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**EDWARD L. DAUGHERTY**  
**ORAL HISTORY**  
**INTERVIEW**

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**Conducted**

**June 2007 Atlanta, GA**

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*The interview began with Ed Daugherty in his garden. The interview was conducted by Charles Birnbaum, Spencer Tunnell and videographer James Sheldon. Here Daugherty discussed the development of the garden and the changes that have occurred both to his property and within the city of Atlanta.*

## **The Daugherty Garden**

### **DEVELOPMENT OF THE GARDEN**

When we bought the house in 1971, it was wide open to the street because that's the way you do things in Atlanta. You stick your chest out, and you want everybody to see every blessed inch of your property. And furthermore, the former owner put lines of azaleas on either side in the boiling hot sun all the way to the street.

And when you opened the door, you were in the street. Well, at the time we had a two year old and a four year old, and then two older children. And, half of Cobb County goes by this door every morning. And so, the last thing I needed was exposure. So, what we did was we first put up a big hog wire fence across here, and I had the railroad tie a post because I wanted that. It was a marvelous lawyer down the street, a wonderful man, who was strolling by one day. And he asked what I was doing. I said, we're going to raise pigs. And it was kind of a surprise. But the whole point was I needed enclosure. So, we then started off by taking all the foundation plans, which were struggling in the north shadow of that building. And we put it out here. This is some of it. This is the so-called dwarf Japanese that obviously isn't a dwarf. But, that's part of it, and then we just simply warded it off. So, my premise was, I want to be able to come out of my door buck naked if I wanted and I was in my yard and not in the street. And so, we had both security and enclosure. And so, we're the only house I know of in the immediate area anyway that's really enclosed or walled off. Until about 12 years ago, this was a shade garden because there was a four foot diameter red oak in this location that put a canopy over the entire thing. The water oaks beyond gave protection from the western sun, and we had another 30 inch water oak right over here. And, when this one blew into the house and we had to move out and repair it, and I was told that oak had root rot, both came down. So, we went from shade to sun. And, this is, then, a 12 year-old garden.

I've always enjoyed the native deciduous rhododendron, what we call wild azalea or bush honeysuckle. And, they are represented here and in other places in the yard, and there are two massive clumps there. The Ligustrum, which I think is a noble and underused evergreen shrub, it stands all kind of wear and tear. So, those at least, and the hollies, I guess, the evergreen hollies are reliable. And you'll find them. I'm not really much of a gardener. I mean, I can create spaces, and give form, but I'm not a horticulturalist. And, what's here is by hardiest (sic). And, just a trial and error garden, it works.

Birnbaum: *And, what about the sweep of this curve.*



Well, it evolved because the bed keeps getting deeper and deeper. But I always wanted a curve and not a rectilinear form in here. The house is rectangle enough. It's hard enough, and the enclosure was always going to be soft because the fence is hidden, and it's just disguised by this fortunate growth. But this has evolved. But there's always been a curve. I mean, it keeps encroaching, so the grass area gets smaller, which is probably a good idea. And, let's see, our walkway system replaces, believe it or not, a footpath from the driveway that came up very close to the house. But, I have a large family, and there's a saying in our family, the Lawtons linger longer. So, you are constantly saying good-bye all the way to the gate. So, we provided a broad enough walkway you could assemble. The sensitive fern, which is the least sensitive of all ferns, was given to us by a friend who said you'll be sorry, has been a most reliable, hardy perennial in that north shadow. You'll also see I repeated another wild azalea which I just bought last year to develop for later bloom. Anyway, I like the enclosure.

### **MATERIALS IN THE GARDEN**

Birnbaum: *What about the gate?*

Well, the gate's the only solid thing in this entire fence, really. The fence is wood only where it's apparent from the driveway. And it used to be much more apparent because the green we've placed on that hard, clay slope has developed. It's only hog wire with vanishes into the vegetation. But the gate was just by way of contrast, and to try to be in scale with this very simple house. The granite treads, as you see, we go down. You step down one, which actually could be a hazard, and then at the gate you step down two. And then at the street at the driveway you step down street. And they are all slabs of Stone Mountain granite, which were brought and assembled. So, that's all a whole new creation. But, I tried very hard to make it in scale with this house and with this face.

This is all Virginia hand mold wood mold brick. It's laid on the thinnest bed of sand, just enough to level it. It will draw moisture through it, of course, that sometimes portions of it can be slippery. But, I enjoy the look of hand laid or dry laid brick rather than it being on a slab or having all the joints. It's just a softer look.

Birnbaum: *I've noticed on a number of your projects already, it's just the transition between materials, moving from brick to slate or other stone materials.*

I felt there needed to be some identifiable sort of a doormat for that door. It's an unusual hood. Fortunately, it's gutsy. And so, that's a Pennsylvania bluestone. And, it gives a soft without a harsh contrast. It's about as mellow as the brick is. So, it just simply welcomes you into the house.

*Continuing around the back of the house.*

I like the sweep of this. It's obviously the granite steps are four times wider than you need to access. But I felt it was important to funnel you in through the opening. The materials here include American holly, which are now being smothered by the Cherokee rose, which is the state flower, but is a Chinese invasive. And I've got to cut it down because it's really damaging the holly. January



jasmine is one of my favorite plants. I'm sure it would show up frequently on jobs, as is the dwarf abelia: both utterly reliable, hardy, will tolerate any kind of soil. This is absolutely red clay. The tea olive I like, and we've used frequently. I've got three different plantings of it in the front yard, and one in the back. The Mahonia bealii, which is the big leaf mahonia is also one of my favorites. A lot of people don't like it, primarily because if you get too close, it'll stick you. But, there's nothing like the reward of those yellow fingers in February. And, for us, it's great. You know winters almost over when the world turns into sort of the hallelujah chorus of yellow fingers coming up.

The neat thing about that particular form of tea olive is it blooms frequently all summer. Normally, you'd think of it as only in the fall, but as an osmanthus, it is less hardy than others. But, with our climate changing, it's very reliable. I remember years ago as a child, my grandmother lived next door, and she had one about that size. And then, we had an extreme cold and we killed it to the ground. And that was, of course, some 50 years ago. But, it's a different world.

Tunnell: *What about the granite steps?*

Yeah, these [stones] arrived, and they were very irregular. And, they even put them down, and I rejected it. They had to take them all back. And be smooth enough to at least be walk able and not dangerous. The wood gate is a copy of a gate from Gunston Hall in Virginia. The difference is that the steel swag in it was wood in the original. But, I had that fabricated as, again, something to be in scale with its massive butt end of the house. Those are cypress logs formed the posts that should have been protected. But, they have not. All this stuff is know. The bug people keep telling us we should take all this plant material away from the house. When the house was built, the driveway led to, to a wooden garage, and you stabled your car like you would a horse, far away from the house. And so, it was at the in and out of the grade. I mean, you just drove in, and then the far end was up on stilts. The mulch is free, and I try to use it liberally. We built this back porch. It was a skimpy servant's porch initially. We had an enormous tree over here.

### **MANAGING CHANGE IN THE LANDSCAPE**

This is one thing I've learned about life and landscape architecture. Everything changes. I had an enormous post oak, which is a cousin of the white oak. And, it fell in the same storm that took the tree out front across what was then a roofed porch. And so, when that came down we decided to build it and make it a little more open and airy. So now, we have an arbor over our deck, which we had added. There was another wonderful, about a 24- inch hickory behind this hedge that fell. And, our neighbors, a couple of big red oaks from next door fell into the yard. And only two years ago, we had that giant poplar, which we've left on the ground for the children to play on. It came from the back property line, fell, and in the process, like ping pong balls, anyway, one hit the other, and then we lost another Post Oak down there that went diagonally all the way across the yard. So, the whole back yard has changed. So, essentially it's an evolving garden.

Tunnell: *One of the things I've noticed is because of where Atlanta sits in the climate zones, that you're always trying to reach a little bit further south into the warmer zone, and a little bit further north into the colder zone.*



One of the great things I learned at Harvard in plant materials that summer with Steve Hamblin was [that] at 1,000 feet above sea level, and supposedly 52 inches of rainfall a year in this location, mild weather, at least [9 month] growing season, that we in Atlanta can grow anything you can grow from Jacksonville all the way to Boston. It's a remarkable horticultural experience. So, there are things that, as you say, are stretched to the margin. I mean, this is about the southern limit of the sugar maple, and just about the southern limit of the successful growth of a hemlock. But, you'll see a lot of hemlock in Atlanta. And then, you can even grow, if you cross your fingers you can grow loquat, so that they're wonderful spread of choices in plant materials that we have. The American boxwood behind you came from Piedmont Hospital when they were about half that size. And the acuba there in the full blast of the west sun because there used to be a lot more shade from next door. The white pine, again, they are sort of marginal in Atlanta, but there's nothing like them. They grow so rapidly, and they give you such a reward that when this was opened up again, I chose to put another one over here diagonally to answer this one. But at the same time, again, to screen my neighbor's swimming pool, which we see from our deck. But, it became a series of verticals. What I had was, and life's getting shorter, here is a pear tree. The big column up there is a pear tree that over time has broken its branches. So, instead of being this wonderful fan of arching branches, it's now mostly vertical. Here's a seedling of it to the left, and when we lost all of this mass of other planting I had in what's now grass, I decided I'm going to arrange this like a group of organ pipes, and so I've got two vertical pairs, I put in intentionally two Lombardy poplars. I had the two autumn blooming cherries which are more vertical and broad, and Chris Hastings gave me that magnolia over there for contrast, and then the pine for screening which is still sort of struggling, as you can see.

But anyway, this is a new landscape. The Japanese holly, the near one, is a volunteer that blew in from my neighbor. The one on the left is one I brought from Williamsburg, and, gosh, in the late '60s, a three gallon can, and then we move from Ansley Park an early 20<sup>th</sup> century Atlanta automobile suburb] here and brought it with us. The wonderful big magnolia in the back is one of our deciduous magnolias, unique to the south, and in addition, I've got a huge Magnolia stellata that's a very dark one beyond to the left. And to the left of that is a taller tree that is the cordata, which grows normally north of here on the way to Highlands. And you begin to see it once you get above Wallhala [South Carolina]. Again, this stuff is a relic of this being a shadier yard. Obviously, the French hydrangea is struggling, but I've moved in other sun loving things like the Buddleia and the Weigela and the Quince and so on.

Like many things, there are treasures here from either my mother's garden or my grandmother's. We keep moving other plants in. Under that canvas is a relic garden house that I had, and I'm afraid it's just a wreck now from East Faces Ferry that I was going to resurrect. But that's a loss.



### **ACCEPTING CHANGE IN THE LANDSCAPE**

*Birnbaum: When one looks at a place like this in a community where teardowns are prevalent today, what's the message that you give to people about why a landscape like this should be conserved versus accommodating a much larger footprint on a property like this?*

Well, let's see, first place, you really have to know Atlanta, which is a bootstrap operation. People come to Atlanta to recreate themselves. I happen to have been all but born here, conceived here, but raised here. And so, I've never lived more than two blocks off of [Peachtree. But, this is only the second house I have owned in Atlanta. But though we've lived in several others, I don't expect this landscape to survive me for several reasons. Number one: just with the growth and continued turbulence of Atlanta, its renewal, I mean, its symbol is the Phoenix rising from its own ashes. I believe this too will go. We have just sold my mother and my grandmother's property very near here about two miles away, and it's been replaced by a very fine office building. In fact, it was the company of a friend of my oldest brother. But all of that's gone, and that is the nature of Atlanta. I mean, this property is worth 20 times what I paid for it 35 years ago. In this case, you have to know the house itself is something my wife calls Flimsy Manor. I told you we raised the floor in the hall about three inches by jacking it up to level it up. It's a homey place, but it is not a fortress. It's not a stalwart, but anyway it's a very livable place, and it seems to me that's the function of the landscape is to be livable for the life of the occupant. Another occupant might have a totally different garden even if he had the same house. They might have other uses. In the course of our 35-year residency, our needs have changed. This used to be really a big ball field, and that's an attempt at a practice basketball court over there. We haven't seen it yet, but down there is a 50-foot bottomland that once was a fabulous vegetable garden, which we don't use now.

Yeah, but the potential for change in Atlanta's always there. And while this has been a continual changing landscape, it's subject to change. I mean, with the teardowns that go on all over the place, some of them are just really absurd in the houses that are built in a place that in themselves are even doubly absurd, there's always that potential. So, in a town that remakes itself every 25 years, I don't expect this to survive. Now obviously, there are some places that architecturally have integrity whose terrain is unique. I would certainly suggest that it be preserved, but it would have to be supported either by a family with means or become institutional in some fashion. And, I don't have a family that can support this. And fortunately, we can at present. And, I don't see an institution, Spencer, unless you know one that can come along and pick it up.

### **CREATING LANDSCAPES FOR LIVING**

*Birnbaum: What is landscape architecture to you?*

I guess landscape architecture simply is living. It's a reflection of your needs and patterns. It's a reflection of what the land suggests. But my garden, if you call this landscape architecture, it's going to be unlike anybody else's because my formula in life is different. This particular piece of



terrain is unlike anything else. I mean, there's no carbon copy. So, my practice has always been to regard each client as an individual, to be assured that their needs are identified and to the extent that we can, within the realms of budget, reflect that need and perfect it. You have to also know that as a child of the south and as a child of the depression because I was ten years old in the middle of the depression and very much aware of it with hand-me-down clothes, fortunately, from an older brother, that I've never been impressed with people's ability to spend money. And, I've always sought to not minimize but at least carefully budget the scope of the work. I don't like overdoing, and I also was raised to believe that at the street, you made a very simple statement, and it was like opening a door. But, the world was out there, and you kept a landscape that was not at all pretentious. If you were going to have a shindig or a celebration or an orgy somewhere, it always took place inside or in the backyard. But you did not make a public display. And for that reason, I have no qualms at all about having a forest between me and the street aside from the fact that it's functionally there for other reasons. It separates me entirely, and I make a modest statement to the street in an immodest neighborhood. And, I think that you live privately, and the garden should reflect your pattern of life now. If you're going to live a striptease life and a billionaire's budget, then sure, throw it all out there. But I'm not going to do it. I mean, I'm not going to help a client do that.

We inherited this wall as well as that brick wall. I don't believe Ms. Dorsey built the brick wall, but she definitely built this wall in 1919. But, we've got, below here, a very plain space which once was the vegetable garden. But we've got sun-loving things that will take neglect. I mean, you have the crinum lilies, milk and wine as they're called, ginger lily, yucca, which I dearly love. This is the filamentosa, and you've just missed the bloom. But, this relatively dry, sunny location has been wonderful. The poplar tree was the twin of the one that fell. And, I've left it here for my grandchildren to play on, and they've really had a great time on it. But that poplar tree is right beside the sanitary sewer. You can see the diagonal fall in the land. So, that's just where a poplar's going to grow.

#### **CREATING A GARDEN FOR CHILDREN**

When my youngest child was about eight, she decided she was not going away to summer camp. But, she wanted to stay home. And, she and her mother decided that if we got some goats, that they'd have fun for the summer. So, this patch 100x50 feet was the goat pen. And so, we had this pair of goats, and of course, in time, they had a pair. So, we had four little goats running around down here, and they had a wonderful time. But, the father was one of the Egyptian Nubians with those long ears. And, they would come and stroll up to the house, eating their way to the house, and come up the wooden steps, which you have not yet done, and then come and sort of want your drink or your nibble, or whatever it was. And, it was really great. And in fact, a neighbor two doors down the street said she was not at all disturbed by the goats. In fact, she said I welcome it with all the sound of all the high rises going up on Peachtree Street. So, it was a touch of the country in the midst of Peachtree's development.

This poplar is probably about 80 years old and was a twin to the one on the neighboring property. In fact, it came from the neighboring property and just fell across the yard is one of the fastest



growing natives in moist ground. When it came into the yard as an intruder, it became for me a piece of sculpture, particularly as a play structure for my grandchildren who were four years old as well as our neighborhood. And so, they had a great time walking up to the end of it.

### **EVOLUTION OF THE GARDEN**

This car is here because my wife said I'm not going to park it under that tree, the hickory that lets nuts fall all over it. And she said it's the tree or the car, take your pick. So, we moved stuff out of here. These are my grandmother's night blooming cereus that I've got to get somebody to re-pot. They must be 60 years old . . . starving, poor things. But this, if you're here when there's not mosquitoes, it's extremely pleasant. There's usually a little breeze, and you can see, there's the big poplar that's on the neighboring property. So, that's as far as we go. And, there's the wonderful pine beyond the silhouette of that hickory. So, we get within this enclosure, and that's the beauty of Atlanta, that we still have a forest where we can restrain ourselves.

It's amazing to remember the evolution of this yard because it's unlike what it was, and it seems every ten years to go through a new iteration. I had over in this area, Charles, where that grass is under the collection of trees, there was a huge mass of mahonia, again, because it was shade from next door. And then, attendant to it was a mass of indica azaleas and other flowering shrubs. And they were all obliterated when the tree fell diagonally right between those two Japanese maples obligingly, right slap between them

### **Plant Material**

#### **THE TONALITY OF GREEN**

*Tunnell: Now, contrasting plant textures as one of the, I mean, I'd call that one of the hallmarks of your planting approach, and actually one of the foremost proponents of yucca, which is not everybody's cup of tea. But you consistently from the very beginning kind of showcased the unusual, like this Hercules club which shows up on so many of your plans.*

I've always seen that as a giant fern, and it's just spectacular. And, it has reasonably good fall colors, but that winter fruit, which is quite dark, almost black, is just a surprise. The yucca is a roadside plant. You'll find it along any of the country roads. And it seemed to me not only proved itself, and therefore being worth consideration for planting, but it's utterly reliable. Yeah, but the chandeliers or candelabras, rather, of bloom, which you've just missed, are unlike any other plant that I know of. Speaking of textures, I've always wanted to get a gunnera in somebody's small garden. That's a surprise.

I made the mistake of bringing some of the fleece vine, polygonum. When my son was working up on the Nantahala River, and it was just popping up everywhere, and I chose to bring some home remembering that it was a wonderful, rewarding texture and flower, and forgetting that it had roots that ran for miles. But we keep popping it out.



Birnbaum: *What about the tonality of green? Is that something that we can discuss? There is such a diverse green palette here.*

I'm not sure I can take credit for that. It's sort of like Martha's great decorator, David Byers, when they were having a discussion about greens and Martha was concerned about putting this green with that. And David said, Martha, look out the window. There are no two greens that are alike. No, I have come to appreciate, rather than to have selected the darkness of the stellata, which is unlike any other green. And, you obviously have the Magnolia grandiflora, which is different both by structure, and nature, and gloss, and so on. But, I am aware of texture more than, I think, the greens. I guess it's just the blessing of working outdoors with plants. Let me call to you all's attention a tree I really want you to see, the native pine of this region. That's the Pinus echinata. That has real character and sculptural form and, it's a shorter leaf than the dominant kind. We see the loblolly pine, Pinus taeda, which is really an invasive; it's really for middle Georgia. And wherever you clear the ground, it comes in almost like kudzu. But that plant is hard to find. And there was another one over there that I don't know (whether it) was taken down or fell down. But, that's an extremely fine tree. And, it has so much so character, and the bark is like a snakeskin. It's closer to the structure of the tree. It doesn't exfoliate in a way that loblolly does. But it just has great character.

#### **SCULPTURAL QUALITIES OF VEGETATION**

Birnbaum: *Now, you've opened the door on the issue of the sculptural quality of plants, which I think about Tommy Church writing about right after you graduated. Is that something that you're very conscious when you work, sort of trees as sculpture?*

Yes, because I think trees very often are the dominant elements in any garden. I mean, first place they're the biggest thing, but they offer you so much even shade or character. I see them as valuable for their sculptural form. So many other trees are just cabbages like the cherry laurel you see, or the Bradford pear which was a dreadful mistake. But, the others clothe themselves. But, one of the earliest jobs of residences I did, large residence, I used some catalpa. And, it was right at the front door of these people. And it was specifically because the house was not gross, but it was large, and it was just large scale and dark. This was the Bunnens. And, I put a catalpa in that descending court as you arrive at the door because of its leaf, this huge, wonderful leaf, and then the sculptural form, which inevitably has those wonderful little fingers of the pods. In any event, the only complaint I had was not an appreciation of the sculpture, but the fact that the worms came to eat the leaves. But yes, the answer is yes. Trees are important, and their sculptural character is one of their significant sorts of marks.

