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Professor Vern Budge Interview Transcription

Vern Budge
Utah State University

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Professor Vern Budge Interview Transcription

Interviewee: Vern Budge
Date of interview: November 11, 2013
Place of interview: Distance Education Building, Room 101, Utah State University Campus

Interviewer: Aaron Smith
Recorder: Aaron Smith
Recording Equipment: Tascam DR-05

Subject of interview: Vern Budge's personal and professional history; The Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning, Utah State University; the profession of landscape architecture

Transcriptionist: Aaron Smith
Date of transcription: 12/14/2013

Brief Description of Contents: This interview was conducted as research for part of *The History of the Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning*, master's thesis by Aaron Smith. It contains information about Vern Budge, former professor in the Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning Department (LAEP) at Utah State University, discussing his education, professional practice and experience as an educator at the Department of LAEP.

References: AS = Aaron Smith (Interviewer)
VB = Vern Budge (Interviewee)

TAPE TRANSCRIPTION

AS: For the record and to start the interview, will you state your full name, where you were born and when you were born?

VB: Vern Jensen Budge. I was born in Malad, ID in 1939. That's rather sobering to think about that. I lived in Malad until I graduated from high school. After graduation I attended Snow College for a couple of years and then served an LDS mission in what was then called the Western States Mission. After two years in the mission I returned to my home in Malad. Three weeks later I enrolled at Utah State for the winter quarter. At that time I was majoring in engineering, but I wasn't particularly happy with it. One afternoon on campus, I ran into an old Snow College friend who was on his way to enroll in the Landscape Architecture Department. He invited me to go along. That was how I was introduced to the field of Landscape Architecture.

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AS: What was his name?

VB: Clark Ostergaard. We had played football together at Snow College and were very good friends. We were both accepted into the department, and it soon became clear that Landscape Architecture was something I would really enjoy. I transferred out of engineering and spent the next three years studying Landscape Architecture.

AS: Did you have any early connections to landscape architecture growing up?

VB: None whatsoever.

AS: How about just connections to the landscape in general growing up?

VB: Well, my father was a beekeeper, so we were in the agriculture business. I spent all of my early years working with my dad and my brothers and became very involved in that industry. We spent every day in the landscape, of course. The family business operated about 5000 colonies of bees in Northern Utah and Southern Idaho as well as in central Montana. My dad enjoyed hunting and fishing, so I grew up enjoying those events as well. I had a great love for the mountains, the streams, the rivers and lakes, and I had the opportunity to enjoy the out of doors. As a result, I learned to have a great appreciation for the environment and its natural resources.

My first job as a student in landscape architecture was with the U.S. Forest Service. I worked out of Salt Lake City in the Wasatch forest for the summer. It was an enjoyable time. After graduation, I had an interview with Professor Carnes, who was Dept. head at the University of Illinois at that time. I was offered full tuition scholarship and a job at the University of Illinois. So, of course, I accepted that opportunity and went to Urbana, Illinois for two years. I completed a Master's Degree there. While I was at the University of Illinois, I took courses in Urban Planning and in Architecture, which expanded my area of interest.

AS: Let's go back to Utah State. What was the draw for you as an undergrad when you first experienced some of those classes?

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VB: I had somewhat of an interest in art and in design. So, naturally, when I saw the projects in progress in the Landscape Architecture Department, it was appealing to me. While in Engineering, I was calculating all kinds of equations and mathematical formulas, testing strength of materials, and all of those things. However, I was struggling to understand how they were being applied. In Landscape architecture it seemed so easy to see the application – how you could end up with a product that was useful and exciting. It also looked like a profession with the potential for a rewarding career.

AS: What was the emphasis of the program when you entered?

VB: Pretty much site planning. Detailed site planning was more of the emphasis in the program at that time. There were a couple of students in the department who were great inspirations to me, Don Ensign and Joe Porter to name a couple. They both became very well known professional landscape architects. Others in the department went on to be great landscape architects and environmental planners as well because of the education they received here at USU.

AS: What years were these real quick?

VB: That would have been in about 1961.

AS: And you graduated in '63'?

VB: No, 1965.

AS: '65', okay. Who was here teaching at the time?

VB: Brillantine was here. Of course, the department head at that time was Laval Morris. And, soon after, Burton Taylor became Department Head. Niederhausern was teaching part time. Baron was in Campus Planning and was also teaching part time.

