

ABSTRACT

SCRC Series: Lewis Clarke Oral History Project – MC 00191

Field Notes: John B. Frazier (compiled April 11, 2011)

Interviewee: JOHN B. (“PETE”) FRAZIER

Interviewer: Yona R. Owens

Interview Date: Thursday, March 8, 2012

Location: Raleigh, North Carolina to Hammond, Louisiana via Skype

Length: Approximately 124 minutes

The interview was conducted through a PC to a landline. The interview questions allowed Frazier to discuss his personal and professional past, Lewis Clarke design principles, and landscape architecture in general.

Tape Log

00:00:00	Introduction
00:00:55	Where grew up, effects of WWII on teen years, graduated from high school 1949
00:02:50	Decided to attend NCSU rather than major in music at Stetson University, family tradition to attend “A&M,” majored in ceramic engineering for one quarter, switched to landscape architecture
00:06:20	Met with Kamphoefner, described office location, dean’s personality, one of first students in formal SOD, described courses, one-on-one instruction with Manuel Bromberg, described his delivery style, mural design, knew Ligon Flynn
00:13:41	Decision to major in landscape design influenced by trip with father to golf course architect in Atlanta, the profession appealed to his sense of scale
00:15:29	Students who were moved from horticulture to SOD, worked with John Lippard on Horn in the West amphitheater as a student project, landscape architecture and architecture studied together for first two years, had Cecil Elliot, George Qualls, Matsumoto as instructors
00:20:05	Anecdote about Baumgarten’s history class, Stuart for descript drawing (what it was), preparing media for use
00:22:41	Classmate Ben Gehry transferred to Harvard, Frazier left as only member of class of ’54, discussed dynamics of landscape architecture faculty before Clarke arrived in 1952, gap between traditionalists and modernists, impressions were originally shaped by <i>Sunset</i> magazine, and <i>Southern Living</i> magazine.
00:28:00	Clarke recalled design at Olmsted scale, and taught detail scale, coincided with Bucky Fuller themes and ten most prominent landscape architects at the time
00:32:35	Clarke adjusted thinking in proper scale, developed concept of “determinants,” married logic and math with design, description of Clarke’s data collection method that influenced design’s direction
00:38:15	Method of displaying data through overlay system, examples of different environments and their determinants, student projects that taught what data to collect, how to interpret it for meaningful design, Pullen Park plans before [Bell] renovation, public exhibit of drawings

- 00:44:40 Students mapped Pullen Park with Clarke's overlay system, created interest among architecture students, innovation to use ecology in landscape architecture, introduced to vocabulary of methodology
- 00:50:10 Discussed visiting critics and lecturers, anecdote about Frank Lloyd Wright lecture where Wright walked off the stage
- 00:55:14 Lewis Mumford was Kamphoefner's favorite, not liked in Raleigh because of his politics; Fitzgibbon, Fuller, and Stuart started geodesic dome company in Raleigh
- 01:00:10 Influenced by advanced thinking inherent in SOD environment, as only 5th year student "picked" Clarke's brain
- 01:03:55 Anecdote about student trip to D.C. to visit Rock Creek Park and have dinner with Roberto Burle Marx
- 01:08:51 Eventually got used to Clarke's British accent, mystery of landscape architecture removed when placed in realm of science and art
- 01:10:10 Described how the "model box" worked
- 01:13:03 Little impression of Nowicki's death in 1950, knew Dr. Dorton, discussed arena design, no compliments, clarification between Catalano and Nowicki
- 01:16:30 Drafted after graduation, stationed in Japan, learned about Japanese gardens, returned to Sacramento, became friends and associated with Robert Royston, attended Harvard, started teaching at Michigan State
- 01:19:10 1960s lived in Puerto Rico, set up practice, moved in 1970s to teach at Louisiana State, knowledge of Spanish opened up additional international projects,
- 01:25:20 Designed prototype, new cities for countries in South America, became interested in "low-cost/no-cost" housing, first time exposure to computers, worked for first time on a multi-discipline team
- 01:30:08 Mostly retired now, still maintains design firm, works on personal projects
- 01:34:18 Opinion on landscape architecture profession going forward, LA's role in climate change scenario, example of Mississippi River, top soil in various locales, landscape architecture's history of designing in environmentally sensitive areas, eventual clash with the green movement, generation of impact statements
- 01:40:53 Comments about BP oil spill, water quality observed as a diver, experience on Florida beaches, use of "land, edge, water" theorem to react to disasters and guide landscape architects' thinking in structure designs
- 01:47:32 More landscape architects should be involved in making policy as agents of "universalism"
- 01:49:00 Important thing to know about Lewis Clarke
- 01:51:22 Reiterated about landscape architects writing programs for low-cost housing, example of program described for Haiti
- 01:57:33 Important thing to know about Pete Frazier
- 02:01:05 Hope to influence future landscape architects, technology aggressive except for astronauts who see world as one, complement to Clarke
- 02:04:36 End of interview