#### **FAVORITE PLANTS**

Birnbaum: *Do you find that there are certain plants where there's a coalescence of those values for you, that those become staples in your work?*



Well, it's like picking a wardrobe. You have many choices. Sometimes when a native won't do what's necessary, either, say, to create screening or to create shade or character. But, I mean, here's a redbud that's native. Behind you is a cherry laurel that's native. Yes, where they'll serve a purpose, and particularly in any ornamental stuff. As you can see, I really prefer the deciduous native rhododendron, the azalea, *Rhododendron calendulaceum* and so on. And, I'm constantly telling my clients to look at that as an alternative to the Japanese, the karumes or the indicas because they have character out of season as well as when they're in bloom. They're also the only rhododendron that's fragrant. And they are marvelously fragrant. And when you enter my garden on an early summer's or late spring, and all those wild azaleas of various Jell-O colors are in bloom, it's wonderful wafting fragrance. It's almost equal to the tea olive, I think. But, they're good reasons to use them. Obviously, they're all evergreens that you can use for screening. But, I try to look at the natives primarily because natives always know what to do. They know how to behave. They know the soil, or they wouldn't be here. And, most of my clients and perhaps Spencer's aren't really gardeners. So, they want something that's as stable as a brick wall. So, it's a very safe choice.

### **LEARNING ABOUT PLANT MATERIAL**

*Birnbaum: Students don't often know their plant materials and then graduate from landscape architecture programs without this knowledge. I'm wondering about how you address this as a practitioner?*

Well, when you think about it, a student is hard-put to collect in four years all the knowledge he needs to become a proficient designer. In the old days, when there was indenture, when you were assigned in a shop or you followed your father's trade, there was continuity. You lived and breathed whatever it was, cobbling shoes, or whatever, almost everyday. We ask an awful lot of students to become proficient in drainage, soils, structures, plants, irrigation, all in four years time. And in that four years, a third of it at least is not really focused on landscape architecture or design as such. So, I think it should not be a surprise that people haven't come out in a perfect mold at the end of four years knowing everything. You and I know that we learn something new everyday, and I'm still learning. The older you get, the more you realize you don't know. And so, I think while I've heard that also from a number of people who say I'm glad to work with a landscape architect who knows plants, well by God, I ought to know something now by this 50 years or so. But, the plant world changes. So, it's like the book of the month. Everything is mercantile and so all the nurserymen are producing new plants. I mean, they're fussing with them, creating either hybrids or variants and so forth. So, there's always more to learn. And so, I'm sympathetic to it. I just think that we ought to recognize the fact that all learning doesn't end at the awarding of a degree in landscape architecture. In the first place, why would we have a BLA, and an MLA, and maybe a PhD in landscape architecture if each stage didn't have some meaning?

### **MENTORS AND MUSES**

Well first, my mother and my grandmother, I guess, as avid gardeners, and for whom I often labored in their yards, and in a way was unfortunate that they lived next door to each other because when I wasn't working for one, I was working for the other. But, at Georgia, I didn't study



plant material. I was just there that year. It just wasn't in that curriculum that year. But at Harvard, certainly Steve Hamblin was a genius at conveying information on plants. And, as I was telling you, we were in the basement of Robinson Hall for nine weeks every morning. And, we had to learn an infinite number of plants each week. And, he would have us, either with a sample or with a way of having you either twist or turn or taste, or chew a plant, to get some kinship, establish some knowledge of what the plant did, and then his stories, of course, were very convincing. But every afternoon, we would then go into the field. In Atlanta, there was a wonderful man, Norman Butts, who was a landscape contractor. He was actually trained as a landscape architect at Cornell, and he moved to Atlanta in 1913, lived in a tent with his brother who was a biology professor at Oglethorpe University, and then established his trade. And, he practiced for some 50 years. But, he was a landscape contractor, and he was imminently helpful to me in learning plants. And then as we go on, every landscape contractor you work with has something to tell you. And then you learn from your own mistakes, probably the best teacher of all.

Tunnell: *There was a bank on Blackland Drive that the planting plant included honeysuckle as the groundcover, and I'm not sure you did that again. You'll have to remind me of that.*

Well, I was first impressed on my first visit to Williamsburg. It must have been '46 or '47. There was this great oval in front of the Williamsburg Inn was planted entirely with honeysuckle. And, they came out with a swing blade or a hand sickle. Weed eaters were not available at that time, and it was absolutely reliable. And it was contained because it was in this curb of this driveway. And I was really impressed. And I have used honeysuckle repeatedly, as long as it's within a limited area. Now, of course the birds will pick up the seeds, but then I've got weeds everywhere. But that's going to happen. But no, I think it's a wonderful plant.

*The Conversation continues inside the house and turns to Daugherty's Atlanta childhood memories.*

## Childhood

### GROWING UP IN ATLANTA

Well, in the first place, I'm really an Atlantan. The fact that I was born in Summerville is almost a technicality. I'm the third child in a family of five, and my mother, I was born in 1926. And, in the '20s, more babies were born at home than they ever were born at a hospital. So, my mother's first two children were born in her home in Summerville, her mother's home, and by the time I came along, I think a third child on the train was more than she could handle. Certainly when the fourth came, there was just no question. They were not all going to get on the train. So, my younger two brothers were born here in Atlanta. Summerville was just what the name implies, a summer resort, to get away from the mosquitoes on the high, sandy ridge, which was really was previously a shoreline and out of the swamps.

Yeah, well, I was raised in Atlanta, and I went to public schools. My earliest conscious years were on West Peachtree Street. And across the street from us was a woodland plot that stretched through to the next street. And we walked through that woodland, it must have been about three acres, to get to the elementary school, spring street school, which is no longer in existence as a



school. From that point, after six years in grammar school, and we, incidentally each class had its own little garden patch that we had to maintain mostly in vegetables, but occasionally flowers. I went to a junior high school in the city system for really just a half a year because we then moved to Buckhead where I was raised through adolescence. And I got ahead of myself because in the county, because this part of the city was still in the county of Fulton. The county only had 11 years of education so I was at R. L. Hope, which was allegedly an elementary school for half a year, and then went to high school which was four years. So, I had seven years of elementary school, and four years of high school.

I went to North Fulton, and it was a good experience. This was the only high school north of Atlanta. So, the entire northern part of Fulton County, which is 60 miles long, had this one high school not more than a mile and a half from here. Anyway, we would eventually incorporate it into the city by mutual vote in the middle of the 1950's. And, things have changed radically since then. So, it's a different place. When we lived in town on West Peachtree Street, we were adjacent to Ansley Park, which you know as a sensitively planned community, and one that has survived because of it. But having this woodland across the street of several acres, and having the woods just north of where WSB is now on Beverly Road as Woodland, we were almost on the edge of the city in a sense. And while Peachtree Road was obviously built up and changing, we didn't feel we were in a downtown situation. It was just that unique relationship. So, I would say that the feeling that the city was a civilized place to live in the first place was helpful. It was pedestrian in scale, and in fact, pedestrian indeed because there were fewer cars. As I recall, we had one car in our family. The streetcar line was almost at our doorstep, and converged with one on Peachtree. And, there were clusters of small retail stores about every six blocks so that you'd have one or two grocery stores side by side competing. And, you had a shoe shop, and a drugstore, and a drycleaner. So we'd have these clusters of four or five stores about every five or six blocks. And, it was characteristic of the whole city. With World War II, all of that ended.

During the War I'm sure that that was reinforced because of gas rationing. You had to shop closer to hand, and probably on foot. But since that time, we've done nothing but explode and disperse. And with it is like a disease that we've spread the measles everywhere.

Tunnell: *The city that you grew up in from 1926 to 1956 was essentially static. There was very little construction. The city since 1956 has been nothing but growth. Can you talk about the sort of shock value, the contrast between those two experiences?*

Well, as I've just described a childhood pedestrian experience, I could walk to school. It was not more than four blocks away, and I could walk safely. I was not going to be bothered by anybody. We had a streetcar, and a system that worked throughout the city. But, certainly by the time, when the second war was over and people began to explore other means of transportation and living, yeah, the scale changed totally. You also had high rise buildings as a commonplace. I supposed a lot of the big houses in the neighborhood where I grew up that had become during the war boarding houses or apartments because of the wartime cramp of people, I mean, there was actually a federal program funding conversion of single family houses into multifamily in order to make it possible for more people to live closer at hand. In fact, much of Peachtree Hills was



converted into apartments, the individual houses so it can be converted back to single family. But the answer to your question was a change of scale, and that really is characteristic of Atlanta and its growth is there's a continuing change of scale. When you look at the Peachtree Street Ridge, it looks like a dragon's back or the stegosaurus with these verticals as a spine that just pop up all along it which just was not only not possible, but not even necessary with a pre-War population of 300-400,000 at most. I think when I was growing up, I believe there were five congressional districts in the state, and now there are 12. And, we've grown from a population of 4 million to 8 million.

### **REMEMBERED PARKS AND GARDENS**

*Birnbaum: Now, during this time, do you remember any Olmsted parks? Were there places that you might have visited that you have recollections of?*

Piedmont Park was the closest park there was of any acreage and size, and it is relatively unchanged, actually. The neighborhood park was a junction of two streets, West Peachtree Street and Peachtree Street. It was called Pershing Point, and it was the nearest thing to flat. There was a nice memorial wall bench there that commemorated all the World War losses and it was just two blocks from my house. It's where I learned to roller skate because it was flat. And, you go up the hill, and it also was a place where the nurses would be sent to take the children, their charges, to rest, and lots of conversation and watching of the children play in this miniscule little park, which to me was big, of course, because I was small. We had wonderful alleys in much of what's now called midtown where you could discover all kinds of things. One time we discovered a cash of gallon jugs of gasoline. Why? I don't know. But, somebody had stored in two luggage trunks these bottles of gasoline. There were great thickets of privet, and wild growth, and blackberries, and so on, and you could play discovery, and peep over somebody's fence, and so on. But, essentially, that experience was pedestrian. And, it was a good place for a child to grow up. You used to go into Ansley Park, and unless you knew specifically where you were going, there was a chance you'd get lost in the sort of curvilinear pattern of streets. It was said that Ansley Park was the place that you took your cats to lose them, and then you had to follow the cat home because you yourself got lost.

### **HOME LANDSCAPES**

*Birnbaum: What about the quality of the home landscapes at that time, and the great architecture and gardens that others were building? Were you aware of this as a high school age person?*

Well, in high school, by that time we were in this area in Buckhead, generally. But, I would say the average home landscaper was a mother and a yard man. There were very few grand schemes that I remember in the particular area where I grew up. Now, remember, this was pre-Second World War. When I got through at North Fulton it was 1943, where we were in the beginnings of our War. But it had not touched us personally. It was also the end of the depression. It was only the Second World War that really ended the depression for us. And, so there was still day labor available to do all kinds of chores, though I must say, the day labor mostly in our family was us: my older brother and myself. My mother converted a shaven plateau of red clay that had been corn patch into a garden



of their own design and making, simply as evidence of the fact that people mostly design their own gardens. The chief landscape talent available that was evident everywhere was that of the W L Monroe Nursery and Landscape company. And, that name continues for another, three generations. But, they did extensive work all over the city, much of it in Ansley Park near where we were living. In high school days, it would have been more in this area on the west side of Peachtree [Street].

I would say very few of the landscapes I can recall were elaborate, as Hubert Owens used to say, that all of residential design was like Gaul divided in three parts. There was the public front area, which was usually simple, and a service area, and then a family recreational gardening area. And, I think most of Mr. Monroe's talent, when he was used, would have been in improving the front for public consumption, and then providing for recreation, and modest gardens in the rear.

My grandmother Wharton, my mother's mother, moved to Atlanta in 1932. And, she and her daughter rented an apartment, about a third of a big house on Peach Street, and which the backyard was well below grade. And, she persuaded the owner, I've forgotten his name, that he should convert this abandoned backyard into a garden. And she said, if you will get the help, and you'll pay for it, I will design it and keep it. And so, Mr. Monroe was brought into play, and he removed all of the trash and garbage and stuff, and then they developed a very simple rectilinear garden plan bordered in box, and an enormous number of linear feet of perennial beds which was my grandmother's specialty. But it was simple. It was an urban garden. There was an apartment building next door, but other big houses on Peachtree Street adjacent. But I would say that more often than not was the case. An aunt of mine, my mother's sister, built what over time became an elaborate series of gardens on Peachtree Battle, which is now cared for beautifully, but is a garden of her own design of her own execution over a period of ten years, and has been cared for and modified modestly over time. But there again, that was personal design and effort, and more likely than not you hired the landscape company to do the heavy lifting, to do the major grading, and masonry work.

And, I'm sure that Mrs. Zahner was a great influence in my being aware of what gardens could be. But, most of those efforts were loving hands at home.

### **REMEMBERED PARKS**

Mr. Pauley designed a number of gardens for some substantial properties. Mr. Pauley was probably the known practitioner in the city. Again, you have to remember that I'm remembering the era in the depression and coming out of it when public works were just beginning to be accomplished. He designed the public park known as Hurt Park, a triangular park downtown within two blocks of Five Points. And, it was a WPA project. The WPA had just funded the renovation of an armory, a huge armory, and put a new marble face on it designed by Robert & Company. But Mr. Pauley took this 30-60-90 degree triangle that tilted from one edge to the other by maybe 20 feet, and made a remarkable collection space, and adapted the land sculpturally to create stairs and a fountain where maximum grade change took place. He did really strong gutsy work that usually had the virtue of simplicity. I don't recall any of his work being what I would call fussy. Mr. Monroe, I don't



believe, was a trained landscape architect. But, he had a great knack for garden design. But, his foremost knowledge, I think, was in plant materials. And, he exhibited great skill in collecting and arranging plants. So, his gardens were very gardenesque. Mr. Pauley's were a little more distinct, clear and stately, if you will. He did several gardens in Druid Hills that you're familiar with that are of record.

I do remember going to the Cator Woolford gardens. Those were elaborate gardens in not a flood plain, but a valley. And, it was one of the first collections of oriental azaleas in Atlanta. And, when those gardens were in bloom, the public was invited not just casually but was actively invited to come and enjoy this pleasure garden of some three acres in that lower plain, I suppose. That was a [Robert] Cridland garden, which I had the opportunity to remake about 15 years ago, I guess. But, that was the one garden I remember being pointed out as a significant land garden. I guess Pauley's Hurt Park was probably the only other one I can remember.

### **PEACHTREE STREET LANDSCAPE**

The thing is, Atlanta was so gratifying to traverse since my traffic pattern, especially as the war came on, and you didn't have gasoline, so you rode the streetcar for sure, you go up and down Peachtree, and it was entirely residential. And, you saw sweeping lawns, and mature trees, and big houses, some pretentious, some modest. But, it was an undulating landscape not only topographically but horizontally, so, like a balloon being inflated and deflated. So, everybody kept their front yards more or less open. While traffic might have been a problem, it was nothing like the kinds of traffic we experience today. But, it was a residential street. So, as you drove, whether you went to church in town, or whether you were on the trolley to go shopping downtown, we were very much a radial transportation system in and out of Atlanta. And, Peachtree Street was our path. And it was a lovely street to experience. So, it could be that that greenscape was my public landscape.

*Tunnell: So, the public landscape that you experienced the most was, in fact, all private landscape so that the trees that you were seeing were all essentially privately owned?*

The motivation of the owner was to keep it presentable, but for visual pleasure, themselves and for anyone who passed by. There was very little ostentation, as I can recall. For instance, here we go. Well, anyway, the house is near the High Museum. Those houses really opened lawns and trees. And, that's the area where my grandmother had been living. But, those were just borrowed public spaces, as you say, in private hands. The biggest park I can remember and the biggest noise or notoriety was when North Fulton Park, as it was then known and now known as Chastain Park, came into public use. And it also was one that was a [Civilian Conservation Corp] CCC, and [Work Progress Administration] WPA funded development. It had been a county prison farm, and home for the elderly. As Eugene Talmadge used to let roll off his tongue, eleemosynary institution, but that space became available as a public space, and the open fields in the bottom land were converted into a golf course. So, there was a sculptural aspect to that. And, the trees were appreciated because you saw shade under the path systems and the road systems as well as pavilion shelters. And, Barbecue places were arranged. I guess that was probably the first time I



realized how structures and land could be put together on a large scale, because it sort of unfolded in front of our eyes over a period of about five years. So, I could observe that. I'm not sure how much awareness I had of it other than to remark, and to know that I was experiencing that change.

### **A FOREST OF WONDERS**

*Birnbaum: One of the things I wanted to ask about is your own spiritual contact with nature and the role that that plays in your approach to design.*

Well, my contact with nature obviously is an urban nature by and large. We passed the place this morning that I spent about 10 years of my young life before the age of 12, a single-family residence on a small lot where there were a series of single-family residences and walking on a sidewalk and being able to walk to school. Also, we walked through about a four-acre woodland to get to the elementary school. And so with a gardening information or gardening on around me for my parents as well as my grandparents as well being in the woods and catching poison ivy and chiggers and chasing snakes and dogs, there was a lot of exposure for a child in an urban situation. I didn't grow up any place where there were a lot of parks as such. But that would have been a whole different scale. But for a young child, a small space can be a great challenge. And that four-acre woodland that just happened not to be developed for whatever reason became *a forest of wonders for me*.

On summers for much of my young life, we'd go to the mountains of Highlands, North Carolina, and there it was a different woodland experience, but it still was a resort environment. But there were other forms of nature and other plant materials. I guess I was always involved one way or another whether it was having a shovel put in my hand to dig up a rock or dig a hole for a plant. That was the extent of it. Mine was not a rural upbringing by any means, nor was it an extremely urban situation either. But I think just the pattern that was set for me by my mother and my grandmother and two aunts, who gardened mightily and loved it, was a kind of example for me and I was led into that. I was always good at drawing, sketching, so that it was an easy thing to put together. So inevitably I ended up in some sort of line drawing relationship with nature.

That forest, the four-acre forest is now gone. It meant a great deal to me as a child. It was a place of exploration. There was a little stream. There were tadpoles, occasionally a drunk asleep in the woods. But I think I was just fortunate living at that place, that proximity to town to have that resource.

If I enjoy this woodland across the street from me on West Peach Street as a child, it's because I always felt comfortable there. I was not threatened. It was bigger than I could ever see at one time from any one point. It was a thicket. It was an enclosure, and it had a roof, and it had an irregular floor. But I was never uncomfortable. And, part of it was because I knew it was just this size, and I could relate to it as a small person.

But, I feel the exact opposite. I feel discomfort when I look at that site now, not because I've lost something, but because it is barren. It is hot. It is without limits. There happened to be two hard,



structural elements on the sides, and I now can see entirely through that block from one street to another. And, it's an uncomfortable place for me to be. I would not seek to go there. I can't imagine myself finding pleasure in that location.

Tunnell: *How does that experience in that woodland inform your work at the woodlands in Decatur?*

I guess simply that having appreciated the early woodland experience that I saw that it could possibly interest somebody else. The woodlands were a cutover piece of ground that had grown up in pines for some 60 or more years. There were no gigantic trees. There were small hardwoods. But it was a piece of land that had been tended. The woodland across the street from us on West Peachtree was just simply that. It was set aside, I mean, it's not developed.

Tunnell: *That woodland across the street from you, was that a place where you as a child could go and essentially get lost for hours?*

Yes. Yeah, there was a plateau, a lawn where, when I guess when West Peachtree was built, there was a broad shoulder where obviously some hillside had been flattened and then the woods began. So that the lawn area became a playing field and the neighborhood would gather to play baseball or scrimmage and football. And then we would go on off into the woods. Our Boy Scout hut, the First Presbyterian Church sponsored Troop 60 in that woodland, on a knoll. So evidently there was a friendly relationship between the church and whoever owned the property. So it was a magnet and a generator, but otherwise there was no structure and there was no development and no change to the landscape. Beyond that up to the top of the hill where WSB now sits was a vast acreage, which was only developed in the late 1930s, which was mysterious land, we passed coming back from town today, and I called to your attention this high ridge and said these were the outer defenses of Atlanta, and indeed there were trenches there, a series of trenches and holes for sharpshooters facing north, and a woodland that had never been cut. The land itself is misnamed Sherwood Forest, but the first thing you do when you develop land is you clear the forest. So much of what I saw there [is gone]. But that was a place of mystery, because it was so much larger, and also one of the Collier heirs lived in this property. They were pioneers in Atlanta from 1830 on, I guess. And that was always spooky, because we never knew when we were going to run into Mr. Collier. It was also a place where there were a few moonshine stills and it was adjacent to the railroad.

Tunnell: *Where there had been moonshine stills?*

Well, I don't know that I saw one, but I was told there were stills there and we were always in expectation that that was likely to come out. So, in any event, despite the fact that it was what's now Midtown there was a fair access to woodland land.