AS: What were their roles in the department?

VB: Well, Lee Baron was basically in construction and a lot of the work that he was doing in Campus Planning carried over to the department. Brillantine was, I think, teaching

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history at the time. I didn't get to know him very well. Gee, I am going to have to look at your list to remember who else was here.

AS: I did bring that in.

(Vern is handed a list of instructors from the 50th anniversary publication)

VB: I mentioned Don Ensign and Lee Baron. Gene Haycock was an architect in town. But I didn't spend a lot of time under his instruction. In fact, I don't remember ever taking a class from him. Laval Morris was the department head -- before Burton Taylor. Laval was the founder of the department and a very interesting man. His son, John, was also here taking graduate classes and teaching a couple of classes as a teaching assistant. I don't remember what he was teaching -- I never took a class from him. Neiderhausern was another architect who was here teaching part time. I got to know him. That's pretty much the people who were here at the time.

AS: During your time here there is a transition in department heads. Morris, I think, leaves in 1963/64 and Burt Taylor takes over. Was there any change in the vision for where the department was going with that change?

VB: Well, yes. I think Burt Taylor had a broader vision of what the profession could be. He had been a student of Professor Morris and had worked for several large architectural and planning firms. So he brought that experience of large scale planning and design to the department. I wouldn't say it was a big transfer of knowledge at that time, but certainly there was a change. Laval was here when the profession was just beginning to be recognized in this part of the country. A lot of his work was in park and recreation design as well as in site planning.

AS: What sort of projects did you work on as an undergrad that stand out?

VB: You have to remember that this is back fifty years. Fifty plus years. Mostly site planning and some residential work. A little bit of housing, a lot of recreation and open space design.

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AS: Were there any particular classes that were most influential in shaping the way you wanted to go professionally?

VB: No. I think at that time I was so new to the professions that everything was exciting to me. I don't recall any particular class. I think, as I have mentioned, that Don Ensign and Joe Porter were very influential as tutors. They were extremely talented individuals and had a good vision of the potential of the profession.

AS: How did you decide to go to graduate school?

VB: I was actually anxious to graduate. I had been in school for a long time. I had been through a couple of years at junior college and three years here at Utah State. I really wanted to get into the profession and I wanted to work on the West coast. But, when the opportunity presented itself to me to have a graduate education paid for, I was happy for that opportunity. So, I went to the University of Illinois, and while there I worked for the Campus Planning Department for a little additional income. I had been looking at a couple of other graduate programs at the time – Harvard being one of them. The cost differences between Harvard and Illinois were extreme, so it made the choice very easy. I really enjoyed the University of Illinois. A lot of the urban planning and architecture courses I took were very large scale. We were doing a lot of work in the southern part of Chicago – looking at not only a full range of residential development, but also new cities and new communities form. That was extremely interesting to me. My track back to Utah State came when a position in the department became available. Burton Taylor called me and said, “Would you be interested in coming out to Utah for just a short time?” I said, “I would love to. I have all my class work done, and I am in the process of finishing my thesis.” So in march of 1968 I traveled out here and taught several courses during the spring quarter. I then worked during the summer for campus planning at USU. I then taught department courses for a year which resulted in an offer to take a full-time position in the LAEP Department. I enjoyed working with the faculty and the students, so I accepted the position and I ended staying for the next 35 years.

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AS: So the University of Illinois becomes an interesting sort of moment in LAEP history with all the people who were there. Who was at the University of Illinois who became involved in the department here?

VB: Well, Craig Johnson was a student at the University of Illinois during that time. Jerry Fuhriman was also a student there along with Gerry Smith and Dave Kotter. They all ended up at Utah State. I think I had a little influence on Craig's decision to come to USU. He and I had become good friends. He also liked the great outdoors and I suggested he would enjoy what the school and state had to offer. I told him, "Craig, you've got to go to Utah State. I know there's going to be a position coming up. Why don't you apply?" He did and he took the job. So we had quite a crew coming out of the University of Illinois at that time.

AS: Did that program have a little bit of a larger scale to it?

