then tell the machine we want a ninety percent probability, we don't want to look at everything. And the machine would run it over and over again, different combinations, as long as the results climbed up in probability, and then when it got to ninety it would say that's it. Fine. What's wrong with that? You're never going to get all the information anyway.

YO: Right, right.

RM: So that's when we did the—we put that to work on the Lanai project in '74 or '75, I forget which, when we did it again. And again, it came up with the same answer. There is no market. [Laughs]

YO: Really? [Laughs] Can't plug that variable in there too well, can you?

RM: Well, we did, we plugged it in. We put in market prices, and we put in how fast they would sell, and which type of unit, multi-family, single family, lots, blah, blah, blah, condominiums, we put all that in, and it would crunch it, but management—

YO: I'm just sitting here amazed at all—

RM: Well, hey, wait a minute.

YO: Doing this before computers.

RM: Yeah, but it wasn't, because we were using computers. Like I say, they were rudimentary. Now, Fred finally went out of business because computer programs, off-the-shelf stuff, overwhelmed—caught up with him, put it that way.

YO: I see.

RM: He saw it coming and bailed out. I don't know what he's doing now. So, that was the system that again was trying to get to what—when you do something on the ground—what the probability is going to be to have the right effect on the environment, and how do we—

YO: What was Eckbo's reaction to this kind of technology invading the design process?

RM: Who, Garrett?

YO: Yes.

RM: They had no idea what we were talking about. You know, the funny thing was the only one I could ever get to even learn how to network a project—you know what network?

YO: Yes.

RM: Activities, time, resources, blah, blah, blah, was Don Austin. [Laughs] He was the only one that understood it. And he could sit down and network. I was flabbergasted. The rest of them had no idea what they were doing.

YO: Amazing.

RM: Anyway.

YO: Let's see here. What accomplishment to date are you most proud of and why? Anything.

RM: Being alive.

YO: [Laughs] Second choice?

1:35:00

RM: [Laughs] No, I'll tell you, and I told you this before. When I came back to Hawaii, I said from now on I'm not going to interpose or interject my opinions or ideas on anybody. If they want to know what I think, they're going to have to ask. Fortunately, no one ever asked. [Laughs]

YO: Well, I'm asking. [Laughs]

RM: You're asking. You're asking. [Laughs] I said that's it. I'm finished. I said I'll do what I can do by myself without hiring anyone. I'm not going to ever have another big office, I'm not going to try to run a school, I'm not going to do any of that anymore ever again, and I haven't.

YO: It sounds like you did it as much—I mean your résumé and your accomplishments is huge, so I think you deserve to do what you want to do these days, however you want to do it.

RM: Well, that's what I've been doing pretty much, and then when I couldn't—finally, I just kind of lost interest in even doing the work, and I didn't want to deal with the people, I didn't want to deal with the clients, and I certainly didn't want to promote work.

YO: Right.

RM: I don't know. I don't look back very well, as you can tell from this interview. Unless somebody jogs my memory, I don't even know what I've done.

YO: I think you've done great. Let me ask you this, what's the one important thing to know about Lewis Clarke?

RM: [Laughs] Mostly what you have to understand, he's an artist in every sense of the word. His decision making track is almost purely intuitive. Most landscape architects can't work that way. I can't. I can't work purely intuitively. I'm not an artist. Unless you understand that about him, you'll be distracted and diverted.

YO: [Laughs] Diverted.

RM: By his ruminations in things that he really has no interest in. I worked with him for five years, and I'm a person who believes that history is one of the greatest teachers you can have, and only recently—he taught that class [history of landscape architecture] for how many years, and I enjoyed it. He knew everything about it, all of those projects. He knew everything. He could talk about this stuff forever. I found out he'd never been to any of them.

YO: Oh really?

RM: Yeah.

YO: [Laughs]

RM: I said, well, he lived in England, he must have gone—no, no, I've never been there.

YO: That's the history of landscape architecture class you're talking about, right?

RM: Yes!

YO: [Laughs]

RM: I'd say, you know, Le Nôtre, I really was impressed. You don't really get the full impact of what Le Nôtre did there until you go there and you walk that axis and you do all the—and he said, no, I've never been there. [Laughs]

YO: [Laughs] I'll have to definitely ask him about that. What is the one important thing to know about Richard Moore?

RM: I'm probably just the opposite. I'm not a very intuitive person. I come about things very analytically, I mean very—not analytically, that's the wrong word. I always take anything I'm going to do and I work backwards and try to understand everything that's involved in it before I do anything.