### **THE DEPRESSION YEARS**

I don't know where you grew up, but it's typical in Atlanta, at least older, established parts of Atlanta. You'd have the home, I mean, a white person's home in the backyard, not a slave cabin,



but serving the quarters. And I'm sure that applied in other places, but you would have parallel societies, for all practical purposes, and in some ways, the black community was, where they served white households in literally more of a community than the white because the white were out here looking outward into nothing, and the black community was here on an alley looking towards each other. And their street was really human scale. And they were in each other's front yards or each other's front porches. And, I think you either had an amiable relationship with your servant, or you didn't have that servant. That's all there was to it. I mean, you could arrange that. But, it seemed to me, and this is maybe willful ignorance, but the relationships were well-defined, so I guess that's why it was civil. There was no discord or rancor. But in my childhood, I remember it was tough sledding. My father was on a salary, and I told you hand-me-downs were a way of life. I remember an aunt of mine recently who just died talking about being at a dinner party in that time when there was wonderful dinner, and really was a lovely occasion. And, a number of people around this table, a dozen or more, and there was a couple. And, the wife just dissolved in tears. And she just almost became hysterical because one of the wives' guests, because here was this abundance of food that they had been almost starving. I mean, it was your society. I mean, it was your peers, and they just had hard luck, whether he had lost his job or whatever. But I remember, and she would never tell me the name of the couple. But, I mean, there was stress, and it was a time when everybody was under stress. So, in terms of the white and the black, at that time in the depression, everybody toughed it out which may have been a palliative to discord, I suppose, but as far as a black and white relationship, it was established, and I'm sure that black people were unhappy because they were deprived, and diminished, and limited. And, the rest of the population, the white population, were toughing it out in restraint, but I don't remember that kind of conflict. But, we knew who each other was, and those two societies sort of ran parallel past. But, it wasn't a mixing. But, it was an interesting contradiction when I got to Boston, the land of the free, you know, oh boy, they can tell you how to do it. But, there was this vast, mean-spirited separation that I observed. Blacks were physically, I mean not necessarily slapped, but at least really-get out of my way sort of thing, which I never experienced here in the south. In other words, there was a little instability at times in the relationship between people. And, this is in '48-'51 at a time when things were boiling, I'm sure, but when they were not open to, civil rights movements as such. And, it certainly became obvious when desegregation hit Boston with terrible instability. I mean, it was as bad as anything that took place down in Alabama with Wallace.

Anyway, but I couldn't say that my childhood was all milk and honey, at least I had the impression that we were all struggling. And we were still, believe it or not, and this will sound ridiculous, that we were still southerners struggling coming out from the civil war, and reconstruction, and so on. You know, the railroads had separate rates for us. I mean the railroad rates were rigged so it was more expensive to send it out than to send it in. And, we didn't own anything. The lands had been absconded, and the railroads taken over, and the taxes capriciously raised so you couldn't pay the taxes. And so they'd take your property. So, that plus falling cotton prices, and then a real economic depression kept us all in sort of a low key stew. But anyway, it was interesting to get to Boston and find out that for all of the alleged freedom and welcome and so on and so forth, that there was still plenty of people who were deprived.



For my master's thesis, such as it was, I did a study of a park for Stone Mountain. At that time, the state did not own the mountain or the acres that were out there. I mean, the memorial had been a product of the '20s, unfinished, and the state was talking about doing something about this natural phenomenon on the land and so on. Anyway, so here's my effort to do something. And so, in preparing this design, I incorporated a common facility. And it was assumed that blacks and whites would be there together, and it was intentional. This was the time when Herman Talmadge, the son of Eugene, was governor. The only real response I remember was Bob Zion getting a piece of paper in a cone and putting it on his head as Ku Klux Klan when I was making the presentation... We just took it for granted that there would be black people and white people using it. But, everybody was certainly aware of the fact that segregation was a way of life here at that time. But it was an effort on my part.

## Education

### CHOOSING LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Yeah. Well, let's see, I was a child when I got out of North Fulton High School. I was 16. I entered Georgia Tech that fall. I was still 16 for another two months. By that time, the War was in full swing, and most of the students at Georgia Tech were either in the Army program [ASTRAP] or the V12 or V something for the Navy. And so, they were churning out engineers to go to war. I was too young to go to war. So, I was accepted in architecture. At that time, I don't believe there were more than 30 students, and we were on the top floor of the physics buildings. And, the principal teachers were P. M. Hefferman and Dick Aeck was sort of part timing because his practice had gone to pot with the war. And, there was a wonderful architect who taught us freehand drawing. I can't remember his name right this minute, but that was the primary thing. But they were so busy with engineering, and I saw in the work of my seniors there who were architectural students, finishing only because they were going to go immediately to war, designing buildings that had no relationship to the land. And, this bothered me because I thought they often looked like they didn't belong on the land, or that it was unhappy, uneasy relationship. It was as though architecture could be practiced abstractly, and separate, and apart from its environment. So, when I was drafted into the Army, I spent a lot of time in various training places thinking about what I was going to do next. And I thought, surely if I study landscape architecture for a year I would become a better architect. And so, I investigated several schools. And, by the time I got out, it was hard to get in anywhere. I mean, there were such an accumulation of veterans that I was able to get into the University of Georgia in 1947, I think it was, and there I just simply began to learn what the field could be.

### UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Hubert Owens was the head of the department, and he was a dedicated planner, landscape architect. He had a thin skin, but was very ambitious, and brought that department into being out of the school of agriculture and got it under the umbrella of the arts. But, he was a good advocate. I can't say that Hubert was a great teacher, but he set a great example in public service, and I think because he spent a lot of time not only boosting his own school and his profession, but making sure that the role of landscape architecture in our emerging world was important and understood. So,



he spent a lot of time lecturing to garden clubs, and civic organizations, and all but preaching on the sidewalks. And, I think it was from him that as much as anyone else I felt an obligation to the public to someone beyond myself and potential clients. Brooks Wiggington was at the school at the time. He was a wonderful, sensitive fellow. He was just the great antidote to Hubert. It was sort of like Laurel and Hardy. Brooks was skinny and tall, and quiet, very accomplished, very sensitive, excellent designer. Hubert was ebullient in a fashion, always aggressive in moving and encouraging. It was a good team.

### **THE HARVARD EXPERIENCE**

I met a man named Hershel Webber, who was a recent veteran and had been at Harvard in the Graduate School of Design who would have been drafted from school, and we became fairly close. I spent a lot of time with him. He was not a stem winder. He was just a serious somebody who enjoyed the field of landscape architecture. And, he encouraged me to apply at Harvard for further study because he thought I, I guess, had something to offer, but primarily because I was a veteran and had prior experience in design of some sort. So, here I was with two years of alleged experience as an architectural student, and one year at the University of Georgia, and no degree. But, because I was a veteran -- which I barely was -- Harvard would take in the graduate school of design such students without a degree. And so, that's why I was accepted. The other thing was, I'm sure that probably being one of the few people from the south that year who were applying who helped as well.

So as I told, you when I got there, and this class of nine students in my first year, Beattie Zion always referred to me as Georgia. We got along very well. There were a number of people, some of whom have made good records in other places, but Bob Zion and Harold Breen eventually formed a partnership [Zion and Breen Associates, now Zion, Breen & Richardson Associates] and were very successful in New York. Bob was from New York City, and Harold was from New Jersey. And, I think we discussed Rich Hague who was from Kentucky was in our class. And, that accounts for about half the class, the names I can't remember the others. But anyway, it was a great sort of vegetable soup of talents and interests who were all combined in one room. And all three years of that graduate level were in one room. So, we fed off of each other, or abused each other. You could always see where you were going. I mean, you could see what was coming ahead. And, one of the more vocal students in the year ahead of me was Ian McHarg. And, you always knew when Ian was in the room. He enjoyed being the Scot and never let you forget it. He also enjoyed his very distinctive voice so that there was this overlay, sort of this caramel overlay to the room, and more often than not, like background music, you could hear Ian expounding on some subject. Ian's personality, I'm sure, had a lot to do with his success as a teacher because he was listened to, and he did have something to say, and he said it well, and influenced a lot of people.

*Birnbaum: In the short time that we've been talking, there are the things, whether it's native plants, the word simple's come up many times when I think of Zion and Breen's work, and Rich Haag's as well as yours, can you trace any of these concepts back to your time at Harvard?*



It was important in all of our classes, whether it was engineering or planting design or site design to prove that something would work. That is, as Norman Newton was wont to say, that “good design is good if it does good.” And, that almost got to be a motto at least for me. It was the test that always applied to anything that I did. And if it did good in terms of solving a problem, but solving it as simply as possible, I think I never sought to make a complicated issue out of something that could be solved simply. I think that that was characteristic of Walt Chambers’ challenges in our engineering courses. It was characteristic of Norman Newton's work. All these comments usually were on the drawing board. I don't recall a lot in the way of lectures. I really don't. Most of our contact was on the drawing board. Occasionally, there was art faculty who were brought in from other places to help us explore our imagination and help us develop abstract ideas.

Birnbaum: *Was Patrick Henry Morgan one of those people?*

He was. He was, but I only remember him vaguely. There was also a wonderful, challenging artist, seems to me with a Russian name who came through for about two weeks, and I think left exhausted. But, I don't know, I think simplicity was considered a virtue, and a workable scheme was thought to be a necessity. We had to prove, demonstrate, that the thing, whatever we were proposing, would work. I remember one project where one of the students, some boy from Manhattan, developed a shopping center which, for some reason, he developed a scheme in which the building spelled out the word shoe in capital letters, S-H-O-E. And in his mind it was a very functional plan, and it may well have been. But it was, I think, regarded by everybody else as a caprice. And, he was really challenged to prove that this thing worked. I mean, it was arbitrary. And, why not? But, on the other hand, it wasn't meeting the test of being functional and really working. We often heard other visiting lecturers who were drawn by the school, specifically for the school, and we'd go over to an adjacent lecture hall. I remember Bucky [Buckminster] Fuller, one time, we would hear from [Joseph] Hudnut [Dean of the Graduate School of Design] Occasionally, we would be privileged to hear from Mr. [Walter] Gropius, though he really stayed down at his end of the hall, and more or less kept himself to his colleagues in architecture. But, there was a lot of wandering around in exchange of ideas.

When I arrived, Bremer Pond, who had been there for some years, was the head of the school of landscape architecture, and he was a soft, gentle presence, clearly of the old school in a sense that he was accustomed to working on largely residential properties, more estates than not, though I remember his showing us photographs of his own small cottage or retreat somewhere in New Hampshire in the woodlands, which obviously showed a softness which reflected his personality. But, he was just a wonderful, warm, blithe sort of presence. Lester Collins was, I think, his successor, and Lester was just the opposite. He was young. He was vital. He was spontaneous. He was like one of these fireworks fountains, from which sparks and ideas flew off. And they were offered generously. He was very modest and gentlemanly in his approach, but I can only use the word generous to explain he was willing to offer ideas to everybody. And, his critiques were really thrilling. And, you really get a lot out of his observation or his question of how you were advancing a solution to a problem.

The last year I was there, Sasaki was head of department. And, I think Lester [Collins] stayed on



staff, but Sasaki was very much a presence, and already at that time he was an object of awe. There was a lot of respect given to him for his professional competence and what he had achieved at that time. In retrospect, it sounds sort of early because here it was '51, but he had come from the University of Illinois back to Harvard where he had trained, and was really welcomed.

## BOOKS

Birnbaum: *Were there any books during that period that were influential for you?*

I think the books that we now think of as guiding lights on landscape architecture were just sort of coming into being. I don't believe that either [Garrett]Eckbo's book [*Landscape for Living*] or [Thomas]Church's books [*Gardens are for People*]were published in that 1948-1951 era, though we were aware of some of their works. I remember one in-house publication of works [*Landscape Architecture*, edited by Lester Collins & Thomas Gillespie] that showed graduates' product, but I don't recall any definite work like [John] Simond's book [*Landscape Architecture*].

Birnbaum: *What about Tunnard?*

Yes, he was at Yale, was he not? I believe he was. I remember him primarily as a lecturer on one occasion. I mean, he came up to Cambridge to lecture. But, the book that I remember reading of his was after I got out of school, and there were two books, both of which I have.

Birnbaum: *Gideon?*

Let's see, that's *Space, Time and Architecture* yeah. I think I regarded that as a mysterious tome. I had a hard time with that, and probably because I was so graphically or three dimensionally oriented that I was so focused on real things, I guess I was less interested in exploring theory. I was probably a very dull student, but I absorbed everything that walked in the door. I don't remember doing a lot of reading, though later acquired those books, and have treasured portions of them.

## ON NORMAN NEWTON

Birnbaum: *So, was Newton teaching the survey course then?*

Our first history, the first year, I think actually was Hudnut's history. Newton would separately lecture, and I'm sure he must have used his slides from his experience. But, the more I got out of Newton was his experience as a practitioner than in retrospect about his observations abroad. It was more a recollection of, and sharing the experiences of working with the firms he worked with in New York. I always got clear thinking and order from Norman Newton. He was always very precise. In fact, almost too precise --he was so careful. But, when Norman Newton spoke, you had the feeling that whatever he said was worth listening to.



## FIELD TRIPS

Birnbaum: *Were there field trips, then?*

DAUGHERTY: Our field trips were more with, the ones I remember were more with Steve Hamlin in plant materials where each summer afternoon we'd go somewhere to some garden. We went out to Weld. We went out to the Honeywell estate. We went to the Crane estate, the bathroom fixture man. We went out to [Arthur] Shurcliff's own household, the one his father had built. I remember this wonderful Cape Cod house that must have grown, as there were children added, and my recollection, it was surrounded at least on three sides with a wall, sort of made a kind of a compound with them in a fairly free, open space. I don't remember adjacent houses. I do remember the sort of caprice of the shutters, which are functional shutters on this Cape Cod house. And, there was a different letter of the alphabet on each shutter as you went around the house. And so, I couldn't help but feel that Arthur Shurcliff, Sr., must have been a fun father to have offered this easy learning to his children. I can't remember field trips as a designed purpose. Isn't that interesting? We went out to Weston a number of times, and I guess it was to help us put our fingers in the ground.

Birnbaum: *Can we back up a little bit and let me ask you about the field laboratory at Weston. So, tell us a little bit about what that was. Who was there? I guess, give us some context for that.*

## WESTON LAB STUDIO

Well, the Weston Studio, as a parcel of land, had been given to the school. And, by the time I first visited there, which would have been in 1948, there was already a structure there, and it was a very simple one or two room studio structure, more glass than not. Obviously a product of the architecture department, there was a flat sloping roof. It was fenestration. That was what that architecture was, it was fenestration. And it was glass, as I recall, on two sides. And, it opened into, it sat on this promontory, and the ground, as I recall, sort of notched into the hill slightly on its backside, but the opening must have been south and east into one side, into a pasture. And, the flatter part immediately to the east was a garden in which there were experiments by students. And, it was the first time I remember seeing garlic used as an ornament, or being aware that garlic had a blossom. But, I remember lollipops on sticks. It was meant to be a place of experimentation. It was meant to be a place, I think, not taken seriously, but just a chance for architects and landscape architects, I'm sure, to enjoy the same plot, and to see the relationship of the two. And, there was an illustration to me that they could work together. I mean, there it was in three dimensions. In the process, there were a number of art experimental things, like Lester [Collins] had stacked up some chimney flue liners to make planters at varying levels. It was like playing a piano. They were at different levels, and at different diameters or areas, and this is sort of a caprice. But that was the whole idea. That was the impression I got. The whole idea was to see it as fun, and to experiment. We went there first, as I said, as plant material students, and then later I think we might have been there twice in the three years total that I was there.



## **SUMMER JOBS**

I did work for one spring vacation part time for a, maybe I had a part time job, in an engineering office. It was on Copley Square, and it was one of those American tiered buildings, four or five stories high. But that was not inspired, and it was not landscape architecture as I recall. It was just drafting work. Another vacation time, this fellow student, the one from California whose name I can't remember, and I, worked for two weeks in the Olmsted office that was still running. And, [Joe] Hudak, I believe, was then in charge. Again, this is in the year of 1948-1951. And, I'm sure it was just to pick up a little money. But, as I recall, we were the only two draftsmen in this vast place. And, I was impressed with the difficulty of working in the dark room because the wood was all stained. It was all tongue-and-groove vertical boarding. The ceiling was all pine. The ceiling was dark. And, the light fixtures were the things that looked like cranes being hung upside down by their heads from their feet. And, anyway, I don't know what we worked on, but it was part of the fun of it, and being out there, and being shown the barn of half-barn of a studio that was built behind it for model making, and then wandering through the garden and just being there. It was a place in shambles, and as a business, as a professional office, it was hardly active. I don't know how he hung onto it. But I believe, as I recall, he bought the property and ultimately sold it to the foundation or the federal government.

## **LEARNING FROM BOSTON**

May I comment on Boston itself? I think, I got as much out of Boston as I got out of Cambridge – the experience was just a totally different way of life physically. I mean, it was a totally different city. It was really inwardly oriented, whereas this city is just the opposite. It's just radial. So, I really treasured Beacon Hill and the downside of it, and all of the tight little streets, Chestnut and so on, up on the hill. And then, the way it drew down the hill into the common, and then into the park, and then Back Bay, and even that was a totally different scale, but at least [it was] pedestrian. And, it flowed and it moved. And you felt you were within an urban setting and still human scale. That was what was important. I think that really impressed me that you could live that way, and very civilly. So, I thought that was important.

## **WORKING FOR DAN KILEY**

I forgot how I got that job. It might have been something as simple as Kiley sending down a poster, sticking it on a board, and saying, I need some help. But, anyway, that was an interesting experience, and I visited in New Hampshire on skiing trips, on weekends, and so on. But, Franconia [New Hampshire, spring and summer of 1951] was almost a nothing little community at the time. And, he [Kiley] managed to get me arranged with some widow lady in town to rent me a room. And then, his studio was then on the second floor of what had either been a barn or was a rather elaborate garage. And, their residence adjacent looked like something that had been added to from time to time. It made a nice, little assemblage, and you really felt you had a mini-village in those two places. The studio itself was just a high-roofed room. And, we worked on a number of residences, and I don't recall specifically a shopping center. It seemed to me for some reason,



whether it was Dan's doing or the architect's doing, or who's, I don't know. But, the whole complex was a great, huge oval, with the parking being the center. But, I remember the Hudson the department store being the focal point of the project. He would spend time off on trips. Most of the time I was there, he was present. But, it was fun to observe Dan and his wife hurdling off into the snow into a station wagon to go skiing at lunchtime, and it was almost faithful; you could count on it. It was 12:00; it was time to get sandwiches, and thermoses, and soup, and off they would go and make two runs on the ski [slope] and come back. And then we'd go on with the work. But, it was just Dan and I in that studio. And, I really don't know what I contributed to him. But, I got the novelty of the experience of working with this imaginative person, who was, I would say, quixotic and exciting. And, he would sketch imaginative things. I was sent down to Greenwich, CT. I stayed in a small hotel in Stanford for possibly a month to oversee the construction of the landscape for a residence, an interesting residence. And it would have been clearly a 1950's long and low, and a lot of wood residence, as I recall, and an informal sort of landscape. He had devised some fences that seemed to me looked like telephone wire between wooden posts or something sort of just, to be different. But, he played the forms into the landscape, I mean, into the vegetation so that it was not a harsh outdoors. I was always excited is a good word by Dan Kiley's work, because it was energetic and unexpected, often very stately, sometimes almost to the point of being boring. But he was great for order. And while he was not personally a disciplinarian as far as I was concerned in our relationship, which was very brief, I always felt that he was very anxious to impose order on any landscape that he was given to work with. But there was always excitement in him personally and in the work that I saw. But, that's about what I remember of Dan.

#### **FULBRIGHT- STUDYING NEW TOWN PLANNING IN ENGLAND**

I was then offered or had applied for this Fulbright, in town planning. And, that was a direct result of the whole theme in the graduate school of design on design collaboration, which I'm sure started at the top of the pile by Gropius himself because that was a pattern of education at Robinson Hall, and then reinforced by our studies of the new towns in England, and the presence of Mr. Holford, who had been the town planner for London.