VB: It did. I think it was a time when the profession was just beginning to focus on large scale environmental planning which was just beginning to be a major emphasis of the profession. There was a lot of interest in the environmental problems that were existing throughout the country and the west was experiencing a large part of those problems. Those were big years in terms of environmental awareness. The place just exploded because everyone wanted to help and protect the environment. And---Landscape Architecture placed a high priority on the environment so there was a big boom in enrollment. I remember when the sophomore class reached a total of 120 students – in that one studio alone. The department was housed in the old Mechanical Arts Building and the students were working on old doors that the lumber company couldn't sell because they had holes in them. We simply turned them over, put them on saw horses and used them as drawing tables. That was our equipment. So---we had T squares, old doors, and saw horses to work with. I think we got some funding to get a few stools, but it was a very interesting time for the department.

AS: What role were you hired specifically to fill, that you were teaching at the time?

VB: Over the time I have been here, I have taught about every course the department has offered at one time or another. I taught everything -- planting design, plant materials,

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construction, design, and basic introduction to landscape architecture. I think the only class that I never did teach was history. So, I had a good opportunity to do most everything in the department at one time or another in terms of class work. Probably my primary focus was in the area of construction although I spent a lot time in residential planning and park recreational design.

AS: Between your graduation as an undergrad and going back to teach at the department, did it change much or expand?

VB: There was not much of a change. The biggest changes came in the early 70s when environmental awareness was being stressed all over the world. It was evident that there were many problems in this country. The book "Silent Spring" by Rachel Carson, was the number one book to read. I remember a statement in that book that stated the Potomac River near Washington, DC was so polluted that if you fell in, you wouldn't drown, you'd just decay. It was a time when the problems in the environment were receiving a lot of publicity and media attention. Landscape architecture was being recognized as a profession that was focusing on solving some of those environmental problems.

AS: How did that social trend start to shape the department?

VB: It was a time when we saw a significant change---from the more detailed site design work and small scale design to a larger environmental planning emphasis. There was a lot of innovative work being done by L.A. Departments at Universities in Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, California, Harvard and others across the country as the focus shifted from site planning and design to large scale environmental planning. We were also picking up on that as well and trying to integrate that same emphasis into our curriculum. It was also a time when technology was beginning to explode and the first computers were being used to analyze and determine land-use compatibility. Up until that time, we had been doing everything by trace paper ---laying sheet after sheet after sheet on top of each other to map soils, slopes, orientation, vegetation, and everything else. We'd pick up twenty layers of paper overlaying each other and then try to decipher what they really meant in terms of how you used the land. With computers, we started to see a whole new trend starting to work.

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AS: I am wondering if we could we reflect a little bit on Burt Taylor's role in the department and just sort of where he was taking things, and how he was as a leader and what he was doing?

VB: Well, Burt had had some great experience professionally. He had worked with large offices, and he saw the potential for the profession. He brought that vision to the department. He was a powerful presence. When he was in the room, he was very demanding and wanted the work to be done. I got along well with him. However, he was a little rough on a few people. His health became a problem, so we lost him fairly soon after I arrived here. He was a good man and made a good contribution. He was very forceful with the administration. The administration understood where we were and what we needed, and Burt played a very large role in that. He helped the department grow. He fit well into the leadership role and was influential with the President of the University and with all the faculty.

AS: I was asked by Gerry Smith to ask you about a 3x5 card that he had some points on that he always worked into speeches. Is this something that you remember?

VB: I don't recall that. You might need to ask Gerry.

AS: Yeah, he had some details on it. Something about seven points that he would always work into every speech, or something like that. So as Burt Taylor's health deteriorated, how did you guys works out the leadership within the department? There were sort of some transitional years there, what was your role?

VB: Well, the first year I was here, I worked in the Campus Planning Department for the summer. During that time, Richard Toth was hired to teach several of the summer courses for the Department. The existing faculty got to know Dick very well that summer and enjoyed him very much. Of course, he was a Harvard graduate and also had had a lot of excellent teaching experience at Penn and at Harvard. So, when Burt's health started to slip, the Department was in need of a new faculty member with adequate qualifications as a Department Head. As faculty members, we suggested that Dick would be a good candidate. We felt that he had had a good experience while he was out here and that he might be interested in coming to Utah and joining our faculty. As it turned out, he did

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enjoy his time here that summer, and he was thinking of moving away from downtown Philadelphia where he was living at the time. I think he was looking for a little safer environment for his family. We persuaded him to come out, and he stayed. He was the natural choice for Department Head and had the necessary credentials. He was a full professor when he was hired -- the rest of us were associate or assistant professors at the time. He assumed that leadership role for a lot of years.