YO: I think they call that—

RM: But I do it in my mind now.

YO: —deconstructing now.

RM: I don't do it—I don't do it exhaustively. I do it iteratively. In my mind, I will run through processes and always end up, in my mind, with a solution and then I go back with the solution. After awhile you can do this, Lewis would say “intuitively,” and I think that's always been my thesis, that I think it is teachable, or it's learnable. I don't think it's teachable; I think it's learnable. You can learn to integrate—you can make your intuition more objective or you can use objectivity to improve your intuition. That's what I'm trying to say. I had it backwards. In other words pretty soon you do things—you start out objectively doing things and gradually you learn how—you train your mind to do them subjectively by doing it over and over again, but he doesn't agree with that. He thinks you're born with it, and—

1:40:28

YO: Well, I was going to say—

RM: —of course if you're born with it you believe that. [Laughs]

YO: Do you think it takes a lifetime to learn what you're saying, that—

RM: No, I don't think it does. I don't think it does. I think that everything you need to learn about it you've already learned by the time you're—practically by puberty you've already learned everything you need to know.

It's just you don't trust it. You don't believe it. You don't try to understand it. In education—and I always said this when I started teaching because I had to go through it. The first thing you've got to do is unlearn everything you've known. I used to tell the students at the freshman orientation. The most difficult thing you're going to have to learn is that everything you've learned so far is irrelevant. Get rid of it. We're going to start talking about learning design. Now that's different. People don't learn how to do design because they think it's not the same process, I guess. I'm not making any sense, am I?

YO: Yes, actually you are because I'm thinking—I can't remember exactly which student it was that I interviewed but he went on at length about how the system that you and Lewis and the rest of everybody used in the School of Design was designed to make you forget or unlearn everything you had learned and get rid of your—they called them bad habits of thinking—and start looking at something with a different eye. So, what you were telling them worked on a few of them, I know that.

RM: Yeah, well, and it's very difficult to do, unlearn things. It's very difficult to do. It's not impossible. But that's why, if you can ever get a school again that can try to teach how to think as a designer—how to think about the design process correctly—you can accomplish something. I don't know if there's a school like that around anymore. I don't know what the schools are doing now, and in the results not much.

YO: In a school like you're describing, what would the first day of that school be like, as far as starting to unlearn something?

RM: Well, in the first place, the first day has to incorporate design education. It can't be two, three years studying something else and then go learn design. That's why you have a five-year program. That's why the first semester you're in a design class. That's why. That's the way you unlearn, by retraining the way you think, retraining your thought process to look at things differently. It's very difficult. It's very, very difficult. I had to do basic design when I went to graduate school. I had to go into a basic design class.

YO: Really?

RM: Yeah. I did that and at the same time I was doing third-year projects the first year, and stuff like that, which again that's helpful. At North Carolina State, because we had so few students, but it would have been good anyway, the vertical integration rather than horizontal separation of students was key, very key, to the whole process working—third, fourth, and fifth year, for example, being in the same classroom together.

YO: Oh really?

1:44:45

RM: Yeah, it was vertically integrated, not—they were third year, but didn't get different problems than fourth and fifth year. What's the difference? There's no difference. A problem's a problem. If you're a third-year student you'll solve it at a third-year level, [Laughs] maybe. Maybe you'll solve it at a fifth-year level. Who knows? See what I'm getting at?

YO: Yes, I do, and I can see where it's—

RM: That was significant. I don't know if it's still taught—probably that's all gone too because no one understood that either.

YO: I'm not sure how they do that now, but I know there's a lot of interaction. One thing I always like to point out, too, is that during your time there the school was very small. Yeah, there weren't that many—what was there, five guys graduated in '66, or ten guys, something like that? It wasn't a very big school so it was more—you had more time with the professor than you do now. Now it's a bit larger population of students.

RM: Yeah. The whole education system was overrun by numbers somewhere along the line, either numbers of students or fiscal numbers, cost per student or whatever. That's what did the whole program in. It's probably not a five-year program anymore. I don't know.

YO: I think it's under negotiation. What is your outlook on the landscape architecture profession continuing on into the future? You think it's a dead profession or you think it's going to be a viable profession?

RM: I think it will be—I think somewhere along the line it will rediscover itself, because these things are cyclical too. The overall society tends to work cyclically as well. It tends to learn from what it's been doing and suddenly makes changes or gradually makes changes. Sometimes it's evolutionarily, sometimes it's revolutionarily. It happened when the Beaux Arts, you know, when the grand old masters, the Harvard whatever group, group of—group of five, that's the wrong country.