So, I decided that was one thing I'd like to do and see, whether or not there was in fact collaborative planning for the new towns in England, and so in August, I departed early on ship to be able to have some time to look around England before the curriculum began. I bought a bicycle, once I got to Liverpool, well, actually bought the bicycle I guess in London, and I started making a circuit of the new towns in the vicinity particularly to the south of London to look at the towns under construction. And I must say, several of them at that point in a way looked more like what I would call housing projects than real communities. They were communities evolving, I remember specifically visiting, let's see, it was Letchworth. Letchworth was the earliest, and then the second one just north of London, Welwyn Garden City. And it looked like home to me. It was, by then, 20 years old, and there were both single family and attached housing, but so arranged that it was just very, very familiar. And it worked as a community because they were attached to the main rail line to London which is also its downfall, which is why it was too easy to get out. So, people dead-roomed there, and then worked in London. So, it wasn't really this self-sufficient town. But, I continued the circuit. I think I visited eight different new towns immediately in the vicinity of



London. And I believe they announced some 30 around the country. But, I found to my distress that most of them were designed almost entirely by architects, that there were very few landscape architects in practice. Sylvia Crowe was one of the few, and her impact was visible on two of them. The collaboration I expected on the basis of the Harvard experience was not played out, in fact. But, there were imaginative solutions to housing, and they were better off than they were in the suburbs or the bowels of London. England lost one third of its housing during the Second World War, which was the occasion of the impetus for the new towns. And, in that, I'm sure they were successful. The accompanying plans for legislation for green belts really interested me. And, when I came home, that was the thing I think that interested me most in Atlanta, that there was an application. Unfortunately, none of it took place. We then had a metropolitan planning commission. Phil Hamill was then head of it here, and a very competent planner. I think he'd gone to Harvard, as I recall; great staff and they kept putting forth ideas for green belts, and greenswards, and parks, and a system of regional parks. But they were constantly shot down by opportunists who obviously had good reason to want to maximize their investment. There was no mechanism set up like the English plan of when their zoning changed the value change accrues to the government. And then, if you'd been adversely affected. Then, out of that pool of money that accrued to the government, you would be compensated so that nobody was hurt. But, instead of each owner rising to a zenith of value or to the depth of deprivation, because of planning, all of the responsibility and the benefits accrued directly to the government. So, for all practical purposes, there was a land plan for all of England in that legislation. But, it worked. Green belts worked in some portions of the country, and they really separated things. And again, it was humane, and human in scale. That was my hope that in coming back to Atlanta that that was something I could bring as ideas and concepts. And I certainly spoke of it any opportunity I had, any place I did. But, I can't say that I contributed much because you look around and you can see the absence of any real protective spatial separation.

#### **EXPOSURE TO ARTISTS AND ARTISTIC MOVEMENTS**

*Tunnell: So there was no interplay between what was going on in the fine arts and what was going on in landscape architecture? What about what was going on in art in the world at that time, was that influential in any type of way?*

Not for me, but I remember both Beattie and Bob Zion exploring with Mondrian patterns and trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear to translate this pattern into something. They were just exploring. It was like playing hopscotch. Can you get from this square to that square? But, it was experimentation, I guess, to see if the art form or canvas could be helpful in evolving a landscape. And, I believe it was really more than anything else, it was sort of like working with a floor pattern. I remember in 1956 here in Atlanta, and I showed you these drawings of All Saints Episcopal Church, the building that was built then as educational for the educational program for the church was designed by an established, notable firm here. And, the designer, particularly of the interior, was this man Henry Jova. Henry Jova was born in Cuba. Thoroughly acclimated, he was a wonderful man, very imaginative. Anyway, he was working for his uncle.



The firm was Abreu and Robeson, and Francis Abreu had brought his nephew in, and he was the chief designer. But anyway, all I was getting at was the interior of the major hall in this new building was painted abstractly. I mean, the overlay, it was like you had taken a floor pattern and put it on the wall. It was like a Mondrian on the wall, and he chose with the door openings and windows, and so on and so forth, to break up this big wall with, obviously, contrived rectilinear patterns. And, the floor execution in asbestos tile was done in the same fashion. I mean, it was not wall to wall covering, but by that I mean no one pattern but a breakup. It was an era of exploration, so I'm trying to respond to your question that it was reflected elsewhere. From what I remember of seeing photographs of expressionism, if that's what it is, of French landscape architecture of the 1920s and 1930s, it was all very much, it just took another generation to get here I guess, but it was all sort of erratic just to be erratic. It was such a violent reaction to the Beaux- Arts formality, rigidity, and so on and so forth, that the gardens that I have seen that represent that era seem to be just contrived shaping for the purpose of just contriving, just to stick the tongue out at something else. And, we're talking about Jova's interior of the parish house at All Saints, which has been completely redone, and one could say humanized, where his Mondrian patterns of paint as well as floor patterns are expressed. But, I didn't really see much connection between that art of the canvas contributing much to landscape architecture. It just didn't seem to work. Now, on the other hand, Miro, you find all over the place, I mean, the three dimensional expressions of that, and I think that's more because they would fragment it. They were open, that you could take a Miro shape, and you could use it in a garden, whereas you couldn't do it with a Mondrian unless you were doing a plaza, say, or something large scale. Who did this dreadful Children's Garden in Piedmont Park?

Tunnell: *[Isamu]Noguchi?*

Yeah, Noguchi. Oh, it's awful. But other Noguchi places, other Noguchi gardens are really paintings, and very successful. And it just occurred to me that the reason they are is because it's like an archipelago of islands in which there's a spatial experience. You can wander through. Otherwise, with the Mondrian, an arbitrary solution and playing hopscotch, I mean, it's not human.

## Professional Practice

### EARLY PRACTICE

INTERVIEWER: *So, when you came back here, you hung up your own shingle; you opened your own office?*

I did. I had worked in the summers both when I was at Harvard, and the summer I was at Georgia I'd worked for Eugene Martini landscape architect. So, I'd have these two or three month increments of employment. I realized that the practice that Martini had was all public housing, public supported housing. It was either PHA or FHA or Wherry housing, one of the Wherry, anyway, all of those that were by way of compensating for the shortage of housing that had occurred because of the Second World War. In any event, as the population exploded, there was a need for all of this growth. But, this was his stock and trade, and most of what the Atlanta planning profession was interested in was doing subdivisions, and housing projects, and shopping centers.



And, I just realized that was not what I wanted to do. So, it was easy. I was single. I was living at my parents' home. I had a degree in landscape architecture. There was no licensure. There was nothing to separate me from doing what I wanted to do. And so, I set up a drawing board on my mother's sleeping porch, and told the world I was a landscape architect. The one ad I put in, somehow the word got around, and I got a call from a local neighborhood newspaper asking for an ad. And so, I must have spent \$25 on an ad. And that was the only advertising I had ever done, and have never advertised since then. Almost instantly, I had a couple of residential jobs, new houses, just as new as I was. And then, fortunately, Georgia Tech had become self-conscious about his thread bare appearance. And, most of its attention was focused on this hilltop, where it was established in 1881. And, with automobiles jammed right up under the window sill, they asked me to help with some sort of plantings. And, thus began a sort of series of studies for introducing walkways, and modifying parking, or to create some planting spaces, and so on. We used to refer to it as the worlds only all-concrete campus, which of course is not the case, but, it was damn near the case. And, from that hilltop, we just sort of drew it off in every direction for new buildings as they came into being. So, there was a huge expansion program for Tech. And one by one, in addition to the overall tree plan, one by one, as new buildings were built I was engaged to make studies for them.

*Birnbaum: So, give me a sense of, I mean, in this initial period while you were working for Tech, and you got some residential clients, is the office you alone? I mean, what is a work day like?*

Yes, it was me alone. I think I stayed on the sleeping porch for about a year, and then felt I had enough money to pay for a one room office in the telephone. And so, I rented what was called a terrace room. It was really the basement on grade of a residence right in the heart of Buckhead, and [I] moved into that space. It was a one man operation, and I would draw and go out on jobs, and negotiate with landscape contractors. It was enough room to have a client come to that address. Eventually, a friend of mine, this decorator, Carolyn Becknell, I had encouraged her with her great talent to be on her own. So she simply said, move over. And so, we shared this office space until both our businesses got strong enough for me to take another room somewhere else up there. But, it was a one-man operation. I can't say that it was very complicated. I worked mostly right in the Buckhead area where we're sitting now, so there were no great distances to cover. As things went on, I began to get work particularly down in Montgomery, Alabama, because I had met at Harvard a very talented architect with a large firm who had been up there for a graduate degree with Gropius. Charles Kelly would invite me down to Montgomery. His firm, a firm he worked for, was principal designer for Sherlock Smith and Adams, and they did significant work all over the region.

### **PRACTICE IN THE 1950S AND 1960S**

The first time I met Larry Halprin, it was in Montgomery, Alabama. In about the late '50s, their firm had gotten a contract with the United Mine Workers to prepare a scheme of hospitals, a chain of hospitals in Kentucky, and part of Virginia for the people who are not otherwise served by any medical facilities at all. And, they had engaged Larry as a site planner. In fact, I think I've seen only



one of the hospitals there in Kentucky. But, it was interesting. And, I remember him lecturing over at Auburn, Charles Kelly got him to go and lecture to the architecture students at Auburn. . . .

But anyway, from there, I began to travel by car, sometimes by train, to Montgomery, and to the northern parts of Florida. I began to do some work in New Orleans. There were very few landscape architects here. Previously, we've talked, you and I, about William C. Pauley. He, during the '20s, '30s, being one of the very few landscape architects in the south, and the only one that I know of, maybe Spencer knows differently, in Atlanta. But, the others were visitors from Boston, or New York, or Philadelphia. Mr. Pauley was the stalwart, almost a pioneer. But there were very few landscape architects. There was a very nice fellow I met in New Orleans, older than I. I've forgotten his name, but I remember spending a day with him early on as I established my office to see what made his day work. And, he meticulously kept a little notebook. Every time we got out of the car, he picked up the notebook. And when we got back, he came back and he noted exactly all the decisions, the time he arrived, and the time he left, and what was to be done, and so on, and kept track of mileage, all kinds of record keeping that I never learned to do. But in any event, there weren't many of us. So, I was on call for a lot of places, and so my practice would include from New Orleans at the southwest, middle Florida and down the peninsula, Jacksonville, and into the Carolinas. But over time, not only has my local practice grown, but there's other landscape architects. There's been less and less need to leave the city. But, I covered a lot of ground to serve people who weren't being served. I moved from this apartment, not apartment, this residence in Buckhead, downtown but in the process of our being in residence, Carolyn Becknell, who was a painter as well as a decorator, and some friends got together and decided we needed to give an alternative place for people to exhibit paintings and sculpture. And so, in 1954, we established on Halloween weekend our first arts festival. We survived for some 35 years or more. After about 20 years, I gave it up. But, we had an interesting and very successful beginning, and then moved it into Piedmont Park where it was for a number of years. And, early on, I urged my colleagues to exhibit, to consider themselves artists because many of the landscape architects were just sort of, oh, pooh-pooh; we're not painters; we're not sculptors. But I insisted. And so, we got a representative display, exhibition of works of landscape architecture as well as architecture. So, everybody came together at least for one week in May. After that, I had moved downtown on a site that's now under John Portman's silo, the 70 story hotel, there was an office building there. And, a couple of architects were also in it, and I practiced there for a number of years. And, it was at that point that I really began to hire staff, and, I had, I think, a total of eight people there working with me. And, so that represented the middle to late '50s, and into the '60s.

I think that our knowledge of what was going on elsewhere was largely either word of mouth, or by publications. I can't say that there was a lot of exchange, or cross-pollination, or visitation back and forth. Larry Halprin's visit to Montgomery, and Auburn, Alabama was an exceptional experience; I don't recall any other landscape architect on tour or making any real impression locally. And, I don't recall any of them in practice in the Atlanta area. That is actually having a commission that brought them here, until in the middle '60s. We had the second time Atlanta, the landscape architects in Atlanta or the region were responsible for our national convention. We had had one in 1954, and I was the program chairman, no, PR Chairman, and it was loving hands at home, but very successful. And Eugene Martini, this is 1954, introduced commercial displays. And, you would have



thought it was heresy for the people in Boston, on Beacon Hill; you just don't do this. But it was very successful, and it made it a financial success, and brought trades people and the profession together who needed to see each other. But, it was the first time that that had ever happened. And then, in 1966, I think it was, we were host the second time, and that time I was program chairman. And there was then a proposal for a park downtown in front of the state capital in front of the county courthouse and in front of the city hall all confining a square block. And, that proposal was for a combination garage with a park on top to be designed by Hideo Sasaki. And, we had preliminary discussions and presentations on the scheme in conference, and then I had the entire convention walk those four blocks to the site, and we went to something that was also called Underground Atlanta, meaning the adjacent elevated streets over the railroads fed into this square block where this park was to be, so that they had begun to get a sense of Atlanta, they got a sense of the challenge, a sense of the opportunity, and to see what essentially was a void that was otherwise defined by adjacent governmental buildings. And, the scheme itself worked out very well. It was very successful for a number of years, and I believe actually it's still state property, but state funding has obviously diminished. And, it's in a state of disrepair, and while it hasn't been dismantled, it's not been cared for.

There must have been 300 people at least. Yeah, it must have been at least that. I made an effort to have someone as an informed citizen, just a citizen, instead of all landscape architects talking to each other come and talk about the meaning of an open space, and what I feel like in the city. And actually, it's a lady who's now a neighbor of ours who's also a painter. And, she came, and she spoke in the most convincing and soft fashion of the importance of open space and civility in the city. This is Mary Charles Wilmer. And then, we had a psychiatrist from somewhere in, as I recall, maybe St. Louis, but anyway, come and talk about the change of scale in human rapport, and a people coming together in the city, and how important it was to plan for people. And, I have forgotten his name, but I remember his saying, and he was in his '60s. And this is 1966. And he's saying I meet now more people in a day than my grandfather would meet in a year. I mean, it's just an indication of the chronology, and the passing of time, and a concentration of people, and the need, then, to plan for people to keep us all sane. And, anyway, it was a great meeting.

*Birnbaum: One of the things that I brought was an article that you wrote in Landscape Architecture magazine about Lake Lanier, in the '50s. I'm curious if you remember this. It's the only article to my knowledge that you wrote in the magazine. How did it come about? Is there was anything you wanted to say about that early project.*

This was the time when had moved downtown in the Henry Gray building, and the client was actually a developer in the building. And, he had an interest in selling boats, and he was a merchant of boats. And then he became involved in acquiring land on this lake which was then fairly new. The Buford Dam, which was constructed by the Corps of Engineers on our only river here, the Chattahoochee, formed this lake, theoretically, for erosion control, and generation of electricity but also to form a reservoir for the city of Atlanta, which it does. In any event, it regulates water. So, these lands, these peninsulas, were available for lease, and I've forgotten his name, Jack somebody, asked if I'd be interested. And I'd never designed a marina before. I didn't know anything about them, but I learned a lot in a hurry. And, I think that the thing that was important about it in terms



of landforms just was the irregularity of the shoreline, and the fact that it made it possible to have a big operation in several different entities. As to being the only article I've ever written for the magazine, I guess that's probably true. I don't think I'm going to ask again. I don't know why anyone should, but anyway, that was an interesting novel project, and I think that's why it was of interest to the quarterly magazine.

## Reflections

### REMEMBERING GRADY CLAY

Birnbaum: *One of the other things I was thinking about as we talked about people from Harvard, did you know Grady Clay?*

Our paths have crossed casually several times. You knew he grew up in Atlanta, and his father was a very noted eye surgeon, and he lived in Ansley Park which was where I was and lived in our early married days. Grady was a great writer for the Louisville Courier Journal, and I first ran across his name on my own when he used to write things called "The Louisvillian," which was a series of commentaries on urban life, and of course always written with good humor and so on. And, I don't know, whatever, I do still have some copies of this fairly rough paper I remember they were printed on. And, I used to use them, and his notations, in local conversations about planning. In any event, I corresponded with him because of the articles, and showed an interest in them. And, let's see, we saw each other rather happily in 1971 out in Portland at the ASLA convention. And, in fact, we were sitting at the same table, and I had been nominated for fellowship in the ASLA. And, I remember the look of astonishment on Grady's face when I got up to answer this call. And, he is just a fabulous fellow. His writing has gotten a little more obscure in recent years, and I don't know if he's writing now at all. But, I've seen him there, and saw him, had lunch with him also on the last, by there, I mean in Louisville. And then I saw him happily for lunch in his appearance here at the last ASLA meeting we had some five or six years ago. And, he was presenting an outline of his book about crossings, his diagram of the landscape in nature or something. But, he's a fine fellow. I felt very comfortable with him, and I can't say that I knew him at all well. But, it was easy to know Grady.

### WORKING WITH ARCHITECTS

Well, I felt welcomed by the profession of architecture in Atlanta because most of those people were ten or 15 years older than I, and many, more and more, became my contemporaries who were sympathetic to the idea of their seeking help of a field or a portion of the development that they didn't know. Cecil Alexander is a name that comes to mind. It was a firm of Alexander and Rothschild that became over time Finch Alexander Barnes and Rothschild. And, they were really imaginative and competent. I did early work with all those firms. In fact, Cecil was kind enough to ask me to help him with his own house. Cecil designed a circular house for himself on a pinnacle of land. And, it was by the hardest, and the landscape took, of course, the form of almost farm terraces, concentric rings descending from it to try to create plausible flat spaces where you could leave the house without falling downhill. But, Cecil and Hermie Alexander were just a lovely couple,



and extremely imaginative. And I would say Hermie was probably a real good sport to live in this carousel.

Bill Finch is one of the extraordinary people in the practice of architecture. He was sort of a happy wild man as well as a very good designer. He also was a very proud Marine who would tell you that he had been to every war they'd ever had. I mean, every time there was a bugle call, Bill Finch responded. But, their firm, both of those firms, Alexander and Rothschild eventually Finch Barnes and Paschal in their merger lasted a long time. It must have been maybe a good 30 years total from beginning to end. Abreu & Robeson was another firm out of which Henry Jova evolved and Abreu & Robeson dissolved. But, most of the firms that I practiced with have now expired. And, the ones I did most of this work with more and more they became my contemporaries. The architects became my contemporaries, and some even students as it turned out. I guess the important thing was that the architectural profession was very close. I don't remember there being a lot of competition other than the ordinary competition to wish for a job. I don't recall backbiting or recrimination. It just seemed to be a good, professional fraternity. Landscape architects, one could say, were even more so, because they were still lower on the ladder requiring work. And as we all know, landscape architecture as seen in the minds of the owner, developer, or even the architect is something you could always do without. But, professionally, I think the city is certainly better off for having been the growth and the practice of landscape architecture. And I think that architects are more aware now than before. I don't think there are as many boxes being designed abstractly without care for the site. A lot of the success of our profession, I'm sure, its application has to do with the increased regulations required by local, or state, or federal government on control of erosion, and clearing, and so on. So, it encourages at least recognition of the principals that are behind landscape architecture.

Birnbaum: *Was it also during this same period, when you collaborated with Tommy Church.*

#### **WORKING WITH CHURCH ON THE GEORGIA CENTER FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION**

Well, collaboration was essentially coming behind him to oversee the completion of his work. Tommy Church was engaged at the behest of Stevens and Wilkinson, a very respected architectural firm in Atlanta to execute a landscape pedestrian plan at the University of Georgia for the Kellogg Foundation Funded Continuing Education Center. And the site was what had been a pecan grove, and the pecans still are a number of those to survive to this day. And, it was a combination of conference center with several auditoriums and meeting rooms, as well as a small hotel. It was a great facility for the university. I met Tommy at the Athen's, Georgia, airport, which is hard to believe there is such a thing in a DC-3. And, he hops out of this plane in corduroy knickers as I recall. Anyway, corduroy for sure, and sort of a mason's tool bag of equipment, which involved 100-foot tape, and a hand tree saw, and a mallet or two. I don't know where his luggage was, but he was over there for several days. But he had come to make sure that the layout was understood, and if there was any pruning work to be done, he was going to show you how he wanted it done. Anyway, it was a great delight. He is a wonderful fellow, and my role was to see to the execution of the work simply because he was from California, and it wasn't going to be easy for him to come back and forth. And, this was pre-jet age.



Birnbaum: *My understanding was that all that Tommy did was also a little sketch. I mean, you did all the working drawings, did you not? Who did the construction documents for the project?*

I don't believe there were any construction documents. If there were, now, he did more than a sketch. There was a site plan, and he had delineated all of the areas of paths that were like a Miro painting applied to the ground that wiggled around and swept around like waves through the pecan trees that became these ambulatories, so that when you were in the conference and you wanted to come out and stretch your legs, there was this canopy of trees, and you could wander on asphalt as the easiest surface delay, and not damage the trees. But, it was this lovely sort of molasses flow of asphalt to encourage you to move on this plateau. I do not recall that I did any staking drawings. We agreed on plant materials that were to be used, but I did a planting plan for an interior court that is open air but couldn't find. And, subordinate planning, so that's right. You're right. I had subordinate plantings around and in the buildings. But, the genius of the scheme was Church's idea of meandering underneath these pecans. It just brought you out of the building, the lower portion of which was mostly glass so that if you took a break from a conference, you could see there was another place to be. And, I think it was that circulation system was the real contribution that he made. I did do the planning plans; that is correct. But those were largely ornamental trees, and shrubs, and ground cover beds, and such.