AS: How did you guys start to work out, you all have pretty much BLAs and MLAs and you could pretty much teach the whole rounds, but you started to kind of specialize in the construction series.

VB: That is an area I have always enjoyed. I grew up in an agricultural environment where my father, brothers, and I spent a lot of our time doing various construction projects --from concrete warehouses to remodeling the family house. I was involved with the construction of small buildings, sheds and warehouses --that kind of thing. I knew a little bit about carpentry and had had experience with various kinds construction equipment. I've always enjoyed hands-on things, so I just gravitated to that subject area. It was an area of expertise in which I felt comfortable. I have no idea what is going on at the present time in the department in construction. It sounds as if they're doing some fun things in terms of hands-on fieldwork, and I am glad to know that is part of the curriculum. When I became eligible for my first sabbatical leave after being at USU for seven years and teaching the construction series, I found an opportunity to work for a large landscape construction firm located in the bay area near San Francisco. I was hoping to see what it would be like to be on the other end of the working drawings that we were teaching our students to produce. It turned out to be a great experience. The firm was bidding and constructing projects designed by some of the best Landscape Architects of that period -- Lawrence Halprin , EDAW, Sasaki Walker & Assoc., Thomas Church, Royston Hanamoto, Alley & Abey -- just to name a few. As I said before, that was a real learning experience for me to be reviewing designs and working drawings from offices I had been reading about for years in my study of the profession.

AS: That would have been around 75'?

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VB: It would have been. Maybe a little later than 75', maybe 77'. Cagwin and Dorward was the name of construction firm I worked for. The firm was submitting construction bids for about five to six projects a week. I become one of four cost estimators for the first several months I was there. I quickly learned the skill of doing material take offs, estimating labor costs and understanding the need for accurate working drawings. After about three months of doing cost estimating, I had the chance to be a construction supervisor over a small playground in downtown San Francisco. Cagwin and Dorward received a call from the City Recreation Department asking them to make a bid on a playground park that was under construction when the contractor skipped the country after having received about 85% of his bid for the project. A bonding company had taken over the job and needed a new contractor to take charge of finishing the construction. I could tell you all kinds of wild stories about that project, but I think its sufficient to say it was a great experience for me.

AS: How did your sabbatical experience and specialization translate back to your academic profession?

VB: Those experiences were very easy to insert into lectures and proposed problems that related to construction. Doing the actual construction on the ground and understanding the sequence and mechanisms used to get the proposed design in place were very beneficial and easy to apply in the classroom.

AS: If we could, let's talk about the student body a little bit. You'd mentioned a huge expansion of enrollment in the program and sophomores. How did the department respond to that enthusiasm, that growing interest in the profession?

VB: We were fortunate enough to have a lot of students who were attending USU from the east coast, the mid-west, and Canada. They discovered that the costs of attending Utah State were significantly lower than the costs of attending universities near their homes, even while paying out of state tuition. Once we had a few students coming, the word just spread. I think they enjoyed the mountains and physical environment, together with the one-on-one learning environment they experienced here. The numbers expanded and we also had a number of students coming from Canada as well. Several of the Canadian

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students who were here for those first few years returned to Canada to practice and for years we had eight or nine Canadian students every year. I think the large number of students we had was the result the environmental issues of the time as well as the fact that the students found out that USU had an desirable work environment and that it provided an excellent education. And, I think they did get a great education. I believe their performance in the profession has validated that assumption.

AS: Was there a time when that sort of changed with the large diversity of students? Was it always kind of that multi...?

VB: It was for a lot of years. I would say the last ten years that I was here we started seeing more of a local enrollment -- students from the intermountain area and the western states coming in and making up the bigger part of the student body. So, I think we started to miss a little bit of the diversity that we had once enjoyed. However, when the graduate program became accredited, there was a tendency again to draw from the rest of the country.

AS: You mentioned facilities earlier, and you were in the, not applied science. What did they call it?

VB: Mechanical Arts.

AS: The Mechanical Arts Building. And then you guys get the studios in the Fine Arts Building. What was that transition like and sort of how did it come about?