YO: [Laughs]

RM: You know, Garrett and [James] Rose and [Dan] Kiley all were in the same class and they started the revolt against the Beaux Arts ideas of formulization of design.

YO: Do you see a movement happening now? Do you see a trend happening now?

RM: Not yet.

YO: Not yet?

RM: Not yet. No, they're still in the formulization stage. That's why everything tends to—it's called "retro" now, like it's—how neat, you know, but it's not neat, it's desultory because it misleads people who could have been creative and made contributions. Instead they're trying to put everything into a neat package, the physical design end of it, and they're not even—they do

all the data and all the stuff and they do great drawings and tremendous computerized projections, but to what end?

YO: Yeah. It's like it doesn't have a soul or something, isn't it?

RM: That's right.

YO: Give me three—

RM: [Laughs] Lewis would say that's the intuitive end, and he's right. There is a soul. There is an intuitive end that everyone has. You don't lose your instincts just because you've got two brains. One side of your brain still contains all those instincts you need to make these intuitive decisions. They've just been buried under all this hogwash.

YO: That's true. We're almost finished here, Richard, but I wanted to ask you, if you had to pick three landscape designs that are, let's say, in the category of most everybody would recognize them, what three are the most successful in your mind?

RM: That anyone's done?

YO: Yeah, from any year, any century, any country, any place.

RM: Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy. That's really hard. Someone asked me that about Hawaii and I said Pearl Harbor and the Ala Wai Canal because, you know, it makes—they said oh, that's engineering, and I said yeah, but that's what impacted the landscape more than anything. [Laughs]

YO: I can see that.

1:49:47

RM: So that's why I'm fumbling with your question. I was impressed with Vaux-le-Vicomte. I was, and to think it was done for the first time, it's impressive. It's still impressive, Le Nôtre's thing.

YO: Yes.

RM: The medieval city to me has always been not only intriguing but just great, great landscape architecture because of its spatial complexity, but still a continuous experience. The buildings don't overwhelm it. You go from landscape space through a landscape to landscape space and you have these great nodes like the piazza at Sienna. The medieval city is—but it is an expression of—it was a social expression mainly, but just happens to still work now. The streets are a little narrow. [That's] a problem, but that's the automobile's problem. If you ever get— [Laughs] we got caught in one in Granada, up in that district, I can't remember the name of it, but [Laughs] I had to drive down the steps to get out.

YO: Oh no. [Laughs]

RM: Oh, it was awful. The only way I knew where I was going was to go downhill.

YO: [Laughs]

RM: Fortunately, it was one of those little funny cars so it was all right.

YO: Well, Richard, those are all of my questions for today. Do you have anything you'd like to add?

RM: Well, a lot of things, but I would suggest let's give it a few days and call me back. You look at what you've got and see where the holes are. There's a plenty of holes that we never talked about, so.

YO: So, we'll do it again.

RM: Yeah. We started to talk about the Iranian work and that was something that was another culmination, that Bell operation. The Bell City is another complete work. That study was a complete study, which incorporated all of the aspects of not only design, but—

YO: And did they build that one?

RM: No, no. I don't care if they're built or not, you know. A lot of people say, oh, you've got to build them. I said no, you don't have to build them. I don't think I have to build them. But no, nothing was built. It's all, you know, everything—Iran was determined since they were the landowners, and the landowners changed, when the Shah went everything else went.

YO: That's right.

RM: Same with Mashhad, the great temple at Mashhad. That was a great urban design experiment, which I have no idea how it worked out. [Laughs] That's the gold dome and the turquoise dome.

YO: Now you've made me curious to go find out. Well, okay.

RM: Anyway, there's a lot of other things, but mainly I would hope you would go over what you have and see if you can condense it down to some main things and then maybe call me back.

YO: Okay.

RM: Up to you.

YO: Thank you.

RM: Are you okay?

YO: Yeah, everything's fine.

RM: [Laughs] It's been a pleasure.

YO: All right. Bye, bye.

RM: Tell everybody, hello. I didn't say anything about students. I know who they are.

YO: Oh, okay. [Laughs] Thank you.

RM: I know what they did. I know what they're doing. I keep track of them the best I can.

YO: I think they kind of keep up with you as well.

RM: Well, I'm still here.

YO: That's what we like to hear.

RM: Okay, babe. Thanks for calling.

YO: Bye, bye.

RM: All right, bye.

Transcriber: Deborah Mitchum

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