And it did not occur to me until this minute that clearly I must have gotten something out of that experience because I think that preceded the Marietta Square Development Plan.

#### **ON MARIETTA SQUARE**

I think that out of that experience with Tommy Church, and walking with him among those trees, and flowing as freely as one could, left with me an appreciation of the idea that you can move in a fluid fashion in an open space, and at the same time that you give direction. And, an application of that knowledge or that experience was I do believe reflected in the plan that you subsequently developed for Marietta Square in the middle of downtown Marietta, GA. And, it was an effort to do a similar thing, that is, to let people move through a space in a free flowing fashion rather than a rigid radial system of walks, and do the least possible damage to the existing mature trees. So, I had not made the connection until this morning.

Birnbaum: *Let's talk a little bit about your philosophy about automobiles, and the role of the landscape architect integrating vehicular circulation into design projects.*

Well, I guess we cannot survive without our modern conveniences. And, that not only includes the automobile, but all the utilities we use. We're not going to be able to do without air conditioning or electric lights. The automobile is a utility. Happily, it's movable, maybe not fluid, but it at least can be moved. And, I think it's a system of priorities. You make decisions about where you want these different functions, and instead of being in the midst of the automobile, we found at the Marietta Square project that the automobile that's already surrounded the square need not overtake that space, but rather there could be created adjacent pockets that were visually connected that would



encourage people to still come to the same source, but to leave their car like leaving your coat at the door, you leave your car in this alcove or designated space and move on. But, our automobiles are like our overcoats, and we each travel with one. And, you just have to make priority decisions as to whether you're going to be in it 24 hours a day or if you're going to find an acceptable place to put it. Clearly, there's the danger problem, and hazard of crossing, and so on. So, the real challenge to any landscape architect is finding a way to eliminate those conflicts, and certainly as you suggest, the place for the automobiles at the continuing education center was done in such a way that the primary pedestrian area was just that, pedestrian. And, you don't even see automobiles except on the adjacent streets some distance away.

We talked about the preserving downtown park as opposed to making it parking, I-N-G, which was an easy play of words with the Chamber of Commerce in downtown Marietta. And from that conference and confrontation came a number of commissions over time, a housing project, a civic center plan that could be implemented over time. And, eventually, because of our familiarity with Marietta, we were invited along with five other firms to submit proposals for a plan for the redevelopment, a study, for the redevelopment of downtown Marietta. And, the team I put together was given that commission. And this, I believe, was in the 1970's. 1979 was the completed work. Marietta was in a state of transition, as all of metropolitan Atlanta always is. But people were leaving the traditional marketplace. The only thing that kept people in downtown Marietta was the county government. And everybody eventually had to go to downtown Marietta to go to the courthouse. But, there was a need to revitalize, or at least look at the possibility of revitalizing downtown. I thought the solution was not a landscape solution in the sense that we were going to draw pretty lines, and solve problems with that. But rather, is it economically feasible to cause downtown Marietta to be anything other than it is? So, I engaged the interest of an economist. And the second thing I decided to do was to determine whether or not there were some traffic alternatives. There was a stranglehold of movement of traffic right around the square, which made it impossible to get from one side or the other in retail business. So, I got the attention of a traffic planner. Thirdly, I thought that since Marietta is older than Atlanta, or its structures are, or there's something left up there, it was important to identify anything that was architecturally significant. So, I got the attention of an architectural historian. And lastly, I wanted a real coordinator as a town planner, and I engaged a friend who was teaching at Georgia Tech in planning. And, the team we put together was accepted. We studied about 200 acres of downtown Marietta, which is cut through by a railroad, the main line, Louisville and Nashville rail line, and conflicting east-west traffic. Anyway, the whole idea was to hold a series of seminars and public meetings that brought into being a commission, a group of people who met on a regular basis. I think we met every two weeks or something like that, and eventually came to some conclusions that were recommendations for change; and at the same time, saving anything that was valuable to the community or valuable visually just to the good life of Marietta. We made a model about half as big as this table of all of downtown Marietta, and held a series of meetings. I got great response, and then implementation has been piecemeal.

*Birnbaum, Tunnell and Daugherty talk about Marietta Square and look at drawings.*



Well, there was one gentleman who came up as a property owner on the north side of the square adjacent to the theatre, which is still in dispute up there. And he was so old, this is 1979-1980. He was old enough to know every building that was there, and he said, you know, I don't know why you're hiring this historian. Nothing up here is historically significant. I saw every one of these buildings get built in my lifetime. Extended as it was, there was no need to really be concerned about them. But, there they are. In the context of a community of buildings, they were important.

And there was an inner urban street car line that traveled from downtown Atlanta Five Points out here. This was the terminus, and there were stretches along that way in the vicinity of Smyrna where the train went 50 mile an hour. It was an inner urban, leather seats, comfortable, you settled in, no seatbelts, but you settled it, and it just took off.

Birnbaum: *This is actually a very complex plan. You've got National Register overlay and it's multi-dimensional in terms of the way that you're looking at historic fabric.*

Well, you see, Marietta was what Atlanta once was. And, Atlantans are very aware of the brashness and newness, and proud of it. But in the process, we've lost so much, just as in my family, I told you we'd just sold my mother and my grandmother's house. And it's now replaced with something, a building I'm proud of, but I'm sorry we lost the property. However, it did a lot of beneficial things for other people in my family, of which there were a number. But, how many times can you turn yourself inside out and still be the same? And, that's what this city is constantly doing. One of the great things which Spencer early on recognized about our plan for this neighborhood, which is Carrere and Hastings was its integrity, its physical, geographical integrity. And, the gnawing away at this edge is a constant threat to what's in here. And, it isn't defensive simply to preserve what's here, to preserve what really is good for whomever. When I am living here, or somebody else is 50 years, what's here has some value, and I think that's what we were trying to say here was with this thing, there is value in this complex in this community, that a lot of the people in Marietta could have cared less like the elderly man who owned half the properties. I think you've got to live somewhere, and it ought to be some sort of quality of life where you choose to live. And, anyway, we were helping them draw a line.

#### **ON TEACHING AT GEORGIA TECH AND THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

Birnbaum: *One of the things we haven't asked you about is your teaching time at Georgia Tech and the University of Georgia, and you have an opportunity, if you'd like to say something about that experience.*

Actually that work at the University of Georgia was I think, just two occasional crit visits. It was not like the spring lecture series that I did at Georgia Tech with architecture. So it was just appearing as an outside critic at a jurying. That's all. I had had the good fortune of continuing very good personal relationships with Hubert Owens as well as Allen Stovall, who was a remarkably fine man and teacher, and now retired, I believe, from that school. But it was just a visiting critic relationship.



## ARE YOU A “MODERNIST”?

Birnbaum: *I was just wondering if you consider yourself a modernist?*

I'm not sure what that means. I have considered myself a rational designer who with the client arrives at a program that makes sense for a piece of land. I never sought to associate myself or to become a stylist of any sort. It's not quite like Mr. Schutze, who would not give the time of day to anybody who wasn't working with an axis. But I just believe that the landscape architect's role is to solve a problem, to give shape, form to the solution that comes from considering the land, the needs, the budget, time as a factor. I mean, with any client, commercial or residential, how long you are going to be on this property is important. I mean, how effectively, or how quickly shall we bring this thing to fruition. I think I was telling you about our experience in Berlin on that hospital where the landscape architect who was in charge for the Tear Garden in Berlin that had been utterly destroyed during the Second World War, primarily for the need of people to have firewood, they cut down the trees, and after that opened the ground for growing vegetables. They developed two parallel planting schemes, one that would guarantee immediate flush growth so that you had quick growing willows and elms and such as that. And then there was a parallel scheme for beeches and oaks and hemlocks and so on. And when we, Martha and I arrived there in 1970, they had just begun culling some of the rapidly growing stuff. But it had given form to the spaces because of what had previously been wonderful clearings in the wilderness had become an open plane. And the landscape architect was able to create a sequence of spaces out of these rapidly growing plants. But he thought both for the short run and for the long term, and I think that's what we all need to do as designers is to be aware of time as a factor in addition to soil and drainage and sunlight and shade and so on.

But the modernist, I've never sought a label. I don't recall being referred to as a modernist or even hearing the term at Harvard, nor at Georgia, for that matter. You were assigned a problem and you were supposed to be a good mechanic or a good artist to translate it into a solution. Nor have I, I've often been asked about the signature form or gadget or detail, and I've never found myself uncomfortable with the curve. They have a role. And there are places where you would intentionally introduce a curve, but it usually had to do with the terrain and the pedestrian pattern, the flow through space.

I've been more concerned with scale and how people react to the gardens that I design than I have been with any specific vocabulary of plants or paving materials. I've never sought to build walls where they weren't needed. I have spoken about working all over the Southeast early on, and less and less so because I don't need to. But from this rolling terrain in the Piedmont with sometimes significant grade changes and real erosion problem to the coastal plain of Georgia and Alabama and Florida, for that matter, obviously you would contain space or shape people's reaction to space with different means. . . . A wonderful, brilliant landscape architect, [A.E. Bye] a little younger than I, who did that perfectly beautiful ha-ha wall--somewhere in Kentucky, as I recall. I mean, it was just stunning. But he learned from doing, he learned from experience, he learned from observation. He learned to use something that was appropriate in that location. And I've always tried to make gardens or spaces that were appropriate to their situation. In fact with residences I constantly



insist that clients feel comfortable in the space. I said it's your garden, and when we get through, it's not my garden, it's your garden, and you're going to live it. And I want you to feel that it fits, just like a good pair of shoes.

Birnbaum: *I'm just going to follow up on A. E. Bye, because we haven't discussed other landscape architects excite you -- historically, today and tomorrow. You just mentioned Mr. Bye and are there others?*

### **ON IAN MCHARG**

I was intrigued with what McHarg became and the comprehensive approach he had, which, I mean, we're inclined to think of him in terms of broad geographical areas, but the principles would apply whether it was a front yard, a backyard or fields or vast acreages. And it was just the comprehensive awareness of what a site offered it seems to me is the challenge that the landscape architect needs to respond to.

## **Elements of Design**

### **FITNESS**

I showed you the other day one of the zoning projects that's going on, where we are today confronted in this neighborhood. And if there's anything I resent I think it's a preconceived notion applied. Again, it's like being fitted with the wrong shoe. It won't fit. This project up on Peachtree is just that, all that was important was a strong axis and something that looked attractive on paper. In fact he designers actually said as much. At this point all that's important is want something that looks good.

Birnbaum: *How do you feel about that?*

Well, it's like what Scarlet's mammy said, it ain't fitting, it ain't fitting. You know, it doesn't work and you've violated one of basic of the role of the landscape architect. If you're going to solve a problem, it fits. It works. And hopefully the other element is to make it attractive and useful. And if you do those three things you've accomplished about as much as you can.

Birnbaum: *Where do you think that breakdown is occurring?*

I would say its common to, I would say all designers are subject to ego, and that's really what was at play is this designer, it didn't really matter what he was, whether he was an interior or whether he was an architect or a landscape architect. He was satisfying himself with a form or a representation or something that pleased him. And in fact he was poorly serving his client, because he was producing something that wasn't going to work and was just going to waste time, aside from the fact he didn't solve the problem, it's going to waste time and waste money, and just cause a collision with some other governmental agency that's going to have to review this unworkable thing.



## COLLABORATION

Birnbaum: *Can you speak a little bit as a person who's worked in a variety of capacities as to the ideal scenario in terms of the role of a landscape architect within the project team and how one works with their colleagues?*

Well, just to recognize in the first place that they are colleagues and that each of you have something to contribute, that each of you has a role, a singular role just by definition of your specialty. But on the other hand you have a role that's mandatory that you find a way to work with your colleague and particularly on larger projects where architecture is important and, say, civil engineering is important. Unless the landscape architect has some knowledge of each and an awareness of the impact of each relevant to that job, there's not much likelihood that the end result of the design is going to be satisfactory. There should be collaboration and I have always tried to collaborate with particularly architects and more, just as often with civil engineers to evolve a workable scheme.

Birnbaum: *Following up then, would you say that in your half-century plus of practice, what kind of shift have you seen in your approach?*

Well, there's a vast awareness now of the value of the professional landscape architecture that of course didn't exist 50 years ago. In the first place, there are more of us. In the second place, we are better trained. We are better informed. We are more likely to be able to work with other design professions. And in the process just as my own teaching experience at Georgia Tech with the architectural students, at least for that 10-year period, there would be maybe 30 people at time for that one-quarter who knew something about landscape architecture that they didn't know before. So I may have impregnated 5% of that population, but that's 5% who didn't know it before. But subsequent to that and over time, I would often be tapped on the shoulder by somebody who said, Mr. Daugherty, I was in your class, you know, this sort of thing, and the value of that experience to them. And obviously, the more you could influence them, the more satisfactory their practice would be in the future. And as I have also said, I think one of the greatest delights was finding that someone decided to change their major from architecture to landscape architecture and that happened a few times.

## ACCEPTING CHANGE

Birnbaum: *Knowing that change is inevitable, how do you feel about the kind of change that happens both personally and as a landscape architect?*

Well, first of all, I guess certainly I accept the fact that change is going to take place. I mean, we see it daily. I mean, your parents die. Your friends die. People move away. People change their careers. So, I mean, it's inevitable that things are going to change. They're not always happy changes. And professionally I've seen a number of my "landscapes" disappear because they were replaced with something else, presumably a better use. But I don't know, I mean, trees fall in the forest and new ones sprout. I mean, I've just accepted that because in the place in which I live



change is always in my urban life, change has always occurred. And I've come to expect that. I guess one of the reasons I'm so anxious that when I complete a job professionally, that it has not only solved the problem but it has a form that's going to mature and hopefully fairly quickly. Because again, this is a place where people move in and move out frequently. There's hardly any building in town that's over 50 years over age that isn't threatened, because the economy just pushes change. So I think we have to be quick change artists in this town.

Birnbaum: *In an ideal world if you were to say oh, go take a look at the designs I did for X, what's the message that you want people to take away?*

Well, in the first place, we could learn more. The other day you were asking about the frailty of the practice of landscape architecture with those people, practitioners who don't know much about plant materials. It's the challenge of knowing so much that we seem to have to know more and more. The people who are custodians of the governor's mansion or any other property that I'm involved with really need to know something about land and plants. Unfortunately it's like janitorial work. It's, you know, if you push the broom hard enough, you'll clean that floor. And with the observation that we made at Pace Academy where the pressure washer did a job, but in the process was detrimental and was destroying the very surface it was meant to preserve.

People don't know how to react to the landscape. We are so far removed, the bulk of us, from actually putting our hands in the ground or working with a plant or waiting long enough to see a plant mature, that we just don't know what to do with them, so we beat the hell out of them. And as we saw the shrubs at the governor's mansion having been mutilated out of ignorance, and that's all it is. And the ignorance is almost encouraged because there's always somebody a little more ignorant who can come along and charge less for their labor, one who can do the work of beating the hell out of the plant. You know, it's shameful, but we design these things that are supposed to last and they're going to only last as long as they are maintained well.

At All Saints where we visited, the forms are very strong, and I think that's one of the reasons I'm really so pleased with it, and that kind of Canterbury Court, which we saw yesterday, the masonry forms are what give it the bone structure. As we saw at Canterbury Court, trees have come and gone. You had not seen it before, but 35 years ago there were different trees. But the basic shadow patterns and light are very similar and they accomplish the same thing. But the transportation patterns, the evolution of the spaces, are there and they will not change unless somebody starts bulldozing. At All Saints the enclosures are there and it's always important to think in terms of somebody walking in space. It's not an abstract design. It's not just something created to look good on paper to get a zoning permit, but rather it's to create a space that can be experienced. And you can give people a frightful experience as well as a pleasing experience. I mean, you can encumber them and enclose them, tighten them, squeeze them or liberate them in each of our efforts. And I think at All Saints it's a very pleasant sequence of spaces that serve different purposes and in the process we've had to look at everything from soil, to appropriate hard surfaces, to drainage, to likely patterns of abuse by just the user, and obviously selecting plant materials that would require minimum attention by the ignorant. I don't know. If you know enough, you can do a good job.



## ON BEING A RATIONAL DESIGNER

I think there are some tried and true expressions which I have used before, but not original with me, but obviously form follows function, and good design is good if it does good. I've never, I don't think I've consciously entered into any two, three or four consecutive projects with any one goal in mind, other than to solve that specific project and as I have often told people, the most exciting project I'm working on is the one I'm working on at the moment, because it consumes me. I don't see that there's anything other than a desire to encourage people to move through a space and to be able to do it comfortably. If there are challenges, if there are dangers or there are hazards to a site, then there are some things to be overcome, but I don't think there's any sort of thematic scheme. You all maybe have seen things other than the fact that I like to make people feel comfortable.

## ON MOVEMENT

*Tunnell: Let's talk about that one element – movement -- is as far away from an ism as you can get, but that sense of movement. Just talk about how you feel about movement. I happen to know that you were quite a dancer, perhaps still are. But how is that, how does that sense of movement enliven or animate your work? Or are you conscious of it?*

Well, I just, clearly, if you're not moving you're static. And there would be some times where you want a quiet static experience. You want a contemplative environment, but most of the time and the commissions that I have had, as I recall, were ones that required people to get from one point to another. And my desire was to make that as, that passage from one place to another as comfortable, as safe, as enticing as possible. I've often used the analogy that what we do is practice the art of the fan dance in that we entice people to move when they cannot see completely everything beyond an obstruction into another space. And I think that subtlety is what keeps people literally moving. There are very few places unless you're, say, in an art gallery and there's one featured painting and you want solitude that you're going to stand and ponder forever and ever. But in the out of doors there's always movement. There's movement by the wind or the branches or they're going to attract your eye. In my little garden there's some guara out there that currently the bees are interrupting and I'll look out into the garden and these wands will be going up and down. And it's sort of funny as if the plants are suddenly animated, and in fact they are, because the bees have invisibly visited an individual flower and weighted that little branchlet down and then it comes back up and it goes on to the next one.

So I look out there and the guara are just waving at me. And it's not the wind. But it's something else. And as the sun moves and the shadows form different patterns on the floor. I remember one day when we had an eclipse and there was that strange moment. It was an exceptional eclipse, actually, in which double images were on the ground. And it lasted for about five minutes. It was sort of like being out of focus or putting magnifying glasses on, but suddenly there were two of everything in the shadow instead of just simply the silhouette of the branch or the leaf. There's so



much movement that just occurs in nature that I think it's natural that we would want to follow it. I mean, nature is a pied piper that will draw you out in spite of yourself.

### **LESSONS LEARNED AND SHARED WITH STUDENTS**

*Birnbaum: We've been talking all about the faculty that you had, and knowing that later on, you yourself became an educator as well as a practitioner. I'm curious if there were things that you carried from other professors that became vehicles for the way you taught others.*

I think that my response would be, what I felt was the test of a design solution at Harvard was that it had to work. It had to please, and it had to be achievable, was the thing that encouraged me most at Georgia Tech because having had the experience, it wasn't contemporary. But having 25 years before, experienced very sterile training there, it was terribly important to me that present day architects, in training anyway, learned that there was another world, and that buildings existed in that context in nature. And so, I was very anxious to get that relationship. And, you couldn't design a building without being aware of, designing the site, and that the two had to be done together. So, I found myself, I'm sure, probably very preachy about architecture and landscape architecture being a collaborative function. And, anyway, that was the major role. It was not trying to be Norman Newton, or Stephen Hamblin, or anybody, but just an awareness to work, which is what I was told at Harvard. In order to be a good designer, you had to work, that we had to do these things together. And, in the ten years I was doing this, and it was an optional course, and that the numbers of students grew over that period of time, was really great. Towards the end there would be something like 30 students, which I thought was pretty good. And, they were there by choice. But, the greatest satisfaction was the seduction of one or two into landscape architecture. That was really great.