VB: I will not try to quote years and dates because I don't recall the actual dates. During my student years in the Department our classes were housed in the basement of Old Main. I recall having three classrooms on the first floor dedicated to the instruction of landscape architecture. Lecture courses used some of general classrooms in Old Main as well.

The Department moved into the Mechanical Arts Building just after I arrived here as an instructor. It was a condemned building at the time, so it worked really well for us because we needed space, and we had a lot of students. The facilities were very basic. We had some old wooden drafting desks (surpluses from some government facility) that were like two thousand pounds each to move. There were only a few of them. All the other

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desks were made from damaged doors and saw horses. We used those desks for drafting. The remaining equipment was made up of T-squares, triangles, pencils and slide rules. That was the equipment being used at the time. We had a lot of cracks in the building from previous earthquakes. The cracks had been repaired with rebar and threaded rods. The one room we used for lectures was an old mechanical shop with a flat roof with very little slope. When it rained or during snowmelt, the roof would leak so we would place several buckets in the room to collect the water. The sound of the water falling into the buckets was quite musical. The students enjoyed our time in that building because the University didn't care if they painted the walls or not -- and they did. I can remember having one group that enjoyed having javelin practice on one of the walls. They were throwing a javelin into the side of the building. It was an environment that was unfortunate in a lot of ways, but they knew that the building was going to come down within the year, so they were having a good time using it while they could.

The Mechanical Arts Building was situated on a beautiful site. We enjoyed being on that corner of the campus and having a view across the Quad. There were a lot of activities on the Quad, and we had a lot of football games after class out there. In fact, we as a faculty liked to join in. It was a lot of fun. We had a good time with the students and enjoyed being with them. The faculty wasn't that much older than the student body. It was a great time. The University was receiving funding from the legislature to build the Art Department and the LAEP Department a new building. The University brought in architects and they made several design proposals for a new building on the site we were occupying at the time. The design proposals included studios that looked out into the valley and would have been very beautiful. However, a new Fine Arts Building was under construction. The President of the University decided that he would have the architects for the Art and LAEP departments change their design and use the site on the North side of the Fine Arts Building as the location for the Art and LAEP Departments. So, it was the University President's decision to build the department where it is today.

AS: How about the engagement with the valley and surroundings? Were you able to use the valley and surroundings as a laboratory essentially?

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VB: I think there's probably not any open space in the valley that hasn't at one time or another been the site of one of our projects. Parks and recreation design, residential, community, and large regional planning proposals are just a few of projects that have been used as a training ground for our students. First Dam is a good example. Our students built most of that. We also worked on projects in the canyon for the Forest Service. I can remember designing and constructing a deck for the preschool children on the North end of campus. We took our construction class out there for a couple of weeks and built a wood deck. We poured concrete and even tried our hand at doing the finishing work. We installed irrigation systems for private residences here in the city as well. That provided our irrigation students with an opportunity to put something in the ground rather than just seeing it on paper. Yes, the community and the entire state and region have been a great resource for us. A significant amount of work in large scale environmental planning, community design and work for various government agencies have been part of the Department's contribution to the region. US Parks and Recreation, US Forest Service, BLM and military bases, nature centers and many others have played a part in the education process.

AS: Were you able to travel with the students much outside of the Valley and see some other areas?

VB: The field trips I took with the students are great memories for me. We went to San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, and Canada several times and once to New Orleans. I think New Orleans was the furthest field trip that I remember, although I think that in more recent years they've gone to New York City. And, in the past few years the students and faculty have made it possible to travel overseas. We did not take field trips overseas but we did have a chance to take a few students to interesting places for special projects or programs.

I had an opportunity to spend about six weeks in Slovenia, working at the University of Ljubljana, teaching and traveling in that region of Europe. It was part of student exchange program which provided funding for students from the University of Ljubljana to come to Utah State to study for one quarter and then allow our students to travel to Slovenia for a similar period of time. Nine of our students participated in that student exchange with me.

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AS: What year was that? Or a ballpark?

VB: I believe it was in 1993.

AS: That seems to be about when that exchange happened.