### **WHAT IS A CULTURAL LANDSCAPE?**

I don't know. It's simply a reflection of the environment you know; the cultural landscape in the Southeast generally would probably be a little different from the cultural landscape of Atlanta. It certainly would be different from someone's rural experience, or if I had grown up in New England or in some dark, and dreary, wintry place, I might have a different attitude. But, in my case, in this place, a large part of the culture is the meeting of the white race and the black, and what we've learned from each other, and how we engage in activities indoors, out of doors. But I usually think of black childhood experience as being very animated. And, I remember children being far more agile with jumping rope than I, and very often with great rhythm and grace, and usually wonderful chance to help that process go. I think of the bottle collections in cemeteries, and fragments that show treasures, things that were important to either the dead, or the family of the dead. While I may not imitate those, those make an impression on me. But, they also occur in the forms and edges of the perimeters of gardens that I made, whether they're rural people or urban people. So, I've seen a certain richness that has occurred, and unhappily, more and more rare in which the personal expression is waning. It's like so much of what we do experience today is a certain sameness, or the same palate, or the same diet. We're so good at communicating that we seem to all see and want the same things. We're made to want the same things. One of the great



opportunities for us in landscape architecture in this part of the world, the piedmont, 1,000 feet above sea level is the plant material. So, one could say how you respond to that plant, or how you use it, or how you abuse it, can get to be a characteristic of a certain mindset. We were recently in the coastal plain town in Edisto, in South Carolina, and I noticed how with even the most ragged collection of adventurous plants, in some portion of that trip, all the yards had clipped these plants into unusual shapes. That is, they were individually trained to be something. It wasn't really truly topiary, but it was. And, it could have been just a playful response to have something to control nature, or to give shape, or to make an impression. But, we have house after house after house for a period of about 20 miles. And then, it didn't happen again. But, it was in that little enclave, that portion of South Carolina, it had become the thing. And this was not just a matter of pollarding Crepe Myrtles, which is almost universal, but these were just privet hedges, or whatever native material that had sprouted in the yard. There was a time when I remember driving through much of the south when you'd often see tree trunks whitewashed, and it was sort of like wearing spats. You'd have huge oak trees in a swept yard, which is imminently practical. That way, there are no leaves. You can see the snakes coming. But the trees will be whitewashed year after year, maybe a couple of times a year so that they were almost caked in paint probably as high as a man could reach. And, a theory was that it protected the trees from bugs and made it possible for you to see anything that was coming up in the air. I don't know what other explanation there might be. But suddenly, it was sort of like a sign of respectability, of keeping your picket fence painted, or keeping something in good repair. You made sure you swept the yard, no grass, just bare dirt, and you regularly whitewashed your tree trunks. That era seems to be waning. I don't see whitewashed trees anymore, but it was, in a way, just as entertaining as these clipped bushes that were impromptu topiaries in somebody's sort of front yard parterre, a country parterre made up of clipped privets like bottles or thermos bottles. I'm not sure. Beyond that, it would obviously be a collection of personal expressions of things that happened to people who share something in common. What we now share in common is a knowledge through magazines, and publications of how things are done all over the country and all over the world. And so, we see, and often adopt or adapt, one or the other, inappropriate plants, and inappropriate treatments of things, in a totally different climatic zone. I don't know what a cultural landscape is.

#### **ON GIVING FORM AND CREATING SPACE**

*Tunnell: A number of times you referred to giving form and being a form giver. So, could you talk a little bit about that, in a sense, as a legacy.*

Well, I suppose if I were a sculptor, it would be easier to explain that form because you're doing something in three dimensions that you either can hold in your hand or build up by hand into some edifice, some object. When we work out of doors, it is sort of like trying to hold mercury in your hand. It's going to ooze out some way. I mean, we're dealing with open space that is going to go to Alabama if we don't interrupt it in some fashion. And, the only purpose in giving form is to limit the expanse of a space to solve somebody's wishes, or just to solve some problem. It has to have a purpose. I don't think we just go out, and draw lines in the sand, and call that form giving. But, I think of again as a man moving through space that you create an envelope that is comfortable for him or the multitudes in that particular situation, that is, whether it's in a front yard, or whether it's



in a football field. You're seeking to define space to limit activities, or to encourage activity. I don't know, but I think we talked the other day about somewhat the role of the artist, and application of decorative themes, or how to translate a painting into three dimensions. And, you clearly are going to have to go through a sculptural attitude to be able to do that. And, I guess I constantly use the image of the overcoat or a suit of clothes. I mean, it has to be something that is comfortable and that fits both the person and the situation. We are molders of space, and we are molders of people's attitudes when we do this.

Tunnell: *What are the things that you want people to come away from your spaces with?*

Comfort.

Tunnell: *What does that mean? What does it mean that you can provide that?*

Well, it means a great deal to me. I would hate to be offensive in the first place. I would hate to create a space that was too hot, or physically uncomfortable, or emotionally uncomfortable, or disquieting. We mentioned in passing the other day, the FDR Memorial in Washington, which Halprin did, which in a beautiful sequence of rooms gave a series of separate experiences, but they were all interrelated, like passing through a portal from one experience to another. And, it was like chapters in a book. The purpose there was to have people have an experience, and to establish a relationship with whatever that message was, whether it's an image, or a sound, or an experience of light. But I would always want to think that you are not harassed by space, or that you are not feeling you were uncomfortable in a Klieg light setting.

### **A RECORD FOR LIVING**

Birnbaum: *What makes you tick, and what is the message for someone that's practicing today? Why they should embrace the continuum, and why they should look at how a landscape has evolved?*

I don't know. I suppose it comes as you earlier asked me how to define landscape architecture, and I said it essentially was a record of living. And, I think that among the talents you bring to any project is yourself. And I happen to value a sense of place, a sense of continuity, an essentially usefulness to any plan that's evolved so that I saw that the past is an integral part of the present. And I thought those things were important. I thought that first it ought to be fiscally responsible. There's no point in painting a pretty picture if it's not worth repairing. So, that's why I thought the economist was the most important thing first. It would make it clear that yes, we can build a city around in this existing space. I don't know. I suppose it's just rational thinking that it makes sense to me that you make sure the foundation is good before you start going up in the air.

I suppose each of us could respond differently to a challenge, but I think it's important for one to have a sense of continuity or where you've come from. And, to give you some guide as to where to go. I see no point in undertaking a project which means you're going to destroy something entirely in order to, quote, "rebuild it" unquote. That may not be an improvement, but personally, to me, a town is as alive as the people who are in it. It was important to see the community as a living entity,



and the problems that prevail today are still those of living persons. And, I thought the past living experience and those who are living in it now need to meet somewhere. And the resolution is certainly possible without dynamiting it or destroying it. I don't know, I guess that's just continuity or sense of well being in a place that you know. I don't know how else to answer that.

*Birnbaum: There's a discovery. You go to a site, you go to Marietta, you go to Pace, and then you start to peel back as part of your analysis process I'm assuming, and then you find these acts of discovery. So, maybe perhaps it's this concept of discovery.*

If I were a physician, and had a patient come to me, I would expect and hope that the patient would give me an honest answer about his symptoms, or his pains, or his hopes, or his fears. And I look for that in a client, and I look for that in the land. And I want to know what makes it tick. I want to know what makes it smile or weep.

*Tunnell: My observation is what you didn't say, when you were talking about the team and all that, which is all true, but what motivates you is not just the sense of place but a love of place.*

Well, there's no doubt that I have a great respect for what is and what has been, and I think it's important that people, everybody, we currently as well as somebody comes along have a similar experience to come to know a site or a place of being, or a building, or a garden just for what it is, what it intrinsically is.

As a sort of an answer to your question about the meaning of it all is I don't know why you would bother to lift a pencil if what you did didn't mean something to you, and you felt that it would not mean something that wouldn't benefit someone else just by conveying information, and it was a three dimensional experience from the past that still had application was an opportunity for life and vitality today. It's like I don't throw these pants away because they're dirty today. I'm going to wash them and reuse them. It's salvaging and reusing in some fashion, but it is a lovely place.

I would like to tell you that one of the greatest pleasures I think I've gotten out of this practice of landscape architecture literally is that, making people comfortable, that is, working with people, and often even having to work confrontationally in order to achieve an objective. And, I guess it's because being a child of the depression, of knowing limits at certain times that were confining, but also observing people not having comfort that I undertook intentionally a number of projects that stretched both either my ability to serve them, or my ability to solve a problem. But, I worked intentionally on a number; I guess a dozen public housing projects. I didn't especially enjoy them with Gene Martini because they usually were vast. But the projects that I was given or offered by architects often as in the rural site planning was really to give a measure of comfort to people in housing that they would not have other had. It was a program I believed in, a program I would support today. Part of it probably comes from the fact that Atlanta was the first public housing project in the nation, and Roosevelt came here and dedicated itself in 1936. I'm a New Deal man. Franklin Roosevelt's a saint. And, I think I've tried to use what talent I had to not just solve problems but make something better. Our present zoning squabbles in this neighborhood really have to do with saying, hey, look twice before you make this drastic change before you take away



my four acre woodland and leave me with a barren piece of land, think of the consequences of this development. I've worked with a number of organizations. We had a friend ask me to, out of the blue, to become the vice president of the Atlanta Humane Society because they needed one; that was all. And I thought, well, OK, I can do that. And they probably just want me to draw a plan. And, I'll get that done; well, it wasn't but three weeks before we were out there personally cleaning dog pens, and feeding animals, and even assistance in cajoling animals for euthanasia because the director of the institution was robbing it blind, and stealing the best animals as well as the food, and hauling them off. That was a challenge, and I felt a real civic responsibility.

### **THE HAPPY PRACTITIONER**

Hubert Owens was a great advocate of the need to be of service in community. So, that has been the pattern that I have followed, and undertaken a lot of things that have probably deprived my family as well as my clients over time. If you all meet anybody of the Woodland's family tonight, it's a project that I admired from the outset simply because it was a group of people who were willing to give up their treasure for the good of a community that needed it. So, I worked my tail off on that job, and probably did twice as much work as I should have. But anyway, what it boils down to is I feel fortunate to have this talent, and will, and the skill to produce some good works. And, that's why it's still fun. I penciled a couple of weeks ago, not for you all, but for somebody else, a short biography which was about eight lines and the last line ended up a happy practitioner, and that's the way it'd leave it. There's not much I've done that I think I would undo. But I have been fortunate, the people I've been exposed to, to help me become really happy practitioner. So, I want you to know that.

## **Projects**

*The project descriptions that follow combine discussions both at the Daugherty residence and on location.*

### **THE CHILDRESS RESIDENCE**

Charles, you asked about native plants. You'll find almost exclusively native plants through out, these are Yaupon, which is the same thing we'll see down at All Saints where that cloister is, and mountain laurel. Now, these rhododendrons may well prove to be a mistake, but they've got a watering system so that they will come on. But, I was looking for something course and loose. I think it's just simple evergreen as one of the opacas. But, we really got blockage, which is what they wanted. You can see, this year was a marvelous year for mountain laurel. It's just fabulous. I think what happens when we had the Easter freeze, it took the leaves away from a lot of trees, and the mountain laurel got more sun than it normally does. So, it's just a superb blossoming year, some native hawthorn, wild azaleas, oak leaf hydrangea. Down in that draw, we've got some hemlocks because on the side of the house, there's a guest wing on the right, and it's to protect us from the sun, the National Park Service access. Now see, this is one of the native rhododendron that has been here since before we came, and how well it's done even in this drought.



Birnbaum: *Who is the architect?*

Jim Choate, and he's one of the partners with Serber Barber, Chote and Hertlein. Now, the magnolia was there, and obviously all this forest was here. And, the burfords push you this way. The family always goes to the left. And, this is really a nice place. And, this is not my style, but it really works well. It's a beautiful piece of architecture. And, as you can imagine, it opens to the rear with almost unbroken glass to the back to get the distant, southern view. And, if they're lucky, and the sun's just right, they can see the skyline.

The architect, I would say, dominates entirely except for the plantings and this curve. You notice there are no circles on this job, I want you to observe that, but all the curves are mine and the extent of this wall is mine. He was very anxious and you'll find when we go around the other side that, see how this wall goes through over there? There's a swimming pool back over there. And so he was very anxious to have these structural lines prevail and stick out and it works.

It's just a beautifully thought out scheme. The idea being that you could see water from both sides, theoretically, the swimming pool there and this pool here. Jim didn't want anything to interrupt these lines but I just really felt we needed a Japanese maple and anyway, all of that works out. We've had a struggle getting stuff established in here but anyway. I'm talking about the perennial stuff. Now that's a hawthorne which is just fabulous in the fall with the red fruit which of course, hang on for half the winter against this warm stone.

Do you know this *Clematis armandii*? I had this [garden] in a combination of *liriope* and *daylilies* which I find very compatible but she didn't like, just plain didn't like *liriope*. But she kept it here underneath this red leafed maple in the fall.

*Continuing around the side of the house:*

And you know the dwarf *viburnum opulus nana*. I love that. It's a nice little plant. Has nice little flat bundles of blossom. And then the *dauidii*, hearts a busting. Don't you like it? Do you know this? We call it hearts a busting.

It's a deep red seed, here it is, and the sepals are orange. And it's dead here, but the combination is just really something. And Queen Anne's lace which is hard to beat. This is full western sun and lots of brown eyed Susan.

Isn't that nice? That is one thing we have here is pine needles. The property line -- see that flood light -- that tree light? That's about the line.

And that was the library in the middle. A little more *Ilex glabra*. But again, you don't see anything here that isn't native until you get here. That's not native. But accept it as southern. That's the black gum (tupelo), which of course was here. The tension in this beam whenever you see like that with stone always bothers me. But it comes off. I mean it's far more believable up there.



Everything outside the building was mine. But this was intentional and massive to be an easy to care for plant. I mean it almost doesn't care where it is as long as it gets sun. And we just whacked the upper row. And there's a detention pond down at the bottom, which is no pond but collects what little water there is and it goes to a pipe down here. And you see the dining room. What's really strange to me about this when the design evolved it looked like, you know, I had been there. 50 years ago this was what people were doing. And so here's this young man who's the same age as Elizabeth [the Daugherty's daughter] who's designed this, who was her classmate at Lovett. So it's redux. We can go across here, I think. And the kitchen is on the left on those windows. Yeah. Here's this wonderful screened porch.

Tunnell: *It is a tropical wood?*

Something they shouldn't have cut. A cousin of mine was very proud of his new porch he added on his place up at Grandview and I said that's a wood that's never been cut. Oh, I didn't cut it, I just bought it. The yaupons and those obviously we have to prune which it needs about every third year. You cut them down to three feet or so to keep them but it's to keep you from feeling you're going to fall off this place. But we've still got this overlook.

Let's go this way. But from here you can see what we had to do with this bank and that's a combination of vincas, vinca minor and vinca major and January jasmine, a Carefree, it'll give them a lift in the winter and breaks off into the forsythia. And this is, I don't know if you get the autumn blooming plum or cherry that blooms in the autumn and in the spring. All during construction they had a feeding stalk out here for the deer because there are deer all down through here going down to the river. And I don't know what bad habits that formed for them but. What I wanted you to see is the extent of this hillside and the way the house is really piled up.

This is a summersweet which is native here and these will be white a fragrant shortly. And we use lots of sweetshrub, that has that little pod of seeds that are very fragrant in the fall and you break it off and you put in your linens, like lavender. Down here we had to form these ditches to interrupt the flow, break the flow, of water and it occurs three times and then it's diverted to the sides and then that water collects and goes into the detention pond at the bottom. The beech tree was already here. That's one thing that was here. All the others are new and they're obviously struggling through this ten month drought. Sydney has just added these gaillardias. . . . See, these loblolly pines don't have anything like the character of that echinata that I was pointing out at the bottom of my yard. I mean they're just big damn trees. You're grateful for them but if you know about the others these look like nothing. This is not native but everything else I think we've seen is. Hey, Sydney!

*Continuing inside, the children are introduced.*

I think what I enjoy most about this place is the very logical breakup into guest wing, family wing, and the joining element and each one is separated visually. Everybody has separation, has privacy and this is a complete unit in itself. Each one of these is complete as you go through. That's wonderfully clean and simple.



## THE COMSTOCK RESIDENCE

*The Comstocks are introduced; they all walk the property together.*

Mr. Comstock: *Look at these two houses tied together. Ed did that.*

*Mrs. Comstock tells about the former owners of the property- the Howels. The group continues through the woods.*

I don't know if you want to go down, but I'd take a look from this terrace. Pearson was the architect.

Pearson. His dad's firm was Pearson, Tittle, and Narrows in Montgomery.

*Conversation continues on the patio.*

Tunnell: *Did you shape this space Ed?*

Yes, I did. What we did was push the house off the ridge, put it obviously indefinitely below the ridge, and then gained a second floor in the process. Then, this thing is entirely on fill, so there's a substantial wall here. And, I certainly can see some cleavage here. And all the fill rotted.

This is the *Rhododendron caroliniana*, which the alternate name is *minus*. And, it is more adapted than the regular *rhododendron* that's down there is a creek, and we've got, sure enough, *Rhododendron macrophila*, not *macrophila*, what am I talking about? *Maxima*, that's what I'm talking about, yeah. But this one is more tolerant of the Piedmont conditions. I can have the terrace web here, which means from back in there, would be up on your nose so to speak, when you sat down. The idea was to intentionally push it down so when you're in that living room, you will always be able to see out into the woods. And so, this was just a device to accomplish that. And, you will notice it's not a complete circle, but there is a radius, as a way of holding it together. Yeah, there's the road there. You can see it right over there. Anyway, this is woodland that she was able to maintain. It really is a quiet sanctuary. There's no traffic on either of these streets. The woods are nice.

*The interview continues up the hill to the front of the house.*

Before we go out here . . . this used to be an open lawn right there. Her gardenia's in bloom and mine isn't. [Daugherty comments on the plantings]- [Here is a] big leaf version of the yaupon, the vomitoria, which is down at All Saints over the arcade, but also was a clump just inside the gate at the Childress but it is the bigger leaf and glossier than the one over there. [Looking at a house in the woods] . . . They have rented this out from time to time, and it may or may not have a tenant. I wouldn't know. But the mast of the house is original. While you all are looking, I'm going to make our adieus.



## **PACE ACADEMY**

Initially, the task was to make use of that plateau where the swimming pool was, and to join what they had created was that first building, this building, and that one, to join these to get across to what was then the gymnasium. And of course, because I've never seen this, or any of the other graduated building going down the hill, they own all the, you can see the clearing to that hillside. And they extended ball fields there. And, the process as Spencer was just saying created great fights confronting the adjacent neighbors.

*Birnbaum asks Ed to provide a little context for the original designer, William Pauley*

The Pace Academy occupies grounds, the estate, and the house, of the Ogden family who built this building in the 1930s. And, they had become a private school, and really rather restricted in its extent. But this wonderful Norman translation of north Georgia granite had elaborate and very strong axial gardens that were developed by Mr. William Pauley. They were quite extensive. But the whole of the scheme lies upon this sort of Gibraltar that the building itself is, and the school had developed classrooms on the one side and a gymnasium on the other so that they could begin an expansion, take an increased student body of these terraces that were in Mr. Pauley's scheme, stepping down the hill as the ground continues to slope in the yards. There had been, among other things, a swimming pool on the low plateau which, while drained and dry, was a threat to the safety of the children, and it was thought possible to make it a common meeting ground for all the children. Well, to develop that plan, you could make it a plaza. And then, the advantage would be that it restricted the growth for the trees that exist near the house. So, it secured the trees near the house, allowed a plausible low, and the next key element was to provide a covered walkway so in winter weather or heavy rains, that one could go from one side of the campus to the other. It's a splendid, strong parti, and my job was really to give frame to that new pedestrian circulation, and at the same time create a nice little eddying place, a place to study to talk, to sit, or to rest. That's all.

*Tunnell: You were fortunate to build this at time when there were not so many project managers involved.*

*Birnbaum: These have all done pretty well.*

Yeah, they have. This is very good for the time, and looks like they haven't abused it. The light fixtures are the same. Dan Kennedy selected these things. I had no idea they had expanded that much.

## **CANTERBURY COURT**

*Prior to the site visit this discussion transpired at the Daugherty residence while reviewing design drawings and photographs.*



This is Peachtree Road, which in this area probably gets 35,000 cars a day. Here in Buckhead at my intersection it's 42,000. This was a collaborative project between two Episcopal churches. It is indeed for retired people who may enter at the age of 65. But, they have to achieve 65. And apparently, there are no terminal limits. There were two residences on two lots adjacent, and essentially were high and flat across the front at Peachtree, and then it began to fall to the rear. And, they folded in on each other so that there is a valley down the middle. And indeed, there is a stream where water eventually collects and comes out of the bottom of the property. It's a nine story building with balconies all the way around, well, on the two sides, the Peachtree side and the Garden side. These ends are blind, and the whole idea was to give a permanent residence that would give people a safe, secure place to be in, and a garden to move to so that one could go out into this garden, which descends slowly, and sort of a uniform gradient, either out at grade and be on what amounts to a raised terrace almost like a giant balcony, or come out on the lower floor where there is a larger terrace, which you could convene a number of people.