VB: John Nicholson started the exchange, and I had an opportunity to be in charge of a group that went over there. It was a special time to be with the students and see the country. I also traveled down to Buenos Aires, Argentina with a group of our students. We participated in a competition with other teams composed of faculty and students from Urban Planning and Architectural Departments from Venezuela, Spain, France, Austria and several other countries. We were divided into teams composed of a mix of students from the other Universities. Each team then prepared designs and planning proposals to renovate an old community called En San Isidro into a new city on the northern edge of Buenos Aires. It was a great learning experience for our students.

AS: I am going to have to ask a year again on that. When was that around?

VB: 1989

AS: It sounds very intriguing.

VB: It was. It was great. We were only there for about two weeks. It was a great opportunity for our students to work with students who had architectural backgrounds. However, it was a time when Argentina was going through some very difficult times. Inflation was about two hundred percent a year. We would buy a train ticket one day but then learned quickly to buy two because the next day the ticket might cost twice the amount of the day before. It was an interesting time, politically and socially. There were some horrendous things going on with the government. The students would talk about it occasionally, but most of the time they wouldn't talk about it because they knew they would be in danger of the government taking issue with them. I made the mistake of being in one of their big halls where there were some banners with names on them. When I asked a student what the banners were, he said "Well, let's talk about it later." Later he said they were the names of students who were opposing the government, and no one knew what had happened to them. They had simply disappeared. They were gone. They removed them.

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It was a very difficult period for those students. The government paid for all expenses related to their studies at the University so almost everyone who was college age attended school. However, finding work related to their major studies was very limited. I believe the architecture department had about 900 majors and were graduating about 200 each year. The students said they would be lucky if four of them could get a job when they graduated. So it was a tough time for them and an interesting time for us to be there.

AS: Absolutely. That is tough. Coming back to some of the things that were happening in the Intermountain West with outreach, through the field service, were you involved with any field service projects that stand out?

VB: Yes. We have had many opportunities to work with various federal and state government agencies. The Department has been fortunate to participate in a variety of environmental field service projects -- working with the U.S. Forest Service, the BLM, the Bureau of Reclamation and others. We've worked with local communities as well as county and regional planning groups. As an example, during the last few years that I was a faculty member, our residential planning class spent one semester working for the small community of Big Water, Utah. It is located near Glen Canyon Dam and Page, Arizona. There was expectation for new community growth, and the students prepared plans and designs for several separate sites that offered potential for development. Those projects were a lot of fun. They provided the students an opportunity to meet with citizens as real clients. Working with the students to record the environmental inventory and analysis on various sites, then returning to present their solutions to the communities was very rewarding.

AS: One of the things that has come up is the teaching style of the department, as I've talked with other people, is how projects would kind of move through different studios through the quarters. So it would start in the Fall with a planning project and would go Winter with John Nicolson and then they would kind of throw it down to the, I think it was down to your studio then kind of come up with some designs, like site level stuff. How did the teaching structure work with some of these projects moving through multiple studios?

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VB: It happened a little, but I don't remember that happening too often. There is no reason why it couldn't. I do recall using the Second Dam on the Logan River as a site for a design problem in one of our Park and Recreation Design Courses. The following semester, they were required to use their proposed designs as a project for producing a full set of working and construction documents. The Forest Service then selected one of the student's designs and construction drawings to install the facility the following summer. That design is what you see on the ground today. It was a day-use facility for picnicking that included fishing access to the impoundment and a boardwalk.

AS: Now I just want to ask some questions that are kind of broader and kind of cover more the kind of changes over time. The first one is just kind of technology. How has technology influenced the profession and just also, what have you seen in the department? How has it been incorporated?

VB: Well, let me just show you. I brought this along because I thought you might find it interesting. That was the most advanced technology we had at the time.

(Vern removes the contraption from its leather sheath)

AS: I don't even know what I'm looking at.

VB: This is the slide rule. I used this during my early years of study as an engineering major. It was used to add, subtract, multiply, divide and to work with logarithms. It was used to solve calculus and trigonometry formulas as well as a variety of other mathematical calculations. If you recall seeing the movie "Apollo 13" you may remember seeing the astronauts doing all of their calculations with a slide rule almost identical to the one in your hand.

I can remember when Sears came out with one of the first calculators. It was about 3"x 5" x 1" thick and could add, subtract, multiply and divide. It cost about \$125. I thought it was pretty amazing technology at the time. Now, you can get all of those functions on your wristwatch for less than a dollar. If you look at the advances in technology over the past 50 years it is just astounding. We used scientific calculators when they finally got to the point where you could actually afford one.

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Of course, in the early 70's, computers were the next generation of technology that made enormous changes in the profession. I can remember having my first computer on my desk. It was a small Apple Macintosh. I should have kept that thing. It was great for word processing and we could see the potential for use in land planning. We that it was amazing that we could play the simple game of ping-pong, thinking how incredible it was that we could control a paddle and hit a ball by using a mouse. I also remember playing a game called Pac Man. Now, with the advancement in technology, Landscape Architects can produce high- end graphic models in color and in 3-D by using programs such as Sketch Up and AutoCAD. Through the use of programs like Google Earth, students and practitioners can acquire huge amounts of information for making design and planning decisions. So yes, technology has just been exponential in terms of what the profession is capable of doing in today's environment.

AS: How did it start to influence the studio and teaching?

VB: Well, I have been retired from the University for ten years, and in this past ten years there has been a great amount of change. We didn't have computers for every student when I was here. We were lucky to see presentation work that was produced solely by computers. Unfortunately, I was here during the period of time when we didn't really get into the latest technology.

AS: What would you describe as being the higher points for the department, sort of, watershed moments for the department's history?

VB: Certainly I think the whole last perspective, utilizing the latest technology, has been a very high water mark for the department. Getting up to speed on all that is available and giving the students that kind of education is extremely important, timely, and even mandatory now If they are going to go to work in the profession. I believe the whole idea of environmental planning, what Carl Steinitz calls GeoDesign [is important]. There are big things now that the department can and should be doing in terms of treating the environment with the kind of expertise that we have . To provide the best understanding and knowledge of how we can use it and do it efficiently and environmentally. I think that has come a long ways.

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AS: Were there certain times that you felt the department was leading in innovation within the profession or academics?

VB: During the period when site planning and design were the primary focus of Landscape Architecture departments all over the country, I believe that we matched up pretty well with most of the other universities. We did a good job in that area at the time. I felt like the students went to work, found jobs and were very happy about their education. We received a lot of letters back at the time that said, "We appreciate the education we got at Utah State, and It has given us the opportunity to be productive and feel that we can compete with anybody." I think that was important for us to hear. I believe our students did receive a good education during their years at Utah State. The Department had national accreditation reviews every few years and the reports were always very positive and we were highly regarded by the review teams.

AS: Were there any times that you felt that the education was unbalanced or skewed towards a specific portion of landscape architecture?

VB: No, I think the Department has remained current with the needs of what was going on in the profession. I do not think that we were lagging to the point where we become obsolete and ineffective. I think we've seen a lot of change just due to the ability of technology to help us. I think that has been good. I think it has broadened our horizons. I think the whole aspect of large-scale design and planning is something that is needed and will be even more important in the future.

AS: Speaking of the future, you kind of mentioned geodesign, what directions do you see emerging in the field and within academic education for landscape architecture?

VB: Well, unfortunately after having been away for ten years, I am not sure I can speak to that very well. I do think, however, that it is certainly going to be in the large-scale environmental planning, geodesign, if you will. It will be more and more in that direction in the future. And, we will have the ability to come up with solutions that are applicable as a result of the technology that is available and the accessibility of more accurate information. The information age is just incredible. You can get an answer for anything, just pull out an iphone and ask it a question. It is just staggering what is available out

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there, and I think that is where it has to come from. We need to be thinking of how to use it effectively and efficiently.

AS: Any other thoughts you would like to add to the interview, or thoughts about the department?

VB: I think the department has evolved over the years. For many years there was a great sense of camaraderie that was envied by other departments at the University. We had a young faculty who all came here to teach at about the same time, and we enjoyed being with each other. It was interesting to hear a lot of the students say that that was one of the things about the department that they enjoyed the most. They really had good access to the faculty and felt as if the faculty was interested in them. That was a little different from a lot of the departments on campus. Because of the size of some of the other departments and the kind of discipline they were in, they were not able to get personally acquainted with many of their students. We were in the classroom with our students for four years -- sitting next to them and visiting with them, working with them, and going on trips with them. They become like family. That was a huge plus for the department over those many years, and as a result the students have felt a personal connection with the University and with the Department. I think it was unique at the time, and I hope that environment continues at the present time.. They were great, great days.

Thank you.