But this garden, this wall encourages you to descend slowly, and gradually, and comfortably onto a plateau, which is the first open lawn, and then the paving for this loop right here was a very smooth, easy surface. And, from there down, after that loop, all of these walks were at this time designed to be of gravel, of very fine gravel, with the premise that the loops gave you an opportunity to talk the short route, or the slightly longer route, or the very long route, and to change textures as well. Down in this place was a storm water collection. We now call them detention ponds, but we decided to make, a silk purse out of a sow's ear, and make a bog garden out of it, which is very pleasant. It was one of the earliest tenants who was there who just loved gardening. She had been brought up Druid Hills, Ms. Hancock, from St. Luke's. And she'd go down there in fisherman's rubberized clothing, and get down in the swamp. And they were always scared Ms. Hancock was going to disappear. But it's filled with cypress, and bulrushes, and aquatics. And, then there's a bridge that crosses, there's an earthen dam, and over it is a bridge that intentionally is painted vermilion to be a visual destination from this raised terrace of a thing. And beyond that, it looks like the world ends until you get down here, and then there's a small, wooded garden. And, within that area there was, and still is, I believe, about a five foot diameter of tulip poplar there that, of course, had its roots in that stream.

The other feature of the thing that was manmade was this parking lot. And because, as people got older, they might have trouble getting to there and back from their site, we decided to make the parking lot a gradient of no more than a fall of 5%. So, by the time you got down here, we were 12 feet out of the ground in this area so that this lower embankment, which diminishes as you rise and come back up to grade, was a great opportunity for a rush of new trees, and ornamental flowering shrubs. So, it was first filled with forsythia, and spirea, and buddleia, and quince, and so on. And, we also put in some crabapples, and some pines. And eventually, almost all of the flowering shrubs have been shaded out. And, they're in the process of transitioning into smaller things and ground covers. But, there was a neat alpine walk. You had a way to go down these grander, open, generous stairs, or a narrow one would also bleed off and allow you to come into the parking lot. But it also gave access to what I call the Alpine Walk, which was this shelf halfway between this grade and that grade. And it too was gravel and then granite treads. So, it was a little more, and intentionally challenged so that if you were a resident, you had plenty of opportunities to entertain



yourself. You could walk completely around the building, and that was simple. Or, you could make a loop of varied links. Anyway, it was to give a variety of challenges to residents of varying ages.

*On site at Canterbury Court, Daugherty added the following.*

I think that the charm for the residents of this place has really been this sequence of movement through paths that give you options for being first closed and then open, and in paths that have varying length. The canopies of trees really put a ceiling on a part of it, so you never see all of it at one time. I think that the exploration is here. There's always an invitation to go a little bit further. We planted these Chinese chestnuts, which are just huge by comparison. And then, this is that fill slope that I've described to you as initially filled with flowering summer spring and summer shrubs. All the pines are ours from 35 years ago. The ginkgo was a gift. I believe this is deutzia here. But, you can see this slope must once have been much sunnier. It's due south facing, and it was on this slope that we had quince, and forsythia, and spirea, and so on. It was a quick fix, but it also gave people things to cut and take back into their apartments. But, it gave entertainment while the whole landscape was maturing. And, this upper trail is what I call the alpine walk. It may now be paved. I don't know, but it used to be gravel intentionally to give you a different tactile feeling, and a sense of exploration. It looks like some of the quince survived. I believe that is paved. And, if you had a minimum amount of energy, you would make the return on this sort of peanut path, and go on back into the building. All of this was once grass, now it is pine strawed and ground covered. It had enough sun.

I tried to make a hillside apple orchard out of this. These were all floribundas, the Japanese crabs. And, you can see some stumps every now and then where they were outgrowing their lives. But, this ground cover was initially all shrubs. And, the resident parking is immediately above and out of sight.

*Tunnell: At a time when people talk more and more about infiltration basins and rain gardens, and here it is.*

Yeah, one could just call this a vital necessity, but we, again, made a silk purse out of a sow's ear and chose to put all water oriented plants in this location. And, this takes all the roof water, all the terrace water. It takes all the parking lot water. It takes the overflow from the air conditioning system. And the cypress, yeah. And there's some Joe Pieweed.

*Birnbaum: Let's talk about light and shadow, which is something we haven't talked about. E.g. In terms of the tree planting that you have going on, is this something that was part of the sequence?*

Yeah, we certainly wanted places where there was openness, and it contrasted with the canopy. And, we were successful in establishing patterns of light and patterns of shade. There's been, as in life, a transition because some of the trees we see here now, succession trees to earlier ones that had survived, but I think at all points, it's a comfortable place to be. Look at the size of the cinnamon fern down there, absolutely happy.



The Cyprus was sort of a chancy recommendation because we weren't really sure it was going to survive, though I had seen cypress in a pond over in Athens, GA, which often has colder temperatures than we.

Birnbaum: *I love the way the path disappears.*

Yeah, you can't see it from one level to the other. . . And, this is the little bog garden where we thought Mrs. Hancock was going to disappear someday. It used to be a lot more open than it is now actually, and there could be boa constrictors in there and you wouldn't know it. She might really disappear.

Finally, that used to be all shade. But that was the property line, and it was this huge thicket. Incidentally, here's an echinata pine if you look up in the sky. And, look at the size of this pine, this loblolly here. This must be a 30 inches --

And you see, we used sweet bay again on the edge on the premise it was near water. This was the native, deciduous azalea. Look how fruitful that is. And, this is our woodland nook. And, the property almost comes to a point right here. And, this had been a favorite of one, of the wife, and in fact, one of the most active sponsors of this whole project. So, they sort of dedicated this tree to her memory. But, there's a nice little north Georgia flagstone terrace down here, and a place to sit if you were strong enough to withstand the mosquitoes. Initially, they had a congenial neighbor who allowed the residents of this first thing to go and use their backyard. And, it was a little clubhouse and a badminton court, and so on. And, they'd just walk through the gate into the adjacent property. It was really nice. Charles, let me take you into the edge of the swamp. You just can't look that way. You have to go here. And, there's at least access, so if you wanted to come down here and put your feet in the water, so to speak, you could. But obviously, it needs some care and weeding. Now this garden was contained entirely by planting all along here trees, some we had planted, but others that were just a thicket where this new complex is. But it's lost a lot. One of the outstanding things to me is that in developing the new landscape, which you can look at if you want to, it looks like a highway, that they didn't consider the fact that there's going to be a huge turnover, a short lifespan for the residents there, and they've got a plan that's a permanent plan. When I was working on that Berlin and Germany hospital project, I learned from the landscape architect there that [they had] lost everything. Most of the trees, if they weren't hurt by gunfire or bombs, they cut them down for firewood in the winter. So, it was really denuded. It almost looked like a golf course. And, in the process of immigrants, people fleeing the east and coming through, they put them to work planting a series of plants. But there were two planting plants. One was one for immediate effect like willows, and maples, and so on, anything that would grow rapidly and develop and get soon a canopy over your head. And then there was an adjacent permanent planting, and here there's an opportunity to have done something. I wouldn't give a damn whether it was mimosas or umbrella trees of some sort. But, there's nothing but sunscald out there and nothing for these residents.

Tunnell: *Do they still allow residents to garden this section?*



Yes. They very actively garden, and in fact, they've moved the greenhouse over here, and there are some garden plots over there as well. But, it's a nice, civilized place. And fortunately, it's still available to the new residents, of which there are three times as many as any original. Yeah, they probably use this as a selling point, and then put you over here in solitary.

*Looking at individual garden plots.*

These were intended from the beginning as little plots where people who had had garden and wanted to garden could continue to do so. And, of course, they turn over from time to time. And, you can see the divisions off one side. And of course, it changes from time to time. . . . And it's also interesting, Charles, that when we did this, the concept was that you'd have a badminton court because people were going to want to play, and then there were two huge poles with floodlights. And of course, nobody ever came out here and played. But, the poles lasted for years and years. And, I'm glad that they're gone. As we get closer to the building, I'll show you shuffleboard court that to my knowledge nobody's ever used.

### **THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION**

The state had appointed the then-governor, I guess it was Carl Sanders, had appointed a commission to look into and guide the development of appropriate architecture for this site as the residence of the governor. I'm sure it was chosen because of its location on this road, and the idea of building something rather grandiose. The only remnant of Mrs. Maddox's gardening effort is this amphitheatre, which was a way of correcting erosion in a ravine. And, allegedly, with her own forces, her own ingenuity, the land was shaped. These stairs, I believe, were new, that is, there were some simpler stairs without cheek walls before. The terraces were formed, and oddly, all of the plants were on a slope, and the plateaus were for gatherings.

And, there are several photographs of opera parties. When the Metropolitan Opera used to come and tours around the First World War, there would be parties in this garden. And, it was quite an event because there was no such place. You could hold almost as many people here in this amphitheater as you could in many of the auditoriums in town. The actual treatment at the bottom was a little bit simpler. There were, I believe, more conical forms. They were arborvitae where these Burfords now are. The pool was a basin. There was no central fountain, as I recall from earlier photographs, and certainly there was not one there when we came. And, my work here was largely in 1967. But, the idea was to make the most of this as a potential gathering space. And, whether or not it's been used in that way, I really don't know. But looking generally at the property, all of the mature trees were actually here in place so that the magnolias we look at in this nearby grove were here. The big white oaks, which are characteristic of mature piedmont forest were here. Most of the evergreens that do the screening are later additions either through my work or in the intervening 30 years or so. The Greek revival house was placed to be parallel to West Pace's Ferry, whereas the original informal Tudor house followed the ridge, and was more irregular, and exhibited itself modestly through the stems of the forest. With the opening that has occurred by virtue of just maturity and loss of trees, but also from the big tornado in the middle [19]'70s, the current mansion is much more conspicuous from the road. There was an intentional widening of



West Pace's Ferry immediately in front of the building so that citizens of the State literally could pull up on the side, and admire the residence of their governor. It led to huge rumors that all of West Pace's Ferry was going to be widened, which scared the fool out of most of the neighbors. But, that was allayed somewhat by the later construction of the brick piers and the ornamental iron fence.

There was originally no fence in the scheme, and Tom Bradbury, who designed the building, also designed, and was asked to design a subsequent masonry wall, but it ended up being not quite gracious, and Ed Jones was asked to come and help. Yeah, Edward Jones was asked to come from Albany, Georgia, and assist in detailing so that both the grace of the capitals and the extended columns, as well as the ironwork, is all the work of Edward Jones.

Tunnell: *Can you describe the interaction with the committee itself with Mrs. Thornton, Mrs. Allen, and the review sessions.*

It was great committee work. They were all enthusiastic about really doing something for the State. Everybody was proud of being able to do this. The previous governor's mansion looked like a rock quarry in Ansley Park. It had proudly served for some years, but this was a new start, and it was after the Second World War gave an opportunity to start fresh. There were a number of men and women on that committee who served well. Mrs. Ivan Allen, then the wife of the mayor, was asked to be in charge of transportation, and in effect, civil engineering, partly because I figure they thought they could get more concessions from the city. But, all of the people were experienced gardeners, and knowledgeable, sophisticated folk, and, they had a lot to contribute. The intent was to preserve as much of the site as possible simply because it was a good, initial layout.

The driveway, which ascends generously and graciously up the hill, arrives at a crest, and continues on around the 17 acre track, which was set aside for this purchase. On the far west side, there is a ravine among those woods where we once had, with the help of the Georgia Botanical Society, a wild garden. And, I have a drawing that shows the details of that planting, which was instituted. The idea was to make a collection of plants native to Georgia that could be shown to anyone who visited from out of state or from another country, this being essentially an exhibit hall, an illustration of the talents and nature of the State of Georgia. But, that garden eventually was abandoned. Also to the west is a wonderful tennis court with this peristyle of masonry columns. It must be 30 inches in diameter. And, when they were built as a tennis court in about 1905, the game must have been a little shorter because by modern standards it had to be about 15 feet longer or 20 feet. So, we added, I think, six columns, three on each side, to extend it. And it had, originally, wooden arbors across the top, supported by beams, column to column, and, there were roses in it. And, we attempted to accomplish that, but I think that didn't come to pass. I believe there are no roses there now. But, it served the Maddox family very well as a residence. It was intended to serve the governor, whoever he or she is, as a residence. And, I think it's done that pretty well.

The character of the land is the same. It's been cared for well. The building presents itself well. When we go into the house or to the front façade, that peristyle, the colonnade completely surrounding, gives openings either to views to the south across the front lawn, or to the west over a large, open terrace, which is an extension of the drawing room, which is the major assembly area.



And, to the north of this into a more informal, irregular area, we designed some semicircular stairs to descend some 12 feet. On the east, we built a wall to raise the grade so that you could progress right off the porch platform into a morning room garden. And, I think you will find that much of the shade that was there, is no longer. But, it was meant to be, in each case, an extension of the interior floor plan by having gardens that responded. But this, like any other garden, and many that I've worked on, its success depends entirely upon its keeping. And, I think that each owner of any property will have their own taste and feeling of how it's to be furnished and kept, but the forms are here. It survived. There are really two landscapes, the 1905 landscape, which is then overlaid with this new, wider circulation system. What the forestry inherited is essentially here, and I think that's the clue to making this a successful landscape.

*Birnbaum: We are in a neighborhood where so many homes are being torn down, and built larger and larger, and you've alluded to the concept of continuity, and design. To this end, I was wondering if you could speak to what that might mean to you personally.*

Well, in the first place, the road, which is more or less level for some two miles, was an open country road when this property was developed. But as each successive state of varying sizes was developed, there was a certain openness to the road, as if you were overlooking a pasture. And they became, eventually, fine lawns sprinkled with specimen trees. That openness became a characteristic of the flow of this road, and West Pace's Ferry is far from straight so that you get varying views as you round curves, and you look first at one open lawn, and a house, and then another. And, I think that was the intention, and the original development, and the placement of the house by Mr. [Walter T.] Downing. And, it certainly was a consideration here. This property was never to be closed off. But, that continuity really is a matter of how space is treated rather than architecture because, indeed, the houses will be replaced from time to time, just as this was an example. The house that was here lasted from 1905 until 1966. The neighboring houses are younger, but some of those, indeed, will be replaced in time. But, I do believe the inherent spatial landscape, that is, the winding roads, the open lawns, the canopy of trees, will be replenished from time to time, but, they will be maintained. I think that's a characteristic of this road, and much of this part of Atlanta.

*Birnbaum: I'm curious about in working on the Governor's Mansion at this point in your career, when you were awarded the commission, to design something that is of such stature symbolically, what did that mean to you as a landscape architect?*

When I was selected for this job, I had been practicing 13 years. That's sort of a young practice. I was very pleased. I had been able to work successfully with a number of architects in that period of time. The architects themselves were known to me professionally. A number of them were known to me personally, so that the recommendations by this Fine Arts Commission together with the support of the architects made that possible. So, I certainly was complemented. In fact, I think my whole career has been a series of one-of-a-kinds or first time. I mean, there was a first time I did a retirement village in Waycross, Georgia for the Georgia Baptist, earlier than this. But, it was a great challenge. But, I love working with the people who are on the committee, and they were all enthusiastic and knowledgeable. So, that really made it easy. And, it was a great cooperation. I



must say, your citing architecture as an element of its time, or an expression of its time, that the Tom Bradbury's firm first produced a very stark, modern building that was a knockoff, a take off on Greek Revival with very slender, squared columns, and projected sort of eyelid roofs. It was almost a Miessian [Mies Van der Röhe] sort of scheme, but in the same place. Well, that just wouldn't fly with this committee. And, the state of Georgia, regardless of whether it was Democrat or Republican is fundamentally conservative. And, this had to be the South rising again, and so it was done as well as possible as a Greek Revival with adequate precedent in Georgia.

Tunnell: *Were you aware of any discussion among the committee about leaving the original house in place?*

I don't remember that happening at all. I think they sort of had it with old houses, I mean, what with the Inman house, not Inman, the Ansley house in Ansley Park, which really did look like a prison. It was good Georgia granite. But it was very heavy building, and while it probably was designed in its time for entertainment. It was not equal to the task or the program of use that was anticipated here. Having this much space in itself is a rarity among the governor's mansions of the various states. I don't know of any. I've made no exhausted study, but I don't know of one that has this kind of space around it.

And there were roses there, and I redid that garden about 15-20 years ago. And, at that time we put back with steel beams an arbor, just to define the space. It's no longer a tennis court. It's a series of gardens inside. It's as though they've taken all your color beds, and put them in that space. And, that place is available for public use. A lot of parties are held there. Weddings are held there. It's very popular. We had huge boxes as planters. And, in them we had yaupon hollies so that you pass through a sort of a vista that enclosed it, and focused on not that very small planter, but that gigantic basin that I told you about. These crepe myrtles, I figured the Lord had made crepe myrtles to be trees. This is a good place to let those trees go, like the one that was out there. Yes, and there's really no reason to prune them. You get yourself a lot of trouble, and you'd end up with a prettier thing. I mean, that's my suggestion.

*The conversation continues while viewing the original construction drawings.*

But, the scheme developed that, as the perennial garden. So, here's the construction drawing that shows the pattern, and so on. And, this is the garden plan on the other side. And, the grade, that's a natural grade out there. The house sits on a pinnacle and you know it falls off there because it's ten or twelve feet. So, this is a retaining wall. So, you could say this is a huge planter, and it's back-filled, and brought up to grade. And, part of this whole purpose was to give it this elevated opportunity to sort of be where the breeze is, which is awfully important.

Birnbaum: *Tell me about the concave/convex stairs. Were you looking at earlier Italian Villas at is time like Villa Rizzardi which had such a staircase design?*

Yesterday we were talking about books I had read. I told you I read very little. I mean, I did not consciously make an effort; on the Medici fountain I certainly knew what I was doing there with



something of that size and of that particular shape, and that was making good use of an established, beautiful precedent. This thing was to be inviting. I found these stairs, the concave form, very inviting from here. And so, that's really what it was. It was like flagging someone into a parking lot. It was a way of bringing you in from this plateau and discovering, remembering, this was a different space when we designed it with these positive forms here that you had to go around, or through, or among. And then, you had this opening that came secondarily. Your first impression was the main distance, and then that was a way, obviously, of making an event with a landing to get down to a lower level.

### **ALL SAINTS EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

*First, a discussion in the Daugherty residence with plans.*

Here's the church. This was then the rectory and this building was built in 1916. This was a huge bungalow, and then all of these were residences. This was always a store there, and this was alleys that were peculiar to a common in midtown Atlanta.

Anyway, the church, over time, moving from here in this direction acquired this in the '70s, which they should have done long before, and then started here and came this way. When this didn't exist, there was a porte-cochere. So, we would drive in through the porte-cochere, and the bottom step was like a carriage block. It was way the hell up in the air, and until 1970 it was always watch out for the bottom step! And, we made this into a porch, which it now is. So, the whole interior of that is pedestrian. There's no automobile. This is the longest going job I have, and still is.

*Birnbaum: I can't help but notice the gracious curves in all of these projects. Is this a signature element?*

I've always sought to soften, I guess, the blow of life, I don't know. But curves, whether they are complete or whether they are just a sinuous line, seem to me a way to get through life, get through all of these brutal buildings because we have a few that are brutal. This one's about as brutal as it could be, but partly because it got its nose cut off.

*Birnbaum: And this is embedded aggregate as I recall, isn't it? Was that a material that you started to use at a particular point?*

Yeah, early on, and as soon as possible, when I had a client who could afford it as opposed to broom finished concrete. And we just recently replaced the walk. I don't know if you've seen it, but all the way down through there, and reduced it somewhat, the magnolia itself with its roots began to push portions of the concrete up. But in any event, as a material, I guess it's like curves. The tinted concrete and the pebble combination is a softer thing to experience than just gray, brutal, either wet or dry concrete. And, I like it because it's a material that lies down and behaves itself, and yet, it has warmth. On paving surfaces, I would normally always prefer asphalt for automobiles than concrete because of the glare. And, we live with so much sun, and we live with so much heat.



Birnbaum: *Let's talk a little bit about the collaboration. You're getting into sort of a fuzzier zone between architecture and landscape.*

Well, I wish I could claim to have thought this up, and designed that. I did not. There was a man, Tony Smith, who was a very clever, talented fellow. And he had a partner, at least for this job, named Jones. I've forgotten which one. So, it was Smith and Jones in 1970-1971. So, it was executed by 1972. Everything all in there was executed by then. And, we worked very hard. There was consideration of an arcade literally started with a covered walk.

So, it was decided we'd have the bride's room here, and the bride would come through here, and Oh my goodness, we must have cover. When this building was built, the architects Morgan and Dillon also designed an arcade that was not unlike that over at the Methodist church on Peach Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Street. So, I mean, the church is heavy. It's this red sandstone that you don't mine anymore; you don't make use of, because it exfoliates. Anyway, it was the same stuff, and everybody agreed that was just going to be too heavy. So, Tony Smith came up with the idea, well, why don't we get the expression of the Gothic arch without the stone? And, it was just brilliant. And, it has no visible roof. It's wonderful. And it works. I must say, in the driving rain, nothing's going to protect you, but certainly these high cuts allow water to come in. And it binds these two things together. So, these solids are joined by this delicate void through here, and as it turns out, are shielded by this enormous magnolia there. And, the combination of this sort of grillage that the cloister performs, and this half screen of this big sculptural magnolia make this a separate place. So, you're not really in the street when you're there. And then, the squeeze between these two buildings, and the difference in this grade, this grade here is about five feet below this grade, gave rise to other collections here. This is where the big assembly of people other than in here takes place. There's a huge parish hall here. But, [the] coffee, the meeting before and after the services always takes place throughout here. The surviving big elm was there, there was one in here, and it died, toppled one day. So, we replaced with two maples. But anyway, you've got civilized spaces in through here, and then this thing is all on, there's a roof. The garage is here, and this is a playground with a foot of sandy soil and woodchips on top. The entire slab, the roof slab of the garage falls at 1%. So, it percolates through a layer of gravel and perforated drains to a collection pipe along here. And then, from here on is on grade, and there's a line of elms, and hackberries through here.

And parking used to go right on through here. When they tore down the rector's home, it was made into parking, and exited onto North Avenue right at this point, and at that point, the parking lot extended, the asphalt lapped right up to here and indeed, went all the way down into here like this, and met the alley. In any event, we purchased this building, and took out parking, and built a terrace with marble over here. So, it was a college function, this being three blocks from Georgia Tech, and so on. Anyway, this is the longest, continuous involvement I've had since 1948. So, that's a while.

Birnbaum: *Can we talk a little bit about this geometry, and the use of the circle? And, I'm curious if it relates to maintenance at all, or if it's a combination of things.*



I can't say that the circle has become a system to simplify maintenance. It really is a circulation device to cause people to perambulate, I mean, to entice people to move through the space. I've used it more that way than any other I can think of. It is true that I am inclined to use, over time, have come to rely upon the circle as resolving a lot of problems.

Tunnell: *One of the ways that you described it to me was that because a circle can be approached radially, you can always be basically on center. You're always on the centerline no matter where you go. So, in that way, it's very democratic, because a different way to state it is it's not that you abhor an axis, you're just very suspicious of them.*

Well, yes, so often they don't serve any purpose. One of the first examples I can remember, or illustration of the peril of the axis is not in Louis the XIV, but rather this famous house in Philadelphia where Mrs. So-and-So's axis is like the Swan House was answered with a laundry, and 100 foot smokestack. And in the case of the Swan House, the History Center, the Inman's actually were persuaded to buy the lot across the street. And they owned it until it was sold after the Inman's death, her death in '60 something. And the History Center bought it in '66. And, one of the first things those people did was sold that lot as an asset to sell. And, they didn't realize. And now there's a very nice imitation Williamsburg house, I don't know if Clem [Ford, architect] did it, or who did it, but it is very nice, but totally out of scale. It's like looking at a doghouse, and it was just the wonderful puffy, *Brillo* answer, a cushion to this vista which should have been preserved.

Tunnell: *The cinerarium, wasn't that the second piece of this?*

In 1981 we built a cemetery, and previously, when this scheme was built in 1971, that walk you see right there actually is a drainage ditch. And then at one point, it got underground and went into a pipe, which went through here, the drainage system. When we decided to make this a cemetery, having taken the driveway out, we demolished the little ditch feeds, and then piped them. And then suddenly we had this place.

*The interview continues on site at All Saints Church*

The church was designed and executed in 1906. As a gift, the architects, Morgan and Dillon, gave their services in design of this building. The property had a ravine running diagonally through it from the southeast to the northwest. And that, over time, has become filled. But, the properties were acquired in sequence in three lots going down to the parking lot where we just were. This porch was a port-cochere, and the carriages, which was what you had [. . . static] made a horseshoe bend through this open space, and came out on the other side of where that magnolia now is, which was only recently moved there. [...static ] it was built in 1913 of the same stone, Virginia sandstone, which is no longer used as a building material because it peels like an onion. So, these two buildings gave the church control of two thirds of the frontage of West Peach Street. Subsequent buildings at the rear occurred in a sequence. But it wasn't until 1956 that another major building program took place, in other words, a good 40 years. When that happened, a basic architectural problem was, how do you connect a square, to a rounded end, to a building?



Eggleston Hall was built as a theatre, and in those days, people had a lot of theatricals, as well as meetings, and the theatre form was appropriate. And in fact, there was even a stage at the front end where now the church office is. So, there had to be an umbilical built, which was an afterthought between the 1919 building and the 1956 building. So, that gave us three buildings that defined an open space. And at that point, we removed the curvilinear drive, and the drive went straight through to the back so that this became a people space between the buildings . . . It used to be when you came out of this porch of this port-cochere that the bottom step was really a carriage block, and you had to drop down about 24 inches so everybody would always say watch out for that last step. When the driveway came out, you were on grade into an open lawn. In 1970, when we developed the connection and removed the east-west driveway entirely, we had a space that served people, and it was defined by the church building, and Eggleston Hall and the 1956 parish house together so that we then designated a living, outdoor space for the church. The arcade was an attempt to express in an open fashion the kind of pseudo-gothic architecture that was occurring in the buildings, and the openness and the airiness also lent a minimal separation of the church yard from the street so that while it's a barrier, it's intermittent, almost like a picket fence. So, you see through. It doesn't really offend. It doesn't really separate the church from the street, or the street from the church. And, it was a stunning accomplishment to use the COR-TEN steel, and the Bausch & Lomb plastic roof.

Tunnell: *Is the designer of the arcade the sculptor, Tony Smith?*

Yeah, or architect. Well, this man's dead, but this was 1971 when this was done. In 1954, this Magnolia was brought to this location. It was about a 12 or 14 - foot plant on the south side of the church. It was then under the shade of some big street trees, and the donor decided it wasn't really going to prosper, and asked me to find another location for it. I moved it to here, and at that time it was in full sun. And this tree, then, has developed roughly 50 years, has become this gigantic piece of sculpture, and has grown abnormally rapidly primarily because this is fill land, because it sits about where the natural ravine was. And, it's become a great plaything for the children. On the inside of the arcade, I devised this circulation system to get you into the space, but the inside, we planted these Yaupon hollies, which you saw at the governor's mansion in a small thicket just above the parking lot. And, these now have grown so successfully that they almost look like Live Oak trees. We obligingly had a heavy ice storm about six years after we planted it, and it broke the tops out of them, and as a result, caused them to be a much denser growth than it would normally. But you can see they actually extend as a roof over the arcade itself.

*Now, inside the space.*

Well, the objective here, even before the arcade was put in was to form a lawn that the church could, I mean, the parishioners could come out of church if they wish to, and stroll, and assemble on an open lawn. And of course, the lawn is diminishing as there gets to be more and more shade. But, we're at a point now where we'd rather give up the extent of the grass in order to keep the sculptural yaupon hollies. If you turn around and look at the porch, you can see there's where the driveway went through in 1971, and we raised the grade to make a series of stairs in the platform so the port-cochere becomes a porch. At the same time, we took the downspouts off of the church,



which used to dump into a driveway, remember the horseshoe driveway, and put them into an open ditch, a concrete ditch. We decided in 1980 that we would have a cemetery for ashes. And so, I put a lid on the open ditch, and made a walkway out of it. And, the ashes, or in the ground cover, immediately beyond the curve, adjacent to the church, and it makes a completely sequestered burial place. Within that, there's something like 352 grave plots set aside, one square foot each. And, we now have this memorial wall, which this wall is only about five years old, incorporating the original cornerstone for the church, and the names of the folks buried here.

Birnbaum: *Do you go to this church?*

Well, let's see, I told you I came here as a ring bearer in my uncle's wedding when I was four years old. And, my family has been here. I didn't actually become a communicant of All Saints until I was about 20. I used to go to a Presbyterian church. But, I've always been involved to some degree. About eight years ago, a chapel which, we had here was expanded. And all of this brick, you can see the transition from sandstone to brick was added. And, Serber and Barber were the architects for it. That firm was the same firm that did the Childress's house that we saw yesterday afternoon, obviously a different talent in design. And then, these are witch hazels, and Virginia sweetspire, and Mahonia bealei. The outside, we've always been able to make use of the sun for a small garden plot. And, it's maintained by one of the church members.

This three-story block was what was to be the first stage of, it is an education building, but it was to have a bridge all the way across joining what was then the chapel at this end, that is, not this building. But that flat roof was actually the second floor level. It was to come all the way across, and the driveway was to go underneath. And, here's this umbilical that joins this rounded form to the 1956 education building. And, the floor levels don't match, so it's a real hodgepodge of levels in there. And, this was meant to be sort of a port-cochere, at least a roof over the passenger's side to get out of the rain and go into this building when it was abbreviated. So, this gets to be the favorite after-service coffee place. Tables are put out, and people mingle and assemble in this area. Everything beyond those two sugar maples was a parking lot going all the way out to North Avenue. And, eventually as we acquired adjacent properties, including that red brick one, the large building to the left, we removed incrementally the parking from this area to free it up.

This wall in this plaza, and these stairs, occurred in 1991, taking the place of what was a parking lot. And, I think it must have been later than 1995 because it followed this chapel addition. I had earlier designed this wall, and it served as the exit to the parking lot. That's why it's that wide. And then, when we got rid of the parking lot and you had to restrain it, and anyway, the hinged gates that we had that double fold that would open up for the full exit, we then fixed in part and just kept central eight feet as pedestrian. We have a control problem of people crawling all over the walls, and then sleeping in here. And that's just part of the thing you live with. But I think our response this winter is going to be more wintergreen barberry all along that thing instead of iron. Here's the big leaf magnolia like the one I had in my own backyard. I felt it needed something of this huge coarse scale. But what to me is important about this whole project is just its incremental growth, just like any parish changes from time to time. And we've slowly but surely assembled, say, 14 out of the 15 parcels that make the square. And, this was a two story store building, retail building, which was



made over for a college center, Georgia Tech, and Agnes Scott College, a women's college in Decatur. And, the asphalt used to go right up against that building, and obviously two feet up the glass line in order to get out on the grade at North Avenue. So, it's been an interesting evolution, piecemeal, and it's the pedestrian activities that tie it all together.

... That's now called the Children's Building, and there's a three story building. The top floor is actually the Episcopal Radio Center. But, the two floors on grade are for the children's education. And, there's a daycare center that's run here. I guess it's in operation right now, but normally it's full of children. The asphalt and the original property line was in line with this building and ran right through these trees. And, the only reason the trees are there is they were on the margin. But, the asphalt went from, in effect, wall to wall, slap up against the trunks of the trees, and having survived that, I figured they could survive anything. So, the grade out there is essentially old grade over there. We peeled away the asphalt, and it goes down to a point where the two story- garage, which is underground, is met, so that from this stump of this elm tree, down another 40 feet is fill against a wall that protects the two story garage. [*Looking at the concrete sidewalk*] You can never have too many expansion joints. The structure of the garage is right where we are in line with that fence in there. So, everything to the left is fill or native soil. And, from here down is a roof. And, there's one foot of soil, which has obviously got woodchips on it. Shortly after we bought this north property for a parking lot, we put in these trees. This is the native short leaf pine, two sugar maples, and a row of cherry laurels, which about every fifth year we come in and cut drastically. But, the fact that they're growing in what amounts to a minimal soil is a testimony to the tree.

### **THE CATHEDRAL OF SAINT PHILIP**

I was just saying my big thing or first consideration on almost any job is trees and the preservation of trees or the addition of trees, because it's the only thing that makes Atlanta livable. Right in front of us are the large trees that were the front yards of Peachtree Road properties. And to our rear are trees that were in the backyards of those same Peachtree properties. On the extreme right edge is a forest, a thicket of white oaks, which is our climax forest in this part of the world. And in designing this parking lot I made sure that the perimeter, the exterior of the parking lot, followed the line of those massive trees. It was a hard sell at one point to restrain the owners from clearing everything. But we do have a perimeter now that gives a sort of cathedral close, even if the acreage is largely asphalt. But if we walk our way towards the building we can pass through and come out on the other side in an area in which I really had impact in the 1980s, with a master plan. But you can see the trees are foil to these increasingly tall buildings, and that damned thing's just under construction. And there's another one just up the hill and two behind us. This wing on our left has just been completed about three years from the porte-cochere north.

Start right here. We're right almost at the end of a three-story brick apartment complex that faced Peachtree, and the cathedral sort of like water coming up to the shore butted up against it and then ran borrowed space to get a driveway across the back to other lands for a parking lot. Ahead of us was a private parcel that faces on Andrews Drive and had long been in contention, had been dreamed of as an acquisition. But it was only after the owner died that the property was made available to the cathedral. There is a residence that preceded almost anything else in this



immediate area of Atlanta. It was the residence of Colonel Andrews, who owned all of the property we're on and all the way to Andrews Drive. It looks like a Hansel and Gretel house and as such sits almost as an appropriate companion for a pseudo-Gothic church. When they acquired it the problem was access and what to do with it. I was able to persuade them to leave the residence as a residence and the grounds essentially as an open park, because on this site you come out of the doors of the church and you fall downhill. So this is about the only flat piece of ground that was available that wasn't paved. As gateways, we had designed these two latch gates, these timber half-pegged structures both as gateways as well as sun and waiting protection places.

Tunnell: *These pavilions are really so beautiful. Please speak to these.*

When this property was acquired after many misgivings, Mrs. Dunn said she would never sell this property to the cathedral, because she was so put out by both the cathedral's growth as well as traffic and noise and so on. But nevertheless, she having owned it since 1928 or so when she died, the estate finally decided to sell to the cathedral. I was able to persuade them, the cathedral, to keep the house as a house and in its sort of Hansel and Gretel nature of the architecture; it seemed to be an appropriate companion to the pseudo-Gothic of the church. But the body of the land, which is an L-shaped tract, it has a frontage of 100 feet or more on Andrews Drive and a tailbone that goes all the way down to the almost wetland. There's a drainage area down there, but it abuts a parking lot which serves not only the cathedral, but also serves the cathedral-owned apartment building, which is subsidized housing. So that it really is a sort of living room to join both functions of the church and those people who dwell in those apartments. So as gateways, as portals, to get from the church itself into the space and to recognize the character of the Dunn house, I had investigated litch gates in England and got some texts and the help, the expert help of an architect, Ward Seymour, a good friend of mine, to translate them into something that was appropriate so that they are not only gateways, they are covered places. If you're in the rain in the parking, you can sit. If you're in the sun you can sit in the shade, and one faces, if you'll notice the axis is radial here or at least at right angles to the source. The other one has a broader aspect, but in both cases they are functional benches.

The most interesting thing about the whole business was the cathedral's relationship, political and social, with the neighborhood. This was also interesting because I have served on the board of the Peachtree Heights West Civic Association for some 30 years, and here I was the planner for the cathedral. And the entire board as well as the neighborhood voted against at public hearings the cathedral's acquiring and being able to develop this land. But fortunately either I was persuasive orally or graphically with plans. We prevailed and the cathedral wanted most of all to incorporate this land partly because they were afraid if they didn't it might go on the market and become a series of townhouses, which would be an even greater threat to the quiet of the neighborhood. So anyway, this was the lesser of the two evils. We succeeded. We now have a civilized park-like space, which is enjoyed not only by the parish, the largest Episcopal parish in America, but also serves the dwellers of the apartment, which they are responsible for.

But this is a neat pedestrian space, and there's a nice ambling walk to go down to the parking lot as well as lead you into the apartment building. On the other side of the church, we developed a



cemetery for ashes, and it was an interesting political squabble too, because it was supposed to be designated first on Andrews Drive, which is a quiet street. Peachtree carries 42,000 cars a day over there and you've heard it when we started this conversation. But because some townhouses immediately opposite the church, which is really an anomaly in a single-family residence area, convinced themselves that they would be observing burials when there was ashes, not coffins. . . . But nevertheless the city was so moved that they required that we not bury on that side, but we were free to bury on Peachtree. So that's where it is.

In 1981 one of the things that concerned the parish was a sense of aloofness, that is, they felt that the community, Atlanta or the public felt that the church was aloof from the street and stiff armed everybody. It didn't help that there was no visible door to the church from the street. So one of the things we did, first we took away a privet hedge, which used to be along the sidewalk, which in itself was a barrier, physical and visual. And then secondly I designed these stairs to bring you in to at least from this windshield of a car, you could see that there was an invitation, a physical invitation to bring you in, steep as they are, to bring you up into the church and into this circulation system. And then of course once you get here, you have to go halfway around the world to get to a door. But at this point there's this marvelous overlook to downtown Atlanta. This cornerstone is from the cathedral that this building replaced downtown. It was across the street from the state capitol. We're going to go on around. These trees, these are yaupon like the ones at All Saints. And they were placed on this hillside with a crane from down on the street. They were not this big of course, but they were pretty damn big, and the only way we could get them up the hill, there being no driveway or no automobile access, was to get them off the truck with a crane. We had failed to get permission from the Georgia DOT to park a truck in the lane, I having forgotten, if I ever knew, that this was a state highway. I do now. But that was about 25 years ago. But they bracketed this and they helped frame the view of the church from below. So you just don't see too much stone. And of course this is a part of the tree planting program. These are replacement trees for others that have been lost. And we round this corner and we come in on the left to the new cemetery, which has recently been expanded by others.

Now the burial area where ashes are placed is sort of in the arms of the church, all along the wall of the church. And originally they were to have been in these beds. Recently there has been more pavement put in here. In fact the terrace behind you was paved. These walks focusing on the statue have been recently added, which means they've diminished the available space for ashes. But there's quite a handsome wall that Henry Smith, architect, whose father actually helped design this building, makes it possible to commemorate everybody who's buried here.

Now the odd part about it is that statue is allegedly Saint Fiacra, who's either the saint of taxi drivers or of gardeners. And it was here before the cemetery was dreamed of. And a lot of people have assumed it had some connection with the cemetery or with death, but it's just as well that he's the saint of gardeners. The driveway recently was raised. There used to be stairs coming into the principal entrance, the narthex of the church. Excuse me. But you can see the stairs that come into this cloister. That is the height it was raised. This whole thing was raised to give more immediate access to the church, and I suppose that was for the convenience of the undertakers to bring coffins in. It also meant nobody could stumble as they came out. I wish that they had stuck



with the plan they adopted and we have this really quite handsome model downstairs that showed this actually the reverse, lowered and with a broad platform up a few steps and then the stairs that led you into it, which also meant you could get a ramp coming in from that arcade level into this door level, this threshold, with ease. But the result of it is now if you look at this property from Peachtree, your view is halfway up the door of the cathedral. They've really obscured the most important element of the church façade.

Tunnell: *Please explain why they built it this way.*

Oh, well, in the first place, when this building was designed in the 1960s, it was understood that a door at the south end would mean it was inaccessible, because this is a V-shaped property. And the only place they could ever park and before this building was built there were a series of almost like portables, a series of buildings they built as temporary ones on back in to a parking lot. All the parking was still out that way, but not as far as we are today. And they were quite right to say well, we ought to come in like ice tongs or pincers, come in from the side. And so they really flipped the building, whereas the altar used to be at this end is now at the other end. So this is logical. It has an entrance, the narthex is here, it goes straight through to Andrews, so you can come up from Andrews up that ramp or you can come up this way. And as they've added, you come through the building in sequence from the parking lot. Why don't we go through here and just meet them in the back. But to me, this really obviated this lovely architectural element of the cloister as well. But then they didn't ask me. Now I did this little garden. I'm going to try the narthex, because normally the church is supposed to be a place of refuge.

It's a handsome building, but the acoustics are terrible. The glass is really good. . . They have a very good organ, a wonderful choir. Now this sort of vestibule was here and then there was an outside courtyard, and it was such a hot box that they just recently bit the bullet, put a roof on it and air conditioned it. So instead of being a garden you might go to if you felt like it, you can really use it.

They also have a maze and it looks like it's poorly used. A labyrinth. And I don't know how much contemplation I could do in that site with all those cars going by. We planted this mound. There was a request to separate visually this parking lot from these commercial establishments here. There used to be a theater in the middle of the rock, but there's a very popular pizza place there. So we built a mound and then Trees Atlanta before the Olympics wanted to put some peaches on Peachtree. So these are flowering peaches, they're not fruiting edible peaches, but the combination of the mounded form and then the peaches.

**The End**